

# Court discusses Harney County difficulties

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

A significant budget shortfall in Harney County and the sheriff's announcement of his resignation by the end of the year drew the attention of the Grant County Court at its April 24 meeting.

In March, Harney County Judge Pete Runnels told the Burns Times-Herald that the county had identified a software issue that had caused the county to begin each fiscal year with an inaccurate general fund balance over the past few years.

Runnels said steps were taken in October to begin reducing county expenses, but larger cuts and adjustments would need to be made in the next fiscal year budget to address the shortcomings.

"It took us several years to get to this point, and we won't come out of it overnight," he told the newspaper.

Harney County Sheriff Dave Ward announced his intent to resign by Dec. 31 in an op-ed in the April 17 Burns Times-Herald. He said insufficient funding and staffing as a result of the budget shortfall had negatively impacted law enforcement and search and rescue services.

"As well, our severely outdated county jail is not only underfunded but is out of compliance with the standards required by law and has been understaffed for years," Ward said.

Ward told the Eagle the county estimated the shortfall at \$2.3 million. He said he was no longer willing to accept the civil liability resulting from the underfunding and was unwilling to cut services or continue operating a jail that did not meet standards.

"In my assessment, the only way for the county to overcome the current budget crisis is by eliminating employee positions," Ward said. "If a person needs to be eliminated from our sheriff's

office, then I choose for that person to be me."

He recommended the citizens and county court appoint a deputy to take over as sheriff and not backfill the deputy position.

Grant County Commissioners Jim Hamsher and Sam Palmer expressed concern about Harney County's financial position. Hamsher said residents and officials here should "count our blessings."

Both commissioners expressed complete confidence in Grant County Treasurer Julie Ellison and noted that Grant County's finances were sound.

Palmer pointed out that Grant and Harney counties have mutual aid agreements, but he doubted Grant County deputies would go to Harney County unless requested. He also noted that inmates in Harney County could be transferred to Grant County, if necessary.

Runnels told the Eagle, while there was room for improvements at the Harney County jail, there were no violations. He also said he knew of no plans to transfer inmates to Grant County, but he appreciated the concern and offers by Grant County officials and residents.

In other Grant County Court news:

- Judy Kerr read a statement to the court requesting that Hamsher be compensated for the extra hours he has spent filling in for County Judge Scott Myers, who has been absent for medical reasons.

She also wanted the official duties of the court members to be updated to address any problems related to court members being unable to work. She said the "position should not have been left dangling" the way it was.

Palmer said he was 100 percent in support of compensating Hamsher, but he didn't know how that could be accomplished.

Hamsher pointed out, with

only three court members and one absent, and with his need to recuse himself from any potential compensation discussion or vote, a quorum would not exist.

Palmer noted that Rob Raschio had agreed to be appointed to the court, if necessary. Raschio served for the remainder of Boyd Britton's term last year after Britton left.

After noting that Myers was "on the mend" and expected back, Hamsher said county counsel could contact the appropriate state officials about any state laws governing absences by court members.

- Hamsher reported the court had received support calls during the recent flood emergency from staff at Rep. Greg Walden, Sen. Ron Wyden and state Rep. Lynn Findley's offices.

Grant County residents were asked to send damage reports to the court so they could be added to a funding request that will be sent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Hamsher noted the Army Corps of Engineers had taken a preliminary look at the Inland Street and Nugget Street bridges in Canyon City to assess damages. He also said he spoke with Canyon City Fire Chief Matt Turner about meeting with other emergency officials in the future to upgrade flood plans for the area.

- A job description for a new human resources position was approved that includes taking over payroll duties from the Grant County clerk, who is paid a stipend to do that work.

A job description for a half-time administrative assistant position was also approved. It's expected that Laurie Wright will take over human resources and a new hire will take the administrative position. Meanwhile, the commissioners have set up an office in the L Building on East Main Street in John Day.



From left, John Day City Manager Nick Green and Mayor Ron Lundbom listen to discussion about city projects during the council's April 23 meeting.

The Eagle/Richard Hanners

# Treatment plant funding complex

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Funding arrangements for John Day's major projects will be complex — especially the new wastewater treatment plant.

That was the message City Manager Nick Green delivered to the city council April 23. The city's goal is 60 percent grants and 40 percent loans for the \$10 million-plus project.

While the city continues to finalize a professional services agreement with Anderson Perry to engineer the facility, the city has received a \$196,500 federal Community Development Block Grant that can be used with a \$200,000 city match for planning and design.

Anderson Perry has recommended a three-stage design process, Green said. While the physical process goes from headworks and solids handling to the membrane reactor and then to the reclaimed water plant, the engineers recommended design and pre-purchase of the membrane reactor first, he said.

