

**SHERIFF**

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After news broke of the arrests and Palmer left the meeting to travel to an Oregon State Police roadblock near Seneca, he requested an update on the situation from a dispatcher who felt uncomfortable relaying "vital and confidential information to someone who may not be trustworthy," Luttrell said.

She also said she was concerned about the process Palmer uses to deputize special deputies, who have authority "to do and perform any act" Palmer might perform as sheriff. She said Palmer refused to provide a list of his deputies to dispatch to authorize their use of the Law Enforcement Data System. She said she was concerned about "the dates in which they were actually deputized" and whether thorough background checks were being completed before giving them "full arrest and use of force powers."

Public records obtained show Palmer has deputized seven as deputies, seven as reserve, five as search and

rescue, six as corrections, one as chaplain, nine as special deputies, three as land use deputies, 11 as public lands patrol, nine as public lands deputies, one as limited to concealed handgun license and 11 as a natural resource committee.

Gray said in his complaint he was greatly concerned by Palmer's support of the militia.

In John Day Jan. 12, Palmer met with three people who participated in the occupation of the refuge, including Ryan Payne and Jon Ritzheimer, according to county residents Dave Traylor and Jim Sproul who were also at the meeting. Palmer said he was unaware the occupiers would be at the lunch meeting, but he followed them and others to another location to continue the meeting after leaving the restaurant.

Gray said the dispatch radio log shows Palmer met with them while on duty for about three and a half hours.

"I have a great public safety concern when the Grant County Sheriff is allowed to openly meet with and be part of this group of lawbreakers," he said in the complaint.

After the meeting, Palmer told the Blue Mountain Eagle the militia members requested he travel to Harney County to "make a stand" for their cause, but he told them he would not without approval from the local sheriff. He described the occupiers as "patriots" but said he did not know if he supported the armed occupation. He did say he believed the government should make concessions to the militia.

"I believe the government is going to have to concede to something," he said in January. "I don't think these guys are going to give up without knowing that they've done something that benefits the people of our country or our region."

Payne, Ritzheimer and others have since been indicted by a federal grand jury on felony counts related to the occupation. Payne and others were also charged with felonies related to a standoff with federal authorities in Nevada in 2014.

In his complaint, Gray also said Palmer deleted a public document from a records management system the police department shares with the sheriff's office.



The Eagle/Sean Hart

**County Commissioner Chris Labhart, left, discusses a draft of a proposed resolution condemning the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge at the last Grant County Court meeting Feb. 17. The room was not large enough for the crowd, so the commissioners booked the larger courtroom upstairs for continued discussion beginning at 11:30 a.m. today.**

**REFUGE**

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Mytchell Mead said it was important for the county to show it was in line with the rest of the country in terms of following all the laws.

Others spoke out against the resolution.

Jim Sproul said the occupation is over, so the resolution would be meaningless.

Judy Kerr said the resolution was divisive and damaged the communi-

ty. She said the resolution failed to mention the Constitution, which can be in conflict with other laws.

Sam Palmer, brother of Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer, said the county should not draft a biased resolution, including terms such as "illegal occupation," before the occupiers have been tried in court.

"If you want to send a letter, I'm OK with that, but let's do it where we're not being the judge, the jury, the executioner," he said.

"Let's do it unbiased, and let's do it legally and lawfully. If you disagree with it, that's for a jury to decide, not for the County Court to decide."

He said he works as a nurse in Harney County and never saw an FBI agent or a known militiaman until Jan. 26 when the occupation leaders were arrested and one was shot by police during the encounter after authorities say he reached for a weapon. Sam Palmer said he and his coworkers never felt threatened.

**GRAY**

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Gray has seen lots of changes in personnel during her time as city manager — several different councils and four mayors.

"We work together better now than before," Gray said. "It's a group effort."

Gray, originally from Stayton, has lived in John Day for 40 years. Other jobs she has held here include First Pioneer Bank — now Umpqua — and the Blue Mountain Eagle, where she was the ad rep for seven years.

Gray's first positions with the city of John Day were secretary/cashier and recorder. Ken Bremner was the city manager then, Gray said.

She and her husband of 10 years, Phil, former owner of John Day radio station KJDY, who retired last fall, have no plans to move out of the area. The couple are hoping to have more time to travel and visit their children and grandchildren — Phil's daughter in Maine, Peggy's daughter in Keizer and son in North Bend.

"Our first priority is to get to know our grandchildren," she said.

Gray said their other

plans include riding bikes and walking more. She's been hitting the treadmill at 4 a.m. before heading to the office. That's not the same as being able to walk outdoors at any time, but she said it has been "good stress release."

Taking music lessons and learning a language are other possibilities with the newfound retiree time.

And sleeping in. When asked, that's what Gray said she was looking forward to doing that first day of retirement.

"Just relaxing — and having a cup of hot coffee," she said.

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