

SMITH

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Users would sign three-year agreements, which would terminate about one year after the users learned the legislature's decision about whether to increase the phone tax that supports 911 dispatch centers across the state, Green said.

Cost sharing for the \$200,000 remaining after using 911 phone tax revenue would be based on user charges per call and the assessed values of the nine participating jurisdictions. Under this model and average call volume, the city would pay \$27,728 for police calls, \$1,064 for public works calls and \$15,596 based on assessed property value, for a total of \$44,388.

In a related matter, Gov. Kate Brown issued a proclamation making April 8-14 Public Safety Telecommunicators Week to honor 911 dispatchers across the state.

The council approved an amended ordinance and adopted an intergovernmental agreement establishing the Grant County Digital Network Coalition. The ordinance was passed under an emergency declaration so the city could meet a deadline to apply for a 2018 U.S.

Department of Agriculture Community Connect Grant.

Similar ordinances and agreements have been approved by Grant County and Seneca, the other two parties in the coalition. John Day will be the lead entity and have overall responsibility for the coalition's operations.

The Oregon Legislature approved a \$1.8 million grant in 2017, enough to run a fiber optic cable from Burns to John Day. The city has signed contracts with Commstructure Consulting to plan the cable route and Fiber Channels to review, validate and update network requirements.

The coalition's board planned to hold its first meeting in April to adopt bylaws, but Green later told the Eagle scheduling conflicts postponed the meeting to May. John Day, Grant County and Seneca each will have one voting board member, with two at-large members appointed by the first three. In addition to Smith from John Day, Grant County appointed Dan Becker, and Green said Seneca appointed Public Works Director Josh Walker.

The council approved a resolution to authorize refinancing through Washington Federal to pay off \$62,000 due on a promissory note for the land used to build the

city fire hall and to borrow \$300,000 to complete construction of the new fire hall.

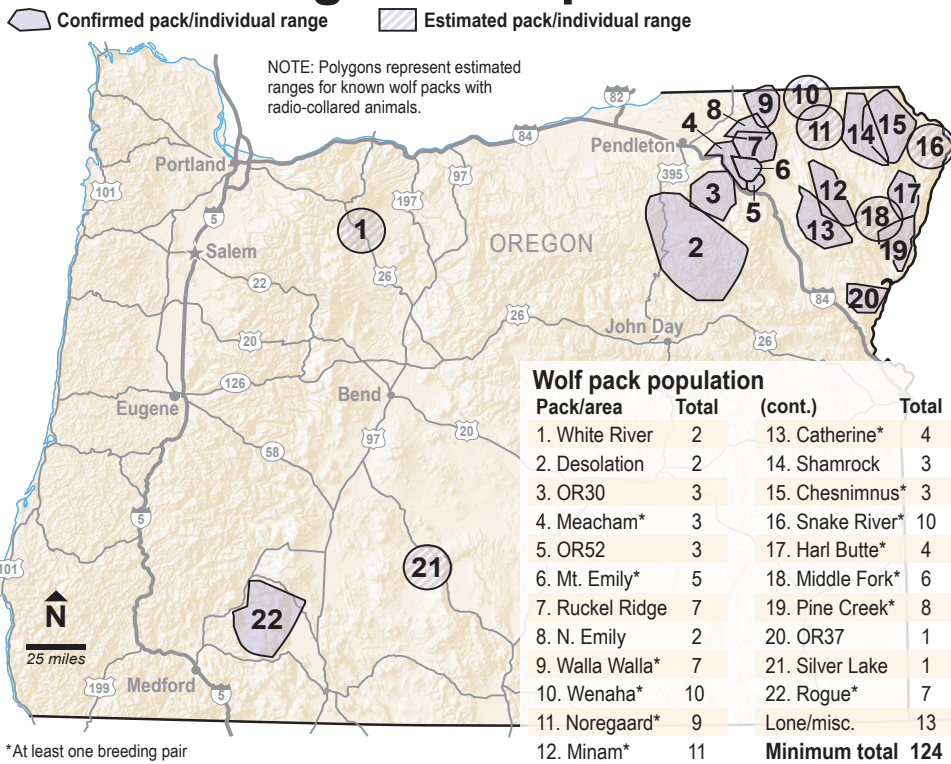
Green said the city could save \$10,000 in origination fees and a significant amount of interest by paying off the loan in five years instead of 20 years. A capital loan from the city's water department to the general fund would be necessary to complete the deal.

Green said he will meet with representatives of Kirby Nagelhout Construction Co. in April to discuss plans to finish the fire hall. The company built the fire hall and will be making seismic upgrades to Humbolt Elementary School this summer.

The council discussed the need to complete an annual performance review for Green's work, which Councilor Dave Holland noted was overdue. Once that is completed, the council could discuss whether to change the city manager contract from one year to multi-year.