Once the design and pre-purchase of the membrane reactor is completed, then the other two major components can be addressed. Green said Sustainable Water, which has sent representatives from Richmond, Virginia, to John Day, will likely bid on the hydroponic reactor portion of the facility.

The construction timeline will depend on awarding the membrane reactor bid and permitting from the state Department of Environmental Quality. Green proposed additional funding first from state and local sources, then federal loans if needed and finally USDA or CDBG grants.

Funding and design will go on simultaneously in this complex process. Green noted that state funding has fewer restrictions and interest rates more in line with the city's needs. The council gave its consensus to proceed as proposed. The agreement documents will be brought back to the council for approval May 14.

The council also gave its consensus to apply for a \$40,000 planning grant from the state Department of Parks and Recreation that will help the public understand plans for funding the construction and future operation of a new public swimming pool.

The grant would be used to determine the aquatic facility's size, amenities, design and location; establishing a service district that

might include residents within 15 miles of the new pool to provide revenue for the pool's operation; preparing a bond measure and the capital bond needed to pay for construction of the pool; and determining the organizational structure for the board that would oversee the service district and pool.

Green noted that the city was "tip-toeing" toward a decision on whether to sell the Gleason Pool to the state for development of a new interpretive center at the Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site.

The council also gave its consensus to proceed with two grant applications for development of the former Oregon Pine mill site — one to the Ford Family Foundation and the other to USDA Rural Development.

The grants would be used to rehabilitate the planer and sorter shed for code compliance, convert the shed into an open-air pavilion, install restrooms, design the parking lot and street network, landscape and build trails between the shed and the greenhouses, and install utility connections as needed. The city's \$250,000 match would come from the city's investment in the greenhouses and city shop, Green said. The Ford Foundation had encouraged the city in the past to apply for the grant, he said.

Green noted that rehabilitating the pedestrian bridge near the yellow steel sawmill building would be done using other funding and donated materials sometime next year.

The council also gave its consensus to proceed with funding for the South Canyon Boulevard sidewalk project. Green said the city's remaining obligation for the project is about \$20,000. Construction of the sidewalk from Sixth Street to the high school could take place in fiscal year 2021, Green said.

In other council news, Councilor Shannon Adair said Grant County Fair Manager Mindy Winegar had asked the city to set up an information booth at the county fair explaining its major projects.

Green noted that posters and other presentation materials from the upcoming regional economic development meeting could be used. City staff or councilors could staff the booth at times, and a cycling digital presentation could be used.

Mayor Ron Lundbom said he had never seen the city do anything like that. The council approved the idea.

## Grant SWCD Weed Control Dept.

### Working for You in 2019

Thanks to the Grant County Court and Northeast Oregon Forests Resource Advisory Committee, Grant Weed Control is able to offer a **50% Cost Share Program for Noxious Weed Control on Private Grazing Lands, through a Title II funded Grant Project.** This program will provide a maximum \$5,000 of noxious weed control services with a \$2,500 maximum landowner contribution to qualifying participants. To be eligible for participation, the treatment property must not be actively irrigated and must be primarily managed for livestock grazing, minimum of 20 acres in size, located within Grant County, and must contain weed species listed on the Grant County Noxious Weed List. Applications for this limited weed control assistance opportunity will be funded on a first come first serve basis.

*Applications due by June 5th.*

**Contact the Grant Soil and Water Conservation District Office at (541) 575-1554 or visit 721 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845 for applications and additional information.**

117734

## GRANT COUNTY EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT

April 24, 2019

It is that time of year when we are preparing for the ESD Grant County Spelling Contest. If you are interested in helping with the County Spelling Contest contact Grant ESD. I am sending out spelling word lists to be used at the local level, winners at the local level will have the opportunity to participate at the County level.

**RE: 2019 STATE SPELLING CONTEST**

The State Level Spelling Contest will be held Saturday August 31, 2019 at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem, Oregon. **Only first place winners in Divisions I, II, and III of the County Level contest may participate at the State Level.**

There are **three** divisions in the State Level Spelling Contest:

Division I	elementary students 1-5 <sup>th</sup> grade
Division II	elementary students 6-8 <sup>th</sup> grade
Division III	elementary students 9-12 <sup>th</sup> grade

**HOWEVER**

The **County Level** will have **FOUR** divisions:

Primary	elementary students 1-3 <sup>rd</sup> grade
Division I	elementary students 4-5 <sup>th</sup> grade
Division II	elementary students 6-8 <sup>th</sup> grade
Division III	elementary students 9-12 <sup>th</sup> grade

Each school may hold a local level contest and enter the top two students from each division to participate in the County Level contest. The local school may determine how those contestants are selected. The participating local schools will determine a date prior to the County Level Contest date for their local contest. The spelling contest results must be turned into the ESD by May 2, 2019.

