

John Day again looking to BUILD

The city hopes its second attempt at the multimillion-dollar federal transportation grant is successful

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

The John Day City Council is again applying for the BUILD grant, which could provide the city with up to \$17.5 million for transportation infrastructure.

The deadline for the application was May 18, and this is the city’s second attempt. Their submission last year made it to the category of highly recommended applicants.

The BUILD grant would assist John Day by helping build a complete street network and transportation infrastructure that includes walking, biking, driving, automobiles and public transit, according to the agenda.

The city council agenda also states that this project will build 4.3 miles of new street improvements and supporting infrastructure, which can be found in several projects in the Innovation Gateway project.

“These are very competitive, and we made it into the final round last year. My hope is that, if we can do that again this year and they think we’re competitive, even if they decide to pull specific components out, we can get some



City Manager Nick Green, left, and Mayor Ron Lundbom during a city council meeting on Feb. 25.

things funded,” said City Manager Nick Green during the virtual meeting May 12.

Based on the feedback from the 2019 BUILD application, the city got a better idea of what to include into this year’s application.

Some of the new additions to the BUILD grant application are Phases 2 and 3 of Ironwood Estates, Government Entry Road, the Charolais Heights intersection improvement project, two parking lots, Mahogany Ridge phase one development and letters of support from senators. The total estimated cost for the projects in the application are \$19.7 million. John Day and partners have committed \$2.1 million in local match (11%) and the city is

requesting \$17.5 million in BUILD grant funding (89%) according to the city of John Day’s website.

John Day Mayor Ron Lundbom said that each grant the city applies for is important, but the Economic Development Administration grant the city is currently working on and the BUILD grant compliment each other in completing big projects in John Day.

The total estimated cost for the projects in the application is \$19.7 million, and the city and partners have committed \$2.1 million in local match funding, according to the city’s website.

Lundbom added that receiving either the

EDA grant or the BUILD grant will give the city an opportunity to begin building on the projects proposed in the applications.

He said the reason why some of the projects haven’t started is because, if the city starts construction prior to being awarded a grant, then the funds used will not count as the city’s matching funds for that project.

“That’s why we’re so eager to get one of these grants because so many things are going to happen once one of these triggers,” Lundbom said. “The timeline of starting and finishing fits exactly within our timeline of starting within six months and finishing within four years.”

Benefits from the projects in the BUILD grant include activating Main Street, economic expansion, workforce housing, improved flood resilience, quality of life improvements, new business growth and riverfront recreation at the Innovation Gateway.

“This is all very well thought out and planned, and we have the support of a lot of local, state and federal agencies that are for it,” Lundbom said. “We’re ready to put the shovel in the ground on some of these projects. We have done the two years’ worth of leg work to prepare to receive the grants and begin working on these projects within six months. All good things happening, and it’s a good time to move to John Day.”

John Day development code amended

Code enforcement, short-term rentals, sign placement and manufactured homes impacted

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Changes are coming for code enforcement, short-term vacation rentals, sign placements and manufactured homes in John Day.

At the joint John Day City Council and Planning Commission virtual meeting May 12, public hearings and discussion were held regarding ordinances amending various aspects of the development code.

Code enforcement saw some changes to clarify compliance provisions, redefine violations and provide provisions for remediation, according to the staff report. Development code violations have been redefined as a nuisance instead of a misdemeanor, which will reduce the penalty fee for violations.

City Manager Nick Green said the amendment also clarifies that any structure that is erected, moved, altered, land divided or used has to be done in compliance with the code.



In a photo of space 23 at Riverside Home Park presented to the planning commission, one of the accessory structures was propped up by iron bars, which was not permitted by the city.

The amendment also places limitations on properties that are in violation.

“If you’re in violation of the code for property, you cannot continue to develop until that violation has been resolved,” Green said. “The intent here is to prevent us from going further down a path that’ll require more time and money to correct.”

Councilor Dave Holland clarified that he does not believe that these amendments

add permitting, but rather clarifies what the city can do when people don’t go through the processes that have already been established.

Sign placements saw changes to avoid unnecessary meetings and give a slight increase in size standards for signs.

Green said that all signs that require permits will be approved as a type one administrative approval, which will be reviewed by Daisy Goebel,

the associate planner, and then go to Green for signature as long as it meets the standards in the code.

Signs will be referred to the Planning Commission for public review if they exceed the size standards, according to Green. Freestanding signs can now be 10 feet in height, over the previous 8 feet, and no building-mounted signs shall project more than three feet above the highest roof elevation of the building.

Planning Commission Chair Ken Boethin said he liked the changes because the commission met many times in the past because a proposed sign was 1 foot larger than regulations allowed.

Alterations of existing manufactured dwelling parks will be subject to a type two site design review, according to Green. This is to ensure that the alteration does not expand a non-conforming use.

Other additional requirements will be 100 square foot of open space for each unit in a mobile home park provided in common open space; common space areas shall each be no less than 5,000 square feet; lighting shall be at levels appropriate for pedestrians; and short-term rentals within mobile parks will be prohibited except in designated RV areas, which shall be subject to applicable transient room taxes.



The John Day City Council Jan. 14.

This ordinance does not affect existing manufactured home parks except when altering or adjusting the parks or when adding new units, according to the staff report.

Regarding short-term vacation rentals and bed and breakfast businesses, the city’s intent is to relax the restrictive policy.

Rather than requiring a type three conditional use permit for someone to convert a property or dwelling unit into a short-term rental, this relaxation would allow property owners to simply apply for a business license and then go through an administrative review with the city, Green said.

Short-term rentals are now defined as providing lodging for 28 or fewer consecutive days.

The amendment also requires a transient room tax for short-term rentals to be collected by the property owner and given to the applicable government body. The city also has an agreement with AirBNB, where the company will remit taxes directly to the taxing authority in the city limits rather than requiring that it be remitted by the property owner.

We are forever grateful for those who have risked their lives to protect our freedoms



120 E Main St.
John Day
541-575-0629
www.lensdrug.com

IN MEMORY OF MANY,
IN HONOR OF ALL,
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!



GRANT COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
301 W MAIN ST., JOHN DAY
541-575-0547

MEMORIAL DAY
REMEMBER AND HONOR



OREGON TRAIL
ELECTRIC CO-OP