

Expansion:

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water damage to logs that need to be replaced. She said the sides of the building that face the sun — all but the north side — will need new chinking and the building needs a new coat of stain.

One of the first jobs will be to remove the deck outside her office on the second floor. It was installed when a restaurant occupied the building during a previous life and diners were seated out there. However, the deck has now become rickety and dangerous. It will be replaced with a stairway and an emergency exit.

Phase Two will cover the sprinklers, audio equipment for the hard of hearing and expanding the building.

“We’ll be able to expand the building going south. We’ll put in a ceramics studio, as well as a multipurpose space for movement, tech classes, dance, music practice, a rental space, as well as possibly bringing our printing press that we have in the basement upstairs,” Coughlan said. “It will almost double the size of this building.”

The entrance to the center also will be changed from its current south-side location to the north side. Across Alder Street from the new entrance is land the center owns that will be used for parking, Coughlan said.

She said construction work is expected to start this month or next, although contractors’ schedules will affect just how soon work can get



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Cheryl Coughlan, executive director of the Josephy Center for Arts and Culture, looks over the upstairs deck that is one of the first things to be removed under plans for repair and expansion Wednesday, June 30, 2021.

done. She’s hoping vital repair work can be completed before winter.

She said the center plans to keep the public informed of progress on the changes.

“We’re shooting for very big event during the Wallowa Valley Arts Festival, that would be Sept. 18,” she said. “At that point, we might have a much better idea as to what the expansion’s going to look like and we’ll know how much it’ll cost and how much money we’ll need to raise.”

Building’s background

Coughlan gave a brief history of the center’s building. She said it originally was a bank, then went through several occupancies, including a restaurant, a hair salon, a place where rummage sales could be held and then it sat vacant for several years.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Rich Wandschneider, director of the Alvin M. and Betty Josephy Library of Western History upstairs in the Josephy Center, leads a tour through the library Wednesday, June 30, 2021. An elevator to give better access to the second floor is part of the center’s renovation plans.

It was purchased from Anne and Bradford Stephens, who were instrumental in getting the center going.

“It was mostly Anne, who was very devoted to the arts,” Coughlan said. “She was part of a group of people who, a couple years before

buying the building, said they wanted to start an arts center.”

They found the current building for sale in early 2012 and were able to get it for a good price.

“At the very beginning, we promised we would buy it back from her,” Coughlan said. “But there were many, many repairs that needed to be taken care of.”

The center was opened in late 2012, after the repairs were completed and the center obtained its nonprofit status. Coughlan came aboard as executive director in September 2013.

Early on, the center also became the home to the Alvin M. and Betty Josephy Library of Western History with Rich Wandschneider as director. It had been housed in the basement of Fishtrap’s building in Enterprise and all concerned believed the move would be beneficial.

“This was a good move for the library,” Coughlan said, “because Alvin had a background in art as well as culture.”

At first, it was just just her and Wandschneider and about 50 volunteers. She was doing a lot of it with his help.

The center now

“Slowly but surely, we were able to hire art teachers and a person who could manage the volunteers, we started an art shop,” she said. “Basically, I was doing everything up until a few years ago when people came in and relieved me of some

of my several tasks. Now, what I’m doing is overseeing the programs and staff.”

The center now has seven paid staff and three interns.

The interns, mostly high school and college students, “help in the classrooms, they help in the gallery, they do a lot of what the volunteers couldn’t do during COVID,” Coughlan said. “We have one person who does all of the education and youth programming and we also have someone doing all of the exhibits and we have one person who’s doing all of our technical needs and creating our systems. We also have a development director who writes all the grants — and that’s Kellee Sheehy — and then Rich, who’s the library director. He does a lot of special programs.”

He managed the process of getting bronze sculptures out front done. He’s also working on a film about places relating to Nez Perce in the county.

Coughlan said it cost the center’s board \$450,000 to purchase the building, but they had to raise \$575,000 to help cover the cost of repairs and expansion. Those fundraising efforts netted nearly \$600,000, she said.

Coughlan said community support has been instrumental in the progress the center has made.

“Who knew this would be a pandemic?” she said. “We’re very grateful.”

To learn more, visit www.josephy.org.



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Council:

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accused him of “flipping her off” during a heated discussion at the February council meeting. He denied that happened in his letter.

In a motion agreed upon during executive session and made formal during the open session, Councilor Tammy Jones moved, “I make a motion that regarding Gary Bethscheider’s complaint that he did not ‘flip off’ Councilor Bingham. Furthermore, the council finds that Councilor Bingham did not make a formal complaint against Mr. Bethscheider. Finally, the council regrets the way this matter was handled and letting the accusations become public and formally apologizes to Mr. Bethscheider.”

