### Council

### Continued from Page A1

If the city does cease ambulance service, it would lose about \$1 million in annual ambulance revenue. The proposed city budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1 does not include ambulance service beyond Sept. 30, and the budget also calls for laying off six firefighter/paramedics, half the number allocated for the current fiscal year (although two of those positions are vacant now).

A standing room only crowd attended Tuesday's City Council meeting, and 18 people spoke, all urging councilors to keep operating ambulances and avoid layoffs in the fire department.

### City manager, councilors concerned about aspects in

county's request for proposals During Wednesday's work session, Cannon and councilors talked about several concerns they have with requirements listed in the county's RFP, saying that in some cases the city couldn't comply with its current staffing, and that meeting the standards would require the city to hire several new firefighter/paramedics and buy or lease at least two new ambulance.

That would cost the city hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Councilor Dean Guyer said he believes the county's RFP is not necessary, and that he prefers the city and county try to reach an agreement for the city to continue ambulance service for the next fiscal year.

Guyer described this idea as a "bandaid" that would give the county time to propose an ambulance district, with a new property tax levy, that voters in the Baker Ambulance Service Area could

potentially decide on in a future election.

Guyer said he hopes that could happen as soon as the Nov. 8, 2022, election, but he noted that county officials have

suggested May 2023. Why are we spending all this time going through an RFP when all we're trying to do is provide some accommodation?" Guyer said. Mayor Kerry Mc-

Quisten said that

City Council and

during an April joint

meeting between the

county commission-

"They don't legally have to do this," Mc-

Quisten said. "And

they came back at

us and said, we are

doing this no mat-

they've started this

legal process where

this is what they're

can't talk them out of

it, what other option

Councilor Ken-

yon Damschen said

he wants the city to

reach an agreement

with the county that

keeps the city operat-

ing ambulances.
"I'm just looking

for us to actually

to resolve this,"

Damschen said.

communicate and

try with the county

focus on trying to

doing. And if we

do we have?'

ter what and so, now

ers, she urged com-

missioners to not

send an RFP.









Cannon expressed concerns about parts of the RFP, including the requirement that the ambulance provider have two ambulances available at all times and a backup ambulance.

Cannon said the city has two ambulances in good condition, one that's not in good shape and a fourth that is not currently capable of meeting basic standards.

> He told councilors he's worried that to meet the county's RFP requirements, the city would potentially need to buy or lease (the latter being his preferred option) two ambulances. A new ambulance costs an estimated \$375,000, he said.

> Cannon said the city, in its response to the RFP, can simply list the ambulances it has available.

"We would say, this is what we have, and we're not going to buy any and if one fails, then we're going to have to just deal with that," he said.

Cannon cited the RFP's requirement that if either primary ambulance assigned to service in the Baker ASA becomes inoperative or leaves the ASA for any reason, it shall be replaced by an identical ambulance immediately.

"We're not going to be able to meet this," Cannon said. "Because if we go to Huntington and we have an ambulance in service over in Boise, I don't have two back ups, I don't have two ambulances."

Cannon said the city would not be able to meet a requirement

in the RFP regarding transfers of patients to hospitals outside the area.

Councilor Joanna Dixon pointed out that the late Leo Adler had always supported

Wendt said. Sometimes the

playground almost seems too

the fire department, including buying several ambulances for the city over the decades. She suggested the city talk with the trustees who oversee the Leo Adler Foundation regarding potential financial help with

the city's ambulance fleet. Cannon also talked about the number of fire department employees the city would need to meet the requirements in the RFP, including that paramedics be assigned solely to ambulance service. That's a problem for Baker City, he said, since the fire department is a dual-role agency, its staff trained to respond to fires as well as ambulance calls.

Cannon told councilors that based on his reading of the RFP, the city could potentially need 18 firefighter/paramedics, to ensure six were on duty at all times. The current shifts have three people on duty.

He also cited a section in the RFP that calls for the ambulance provider to pay overtime to employees who work more than eight hours per day or 40 hours per week.

Cannon said the RFP seems to be designed more to appeal to companies that only operate ambulances, rather than dual-role agencies such as the city's fire department.