Holland said a multi-year contract would provide more security for both the city and Green. Anna Bass, of Oster Professional Group, said the budget could accommodate the proposed contract change. Holland said he had worked with Bass and talked to other councilors about the proposed change.

Known Oregon wolf packs (As of Dec. 2017)



*At least one breeding pair

Source: Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Alan Kenaga/Capital Press

WOLF

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Gov. Kate Brown said she is encouraged by the continued recovery of Oregon wolves, though ongoing conflicts with poachers and livestock remain troublesome.

"Despite this good news, ongoing issues of poaching and livestock depredation must be carefully considered as we explore more effective management and conservation practices," she said.

Though ODFW removed wolves from the state endangered species list in 2015, it remains illegal to shoot a wolf except in limited circumstances, such as in defense of human life or those caught in the act of chasing livestock. Wolves remain federally protected west of highways 395, 78 and 95.

ODFW reported four cases of wolves killed illegally in 2017. Three cases are still under investigation. The fourth, in Union County, involved a wildlife trapper who shot a wolf he found in one of his traps. David Sanders Jr., 58, pleaded guilty to one count of using unbranded traps, and was sentenced to 24 months bench probation, 100 hours of community service and a \$7,500 fine.

The Union County District Attorney's Office agreed to dismiss one count of illegally shooting a special status game mammal, though Sanders did

have his hunting and trapping license suspended for 36 months and agreed to pay an additional \$1,000 penalty to ODFW.

In all, 13 wolf deaths were recorded in 2017 — 12 of which were caused by humans. ODFW issued lethal take permits that resulted in four wolves being shot from the Harl Butte pack in Wallowa County, and one from the Meacham pack in Umatilla County, to try and curb livestock depredations. Lethal take is allowed under Phase III of the Wolf Management and Conservation Plan in Eastern Oregon.

Meanwhile, OR-48 from the Shamrock pack was unintentionally killed by an M-44 cyanide trap that had been set by USDA Wildlife Services on private land; a pup from the Ruckel Ridge pack was killed by a livestock protection dog; and OR-30 was shot by an elk hunter in Union County who claimed he was acting in self-defense. The hunter, 38-year-old Brian Scott, was not charged with a crime.

Sean Stevens, executive director of the Portland-based environmental group Oregon Wild, was sharply critical of poachers and ODFW killing wolves. Most recently, the agency approved killing two more animals from the Pine Creek pack in Baker County for preying on cattle. ODFW killed one April 10.

"The wolf population is

stagnant because poachers and ODFW agents are killing more wolves — this despite the fact that ODFW admits livestock depredations are down from last year," Stevens said. "It demands accountability from an agency that insists on killing more wolves every year."

The annual wolf report shows confirmed livestock depredations decreased from 24 in 2016 to 17 in 2017. Those cases involved 11 calves, one llama, one alpaca and 23 domestic fowl.

Ranchers, however, say they will need more support from the state to ensure they can protect their businesses and their livelihood.

George Rollins, a Baker County rancher and co-chairman of the wolf committee for the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, said the latest depredations by the Pine Creek pack resulted in three dead calves, four wounded and another three missing.

"The people taking the economic loss and the emotional stresses are the producers," Rollins said. "It gets very tiresome. They feel like they're not being supported. Nobody's listening to them."

ODFW is still working to pass an overdue five-year update of its wolf management and conservation plan. The Fish and Wildlife Commission decided in January to do more stakeholder outreach and try to reach a greater consensus.

FINDLEY

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said he opposed one because it offered property tax exemptions, which he believes should be a local decision, and noted that a bill to provide tax breaks for solar developers was tabled because supporting documents lacked real numbers. Landowners need protection from sophisticated solar developers, he said.

A cap-and-trade bill aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions failed to pass. Findley called it "a bad idea for Oregon." He also called the passage of Senate Bill 1528, which disconnects Oregon from the recent fed-

eral tax bill that provided a 20 percent deduction for small businesses, "a bad day for small businesses in Oregon."

The first bill he ever nominated, House Bill 4153, which designates Eastern Oregon Rural University as Oregon's Rural University, passed by 60-0, an unusual accomplishment for a beginning legislator.

Findley is familiar with strong local interest in seeing 911 phone taxes increased to help fund emergency dispatch centers, and he supports the idea of keeping a dispatch center in Grant County, but he wants to find out where the money has been going before seeing the tax raised. At the same time, he recognized the

need to fix the funding shortage before the phone tax sunset in 2021.

While he supports expanding broadband internet service to rural areas, Findley voted against a net neutrality bill. The legislation was a "fluff bill," he said, limited to internet providers that served government agencies in areas where real competition existed.

When asked about the high cost of hunting tags, Findley said the problem was that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife relied too heavily on hunting tags for habitat protection and other purposes. Money for those purposes should come from the general fund, he said.

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