

# City approves resolution to fund integrated park system

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle

The city of John Day approved a resolution that authorizes expenditures to fund the integrated park system at the city council meeting March 10.

"It's been several months, probably almost a year, since we started designing the integrated park system," said John Day City Manager Nick Green. "The concept is can we build a series of trails and bridges between existing public spaces in John Day so regardless of where you are, you can get from one to the other."

This project was funded by the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

**The John Day City Council listens to a question from the community about the Fourth Street repairs March 10.**

through last year's large government grant program, and the agreement was approved on Dec. 30, 2019.

The \$471,927 awarded for the project will cover the first piece of the integrated park system, which covers the lower half of the parking off of Bridge Street, improving

two entrances and plumbing for a future restroom, Green said.

The match for this portion of the project was the purchase John Day-Canyon City Parks and Recreation District made of the land. After designs are finalized, construction will begin after the

T-Ball tournaments or in the summer.

"The resolution approves us to begin spending the money that has been awarded," Green said.

According to the meeting agenda, the city has until Oct. 31, 2021, to complete the project.

The John Day City Council also discussed their intent to award the Fourth Street repairs. The city received three bids.

The bids were evaluated based on their team, past performance and references but not the price, Green said. The price is determined when going into design, he said.

The funding for the project will be provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency through an agreement administered by the state of Oregon through the Oregon Military Department, Office of Emergency Management and funds from the Small City Allotment Program, according to the agenda. The public works committee met prior to the city meeting to talk about

the bids. The committee did not have a chance to call the references in the bids so they recommended checking the references, rescoring the bids and presenting a ranked recommendation to the council in a future meeting.

Ray Cox of John Day asked the council what kind of repairs will be done for the project.

"We are going to let the engineers present some options, and then we are going to do a cost-benefit and life-cycle analysis of the options because there are several ways they can do it," Green said.

There will be a special city council meeting at a later date to make a decision on the bids.

## Williams explains decision to step down as emergency management coordinator

By Steven Mitchell  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Ted Williams, the county's former emergency management coordinator, said he hopes the county's new emergency operations center is effective.

After four years on the job, Williams resigned after a heated emergency Grant County Court session March 6 that saw the formation of a coronavirus task force — with a sheriff's deputy in charge. Williams said he was blindsided by the meeting where the county appointed Deputy Dave Dobler, the search and rescue coordinator, as incident commander of the county's response to the new virus.

Williams said the creation of the task force effectively replaced the emergency management team that was already in place, and the opening of new operations center — when one already existed next door to the county health department, the lead agency during a health emergency — was a waste of county resources.

Williams said the health department — which did not have a representative at the emergency meeting but is listed as the lead agency for pandemics in the county's emergency plan — should have been involved in planning



Eagle file photo

**Grant County Emergency Management Coordinator Ted Williams describes emergency planning during a Grant County Court meeting in August.**

for a public health crisis.

"They have to be involved because they are the lead agency," he said. "How can we be sure we are getting good information?"

Williams knows the county's emergency plan well because he was hired to update it in the aftermath of the Canyon Creek Complex fire in 2015. The plan was outdated and did not list guidelines for catastrophic events, such as pandemics or technological disasters, he said, and one of his tasks was to open an emergency

operations center, which was housed in the emergency management office.

To create the plan, Williams said he worked with a variety of agencies — from law enforcement to representatives from different cities — to involve other stakeholders and gather feedback.

Williams said he understands not everything goes according to plan in an emergency but that it was wasted time and effort to develop the plan and then not follow it.

"You try to follow them because we built those plans for a reason," he said. "They were approved by the county court for a reason with the expectation that we would try to follow it as closely as possible."

Williams said, while it appears the health department is taking the lead on the coronavirus response in the county, those health experts should have been represented at the emergency meeting.

Williams said the request to create a task force, which came at the recommendation of Sheriff Glenn Palmer, had more to do with problems between his agency and the sheriff's office than it did with getting in front of a public health crisis.

Williams said the rapport between the two departments soured after the Rail Fire in 2016.

Williams gave a report on the county's response to the fire, which he characterized as a "solution-based" meeting. In the report, Williams said he mentioned that the sheriff's office did not establish roadblocks where they were supposed to.

"That was probably our initial issue, and it went downhill from there," Williams said. "I don't think he wanted to be accountable, and he did not believe he felt it was his problem to fix."

Williams said the spirit in which he wrote the report was to improve the agencies and to better coordinate the county's response to an emergency.

"There was always something good in a report that I wrote — and there was — and always something to improve on," Williams said. "There was not anything on either side that was critical in the report, and the point of the meeting for the county departments to better serve the community in an emergency."

Palmer declined to comment. Grant County Judge Scott Myers said Williams and Palmer did not agree on emergency management protocol.

