

# Enterprise urged to test for omicron variant

By **BILL BRADSHAW**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The COVID-19 pandemic cast its shadow over a couple of issues dealt with Monday, Jan. 10, by the Enterprise City Council at its most recent meeting.

The meeting started with a work session during which a presentation on wastewater testing was given by Stacey Karvoski, quality director and nurse at Wallowa Memorial Hospital. Karvoski requested that the council approve testing for the new omicron variant. No decision by the council was included in a summary of the meeting provided Jan. 11.

## Motel tax

In another matter, during the regular meeting, city Administrator/Recorder Lacey McQuead told the council motel tax receipts received from Wallowa County (one payment per year) were 284% more than budgeted. The tax receipts received from transient lodging within the city are 172% more than what was budgeted, with one more revenue payment anticipated before the end of the fiscal year.

McQuead said the city had received \$42,678.29 from county tax receipts and \$60,422.74 from city

tax receipts.

She said that in 1997, the city established a 2% transient lodging tax, which was raised to 3% in 2002. There have been no adjustments since then other than to redefine such lodging to include vacation rentals. She said that upon review, Enterprise has one of lowest motel tax rates in the state.

McQuead said she does not anticipate a future reduction or increase in tax receipts, although she does not know how things will move forward.

“We budgeted conservatively the past couple of years because we anticipated a decrease in receipts due to the pandemic,” she said. “That is not what we are seeing with the revenues we have received. What the future holds, I have no idea. There is too much unknown at this point.”

## Pay scale update

Also during the regular meeting, the council approved a corrected version of a resolution dealing with a three-year bargaining agreement that took effect July 1, 2020, with all employees not directed by a collective-bargaining agree-

ment of contracted employees. McQuead said there is a need to change the wage scale to reflect the new sewer plant assistant position. Instead of staff receiving bonuses for certificates received, the new wage scale will now allow certified employees to move into a new wage column. All Public Works Department staff agreed on the change prior to the meeting. The council voted to remove the original wage scale from the resolution and replace it with the new scale.

## Pump track

In another matter, the council heard a report following a meeting with Angela Mart of the Wallowa Mountains Bicycle Club, which hopes to see a pump track built in town. Committee members had met with Mart at the Little League field before the holidays, but after discussion — and opposition by Little League representatives — it was decided the field was not the best option for the track. Instead, the city will look at a site north of the city park, but contact with the Federal Emergency Management Agency will be necessary first, as it is a riparian area.

McQuead also said she will seek assistance from Mart and her board in

obtaining grant funding to build the track.

## Goals for 2022

McQuead presented the council with a list of goals to be accomplished in 2022. Those include:

- A new employee in the Public Works Department specifically for the sewer plant.
- Budget changes: Budget officer Christie Huston was complimented on her job assessing the budget and finding ways to save the city money. Each department manager needs to take time to review their budgets and see if any changes that can be made to better the financial position of the city.
- Downtown improvement: New businesses moving in, Andy McKee has finished a portion of the Litch Building with more upgrades to come and there are fewer open store fronts than last year. However, ways to add some beautification to downtown are sought.
- Managers’ performance reviews are due June 30.
- McQuead recommends that department managers meet with their committees at least quarterly, but monthly meetings would make staff feel supported by council.
- Review of the Municipal Code and Comprehen-

sive Plan: Due to the grant the city received from the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, this will be a project that starts this year, but will not be “completed” until late 2023.

## In other business, the council:

- Presented outgoing Assistant Fire Chief Dan Niezen with an award for his 15 years of service to the city in the Fire Department.
- Swore in Corey Otten to replace Christie Huston in City Council Position No. 3.
- Read a letter from Bob and Kathy Rietman expressing their concerns over traffic near the schools. The council recommended McQuead prepare a letter to the Enterprise School Board informing it of the safety concerns once again brought to the council’s attention.

## Among the department reports:

- Public Works Director Shawn Young informed the council of complaints the city received the previous week about plowing alleyways. The council agreed that alleys have never been plowed by the city nor should the city start now, as the focus needs to remain on main thoroughfares. Young

also said the department has put in many hours the previous week, largely due to the need to keep streets clear of snow. The council expressed its appreciation for the crew’s hard work.

- Fire Chief Paul Karvoski told the council that the fire crew will vote on a new assistant chief to replace Niezen at its first meeting in February.
- Police Chief Kevin McQuead said the city had issued no DUI citations over the holidays during the safe driving campaign. He also said he was unable to provide his regular monthly report because his computer system was down.

The next council meeting will be Feb. 14 at 6 p.m.



### Births

A daughter, Harlee Lynn Paine, was born January 1, 2022 in Enterprise to Mason and Baylee Paine of Joseph. Grandparents are Dana & Kevin Shelton, and Sharon & Winfield Paine.



