

Joseph City Council starts the road back

Names new pro-tem, agrees to deal with Braden

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — The Joseph City Council began the road back from dysfunction, Tuesday, July 20, by voting in a new mayor pro-tem and taking other measures in the wake of the censure and resignation of one of its members.

Councilor Lisa Collier was elected by her peers to serve as mayor pro-tem, the position former Councilor Kathy Bingham was removed from June 30, as well as from committee assignments for a year and banning her from contact with city employees after several complaints against her were received by City Hall.

Although the council has a new pro-tem — who serves as mayor in the mayor's absence — filling Bingham's former committee assignments will have to wait. The same is true for



Joseph City Councilor Lisa Collier, center, listens as a resident addresses the council. She was voted as the mayor pro-tem Tuesday, July 20, 2021. At left are Pro-Tem Administrator Brock Eckstein, and at right is Administrative Assistant Jamie Collier.

applications for other committee assignments. Making such assignments is the mayor's job, and Mayor Belinda Buswell was absent from the last council meeting. Pro-tem Administrator Brock Eckstein said she was home sick.

One other item from recent difficulties had to be postponed. A response to Parks Department Lead Dennis Welch's accusations against Public Works Lead Levi Tickner will have to wait for the Aug. 5 council meeting, since Welch was

not present to rebut Tickner's statements. Welch, too, was home sick, Eckstein said.

But the council did accomplish one major chore from recent months — that of agreeing to a severance agreement with former Administrator/Recorder Larry Braden. Braden resigned April 11 citing harassment by members of the council.

The council went into executive session to discuss details of the agreement. Once back in open ses-

sion, Eckstein said that after negotiating with Braden, they agreed the city will pay Braden \$25,000 and Braden will agree to make no further claims against the city. Braden worked for the city for just less than two years.

The council also approved new job descriptions for several city employees, but decided to hold off on details of the Parks Department lead, the position Welch now holds.

In other matters, the council:

- Heard a complaint

about the cost of water and sewer hookups from resident John McColgan, who called the city's current rates "exorbitant." Tickner and Brad Baird, of Anderson Perry Engineers, explained the reasons for the high cost was largely about paying for infrastructure a property owner hadn't been paying for prior to building a new home. The council took no action on McColgan's complaint.

- Heard a complaint from Chuck Anderson, "alpenmeister" of Oregon's

Alpenfest, who considers Joseph's \$475 fee for transient merchants too high. He requested that the council enact an exemption for non-profit fees such as his Wurstwagen. It sells bratwurst sandwiches to raise money for the annual Alpenfest, which will be held at the Chief Joseph Days Rodeo grounds this fall and he'll have to pay the \$475 fee, cutting deeply into his profits and thus, into funds for the Alpenfest. Anderson asked the council to consider a nonprofit fee for operations such as his. Collier said it was worth discussing and several councilors agreed, but no decision was made.

- Approved all liquor licenses en masse. Eckstein told the council they could handle it that way or one by one, if they had a problem with the holder of a liquor license.

- Heard a request for a crosswalk at the intersection of Highway 82 and 4th Street, but explained that such an intersection will be addressed when handicapped-access ramps are installed.

IN BRIEF

The OHA does not give information on where in the county or who was involved in the reported cases.

Bank robbery reenactment returns

JOSEPH — A reenactment of the 1896 robbery of the First Bank of Joseph will take place Saturday, July 31, following the Chief Joseph Days Parade at the Wallowa County Museum in Joseph, according to a press release.

The museum is at 110 S. Main St. in the former bank building. The robbery took place Oct. 1, 1896, according to Chieftain files.

The museum has gone through numerous changes

in the past year, according to Jude Graham of the Joseph Chamber of Commerce. In addition to the return of the robbery reenactment, new displays are on hand and the museum's entire collection is being digitized for research purposes.

The Stangel Bison Ranch of Enterprise donated a bison skull and hide for the museum's Nez Perce exhibit.

Also at the museum will be a display of Chief Joseph Days memorabilia to mark the 75th anniversary of the rodeo.

Wallowa aids firefighting efforts

WALLOWA — Despite the absence of Mayor and

Fire Chief Gary Hulse, the Wallowa City Council held its usual meeting Tuesday, July 20, city Administrator Carolyn Harshfield reported.

"It was pretty quiet," she said Monday, July 26.

The council approved a \$2,000 grant received by the city library for teen activities, Harshfield said. That was the only action of substance conducted at the meeting, she said.

Hulse, in his capacity as fire chief, has been taking one of the city's water trucks to the Promise area to help battle the Elbow Creek Fire for the past two weeks, Harshfield said. She said he usually takes one other volunteer firefighter.

— The Chieftain



We are on the front lines of the fire again, this time with a local firefighter making a difference. Jeff Weer of Lostine is among the Wallowa County citizens helping tackle the Elbow Creek Fire. Thank you Jeff for your hard work and dedication to Wallowa County!

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TUESDAY
1:30pm Bucking Horse Stampede — Main Street

WEDNESDAY
9:00am Little Buckaroo Special Needs Rodeo
2:00pm Slack — Arena
6:00pm Rodeo Gates Open — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
7:00pm PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
9:00pm Family Fun at the Thunder Room — DJ

THURSDAY
9:00am Tough Enough to Wear Pink Walk
9:00am Steer Tripping, Three Rounds
2:00pm Slack — Arena
6:00pm Rodeo Gates Open — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
7:00pm PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
Tough Enough to Wear Pink — Wear Pink
9:00pm Fun at the Thunder Room after Rodeo — Stay Tuned!

FRIDAY
10:00am Chief Joseph Junior Parade — Main Street
2:00pm Slack — Arena
6:00pm Rodeo Gates Open — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
7:00pm PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
9:00pm All Teen Dance — Joseph Community Center
9:30pm Live Music and Dancing at Thunder Room — Whiskey Creek

SATURDAY
10:00am Grand Parade — Main Street
2:30pm Slack — Arena
6:00pm Rodeo Gates Open — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
7:00pm PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
9:00pm All Teen Dance — Joseph Community Center
9:30pm Music and Dancing at Thunder Room — Whiskey Creek
After Rodeo — Cowboy Breakfast — Rodeo Grounds — til 3:00am

SUNDAY
6:00am Cowboy Breakfast — Rodeo Grounds — til 10:00am
9:00am Cowboy Church Service

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