

# County accepts \$500,000 for fairgrounds work

Still needs to decide which projects can be done

By **BILL BRADSHAW**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — A \$500,000 federal grant Wallowa County is receiving through the American Rescue Plan Act for upgrades to the fairgrounds was approved Wednesday, Feb. 16, when the Board of Commissioners met.

Acceptance of the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund Grant had been tabled at the commissioners Feb. 2 meeting because of concerns county counsel Paige Sully had over how the state was involved in the county receiving the money. Commission Chairwoman Susan Roberts said Feb. 16 that those concerns had been resolved and the commissioners were comfortable approving the grant.

"This is the money that came through the representatives and senators and was dedicated to the fairgrounds," Commissioner Todd Nash said. "Rep. (Bobby) Levy (R-Echo)

committed \$500,000 to our fairgrounds. Our fair board looked at projects that were needed and submitted them to a board that was made up with Tina Kotek (who until January was speaker of the Oregon House and is now running for the Democrat nomination for governor) and others at the state level to get approval and got that approval from them. It was sent back to us and now and finally it's come to a place where we get to look at the grant and assess it."

Nash, who is most closely involved with the fairgrounds among the commissioners, said now it's time to seriously look at which projects can be covered by the money.

"Some of the projects, admittedly, might not pass muster with the ARPA money that that came from originally, so we're reassessing projects that are acceptable and that fit within it, that we think we have those," he said. "There's much-needed repair at the fairgrounds, as many of you know, so this is very much appreciated. With that, I would make a motion to accept those dollars."

Commissioner John Hillcock agreed, and seconded Nash's motion to approve the grant.



Wallowa County Chieftain, File

**Holes are clearly visible inside the roof of the show barn at the Wallowa County Fairgrounds. A new roof is high on the list of improvements at the fairgrounds the county hopes to achieve over the next couple years with \$500,000 it's receiving in federal funds.**

"It's an ongoing struggle to figure out what we can do and what we can't do that will be acceptable," he said.

Some of the projects targeted for upgrade at the fairgrounds include a new roof for the show barn — which has several holes in it.

On Nov. 3, Nash read a list of needed upgrades at the fairgrounds, which included the indoor arena/show barn roof, the food booth, replacing the ventilation system in the kitchen, remodeling restrooms for Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, grounds irrigation, the outdoor

arena, new implements for the tractor, a drainage system for the swine barn, support replacement in the beef barn, enclose the maintenance shop under the grandstands, upgrade the Quonset building and its restrooms for ADA compliance.

Also on the list are projects at the Cloverleaf Hall, part of which will be paid with a \$200,000 grant donated by Wallowa Memorial Hospital. Those projects include updating the heat pump system, remodeling restrooms for ADA compliance, a generator to use during power outages and

movable room dividers. But those projects are separate from those to be done with the ARPA money, Nash said last week.

## Letter to ODOT

In another matter last week, Roberts read a letter the county has been asked by Region 5 representatives of the Oregon Department of Transportation concerning the Infrastructure Act and allocations. She said ODOT sent the county a form letter and asked the county to add specifics pertinent to it. The state wants counties to list their needs so ODOT doesn't have to wade through pool of requests.

The letter said, in part, "For example, Wallowa County has main roads that carry timber, agricultural, recreational and passenger traffic. Therefore, we would like to use our funding differently than a county with more urban traffic needs. Our roads are in need of widening, paving and even base repair. We also have a growing number of bridges in need of repair or replacement. In some cases, these bridges are the only access to residences with no alternative detours. Our rural roads are coming under greater use as more people

move to Wallowa County and/or make use of trailheads, campgrounds and other recreational lands. The continuing loss of federal timber dollars and other funding sources have made it even more imperative to direct our funding to the most-needed projects."

Roberts said that what they're suggesting is that ODOT dollars go directly to the county "and not have the state determine what our projects should be."

The commissioners approved sending the letter.

## Other business

In other business, the commissioners approved:

- The rehiring of Don Sallee II as a building codes official.
- A resolution to appoint members to the county's museum board. Appointed were Claudia Boswell and Elaine Isley.
- The initiation of a Justice Reinvestment Grant for \$97,000.
- An intergovernmental agreement.
- Measure 57 funds.
- An easement requested by Tyson Orr underground utilities under Williamson Lane at the site of a new house just south of Enterprise.

