

Commissioners take actions for county fair

Mull land buy, OK loan to pay premiums

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — As the Wallowa County Fair was preparing to start, the county commissioners took two actions Wednesday, Aug. 4, to facilitate fair activities: the possible purchase of land adjoining the fairgrounds and a loan to fund fair premiums.

Commissioner Chairman Todd Nash invited Brinda Stanley, chairwoman of the fair board, to discuss the possible purchase of land belonging to the estate of Larry Wishart, who died in June.

“It seems like a really good fit,” Stanley said of the approximately one-third acre parcel. “We don’t often have a lot of opportunities to purchase property that adjoins our fairgrounds. ... Down the road it could house staff for the fairgrounds. There are a lot of possibilities. It has a great shop. Years ago, when I was young, it was a truck shop where trucks could pull in and out of there ... so it just seems like a really good fit. Our board is really excited



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Wallowa County Fair Board Chairwoman Brinda Stanley addresses the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners about a possible land acquisition adjacent to the fairgrounds Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021.

about moving forward with it. Now we’re just trying to figure out how we can move forward and make it happen for the fairgrounds and our community.”

Nash noted there are legal issues to be dealt with. Since Wishart died only two months ago, there are another 16 months during which someone with a lien against his estate can file a claim.

“There are ways in the private sector in which people can get around such things, but it doesn’t work well for a public entity,” Nash said.

He suggested the possibility that, if it’s agreeable with the Wishart family, the county could lease the property with an option to purchase it after the 16 months are up.

“We need to have a work session to get some clarity on how we direct our county counsel to either draft something up or to negotiate with the Wisharts, or if there’s even a desire for this board to move forward on such a purchase,” Nash said.

The commissioners agreed no action could be taken at Wednesday’s

meeting on the matter, since more information is still needed.

Commissioner Susan Roberts said some of the questions that need to be answered include how the property will be maintained, the cost of any purchase or lease and whether the property will be on the tax rolls of the county.

Nash said some of those issues are the purview of the fair board, but agreed with Roberts that the financial aspects — including the property’s assessed value — are of chief concern to the county.

“Appraised value is really hard to assess right now. People throw prices out there and somebody comes in and offers them \$40,000 more to make sure they get it.”

Although no decision could be made, Stanley said she hoped to have more information for the commissioners by their next meeting.

“We wanted to get it out there in the public eye and let people know what we’re thinking about,” Nash said. “We don’t want to do anything under the radar.”

Fair premium loan

In another matter, the commissioners approved taking out a loan of \$75,000 so the county can

pay fair premiums immediately after the fair.

“After the fat stock sale, sometimes those checks come in slowly,” Nash said. “Community Bank has been really generous offering us a no-interest loan for 90 days. That allows us to get those checks out to those kids faster rather than waiting for the last checks to come in. We really appreciate Community Bank doing that and Brinda (Stanley) working with them to make that happen.”

The commissioners also approved sending a letter to the federal Bureau of Land Management on its plans to restore lands affected by the Joseph Canyon Fire in June. The letter expressed approval of plans for livestock inventory, treatment of noxious weeds and aerial seeding, but suggested additional measure when it comes to seeding.

“We understand that native perennial grasses are favored over other varieties,” the letter stated. “However, they often take a while to establish so we recommend supplementing with other perennial grasses.”

The commissioners also approved an order reopening county road that had been closed for fire safety issues.

Other actions

In other matters, the commissioners:

- Approved a request by Robin Wortman, of the county’s District Attorney’s Office, that the county apply for a \$185,320 grant to fund victims’ advocate services and hire another full-time employee.

- Asked for more information on a wellness application for Wallowa County Sheriff’s Office deputies. Stacey Fregulia, the commissioners’ executive assistant, said it was originally thought applying for the matter would be simple and Sheriff Joel Fish appointed her to do so, but upon investigating it, she needs legal authority to do so. Fregulia said she would continue to investigate it and return to the commissioners with more information.

- Approved action notices for cost-of-living pay increases for Hailley Collier, who is on her probationary period with 911 dispatch, and for Jakeb Thompson and David Riley with the Wallowa Lake Community Service District.

- Approved an easement for Joel Schiefelbein who wants access to a private residence on Dunham Road.

Legislature begins 46-day race to redistricting on Thursday

By **GARY A. WARNER**
Oregon Capital Bureau

SALEM — Eleven state lawmakers on Thursday, Aug. 12, will begin a politically Herculean task with historically small odds of success: Draw 96 new political districts in 46 days that will be used beginning with the 2022 election.

