

Split city council denies pool permit appeal

By BENNETT HALL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A divided John Day City Council rejected an appeal of the conditional use permit for a proposed aquatic center on Wednesday, Jan. 5.

The council voted 3-2 to uphold the permit, which was issued Nov. 9 by the John Day Planning Commission. John Morris, an outspoken critic of the aquatic center proposal, filed an appeal of that decision on Dec. 8.

Councilors David Holland, Gregg Haberly and Paul Smith voted for a motion to uphold the permit, while Councilors Heather Rookstool and Elliot Sky voted against it. An earlier motion by Rookstool to hold the record open for two weeks at the request of Morris was defeated along identical lines.

Mayor Ron Lundbom and Councilor Shannon Adair recused themselves from voting because both had spoken in favor of the pool project at the Planning Commission meeting.

In his appeal, Morris argued that the Planning Commission was biased and prejudicial in its decision to grant the permit because he was not given “the same opportunity to provide and to complete his testimony” as those who spoke in favor of the pool project.

He expanded on his objections in 15 pages of written testimony, which he and his wife, Charlene, read into the record at the appeal hearing.

Among other things, their comments claimed that the council “is spinning out of control,” that City Manager Nick Green “controls the city council” and that Councilors Holland and

Sky had “demonstrated a lack of integrity, morals and ethics” by their actions in regard to the pool project.

“This entire process is a charade, a farce,” their testimony stated in part. “It is a deceitful, fraudulent way of doing business.”

John Morris concluded by asking the council to hold the record open for 10 days to allow additional testimony to be submitted.

At the suggestion of City Attorney Garrett Chrostek, Rookstool made a motion that the record be held open for seven days to allow additional testimony and another seven days to allow Morris, the appellant, to respond.

“I need more time, the community needs more time — I just think we’re jumping the gun,” Rookstool said.

“I want to make sure that I do

my due diligence.”

But other councilors said they saw no merit in the appeal.

“I feel that the conditions, the criteria of the application (for the conditional use permit) were met,” Holland said. “I don’t see any major reason not to do this.”

After the vote, John Day-Canyon City Parks and Recreation District board member Lisa Weigum invited community members to direct any comments, questions or concerns about the proposed aquatic center to the board.

“We appreciate the conversation, we appreciate the Morrises ... and we understand how important community input is in this,” she said. “We will happily accept comments and information from the community at any time.”

For their part, the Morrises said they have not yet decided whether to take their appeal fur-

ther. But they both said the city needs to find a way to have more public involvement in the decision-making process.

The proposed aquatic center would replace the old Gleason Pool, located in a city park adjacent to the Kam Wah Chung State Historic Site. That pool, which opened in 1958, has been closed the last two seasons due to COVID-19 concerns and significant deferred maintenance issues.

The City Council recently approved the sale of Gleason Park, where the pool is located, to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. The state is planning a \$4.5 million expansion of the Kam Wah Chung Historic Site on the park property.

Plans for the new aquatic center call for a six-lane, 25-yard competitive pool with spectator seating and an 8,000-square-foot structure to house locker rooms, a lobby and office space for parks

and recreation staff.

The project has an estimated price tag of \$6 million, but the city has already obtained \$2 million in state funding and is considering up to \$1 million more in cash and in-kind contributions for site improvements, including the money from the sale of the Gleason Park property. The city also plans to cover utility costs for the new pool.

The parks and rec district still needs to raise \$3 million to \$4 million to cover design and construction of the aquatic center. The district plans to put a bond measure on the ballot next year for either the May or the November election.

If voters in the John Day and Canyon City area (the area covered by the district) approve the bond measure, the new aquatic center could open as soon as the summer of 2023.

Shawn Dale Nebeker

September 6, 1967 ~ December 28, 2021

Shawn Dale Nebeker passed away in Phoenix, AZ December 28, 2021, due to complications following COVID-19. He was 54.

Shawn was born on September 6, 1967, in Burley, Idaho to his parents, John Dale and Bertha (Moore) Nebeker. He graduated from Thurston High School, Springfield Oregon in 1985. He worked for George's Shop N' Rock in Vale Oregon during the late 90's and Pinal County in Casa Grande, Arizona at the time of his death. He was a volunteer EMT for the Vale Fire and Ambulance for 11 years.

If you were blessed to know Shawn, you knew he was hilarious, generous, stubborn and would do anything for anyone. His laugh was contagious, and his heart was huge.

Shawn is survived by his sons, Harry Colton Nebeker and Kyle Nebeker, his mother and stepfather Bert and Doug Kruse, twin sister Shauna Phillips, sisters Lynda Reynolds, Merna Bennett and many friends who loved him fiercely. He is preceded in death by his father, John Dale Nebeker on November 17, 2021.

