

John Day receives \$2 million for aquatic center construction

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

The city of John Day is getting \$2 million to help fund the construction of an aquatic center and \$1 million for a new Kam Wah Chung interpretive center.

The funding comes amid a flurry of spending at the end of the 2021 Oregon legislative session — otherwise known as the “Christmas Tree Bill” — which is a collection of local projects and programs.

Under Senate Bill 5534, \$2 million in net proceeds of lottery bonds will be allocated to the city of John Day to construct an aquatics center.

In House Bill 5006, the city was awarded \$1 million for the proposed Kam Wah Chung interpretive center.

Nick Green, John Day city manager, said the pool project would be a joint effort between the city of John Day, the John Day/Canyon City Parks and Recreation District and the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department.

According to the legislation, the appropriation will:

“Create jobs, further economic development, finance public education, or restore and protect parks, beaches, watersheds, and native fish and wildlife, and is authorized based on the finding that improving access to recreation services will enhance the economic viability of the region, create jobs and improve the quality of life for the community.”

Green said the plan is to use the proceeds of the sale of the old pool to go toward the operations and maintenance costs.

He said this \$2 million windfall would reduce the pool’s cost by at least a third of the original proposal of \$6 million.

He said the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department provided separate funding through the Integrated Parks System to build a parking lot at the west end of the Seventh Street Complex. Green said the parking lot would be for both the pool and Little League

events.

Green said the city of John Day and Parks and Rec provided the matching funds for that grant.

He said, to cut costs, Parks and Rec offered a space for the new pool on the land they own at Seventh Street.

“They worked collaboratively with the city of John Day to come up with a plan for the new pool that’s financially viable,” he said. “But we needed an assist from the city of John Day and the state to get it done.”

Green said it was a “team effort” by three different agencies and the county’s state legislators to help create a new pool that will last.

“Both of these investments will improve the livability and financial viability of Grant County and will benefit businesses and residents who work in the services industry,” Green said, “specifically at our local restaurants and lodging establishments that were the hardest hit by COVID-19.”

The city of John Day abandoned plans to ask for voter approval for a bond for construction and a taxing district for operations costs for a replacement for Gleason Pool last year.

While Green said the city and Parks and Rec would move forward with operations and maintenance costs without going to the public for fundraising, he said they might need some additional fundraising to build the pool at the scale that the community wants.

“We’d like to have a competition pool that’s larger and a little bit colder and then a warm water pool for aerobics and teaching younger kids,” he said. “And that’s what’s in the plan. We’d like to be able to build the full plan, but the cost of the full plan is \$6 million. So, at \$2 million. We’ve taken a third of the cost off the table.”

Green said they might be able to come up with some other funding sources to reduce any further costs or they might go out to the public and ask if they want to put in some money to build the facility as it was designed.

“Either way,” he said, “we’re going to build something.”

No public interest in deputy caught having phone sex with inmate, attorney says

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle



Dan Thenell

An attorney for the jail deputy recorded having sexual phone conversations with an inmate said there was no public interest in the matter and threatened to sue the county if records related to the investigation are released.

Dan Thenell, general counsel for the Fraternal Order of Police union, argued that his clients, former deputy Abigail Mobley and her husband the undersheriff, had been “vilified” based on “false accusations” at a name clearing hearing June 23 offered by the Grant County Court, which has indicated it plans to release records related to the case to the Eagle that were requested in October 2020.

“(Mobley) has been the victim of a vicious campaign to defame her,” Thenell said.

Thenell said there was no public interest in the records because Mobley resigned from her position at the sheriff’s office, and the only reason to release them would be to hurt her.

He said, if the county releases the records as planned, it would present his client in a false light, and he would have no choice but to pursue a legal remedy. (False light is a tort for which a lawsuit could be filed.)

Personnel discipline actions are conditionally exempt from disclosure under Oregon law — unless the public interest requires disclosure in the particular instance. Personnel investigations of public safety employ-

ees that do not result in discipline may not be disclosed — unless the public interest requires disclosure, or the public body (in this case, the county court) determines that nondisclosure of the information would adversely affect the confidence of that body.

Mobley spent 21 months on administrative leave from March 2019 until she resigned in December 2020, costing county taxpayers between \$117,500 and \$149,000, amid investigations by Deschutes County Sheriff’s Office, the Oregon Department of Justice and Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office.