Cannon also said he's concerned about the potential cost to the city to comply with other aspects in the RFP, including monthly reports, yearly criminal background checks for employees, and billing discounts for people with an undefined "severe financial hardship."

"I think they are making demands that no provider is going to be able to live up to all of these," McQuisten said.

#### Commissioners 'mystified' by city officials' reading of RFP

Baker County Commissioners Bennett and Nichols, who along with Commission Chairman Bill Harvey ap-

I don't look at that playground

there are skipping school," she

and wonder if the children

proved the RFP, both said on Thursday, May 12, that they were "mystified" by the city councilors' comments about the document.

In response to McQuisten's comment that no applicant could comply with everything listed in the RFP, Bennett and Nichols said that although the document does include the verbs "shall" and "will" frequently, the RFP is not, and was not intended to be, an exhaustive list of mandates that prospective ambulance provid-

ers must meet in every detail. "I don't read it the way they do," Bennett said.

Bennett said he expects that Baker City's proposal will list the services the city was capable of providing. He said he understands that that list would not fully comply with every

part of the RFP.
"I can assure you (the city) would not be dismissed out of hand" if its proposal doesn't meet every item included in the RFP, Bennett said.

Bennett said his preference has been, and remains, that the Baker City Fire Department provide ambulance service for the Baker ASA.

'The people are served well" with the current operation, he

As for Cannon's concern about overtime pay, and his contention that the RFP is better suited for an ambulance company rather than a dual-role fire department, Bennett said the county included that section to cover the possibility that it would receive proposals from ambulance-only providers.

He said commissioners understand that the city fire department has 24-hour shifts, and that prospective providers do not absolutely have to comply with the overtime

provisions. Nichols agreed with Bennett's assessment of what the commissioners expect with re-

gard to responses to the RFP. Nichols said he hopes the city, rather than point out the aspects of the RFP it can't comply with, at least not without having to add staff and equipment, will instead submit a proposal that lists the services the city can provide even if that's equivalent to the current ambulance operation.

If the commissioners select the city's proposal, they can negotiate the details of a contract with the city, Nichols said.

"Anything you can't meet (in the RFP), just say so and we'll deal with it in the contract, if they get selected," he said. "I am willing to negotiate those things. Make us some sort of offer."

Nichols said he doubts any prospective provider could meet every requirement in the

"That's why it's called a proposal," he said.

Guyer said during the Wednesday work session that he believes the RFP is a "boilerplate" document, with generic language, and that commissioners are willing to discuss proposals that don't comply with the RFP in every regard.

"This isn't the end all, be all," Guyer said.

## **Playground**

Continued from Page A1

and a jungle gym with a double

slide and a curly slide attached. These items replaced the previous equipment that was in poor condition because of age, according to Beth Wendt,

North Powder city recorder. Almost all of the children who participated in the ribbon-cutting event were kindergarten, first and second grade students at North Powder Elementary School and were brought to the playground by

The grand opening was conducted at what is now G.M. Huckleberry Park Playground. dren are coming to the play-The name reflects North Powder's reputation for huckleber-

their teachers.

ries in the nearby forests, and the city's annual Huckleberry Festival each July, Wendt said. The city park, until now, did not have a formal name.

The new playground equipment at the park cost \$67,000 and was purchased with money raised from donations

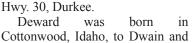
and grants. The new equipment was installed last fall and since then finishing work has been conducted. Children began using the new playground once the

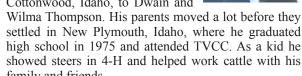
new items were put in. "Some children were even using them when there was snow on the ground," Wendt