Shawn will be cremated, and his ashes spread at Duck Lake per his request. A memorial will take place on May 14th at 10:00 a.m. at the Geiser-Pollman Park, Baker City, Oregon. All are welcome to attend and celebrate Shawn's life.

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Paid for by the family of Shawn Nebeker.



Area hospital welcomes first baby of 2022

By BENNETT HALL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — It's a girl!

Mykaila Gifford, the first baby born in Grant County in 2022, is the daughter of Amanda Bogen and her fiancé, Tylor Gifford.

She arrived at 12:04 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 5, at Blue Mountain Hospital, weighing 5 pounds, 15 ounces and measuring 18¾ inches at birth.

Mykaila was born about three weeks early due to a complication, “but I think we’ve got it squared away now,” said her mother.

Other than the birth itself, the hardest part of the process might have been settling on a name.

“The naming of her was a nightmare,” Bogen said. “We couldn’t agree on anything until the last second.”



Contributed Photo

Tylor Gifford and Amanda Bogen pose with daughter Mykaila Gifford at Blue Mountain Hospital in John Day.

The newborn has three older siblings waiting to welcome her home — sister Skylar, 13; brother Zerik, 10; and sister Grayce, 2 — although it sounds like the reception might be a little one-sided at first.

“Zerik is not very happy about having another sister,” Bogen said. “But the girls — the girls are real excited.”

Being the county’s first baby of the year comes with some perks: Mykaila and her parents were presented with a gift basket at the hospital. The goodies included \$100 worth of Grant County Greenbacks from the Grant County Chamber of Commerce, a \$50 gift card from 1188 Brewing Co., a newborn photo session valued at \$250 from Meaghan Leigh Photography, a welcome baby bag from Families First, toys from the Blue Mountain Hospital Auxiliary and a baby tub with diapers, wipes and accessories from Chester’s Thriftway.

Bogen said she was looking forward to being able to bring her new baby home.

What’s on the agenda?
“A lot of nothing,” Bogen said. “Just spend time with the babes.”

Law makes remote access to meetings permanent

By APRIL EHRlich
Oregon Public Broadcasting

SALEM — What was once a solution during the pandemic

— allowing people to participate in public meetings remotely to accommodate COVID-19 health guidelines — is now state law.

House Bill 2560, passed by

the Oregon Legislature in the 2021 session, took effect Jan. 1. It requires governing bodies to make most public meetings remotely accessible when it’s “reasonably possible.”

At the start of the pandemic, governing agencies across Oregon — from small city commissions to statewide legislative committees — transitioned to hosting public meetings remotely, or at least providing a way for people to view and participate in meetings from home.

That could change as soon as social distancing requirements lift, according to one of the bill’s sponsors, Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, D-Portland. During a Senate committee meeting in

April, Hayward said some governing bodies in Oregon were planning to go back to holding in-person meetings at which people can only testify in person.

“We have people who travel from Enterprise to Salem — a six-hour drive — to testify for 15 minutes,” Hayward said. “That’s not OK. We need to make it so that they don’t have to do that if they want to get their voices heard.”

Oregon is among the largest states in the country in square mileage, ranking ninth between Colorado and Wyoming. That makes for some long drives for people wanting to testify in Salem on statewide rules and legislation.

Eva Jean Earnest Kidd

January 3, 2022

Eva Jean Earnest Kidd, 80, of John Day, died Monday, January 3, 2022 at Valley View Assisted Living in John Day.

She is survived by her husband of 51 years, Marvin Norman Kidd and three children, Norma Russell (Jamie) of Dillon, MT, Dan Kidd (Jasmine) of Mt Vernon, OR and Cynthia Kidd (Brad) of Mt Vernon, OR. She also has one surviving sister, Imadell Moore of California and brother Marcus Earnest of Arkansas.

She also celebrated the lives of her five grandchildren, sister and brother Haley Olson and Damon Olson and brothers Dan Kidd, Jr, Trenton Kidd and Mason Kidd.

She was fortunate to live long enough to have three great-grandchildren, Emmie Reinstra of John Day and Everett Olson and Traisn Kidd of John Day, who were born in 2021.

Eva was born in Finley, Oklahoma to Forest and Sarah Earnest and was the ninth child in a family of 11. She grew up in Chowchilla, California and then lived most of her life in Redding, California where she raised her family. She and her husband became traveling camp hosts for approximately 15 years and traveled mostly to Arizona and Montana to be with various family members. After that they lived in Idaho for a short time, before settling in John Day for the past 15 years.