The County Level contest will take place at 1:00 p.m. on **May 8, 2019 at the John Day Elks Club.** To participate at the County level you must have **won at the local level and be named on the completed form sent in by your home school district.** Home-school students should contact their local school district to participate at the local level.

If you have any questions you may contact Savannah at Grant ESD 575-1349.

117873

## Lake Creek Camp

### Would Like to Thank the Many Donors and Volunteers Who Made this Fundraiser Possible

**SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

**ST. HELENS BEEF - DONATED BEEF**  
**LENNY & SHERRI DOWDY - COOKING MEAT**  
**BECKY JO GRIFFITH -- COOKING & FOOD PREP**  
**OLD WEST FEDERAL CREDIT UNION: HIS & HERS PISTOLS**  
**LIVE MUSIC BY: "WE'RE NOT BROTHERS"**  
**SPITFIRE COCKTAILS**

**CASH DONATIONS:**

THE BANK OF EASTERN OREGON: \$1,000.00

DRISKILL MEMORIAL CHAPEL: \$500.00

IRON TRIANGLE L.L.C.: \$250.00

RISE & RUN CONSTRUCTION: \$200.00

GANDER CATTLE RANCE: \$200.00

OREGON TRAIL ELECTRIC COOP: \$200.00

MARJORIE R. PIERCE TRUST: \$100.00  
(In Memory of Dennis Reynolds)

JEROME NATURAL RESOURCE CONSULTANTS: \$100.00

LANCE & LOUANNE ZWEYGARDT: \$100.00

THE STANBRO FAMILY TRUST: \$100.00

L & L EXCAVATING: \$100.00

JIFFY ELECTRIC: \$100.00

FRONTIER RENTALS: \$100.00

CORNER CUP

BURNS DENTAL GROUP

MIKE VOIGT CONSTRUCTION

CAROLYN STOUT

SHANNON VOIGT CONSTRUCTION

SUBWAY OF JOHN DAY

WESTERN DRILLING

GARDENER ENTERPRISES

**DONATED LIVE AUCTION ITEMS:**

Clair Kehrberg/H&R Block	Service Creek Outfitters	Pioneer Pacific Flags
Donna Carter	Mobile Glass	Better Blooms & Gardens
Sharon Mitchell	John Day Polaris	Forest Access for All
Winchesterbay Charters	Land Title of Grant County	Clay Cook & Julie Miller
Snaffle Bit Dinner House	Crown Cattle Co.	Charity Ironworks: Schaeffers
Lenny & Sherri Dowdy	Pendleton Round Up	Silvies Valley Ranch

**DONATED ITEMS AND VOLUNTEERS:**

1st Choice Auto Body	Grant Co. Community 4-H Club	North River Electric (Dayville)
Andy's Plumbing & Sports	Grant Co. Fairgrounds	North River Electric (Glide)
Anthony Lakes Ski Resort	Harriett & Pete Currier	Nydams Ace Hardware
Aimee Rude	Jennifer Reimers	OSU Extension
Blue Mtn. Chiropractic	John & Debbie Sanowshi	Outpost Pizza Pub & Grill
Bob & Judy Kerr	John & Lindy Bastian	Pioneer Feed & Farm
Bryan & Katie Nelson	John Day Golf	Rocky Mtn. Elk Foundation
Carl & Vicki Heckman	John Day True Value	Rob Botefuhr
Carol Waggoner	John Day Video	Rude Logging
Carson McCay	Jonna, Mahayla & Callie Moss	Shawna Clark
Chester's Thriftway	Jozie Rude	Sorbenots Coffee
Childrens Barn	Kaidee Weaver	Staci Kopke Hales
Cooking Cousins 4-H Club	Krista Gehley	Susie Brown
Crooked River Ranch Golf	Lauren Wenger	Tanni Wenger Photography
Darla Carpenter	Len's Drug	Teri Bowden
Debi Heckman	Les Schwab Tires	Terry & Billy Jo George
Debbie & Bill Prophet	Lisa Peirera	Tessa Coalwell
Erica Richartz	Logan Namitz	The Cut Above
Frances & Harold Preston	Michelle McManama	Theresa Weaver
Full Sail Brewing Co.	Mike & Shannon Springer	Tidewater
Glenn & RoseAnn Palmer	Mobil Gas Station	Timber's Bistro
Grant Co. Bldg. Supply	Mobile Glass	Yao Hui Huang Palmer

Thank you to all those who made desserts and to those we may have overlooked.  
Thank you to Hutch's Printing for the flyers, tickets, and invitation cards.