DOJ officials determined through dozens of recorded jail calls that Mobley was having sexual conversations with former jail inmate Darren Mortimore but concluded there was not “a reasonable likelihood of proving beyond a reasonable doubt that Ms. Mobley committed the crime of custodial sexual misconduct.”

Thenell said at the hearing that the inmate was an intelligent predator seeking out and abusing vulnerable women, including another former female sheriff’s office employee.

He said Mobley had taken responsibility for her actions. He said she completed a diversion for a driving under the influence of intoxicants charge and completed inpatient treat-

ment for alcoholism.

“She was using alcohol to cope with the pressures of the job,” he said.

Thenell said Umatilla County’s investigation concluded that Mobley violated the terms of her employment but found no evidence of sexual contact or theft of drugs from the evidence locker, which had been alleged by former deputy Tyler Smith. (The Eagle has not been able to verify this because those records have not yet been released.)

Thenell said most of the “false information” related to the case came from Smith and his girlfriend Haley Olson, each of whom has a federal lawsuit pending against the county.

Mobley did not speak at the hearing. After Thenell read prepared remarks, Grant County counsel Dominic Carollo asked why he opposed the disclosure of the records if they confirm everything he says.

Thenell said the information was “personal” and “embarrassing” related to Mobley’s “demons.”

After the hearing, Carollo told the Eagle he could not yet release the records because Mobley has a pending temporary restraining order filed in circuit court to prevent the release of the records. That lawsuit had been on hold, pending the name clearing hearing.

“We don’t think their lawsuit has merit,” Carollo said but added that the county has to balance the legal issues.

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

Tyler D. Dehiya, 27, John Day, pleaded guilty June 24 to unlawful possession of methamphetamine committed on Jan. 24, 2020. He was sentenced to 10 days in jail and 18 months of probation. He was ordered to pay \$200 in fines, complete 40 hours of community service, obtain a substance abuse assessment within 30 days and attend no fewer than two Narcotics Anonymous meetings per week. In a separate case, Dehiya pleaded guilty June 24 to manufacture of methamphetamine committed on July 7, 2020. He was sentenced to an additional 20 days in jail and 24 months probation. He was ordered to pay \$200 in fines and complete 40 hours of community service. Charges of delivery of methamphetamine, possession of methamphetamine and conspiracy to commit a class B felony were dismissed.

Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff’s Office reported the following for the week of June 30:

Concealed handgun licenses: 12
Average inmates: 9

Bookings: 5
Releases: 5
Arrests: 1
Citations: 4
Fingerprints: 2
Civil papers: 13
Warrants processed: 1
Assistance/Welfare check: 0

Search and Rescue: 0

June 22: Caleb Fechtig, 27, John Day, driving under the influence of intoxicants.

June 22: Daisy Goebel, 24, John Day, violation of posted speed, 85/55 zone.

June 18: Juvenile, 16, Mt. Vernon, violation of posted speed, 64/35 zone.

June 18: Sheila Fries, 52, Kirkland, Washington, violation of posted speed, 47, 30 zone.

Grant County Justice Court

Exceeding speed limit: Bruce H. Devlin, 72, Sherwood, May 29, 85/65 zone, fined \$225; Kelby M. Kautz, 23, Burns, May 29, 79/65 zone, fined \$265; Damon C. Motz-Storey, 27, Portland, May 31, 43/30 zone, fined \$165; Martin E. Anderson, 69, Crooked River Ranch, May 31, 48/35 zone, fined \$165; Paula L. Harmen, 53, New Albany, Ohio, May 26, 87/65 zone, fined \$440; Douglas A. Kinser, 49, Cottage Grove, May 30, 75/65 zone, fined \$165; Scott X. Stevens, 59, Bend, May 28, 35/25 zone, fined \$115; Kayle J. Rodriguez, 36, Prairie City, May 19, 75/65 zone, fined \$165; Toby

L. Thomas, 35, Mt. Vernon, May 19, 37/25 zone, fined \$165; Joshua D. Fisher, 37, Madras, May 26, 38/25 zone, fined \$165; Luke R. Manning, 28, Eugene, May 27, 46/25 zone, fined \$265.