The six Democrats and five Republicans on the House and Senate redistricting committees are set to receive block-by-block U.S. Census data full of population and demographic changes since the last map-making 10 years ago.

The pandemic and politics led to a six-month delay in delivery of the information on population changes and demographic shifts that is required to draw maps meeting federal and state laws.

It took an Oregon Supreme Court ruling to give the Legislature the first shot at redistricting. But the justices settled on a crushing timeline that would require a special session of the Legislature on Sept. 20 to ratify the maps in time to have them delivered to the court by Sept. 27.

What they come up with has even the most seasoned politicians in Salem scratching their heads.

“Nobody knows what their district’s going to look

like right now,” Senate President Peter Courtney said last week. “Some are going to be dramatically changed, and some aren’t.”

The committees’ to-do list:

- Draw 60 House districts, each with about 70,621 residents.

- Draw 30 Senate districts, each with about 141,242 residents.

- Draw six congressional districts — one more than now exist — each with about 706,209 residents.

If successful, the lawmakers will create the maps, win approval in the House and Senate, and then get Gov. Kate Brown to sign off on the plan.

That’s happened once in the past 110 years, in 2011. The rest of the time, the Legislature couldn’t agree, the governor would reject the lawmakers’ plans, or court challenges would lead to revisions.

Plans for a “road trip” of hearings to present a preliminary plan to the public are shaky amid a new wave of coronavirus cases. The committees could return to the earlier format of taking virtual and written testimony.

While the district final lines likely won’t be seen until autumn, the initial raw data shows major shifts in the political landscape.

Oregon received a new congressional seat by out-

pace the nation in growth. The 2020 population is 4,237,256, reflecting 10.7% growth since 2010, above the 7.4% national average.

But the growth has not been evenly spread across the state. Traditional Republican strongholds in Eastern and Southwestern Oregon have seen below state average increases.

The biggest bounce has been in the Bend area, with population growth of about 25% since 2010 — the city now has more than 100,000 people. Democrats flipped the state House seat representing most of the city in 2020. Deschutes County gave a majority of its presidential vote to Democrat Joe Biden over then-President Donald Trump.

The other big growth area was a suburban arc around Portland stretching from Wilsonville to Hillsboro, then curving over northern Portland before dropping southeast into Clackamas County. All the current representatives in those areas are Democrats.

House Minority Leader Christine Drazan, R-Canby, fired a warning flare to GOP supporters, noting Democrats control all the levers of power on redistricting, from the Legislature to the governor and secretary of state, and noting a majority of the Oregon Supreme Court was appointed by Democrats.

Call put out for ‘Little Works’

JOSEPH — There’s a new call to artists from the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture: The Little Works Exhibition.

For this exhibit, the center is asking for little works of any 2D or 3D media that fit into an imaginary 7-inch-by-7-inch-by-7-inch box.

Frames, stands and/or all other presentation

hardware are included in the space limitation.

All works must be for sale.

To submit works for consideration, email images to exhibits@joseph.org and use “Little Works” in the subject line.

Include title, medium, dimensions, year completed and price for each

piece submitted. The deadline for submissions is midnight, Tuesday, Aug. 31.

The exhibit will be displayed Oct. 6 through Nov. 22, with an opening reception from 7-9 p.m. Oct. 8.

Works must be delivered to the center by Sept. 20-30.

— Chieftain staff

MAIN STREET
7TH ANNUAL
Show and Shine
2021
AUGUST 20-21
ENTERPRISE, OREGON

Friday August 20th	
9am	Registration Starts at Main Street Motors
Noon	Cruise to Imnaha Store and Tavern (meet behind the grocery store in Joseph)
5pm – 8pm	Music in Warde Park by No Boundaries (Main St. & 2 nd in Enterprise)
Saturday August 21st	
7am	Registration Continues at Main Street Motors
7am	Parking for Show and Shine Begins
7am – 10am	Elks Breakfast Fundraiser at Main Street Motors
9am-ish	Nation Anthem Flags – Eagle Cap VFW Post #4307
9am – 3pm	SHOW AND SHINE Main Street in Enterprise
2:30 pm	Awards on Main Street in Enterprise
After Awards	Cruise By Local Senior Homes (map in Goodie Bag or at Information Booth)

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Winding Waters
Your Health Care Home

COMMUNITY IMMUNITY