

Commissioners shuffle positions for coming year

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — It was largely personnel matters addressed by the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners during its first meeting of the new year, Wednesday, Jan. 5, including shuffling of positions on the board itself.

Commissioner Susan Roberts took the gavel as chairwoman for the coming year, succeeding Todd Nash.

Nash's stepping down as chairman works out timely for him, as he now has the responsibilities of the new president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association. Roberts took a moment before conducting the regular business to acknowledge Nash's new duties for the two-year term.

"I don't believe we have brought that to anyone's attention yet, so I would like to ask Commissioner Nash if you would take about two minutes and tell us what that might mean," Roberts said.

"It's a huge honor to be able to represent cattlemen in Oregon," Nash said. "It means that I'll probably be on the road a bit more the next couple of years as I fill out this term. There's a myriad of things that impact the cattle industry. It's the most prominent agricultural commodity here in the state, the No.



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Commissioner Susan Roberts took the helm as chairwoman of the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners for 2022 at the board's first meeting of the year Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022. Also seated there are Commissioners John Hillock, left, and Todd Nash.

1 commodity in the nation and here in Wallowa County it represents about 40% of what is our agricultural base here. I'll work on issues with my various committees that are tasked to different things and the executive board and members scattered throughout the state. I asked when I was first elected a (county) commissioner ... if they would support me taking on such an endeavor and they did at that time. The commissioners have been very supportive

of the role, my community has been, my family — and I do need support, because it does mean time away from home, and neighbors helping out. It's a huge honor and a lot of responsibility."

The weather

The commissioners also brought up issues created by recent winter storms.

"It's a little obvious that we've had a little weather event here. People are saying that it's just a good, old-fash-

ioned winter, but I don't remember it being quite this old-fashioned before, but maybe I'm not old enough," Nash laughed. "The wind event and the accumulation of snow is a substantial struggle for many. I will say that the community has been so tolerant of waiting to get dug out. The road crew has been heroic in their efforts to stay out late and get out early and get roads punched out and they must be getting somewhat haggard. I really appreciate the

community's patience."

"We really appreciate the employees who came in," Roberts added. "I asked Monday (Jan. 3) that most employees stay where they were at home and give the road crews time to get in. Maybe in a couple of days we'll be doing floodwaters."

Commissioner John Hillock added another concern.

"One thing I'd like to bring to your attention is, and I've talked to (Emergency Services Director) Paul (Kar-

voski) that Crystal Broadband no longer has a presence in Wallowa County — a working employee — and they have lines down," Hillock said. "I have Paul working on contacting them and if we don't get any response, we're just going to start chopping them down. We'll talk to the sheriff about that and make sure we're within our rights to do that. If they aren't going to maintain things then they're a hazard to the public. There's one down where the UPS trucks can't get in and out. They need to either come here and have a presence and maintain their facilities or we're going to have to take action and fix it."

Hillock said he's put Karvoski in charge "Because it's more his bailiwick."

Other business

In other matters, the commissioners:

- Approved a wage increase and classification change for Suzan Hobbs in the Building Codes Department.

- Approved a resolution to appoint members to the Wallowa County Natural Resource Advisory Committee. A full list is available at the courthouse.

- Approved an easement for Ziplly Fiber Northwest on Fish Hatchery Lane in Enterprise.

Wallowa County denies amendment to airport zoning law

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — An amendment to a county ordinance that would have expanded permitted uses on land adjacent to airports in the county was denied Wednesday, Jan. 5, by the Wallowa County Board of Commissioners.

The move came on a 2-1 vote, with Commissioner John Hillock voting

against denying the amendment at the conclusion of a public hearing on creating an airport adjacent zone held after the board's regular meeting.

County Planning Director Franz Goebel read a report from the County Planning Commission in which the planners recommended denial of the amendment.

"This is the second official hearing as required

for an official amendment," Goebel said. "The first was before the Planning Commission. In summary, their recommendation to the Board of Commissioners was to deny the application."

In voting against denial of the amendment, Hillock said there is still information needed to determine how best to accomplish it.

"We need to do more research on this," he said.

The request for the new zone was submitted by S&Z Properties LLC, represented by local attorney Rahn Hostetter.

Goebel said there have been multiple hearings on the amendment, after which it was continued several times to gather more information from the Oregon Department of Aviation. He said both the ODA and the city of Enterprise have been opposed to the amendment.

He said the amendment would have applied to not only the commercial airports in Enterprise and Joseph, but to private landing strips on private land in the county.

"The application was to create a new zone type that could be applied (for) by a landowner near an airport," Goebel said. "The primary point of contention is that in their application, they included a residential ele-

ment for apartments and condos near an airport, and that's contrary to what the Oregon Department of Aviation believes is an allowable business."

Goebel said that at this point, there has been no direction from the commissioners to rework the proposed amendment to address objectionable elements of it. It could be done, if S&Z Properties wishes to appeal it.

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