In her young years, Eva worked picking cotton in Chowchilla. She held many fast food cook positions and worked as a lunch lady at her children’s high school. She also served as a home care attendant. Her favorite job was at the University of Idaho Agricultural Experiment Station where she assisted in agricultural experiments near Parma, Idaho for approximately five years.

She joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in 1973 and was active in many positions such as primary teacher, stake missionary leader, and first counselor in the Relief Society.

She was a kind, generous and loving wife, mother and grandmother. She was forthright and compassionate when it came to the affairs of her family and friends. She was a natural born prankster and jokester and loved pulling a fast one when she had the opportunity. She also loved to read, work crossword puzzles and do various crafts.

She had a special place in her heart for dogs and cats and over the years, she spoiled and cared greatly for all the family pets. She loved traveling the backroads with her husband with a cold Pepsi and peanuts and she was able to visit quite a few states and Mexico in her lifetime.

She will be greatly missed by all who loved her.

A private ceremony with her immediate family will take place this week. Paid for by the family of Eva Kidd.

5277551-1

Wilma Marie (McKern) Bauer

March 13, 1927 ~ January 5, 2022

Wilma Marie (McKern) Bauer, age 94, of Mt. Vernon passed away January 5, 2022, in Prairie City, Oregon. A memorial service will be held at 11:00 am on Thursday, January 13th, 2022 at the Grant County Fairgrounds Pavilion. A potluck reception will be held immediately following the service, also at the Pavilion. A private family interment will be held at Canyon City Cemetery prior to the Memorial Service.

Wilma was born March 13th, 1927, at the old McKern place outside of Mt. Vernon to Jay and Jessie McKern. She went to school in Hermiston and in Mt. Vernon and graduated in 1945. Wilma married Herb Bauer on August 20th, 1946, together they had three children. She worked in various grocery stores throughout the years, in Redmond, Mt. Vernon and Long Creek. She retired in 2002 after working for Chesters Thriftway for 17 years as a checker. After her retirement she enjoyed volunteering, traveling with groups and friends and family to various places, weekly card games, baking and sharing her famous apple pies.

Wilma was a member of the Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Church, the Mt. Vernon Grange, American Legion Auxiliary, the Grant County Museum and she wrote the Senior Center News for the Blue Mt. Eagle. She loved Grant County especially the Century Farm property west of Mt. Vernon. Out of her 94 years she only lived outside of Grant County for seventeen years, living one year in Hermiston, Oregon. While in Hermiston she worked at Ordinance Depot in 1945. Also, her and Herb lived in Pendleton, Oregon where they resided for sixteen years. Herb worked at Woodpecker truck and Wilma worked at the Prowler RV Factory.

Her greatest accomplishments were being a loving wife, mom, grandma, and great grandma. She had many friends and lived a life of loving service.

Wilma was preceded in death by her parents, Jay, and Jessie Bauer; her husband, Herb Bauer; sister, Charlyne Rutler; two brothers, Melvin (Shorty) McKern and Merrill McKern.

Survivors include her son, Neil (Jan) Bauer of Mt. Vernon, Oregon; daughter, Karen (Tom) Love of Umatilla, Oregon; daughter, Marcy (Bill) Bacon of Hermiston, Oregon; six grandchildren and twelve great grandchildren.

Memorial contributions in her honor can be made to the Shriner’s Children’s Hospital through Driskill Memorial Chapel, 241 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day, Oregon 97845.

Paid for by the family of Wilma Bauer.

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Tom Averette

May 24, 1951 ~ December 13, 2021

Tom Averett was 70 when he passed away from a stroke at Legacy Emmanuel in Portland, December 13, 2021. Tom was born May 24, 1951 in Baker City Oregon.

He is survived by his wife Sherry and his beloved dogs, Patch, Kenzie and Ollie. Also his mother Rosalie Averett of Austin Oregon, Brother Dan and his wife Karla Averett, In-laws Tony & Evelyn Johns and several nephews and families.

He graduated from Prairie City High School in 1969.

He was preceded in death by his father Tom Sr, loving grandparents, Roy and Elva Wright and Ray and Oma Averett.

There will be a memorial service in the spring to be announced.

Paid for by the family of Tom Averett.

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Last Week's Temps

John Day	HI/LO
Wednesday	36/32
Thursday.....	42/39
Friday.....	42/28
Saturday.....	35/24
Sunday.....	37/23
Monday.....	38/27
Tuesday.....	39/31

24/7 FORECAST

AUTOMATED: 541-575-1122

ROAD CONDITIONS: 511; TRIPCHECK.COM

NOAA WEATHER RADIO FOR JOHN DAY

162.500 MHZ

WEATHER FORECAST FOR THE WEEK OF JAN. 12-18

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Mostly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Mostly cloudy
42 27	41 28	40 26	41 26	42 26	42 30	41 32