Violation of basic rule: Gregory D. Busse, 66, Kimberly, May 29, 90/55 zone, fined \$440; Nancy R. Jimenez, 38, Mt. Vernon, May 28, 70/55 zone, fined \$165; Billy M. Ferrell, 30, Cottage Grove, May 28, 72/55 zone, fined \$165; Amy S. Converse, 46, Bend, May 28, 75/55 zone, fined \$165; Dyklesia C. Plazola, 29, Madras, May 31, 75/55 zone, fined \$165; Kiana L. Lewis, 18, Redmond, May 31, 75/65 zone, fined \$165; Cayce R. Englar, 29, Lacey, Washington, May 25, 73/55 zone, fined \$165.

Failure to use safety belt: Charles C. Paulson, 44, Prairie City, May 29, fined \$115.

Driving while suspended: Charles C. Paulson, 44, Prairie City, May 28, fined \$440.

Driving while using phone: Juvenile, 17, John Day, May

28, ordered to attend distracted driving course.

Oregon State Police

June 14: Troopers from the John Day work site responded to a report of a domestic dispute in progress on Cottonwood Street in Mt. Vernon. A 46-year-old woman was removed from the residence. An intoxicated 38-year-old man, Joshua T. Fleetwood, was removed from the residence and transported to the hospital. He was later lodged in Grant County Jail on unlawful firearms use charges. No injuries were reported.

June 19: A trooper stopped a vehicle for failing to drive within the lane near milepost 159 on Highway 26. There was a moderate odor of alcohol coming from the vehicle. The driver’s eyes were glassy and bloodshot. The driver said he drank one beer. He consented to field sobriety tests where he displayed further indicators of impairment. Jake D. Reynolds, 28, was arrested for driving under the influence

of intoxicants and transported to Grant County Jail. A breath test showed a blood alcohol content of 0.05%. The trooper issued Reynolds a citation.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch responded to 196 calls for service during the week of June 21-27, including:

John Day Police Department

June 22: A theft was reported on West Main Street. June 23: Responded with Grant County Sheriff’s Office for disorderly conduct on West Main Street.

Grant County Sheriff’s Office

June 23: A flash flood was reported at a residence on Mooncreek Lane. June 25: Responded to a possible intoxicated driver on Highway 395 in Seneca. June 26: Cited Charles E. P. Brown, 62, Baker City, for speeding, 85/55 zone. June 27: Responded to a reported vehicle crash on Mt. Ireland Lookout Road.

June 27: Assisted Oregon State Police with a motorcycle crash on Highway 26 near milepost 201.

John Day ambulance

June 21: Dispatched for a possible heart attack on Northwest Seventh Avenue.

June 23: Responded with Monument ambulance for a 77-year-old woman with circulation problems on Top Road.

June 24: Paged with Long Creek ambulance for a 73-year-old woman who ran out of oxygen on East Main Street.

June 25: Responded to a driver in distress on Highway 26 near milepost 173.

June 25: Responded for n 86-year-old man with cardiac problems in Prairie City.

June 25: Responded for a 74-year-old woman with severe diarrhea on Railroad Avenue.

June 26: Responded with Monument ambulance for a 31-year-old woman with possible heat stroke on Manny Neal Road.

Your Rural Family Health Clinic



Grant County HEALTH Department
528 E. Main, St. E., John Day

Monday - Thursday
7am - 6pm
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Appointments available

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- HIV Testing & Referrals
- Cocoon
- WIC
- High Risk Infants
- Maternity Case Management

Grant County Health Department does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or age in admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment.

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FORMS NEED TO BE TURNED IN TO CARLI BREMNER AT SOLUTIONS OR VIA EMAIL CARLIGARDNER2015@GMAIL.COM BY JULY 9TH - ANY LATER AND NO GUARANTEE FOR SHIRT ON TIME

RELEASE FORMS WILL NEED TO BE SIGNED AT THE DOOR BEFORE YOUR ATHLETE CAN PARTICIPATE AS WELL AS CASH/CHECK - WE WILL BE FOLLOWING ALL SCHOOL GUIDLINES RELATED TO COVID

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EASTERN OREGON PHOTO CONTEST

2021

Voting for ‘People’s Choice’ NOW OPEN

Vote online for People’s Choice from 12:01 am Monday, June 21 through 11:59 pm Wednesday, June 30.

The winners will appear in the July 7th edition of Go Magazine; the top 25 will appear online.

Gift cards to a restaurant of your choice will be awarded for first, second and third place.




All photos online at: bluemountaineagle.com/photocontest

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