Today, many more chilground than before the new equipment was installed,

## "Hardly a day goes by when Deward Dwain Thompson

July 22, 1957 - April 19, 2022 Deward Dwain Thompson 64, of Durkee, OR, passed away unexpectedly, of a cardiac arrest, on April 19, 2022. A celebration of his life will be held Saturday, May 21, 2022, at 4:30 p.m. PDT at the Durkee Community Center, 28716





family and friends. Deward sold livestock supplies for a short period where he got over his shyness and developed his people skills meeting many ranchers around the area. After that he followed his passion for ranching, working on different ranches before he settled down with his family working for Lee and Glenora Wright, (L3 Cattle Company) for many years. He was a stickler for good fences and had his own fencing business. Deward inherited his dad's talents running dozers, backhoes and other equipment. He was a man with a vision when it

came to designing and building projects. Deward married Connie Johnson at age 24 and was an instant dad to two little girls, Marti, five, and Mindi, three, who he treated as his own immediately. Deward and Connie completed their family with Ashley and Amy. It wasn't unusual to see him with the girls working livestock, building fence, driving a pickup, or just making memories. They had a band of sheep and later upgraded their ewes to produce champion bucks

and multiple grand champion 4-H market lambs. In 1999, he married the love of his life, Kathryn Flack. They spent 23 wonderful years together working side-by-side living their dream on the 32 Ranch they had in Huntington and Durkee, Oregon. He enjoyed many of the fun-filled adventures, building the cabin, fencing, hunting, gathering cattle and branding. Deward's fun, witty and caring personality surrounded him with a lifetime of wonderful people he truly treasured.

Deward was a very generous man, especially with his time, always ready to help a friend or neighbor. He was a member of the New Plymouth Rodeo Board as well as the New Plymouth Volunteer Fire Dept. He was a very active board member of the Burnt River RFPA helping prevent rangeland fires. He was the community "fixer" and always took time to help, find a part, or just to talk.

Deward is survived by his best friend and wife, Kathryn; sisters, Anita Carol (Gary) Cooper of Hermiston, OR and Tammy Jacobs of Payette, ID; daughters, Marti Hutchinson of Boise, ID, Mindi Madrid Thompson of Bernalillo, NM, Ashley Eckelberry of Fruitland, ID, Amy (Ben) Coburn of Durkee, OR; grandchildren, Justice, Gianna, Journee, Indiana, Ayden, Aleah, Bradly, Zach, Connor, Deton, Natalie, Harley, Breyden and Tilly.

Deward was preceded in death by his parents, Dwain and Wilma Thompson, son-in-law, Steve DeFrance, and many treasured family, friends and dogs. Deward's dogs were especially important to him and he was rarely without one by his side. For those who would like to make a memorial

donation in memory of Deward, the family suggests either the Durkee Community Corp or Baker FFA Alumni through Tami's Pine Valley Funeral Home, P.O. Box 543, Halfway, Oregon, 97834. Online condolences may be shared at www.tamispinevalleyfuneralhome.

### Robert Isaac Watson Jr. March 22, 1934 - April 27, 2022

Robert Isaac Watson Jr., 88, died April 27, 2022, at his home in La Grande, Oregon. He was born March 22, 1934, to Robert Isaac Watson Sr. and Irene May (Goff)

Robert graduated from Baker High School in Baker, Oregon. He served 4 years in the United States Navy aboard the USS Vaughan and Richard aircraft carrier.



After the United States Navy, he worked for and retired from the United Pacific Railroad. He worked various truck driving jobs. He worked for Community Connection and retired there.

He enjoyed fishing, hunting, and spending time at his ranch in Keating, and loved visits from his grandkids and great-grandkids.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Ruth Lea Watson, and son, Daniel Scott Watson, his parents, 1 broth-

Survivors are son Douglas A Watson (Michelle), grandkids Stephanie Barnett (Kirk), DJ Watson (Morgan), David Watson (Kellie), three step-granddaughters and 12 great-grandkids, his siblings: two brothers Mike Watson (Debbie), Larry Watson (Myrna), three sisters Helen Lefever, Sharon Brainard (Jerry), MaryJo Zimmer (Allan) and numerous nieces and nephews.

A service will be held at a later date at Mount Hope Cemetery in Baker City, Oregon.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society through Gray's West & Co. Pioneer Chapel at 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814.

To leave an online condolence for the family of Robert, please visit: www.grayswestco.com.