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## IN BRIEF

### Grange to hold chili cookoff Jan. 22

JOSEPH — A competitive chili cookoff is being hosted by the Hurricane Creek Grange to coincide with the conclusion of the 2022 Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race, according to a press release.

The cookoff will take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 22, at the grange, 92930 Airport Lane just west of Joseph.

There is an entry fee of \$10 each for the contest, with a \$50 cash first prize and a second prize of a basket filled by local vendors.

Those who come to enjoy the chili are charged \$5 for a bowl and some cornbread. Dessert of pies also will be available. Whole pies go for \$15.

There also will be a local vendor market, the release stated.

For information, call Barbara McCormack at 541-605-8233.

### Chamber offers ag business training

ENTERPRISE — The Wallowa County Cow-Bells Farm and Ranch Business Training is being sponsored by the Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce in January, according to a press release.

The session will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Jan. 21, at the Tomas Conference Room, 309 S. River St. in Enterprise.

Cassi Johnson of Pacific Intermountain Mortgage Co. will kick off the day with a QuickBooks training session. She will cover data entry (such as entering checks and deposits), creating custom invoices and using the invoicing feature, setting up a chart of accounts, reports and customizing reports, using the payroll feature and more. Both QuickBooks Desktop and QuickBooks Online will be discussed.

The afternoon will feature a panel of local experts who have success in direct sales of their products. Learn about processing, storage, delivery and marketing challenges and how to overcome them.

Because this class is sponsored by the chamber, 50% of the class fee has been covered to help keep costs low. Cost of the class is \$50, with a \$3 transaction fee. Register at <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/3barconsulting/625702#>.

While this training will have a focus on the agricultural industry, anyone interested in learning more about QuickBooks and running a small business will benefit.

### Bikepacking tour webinar is Jan. 25

WALLOWA COUNTY — A webinar on the Wallowa Bikepacking Tour will be held by Dirty Freehub at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 25, according to a press release.

Route designer Ben Groeneveld will discuss his latest adventure and why this is his favorite place to ride in Northeastern Oregon.

The webinar will be moderated by Linda English, the executive director of Dirty Freehub, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that is an online guide for five-star gravel bike routes. Dirty Freehub’s goal is to build a community of gravel cyclists who care about where they ride. The group hopes to get participants involved as advocates, volunteers or donors with organizations that protect and preserve recreational lands.

To participate in the Zoom webinar, visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86410473402?pwd=TWV2bCtGRjFMZFIlYmY4c2VlTHpzQT09>. The meeting ID is 864 1047 3402 and the passcode is Bikepack.

Those without Zoom capabilities can attend by phone by visiting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86410473402> to find a local phone number. The meeting ID is 864 1047 3402 and the passcode is 36012512.

### An introduction to block printing class set

JOSEPH — Learn the basic techniques for block (or relief) printing at a class planned at the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture on Jan. 22.

The class will be taught by Heidi Muller of Joseph from 1-4 p.m. It costs \$65. A maximum of six students can be accepted. Face masks and proof of COVID-19 vaccination are required, according to a press release.

The class will teach how to transfer a design, carve with cutting tools and ink

and print an impression of a carved block onto paper. Students will use a soft, rubbery medium that cuts easily and burnish the images by hand. Materials will be provided, but participants are asked to bring designs or images they would like to work from. Students will go home with a new set of skills and finished prints.

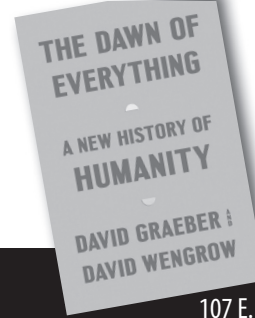
Muller first learned printmaking in high school, and returned to it in 2019 by taking classes at the Joseph Center. She makes linocut prints using the big press in the print studio and enjoys making small projects that she hand-prints at home. She draws inspiration from nature and iconic women.

— Chieftain staff


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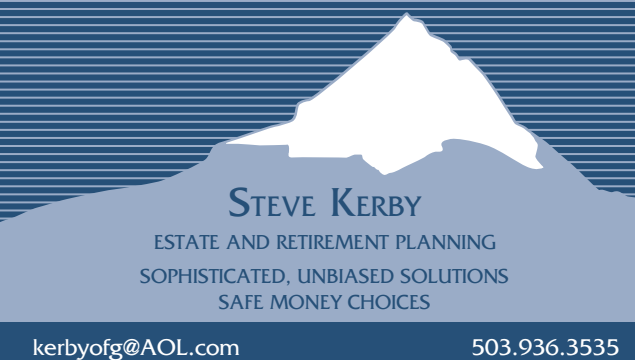
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