## Sweetheart sale



**Susie Waterman of Joseph, right, looks over the display of collectible antiques offered for sale Friday, Feb. 11, 2022, by Pam and Dan Low, seated, at the Hurricane Creek Grange's 11th annual Sweetheart Indoor Yard Sale held in honor of Valentine's Day. The sale, along with an open kitchen, also went on Saturday. Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain**

## WALLOWA

### Council fills vacant seat

By **BILL BRADSHAW**  
Wallowa County Chieftain

WALLOWA — The Wallowa City Council is back up to full strength, now that Paul Doherty was appointed to fill a vacancy at the council's meeting Tuesday, Feb. 15, Mayor Gary Hulse said.

Doherty replaces long-time Councilman and Council President Joe Town, who retired Nov. 16 for health concerns.

Hulse said Doherty will serve until the November elections, at which time he can opt to run for a permanent seat on the council.

In another matter, the council heard an update on the new Wallowa Memorial Hospital clinic planned for the city. Dan McCarthy, of the Wallowa County Health Care District, showed plans for the clinic and gave an approximate time line for its completion.

Hulse said the council had previously vacated a portion of 9th Street to allow the clinic to reur-

bish the old Fox Archery building and add onto it for the clinic. It is to be located at the intersection of Highway 82 and the truck route through town.

McCarthy told the council it is hoped to have the clinic up and running in August or September, Hulse said.

In other business, the council:

- Approved an ordinance changing Frontier Communications to Zippy Fiber to give Zippy the utility franchise for the city.
  - Approved a variance requested by Stanley Richardson for 401 S. Alder St. Hulse said Richardson wanted to build close to the property line and letters were sent out twice to neighbors to ensure no one objected.
  - Was going to hear from Katy Nesbitt with Wallowa County Economics on the housing crisis, but Nesbitt had a conflicting appointment and was unable to attend the meeting.
- The next council meeting will be March 15.

## IN BRIEF

### Beekeepers to hold first meeting of season today

JOSEPH — Get in on the latest buzz about bees Wednesday, Feb. 23, as spring nears and the Wallowa County Beekeepers will hold their first meeting of 2022 at the Hurricane Creek Grange.

The meeting, which runs from 6-8 p.m., is open to the public and admission is free.

Anyone interested in meeting fellow local beekeepers, in exploring the possibility of getting started in beekeeping yourself or if you just like bees and other pollinators, this event is an opportunity to meet and support local beekeepers.

Meetings are open to club members, anyone interested in getting started in beekeeping, gardeners, ranchers, farmers and other bee enthusiasts.

Light refreshments will be offered, and information about beekeeping in Wallowa County will be shared. One or more door prizes will be awarded, and a few items of surplus donated beekeeping equipment will be available free for the taking.

Meetings are education-focused, fun, and open to anyone interested in bees or beekeeping. Join us to hear funny stories about beekeeping and to learn more about bees, keeping bees, hive products and other bee-related topics.

The Wallowa County Beekeepers club is a 501(c)(3) charitable, non-profit, education-focused organization with a growing

membership. The club meets five times a year. Additional 2022 meeting dates are April 27, June 29, Aug. 31 and Nov. 2. All meetings run from 6:30-8 p.m. with meeting locations to be announced.

For more information contact Nelda (Nel) Murri at nmurri@gmail.com or 509-540-4733.

### Collage class planned at Joseph Center

JOSEPH — A new collage class will be held at the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture exploring a variety of techniques and materials, according to a press release.

Taught by Janis Carper, the class will be held 5:30-8:30 p.m. on March 16 at the center. Cost is \$45.

In the class, participants will experiment with design, layering, color and transparency. Basic materials will be provided, but participants are free to bring — in addition to their imaginations — any other materials that inspire them, such as discarded books, old magazines, photos, greeting cards, scraps of paper, buttons, old jewelry, fabric, etc. The class promises students will come out with a finished product.

To register, visit <https://josephy.org/event/collage-with-janis-carper>. To learn more of Carper, visit <http://secondchanceproductions.com>.

— Chieftain staff

This week's featured book

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by Roddy Doyle

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