

# The hurdle of financing a pool in Grant County

Even if a new pool can be built, the ongoing operational costs need to be covered

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Gleason Pool's final season has passed as COVID-19 prematurely cut the facility's last year for opening, but conversations on how to move forward continued between the Grant County Court and John Day City Council.

John Day City Manager Nick Green opened the discussion on the pool during a joint work session on Oct. 14 by saying the city spent all the funds they can planning for the replacement and plan to sell the land to the state. He added that the state is actively working on plans for the new Kam Wah Chung Interpretive



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

**The John Day City Council and Grant County Court discuss covering operating costs if a pool was ever built in Grant County Oct. 14.**

Center at the Gleason Pool site.

Green said, even if voters were to put construction of a new pool on the ballot through a citizen initiative, operational costs still must be covered.

He said he believes a reason other cities were against the plan was because of the permanent tax rate proposed in the aquatics district that would cover John Day, Prairie City, Mt. Vernon, Canyon City, Seneca and the corresponding fire districts.

To cover operations, the proposal

detailed a new taxing district with a permanent rate of 20 cents per \$1,000 of a property's assessed value. For a property assessed at \$100,000, this would cost \$20 per year permanently.

To cover the 20-year capital bond, property owners would pay a temporary rate of about 71 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. For a property assessed at \$100,000, this would cost about \$71 per year for 20 years.

"I can understand that. I can appreciate that. I don't know how else you fund it unless there's an

intergovernmental agreement where we all agree to cost share out of our current tax base," Green said.

Green said the concern about the permanent tax rate to fund the pool's operations is a solvable problem if the communities choose to solve it.

"Getting it built wasn't really the challenge so much was figuring out how we operate and sustain it," Green said.

Grant County Commissioner Jim Hamsher said a reason why communities might not want to participate is because of bad timing with the current economy, unemployment and shutdowns caused by the pandemic.

"Sometimes it's bad timing when you start surveying people who are wondering how to buy groceries," Hamsher said. "I think a lot of it is timing."

Hamsher asked if it were possible to retain the the property specifically for Gleason Pool and put time into remodeling. This was also a concern

brought up by other leaders in the community who wondered if Gleason Pool could still be retained.

Green said the challenge would be building for the future. He said it was not an ideal location, the size of the pool does not allow for growth and it would not allow Kam Wah Chung to expand at its site.

"We're going to be giving up cash that we can realize from the sale, and put toward a new facility, and we're going to lose the tourism dollars and benefits of that multi-million dollar state investment that the state is programming to do," Green said.

Green added that the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department plan has a building sitting on the foundation of the current pool.

Grant County Judge Scott Myers said, when surveyed earlier this year, he supported Canyon City being included in the proposed aquatic district but said moving forward now would be difficult.

## Additional funding available for Grant County small businesses

Sheriff recognizes deputies

By Steven Mitchell  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County small businesses have an additional \$500,000 available to them through the Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation.

Stephanie LeQuieu, Oregon RAIN rural catalyst, said during a session of Grant County Court Oct. 14 that businesses that have already received grant money in a previous round are eligible for a supplemental grant.

She said the threshold increased from \$2,500 to \$5,000. Businesses that received \$2,500 during the first round of funding can now apply for an additional \$2,500.

While the county's grant money is available until the funds are exhausted, the deadline for the grants through GEODC is Nov. 16.

Tory Stinnett, the county's

director of economic development, said the process can seem overwhelming, but all businesses must do is fill out the application and send it to [tstinnett@grantcountyoregon.net](mailto:tstinnett@grantcountyoregon.net) or [stephanie@oregonrain.org](mailto:stephanie@oregonrain.org).

"It's a lot, so that's why we're just asking people to fill out the application and send it to us," she said. "And we'll send it off to the different places because we want to make sure that everyone is getting the money."

County Commissioner Jim Hamsher said the "time is of the essence" to get the applications turned in.

Full applications are available at [grantcountyoregon.net/DocumentCenter/View/871](http://grantcountyoregon.net/DocumentCenter/View/871).

Supplemental applications are available at [grantcountyoregon.net/DocumentCenter/View/872](http://grantcountyoregon.net/DocumentCenter/View/872).

The court also approved Stinnett's request to hire a full-time assistant. She said she is budgeted for 30 hours, but she needs a full-time staffer to get resources to businesses "espe-

cially during COVID."

