

Findley and Owens request \$1.5 million for John Day sewer plant

State legislators had \$6 million total for critical projects in their districts

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

State legislators requested \$1.5 million from the American Rescue Plan Act for John Day's Wastewater Treatment Plant.

State Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, and Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane, announced May 12 they are requesting funds for eight projects across their jurisdictions that will fund critical infrastructure projects.

Oregon is anticipated to receive about \$4 billion from the American Rescue Plan. Findley and Owens requested a total of \$6 million for the eight projects. Each Oregon House member was able to direct \$2 million and each senator \$4 million in these federal funds toward their communities' needs.

"We worked closely together and alongside local leaders to research and learn which projects are most needed and that would provide the greatest benefit to our communities," Findley said in a press release. "These infrastructure improvements are critical to the future of our region."

John Day City Manager Nick Green said he appreciates both Findley and Owens for advocating for this critical infrastructure project.

"This is a \$13 million investment by our community, which has over 57% low-to moderate-income households," Green said. "Being able to secure an appropriation of this size will significantly improve the financial position

of the city and help us keep our wastewater rates manageable for our low-income residents."

The \$1.5 million in funding will help the city build the new wastewater treatment plant designed for the Innovation Gateway site and replace the 72-year-old treatment plant currently in place.

"Their efforts were critical to ensuring this request was compliant with the requirements and competitive in the mix of all the capital improvement projects requesting funding throughout the state and in their districts," Green said. "It would not have happened without their strong support."

Green said, because of this appropriation, the city will be able to keep the sewer project on schedule to begin construction this year.

"This is a massive investment for our community and one that earned the League of Oregon Cities 2019 Award for Excellence for its bold vision, inclusive design and multi-dimensional community benefits," Green said. "It's a great example of how rural communities can lead the state in innovation and economic value creation."

Other projects Findley and Owens requested funding for include:

- Vale Wastewater Treatment Facility: \$1,000,000
- Madras Industrial Space Grant: \$750,000
- Harney County Fairgrounds: \$1,000,000
- Malheur County Fairgrounds: \$455,000
- City of Unity Water Tower Replacement: \$500,000
- Sumpter Valley Railroad: \$45,000
- Jefferson County Housing-Disadvantaged Community Shelter: \$750,000



Eagle file photo

The John Day City Council listens to Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley and John Day Police Department Chief Mike Durr during a meeting on March 31.

Special meeting scheduled about John Day police levy

New plan is to request voter approval for \$50,000 per year in five-year tax levy

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

A public hearing regarding a resolution to refer a ballot measure for a tax to help fund the John Day Police Department will take place May 27.

The city of John Day is holding the special meeting at 6 p.m. Thursday, May 27. The council will review the resolution for the emergency election to go before John Day voters.

This meeting will provide the people with an opportunity to comment.

John Day City Manager Nick Green said this will allow him to file the resolu-

tion on May 28 with the Grant County clerk.

The question prepared for the ballot reads: "Shall John Day impose a tax of \$50,000 per year for five years to fund law enforcement operations?"

While the rate needed to collect \$50,000 can vary each year depending on the growing tax base in John Day, it is estimated that the proposed tax will result in a rate of approximately \$0.50 per \$1,000 assessed value in the first year. The levy will sunset in five years.

"Prior to the election, in the town hall, we can explain this is the amount we need to collect and this is roughly how it will affect you individually," Councilor Dave Holland said. "This is in the 45 to 50 cent range per thousand, but not to exceed \$50,000 per year."

John Day City Councilor Heather Rookstool said she was concerned this would



Eagle file photo

John Day Police Chief Mike Durr participates in a study session about the future of the John Day Police Department.

make the request confusing because it's not a fixed percentage and the rate will be based on the ask of \$50,000. The city previously proposed a rate of 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

"At the fixed rate of \$50,000 a year, the total cost to the community would be \$250,000 with a sunset in five

years," Green said. "If it's 50 cents per thousand, I would have to estimate the total because our tax base is growing, and it would be more than the \$250,000 we need."

To pass, voter turnout for the special election must be at least 50%, and a majority must approve the five-year levy.