Other claims against Bingham detailed during executive session but summarized in motions made during the open session that followed included harassment of city employees, violation of executive session privacy and letters supporting the claims.

Repeatedly, council motions found the allegations “unsubstantiated” and thus, no action against Bingham was taken. However, while claims such as harassment did not “rise to the level of harassment,” Bingham was found to have not acted appropriately under council rules.

Hope for healing

Several of the complainants said they were sat-



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Joseph City Councilor Kathy Bingham leaves an open session of the Joseph City Council Wednesday, June 30, 2021, after refuting five written complaints against her by Joseph residents. The council agreed to censure her in open session.

isfied with the council’s actions, even though their complaints were deemed unsubstantiated.

But there appeared to be enough evidence that Bingham acted improperly and on enough occasions that a final motion was made to censure her.

Councilor Matt Soots read that motion in open session, as agreed upon during executive session: “I make a motion that, based on Councilor Bingham’s behavior and decorum at public meetings that she be censured by removal as mayor pro-tem, removed from all committees for one year and banned from interaction with city employees in her role as city councilor except for contact with the city administrator.”

Mayor Belinda Buswell seconded that motion — and all the motions — and it was passed.

During the discussion of a motion he made, Councilor Stephen Bartlow said, “We keep hearing the word ‘unsubstantiated.’ What

Michael Lockhart, another complainant, also agreed the council acted properly.

“They can’t react to hearsay, but Gary’s wasn’t hearsay,” he said of Bethscheider’s letter. “She (Graham) saw it and I saw it. I’m not upset. The council did the best job they could and the consequences are there.”

City Parks Director Dennis Welch also was satisfied.

“I think they’re doing the best they can, but I think everybody was lacking on information,” he said. “I think it’s fair that (Bingham) is not to interact with city employees or be in any committees.”

Graham said the council’s actions Wednesday could lead to healing for the heretofore dysfunctional city government.

“They did what they could do and I think it’ll help the city heal,” she said.

The council originally had intended to hear Public Works Director Levi Tickner’s response to complaints against him by another city employee after the issues with Bingham were resolved. Tickner had opted to make his response in open session.

However, since the meeting had run past 9 p.m., Buswell asked for a motion to postpone hearing Tickner until just before the July council meeting, which was moved to July 15. It will begin at 5:30 p.m.

is asked for are the names of witnesses and specific details that can be checked out. I don’t want to discourage anyone from our city to bring complaints. We’re just asking for some substantial witnesses or other evidences that will help us pursue the complaint.”

Jude Graham, who wrote two of the complaint letters, said, “They did a good job tonight.”

She agreed more substantial evidence was needed, as Bartlow explained.

“Councilor Bartlow explained that — he explained what they meant by unsubstantiated,” she said. “They wanted witnesses and I witnessed some things, but they wanted more. I understand that. If you have situations, you need more than two witnesses.”

PLAY CHESS?

WALLOWA COUNTY CHESS CLUB
 Thursdays • 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.
 Josephy Center for Arts and Culture, 403 Main St., Joseph, OR
 For info call Clem at 541-432-6309 or Bill at 541-432-0409

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Thursday, July 15
 7-8pm

Lynn Tompkins
 Director of Blue Mountain Wildlife

Blue Mountain Wildlife works to rehabilitate orphaned, injured, and/or ill wildlife with the goal of returning them to the wild. While they care for many types of wildlife, BMW specializes in raptor care and supports education and research by sharing their raptors and information they’ve gathered with the public, as well as with studies like the Global Owl Project.

Lynn will share information and stories about BMW’s rehabilitation process and will speak specifically about owls in our region.

Wallowa Lake Lodge Thursday Speaker Series

Wallowology!
 at Wallowa Lake Lodge

Natural History Discovery Center
 508 N. Main • Joseph • wallowology.org • info@wallowology.org

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

BRENDEN MOORE

Brenden Moore ran on two state-championship winning cross-country teams for Wallowa Valley, then placed at the state track meet in the 3,000, and recently signed his letter of intent to run for NCAA Division III program Randolph College. For reaching the next level, Moore gets this week’s athlete of the week.

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Astronomy Outing!

Friday, July 9

9:30pm - 11pm
 ages 8 and up • under 16, adult supervision required

10:30pm - Midnight
 ages 16 and up

At a dark sky location close by

Free! • Beginners encouraged!

To sign up and receive details, pre-register at info@wallowology.org

Each evening session will include a short introduction to astronomical observation and guided help in using a telescope to view planets, star clusters, nebula, and galaxies

In partnership with Ida B. Wells High School Astronomy Club

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