Myers, who supervised the emergency management coordinator, said he asked Williams to reconsider his resignation.

"I did not want to lose him," Myers said. "He brought attention to detail and extensive knowledge to the position. He wrote the county's emergency plan."

Williams, who served in the Idaho Military Division of the Air National Guard and later provided private security for high-level executives and owned his own consulting firm, said he is happy with the work he did with county and he is not sure what his next move will be.

## COPS AND COURTS

*Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.*

### Grant County Circuit Court

Zyna M. Richardson, 37, pleaded guilty Feb. 20 to a count of second-degree burglary and a count of third-degree criminal mischief committed on July 10. She was sentenced to serve 20 days in jail, 36 months of bench probation and pay \$500 in fines. Counts of theft and second-degree trespass were dismissed.

### Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff's Office reported the following for the week of March 11:

Concealed handgun licenses: 9  
Average inmates: 21  
Bookings: 13  
Releases: 12  
Arrests: 3  
Citations: 0  
Fingerprints: 2

Civil papers: 17  
Warrants processed: 2  
Assistance/Welfare check: 0  
Search and Rescue: 0

### Justice Court

Dog as a public nuisance: Tabitha Graves, 23, John Day, Jan. 19, fined \$135.

### Oregon State Police

March 8: Transported a 45-year-old woman from Prairie City to the Grant County Jail. The woman was arrested by the Grant County Sheriff's Office for fourth-degree domestic assault. The woman's 12-year-old son was taken into protective custody by the Department of Human Services.

March 9: Responded to a reported rollover crash on Highway 395B near milepost 107. The crash occurred at approximately 1:30 a.m. The vehicle was traveling northbound on icy roads when the driver lost control, sliding across the southbound lane of travel and going over an embankment and rolling. The vehicle came to a rest on its side on Beech Creek.

The driver and his passenger were given a ride from the scene by a passerby. The passenger was evaluated at the hospital for possible injury. The driver never made any effort to notify law enforcement of the crash. The driver was cited for a careless driving accident and failure to report an accident to a police officer. Frontier Towing removed the vehicle from the scene. It appeared the gas tank did not rupture, nor did any hazardous materials spill from the vehicle into Beech Creek. Oregon Department of Transportation and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife were notified of the crashed vehicle in the waterway.

March 9: Responded to a reported crash on Highway 395C near milepost 15. The driver was traveling northbound at a stated 65 mph when he encountered slush in the roadway. The vehicle started to slide. The driver was unable to recover from the slide and hit a hard snow bank off the northbound shoulder, then trav-

eled about 15 feet down the embankment before coming to a rest. The vehicle sustained body damage but was drivable. Frontier Towing responded and pulled the vehicle back onto the road.

March 10: Responded to a car versus semi crash on Highway 26 near milepost 162. The car was traveling eastbound behind the semi. The semi stopped for a school bus with red lights activated. The driver behind the semi was distracted by a pedestrian and struck the rear trailer of the semi. Vehicles sustained damage. The driver of the car was cited for following too closely. OSP conducted a Level 2 inspection of the semi and found no deficiencies. The rear trailer of the semi did not sustain significant enough damage to result in the unit being placed out of service.

March 14: Mackenzie R. Clark, 24, of Prairie City was arrested on a failure to appear warrant out of Grant County. He was transported to the Grant County Jail where he was lodged.

### Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 149 calls during the week of March 9-15, including:

#### • John Day Police Department

March 10: Arrested William J. Collier Jr. of Prairie City on violation of a no contact order/harassment.

March 10: Responded for a call for disorderly conduct.

March 10: Responded to a noninjury motor vehicle crash OSP handled on Ford Road.

March 15: Responded to a report of theft on Southwest Brent Drive.

#### • Oregon State Police

March 9: John Day ambulance called for a motor vehicle crash on Highway 395 near milepost 107.

March 9: Along with the sheriff's office, responded to a report of a slide off near Starr Ridge.

March 14: Advised of hogs loose and creating a hazard on the roadway on Highway 26 near milepost 142.

#### • Grant County Sheriff's Office

March 10: Received an

animal complaint on West Bench Road.

March 12: Received a call for a domestic dispute on South Scenic Drive.

March 13: Assistance was provided for campers stuck in the snow near Slide Creek Campground.

#### • John Day fire

March 11: Along with Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative, responded to a tree across a power line that started a fire.

#### • John Day ambulance

March 9: Along with Seneca ambulance, responded for an 11-month-old child.

March 10: Responded for a 66-year-old man who had fallen.

March 11: Received a report of a 66-year-old man who was not breathing.

March 13: Along with Seneca ambulance, responded for a 74-year-old man with difficulty moving and confusion on Izee Paulina Lane.

March 14: Responded for a 45-year-old woman who wasn't breathing on Southwest First Street.

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