If it fails, Green said the city would pursue closing the department and transitioning its officers to the Grant County Sheriff's Office.

Green also recommended the city apply for a law enforcement grant that recently became available.

The grant would provide 100% of funding for an officer in year one and then tiers down by 20% each subsequent year for five years. The grant would make a significant, positive impact, but the city would have to wait until October to know if they were awarded the funds.

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

Two charges of second-degree disorderly conduct against Josva T. Halseide, allegedly committed on Jan. 6 and Jan. 27, were dismissed on Jan. 28 based on a motion by Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter because the defendant is in a facility for the mentally ill and receiving services.

Two charges of fourth-degree assault constituting domestic violence against Keith A. Mark, allegedly committed on March 12, were dismissed on May 12 based on a motion by Carpenter because the victim and eyewitness are

uncooperative with the state and the victim actively advocates for the defendant.

Robert L. Crosby, 34, pleaded guilty to a count of harassment committed on April 2. Crosby was sentenced to 12 months of bench probation, 20 hours of community service and ordered to pay \$200 in fines.

Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff's Office reported the following for the week of May 12:

- Concealed handgun licenses: 9
- Average inmates: 12
- Bookings: 11
- Releases: 12
- Arrests: 3
- Citations: 0
- Fingerprints: 2
- Civil papers: 38
- Warrants processed: 4
- Assistance/Welfare check: 0
- Search and Rescue: 2

Grant County Justice Court

Careless driving: Christian J. Wallace, 19, Anderson, California, April 10, fined \$265.

Driving uninsured: Christian J. Wallace, 19, Anderson, California, April 10, fined \$265.

Mason R. Zipp pleaded guilty to unlawful entry on state wildlife and was ordered to pay a \$440 fined.

Marguerite C. Decourcelle pleaded guilty to unlawful entry on state wildlife and was ordered to pay a \$440 fined.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 192 calls during the week of May 10-16, including:

• John Day Police Department

May 11: Received a report of a pet stolen from a residence. Arrested Melenda Dethman, 60, of John Day for

first-degree burglary, criminal trespass and theft.

May 11: Bradley Bolin, 34, of Mt. Vernon was cited for driving while suspended and uninsured.

May 11: Received a report of a horse running loose near Canton Street and West Main Street.

May 12: Mary K. Armstrong, 33, of John Day was cited for speeding.

May 12: Ashlie R. Clark, 29, of John Day was cited for driving while suspended and driving uninsured.

May 14: Responded to a report of a driver coming into city limits who had been swerving and nearly striking other vehicles on Highway 26.

May 15: Travis J. Freniere, 34, of John Day was cited for driving while suspended and uninsured.

May 15: Cited Susan L. Burton, 61, of John Day for speeding on Highway 26 near

milepost 163.

May 15: Cited Jordan K. Cole, 28, of Renton, Washington, for speeding on Highway 26 near milepost 163.

May 15: Cited Lacey M. Mortimore, 38, of John Day for speeding on Highway 26 near milepost 163.

May 15: Cited Robert B. Wolf, 63, of Boise, Idaho for speeding on Highway 26 near milepost 163.

• Oregon State Police

May 11: Advised of an injured elk near Picture Gorge.

May 14: Received a report of a driver swerving, nearly hitting other vehicles on Highway 26 near Pine Creek.

• Grant County Sheriff's Office

May 10: Responded to a report of possible elder abuse in Long Creek.

May 10: Received a report of a dispute in Dayville.

May 11: Received a report of theft in Prairie City.

• John Day ambulance

May 10: Dispatched to an elderly woman with back pain on Northwest Canton Street.

May 12: Responded for an 83-year-old woman with shortness of breath on Brent Lane.

May 12: Transport for a woman who was dizzy, nauseated and confused on Valley View Drive.

May 14: Responded for an 83-year-old woman not feeling well on Brent Lane.

May 14: Responded for a 71-year-old woman with respiratory distress on South-west Fourth Avenue.

May 14: Responded for an 18-year-old man with an amputated finger.

May 14: Responded for an 82-year-old woman vomiting.

• Seneca ambulance

May 11: Along with John Day ambulance, paged for a woman with an erratic heart rate.

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