She said she was not sure if there were any grants to pay for an assistant, but she said part of her department's funding comes from the Oregon lottery.

She said the lottery funding does not show up on her budget, but that under "transparency in Oregon" on Oregon.gov, it will show how counties spent the money. Stinnett said it shows Grant County spent part of the money on an assistant in the economic development office.

According to the county expenditures on the State Lottery Fund page, \$59,532.87 was used: "A 31 full-time equivalent Economic Development Coordinator was employed during this time to work with cities and non-profit entities securing grants and event planning to bring tourism into the county. The balance of these funds was used to sustain employees at the fairgrounds and airport who also host events to bring tourism into the county."

Stinnett said as a third of it

goes to both the airport and the fairgrounds. She said she did not want to take the funding away from either department but wants to meet with them to see how the lottery money is spent.

Myers said funding the part-time position raises a "question of sustainability."

Palmer moved to fund the position, and Hamsher seconded the decision.

LeQuieu asked if the court intended on renewing her contract as manager of the John Day Farmers Market. Myers said, if funding is left, that it would continue.

Sheriff recognizes deputies

Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer recognized Sgt. Josh Wolf and deputy Wade Wadell, who completed 52 hours of supervisory training through the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training and the Command Council.

Sheriff Palmer said Under-sheriff Zach Mobley and Sgt.

Danny Komning completed the DPSST supervisory training too.

The sheriff said the office had issued Komning's certificate, but he still wanted to recognize him, nonetheless.

"The training is very, very intense," he said. "And it goes right into the evening, so I just wanted to recognize these gentlemen."

**Flood ordinance hearing postponed**

Planning director Shannon Springer requested the court push back its approval of the flood ordinance to Nov. 18. Springer asked the court to postpone adopting the ordinance in August so that the maps could include the Silvie watershed. At the court's direction, the Planning Department sent notices. Since then, Springer said she received calls on behalf of a couple of property owners who would like to participate in the hearing.

**Rock crushing on Highway 395**

County Roadmaster Alan Hickerson said the rock crush-

ing project on Highway 395 near Izee is set to enter the intent to award process. He said the low bid came in at \$287,850.

Hickerson requested approval to exchange the snowplow the department purchased last month. He said there was a miscommunication with the sales representative and the one that arrived "will not work." He assured the court that there would not be a return fee. The plow will cost an additional \$2,300.

Hickerson requested approval to have the air ducts cleaned at the Road Department building. The office manager, Hickerson said, is having breathing issues, and they believe the cause is the air ducts. The air ducts in the 15-year-old building, he said, have not been cleaned, but Ryan Palmer cleans the air filters every three years.

The court approved \$886 to be written into the budget to have the air ducts cleaned and to have it done as "routine maintenance."

# LAMBORN

WRITE IN CANDIDATE FOR  
**CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE**  
24TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

## AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

I'd like to address two points regarding Mr. Carpenter's endorsement of my write-in candidacy to be your Circuit Court judge that have been raised with me.

**1. Should I be "tarred with the same brush" that caused Mr Carpenter to withdraw from this race?** Keep in mind that Mr. Carpenter endorsed my candidacy, not the other way around. When he decided to suspend his campaign, Mr. Carpenter could have done three things:

- He might have endorsed my opponent.
- He might have remained silent on the issue; or,
- He could endorse me.

Mr. Carpenter endorsed me, and he explicitly asked those of you who have been his supporters to cast your write-in votes for me. When Mr. Carpenter weighed his options, he decided I was the best, most feasible, candidate to run for this position. How did he know that? Simple. If the same citizens who voted for Mr. Carpenter in the primary vote for me now (as he's asked you to do), and the same citizens who voted for me in the primary do so again, I win. 3193 to 2814. If the numbers didn't support the decision, I would not be running.

**2. People have concerns regarding the allegations surrounding Mr Carpenter and, somehow, those concerns apply to me.** They don't. My record is clear and unblemished. Mr. Carpenter suspended his run for reasons specific only to him. He wanted Grant and Harney voters to have a real, feasible, logical, CHOICE for Circuit Court judge, and he did the math.

If you were previously supporting Mr. Carpenter, please follow his endorsement and write in John Lamborn for Circuit Court Judge. Thank you.