#### Douglas Dale Nichols June 1, 1951 - December 12, 2021

Douglas Nichols passed away December 12th, 2021, at Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center at the age of 70. Doug was born June 1st, 1951, to Tom and Bernadine Nichols in Baker, Oregon.

He graduated from Baker High School in 1969. Following graduation he joined the United States Air Force becoming a sergeant as an aircraft mechanic and was honorably discharged in 1974. In 1971 he married his high school sweetheart, Marilyn Inez Ego, and they went on to spend 50 years happily married, rarely leaving each other's side. In 1972 they welcomed their daughter, Kellie, while stationed in Bakersfield. California. In 1974 they then welcomed their second daughter, Carrie, while residing in Heppner, Oregon.

After Doug sustained a severe hand injury while working at a mill in Heppner, they decided to move to Albany, Oregon, where he attended Linn-Benton Community College, earning a bachelor's degree in wastewater treatment. He excelled in his career over the next 37 years and in 1995 he became the project manager on the big island in Hawaii. Eventually his career moved him and Marilyn back to Oregon where he became the project manager in Hood River, Oregon. He retired in 2017 after 37 years with OMI/ CH2MHILL. Retirement then brought Doug and his wife to Sandy, Oregon, in 2018 where they could be closer to their daughters. Doug was a movie buff and a puzzle fanatic. A true family man with a big heart. He is deeply missed by so many.

Doug is preceded in death by his father, Tom Nichols, and sister, Cindi Spriet.

He is survived by his mother, Bernadine, brother, Dan Nichols and brother, Terry Nichols, his wife, Marilyn Nichols, daughter, Kellie McDonald and her fiance Fred McAfee, daughter, Carrie Gough and her husband John Gough, his grandsons, Joey McDonald, Myles McDonald and his wife, Katie McDonald, Douglas Gough, Nicholas Gough, and two greatgrandchildren, Lucy McDonald and a great-grandson expected in September, as well as many aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews and cousins.

A celebration of life will be held May 21st at 1 p.m. at the Lynchwood Church of God, 3818 SE 174th Ave, Portland, Oregon, 97236. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St. Judes Children's Research Hospital.

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### Brian Richard Trost April 1, 1976 - May 4, 2022

Brian Richard Trost (April 1, 1976 - May 4, 2022) was born in Ontario, Oregon, to Rick and Patty Trost. He grew up and attended school in Unity, graduating in 1994.

In 1998, he married Shelly Cornford, and together they had Taylor and Brytney. They lived in Unity for a while and later moved to John Day where he worked for the mill. During his time in John Day,



he attended Northwest Lineman School in Idaho. Brian moved back to Unity and began working with his dad

in construction. In 2008, he married Brandy Carter. He gained a daughter, Chloe, and together they had a son, Lane. He and Brandy moved to Redmond where he continued to

work in construction. In 2020, Brian moved to Unity to work with his dad. Brian was a hard worker and a perfectionist. Besides building new houses, he made pole furniture and railings for decks. Brian loved to hunt and fish and enjoyed anything outdoors. He was usually the first one to find the morels that popped up in the spring. He was a good cook and liked to use his Traeger to smoke the game he hunted, including a rattlesnake one time. He enjoyed taking family trips to the Oregon coast and going deep-sea fishing.

Brian loved animals and they loved him. His dog and cat, Bella and Muzzy, were constant companions and followed him everywhere. Rocky the dog and Brian are now together to keep each other company.

He is survived by his parents, Rick and Patty Trost; friend, Brandy Trost; grandmother, Doris Jenson; children, Taylor Trost (Kenya), Brytney Trost (Jeffrey Berkebile), Chloe Loranger, and Lane Trost; siblings, Andy Vogt, Nathan Vogt, Tara Martinez (Art). He is also survived by his nephews, Austin, Connor, and Braden Martinez, and many aunts, uncles, and cousins. Brian loved his grandbabies, Remington and Stevie Mae Trost, and Mia and Ridley Berkebile. He will be terribly missed by his family and friends.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date in Unity, Oregon.

To leave an online condolence for the family of Brian, please visit www.grayswestco.com