

Broadband

Continued from Page A1

Other concerns

Bush said he has worked with municipal corporations before and, while they are a good legal tool, there are long-term ramifications he suggests the county consider before it gets into building out a broadband infrastructure.

Under ORS 190, two or more governments can get together and form agreements to deal with issues of mutual interest. In 2018, the issue of mutual interest for John Day, Seneca and Grant County was expanding broadband internet service countywide.

The board has standing members to represent the interests of their communities. For Grant County, it is Dan Becker, who also is the co-chair. John Day chose Elliot Sky, and Seneca chose Walker.

The board has two at-large members, Denise Porter from Long Creek and Harsh Patel of John Day. The standing members appoint the at-large positions to serve two-year terms.

Nonetheless, Bush said, the county needs to be thoughtful about participating in an ORS 190 agreement.

"When you come together with another entity and you create something, build assets or build infrastructure, you have to think about the long term," Bush said.

The agreements, he said, can be dissolved, and then questions such as who owns the infrastructure, how does it get maintained and who pays for it have to be answered.

"Those are all things that need to be carefully looked at before we make big-dollar decisions on behalf of the taxpayers," Bush said.

Additionally, he said, another question is what if the technology changes in five years. He said the county had not considered those points because it had not been given the information.

Bush said he thought the broadband project is well-intentioned.

"We just have to make sure that we're not putting ourselves on the hook and supporting an infrastructure down the road that we may or may not even need," Bush said.

Another concern Bush had during the May 4 session was that John Day was the only entity listed on the internet services agreement between Grant County Digital and Oregon Telephone Corp. Walker said that was because John Day is the fiduciary for the EDA grant.

Becker, Grant County's representative on the digital board, said John Day serves as the planned point-of-presence for the fiber optic network and would house servers, routers and network switches at the fire hall.

"(The service agreement) is not excluding Grant County," Becker said. "(OTC) is delivering fiber optic access to the firehall building that the city of John Day is already connected to.

"We have a room inside the fire hall which we pay for," he said, "and (OTC) have infrastructure in there with us."

COVID relief dollars

There was a miscommunication between the county and the city about the construction costs of the fiber optic network.

According to Bush, he was under the impression the county was being asked to put up \$120,000 of its American Rescue Plan Act funding as a match to cover construction costs, up from \$67,000. Bush added that the initial estimate was from two to three years prior, and costs for fiber and construction have increased significantly.

However, Bush said, Green had not put out any bids for the project and he was waiting for Green to get back to him with more documentation, including the actual costs of the project.

Green said in an interview that he and Bush had spoken and cleared up the confusion. Bush said the county needs to know what the actual costs are going to be, and Green agreed.

"We can appreciate where he's coming from in wanting to give the county solid costs," Green said.

Green said he doesn't have a firm estimate of construction costs for the project yet.

One reason for that, he added, is that the Grant County Digital Network board is waiting to learn whether the county wants to participate in the project so it can determine where the fiber lines need to be built.

It seemed to the board, he said, that the top priority would be to connect the county courthouse, airport and industrial park and the homes along the way.

Green added the board is about five to six weeks out from awarding bids for the construction.

Like Bush, Green said there was a miscommunication about using county ARPA funds to cover construction costs. He said both John Day and Seneca had put some of their own ARPA money into the project and the digital board would like to see county ARPA dollars go to expanding broadband in the county, but it does not have to be tied to this specific project.

Green said the county could allocate funds to go toward one of the CyberMill locations or put money in a reserve fund for maintenance of the public fiber or future upgrades.

"We think that if there was a portion of their funds that was reserved for that, there's a couple of different ways that can be expanded and would add value," he said. "That would be their call. We're not trying to pressure them."

For his part, Grant County Judge Scott Myers said the county previously turned down Grant County Digital Network's funding request for \$75,000 on the advice of the county's legal counsel.

"I'm just not convinced that the (CyberMill) is the best use of ARPA money or county assets," Myers said. "I'm still open to be convinced."

Rappel

Continued from Page A1

Kahler said a rappel crew's specialty is roping into small, remote, quick-response fires.

All of the training is standardized. So, when a crew is called out, depending on the location, they can be on a fire in as little as an hour. That's why the training is so important between the multiple crews, Kahler said.

"(Rappelling) is just a very quick, efficient way to get people on the ground where they need to be," he said.

Kahler said the rappel crews do not bring on new firefighters. Instead, they look for experienced firefighters who bring a solid skill set with them.



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

A rappeller dangles above the ground on Thursday, May 5, 2022, during the U.S. Forest Service's national rappel certification training at the Grant County Regional Airport.

When the Forest Service dispatches a crew to a remote area, they have limited supervision.

Typically, he said, each crew is between two and four

people, and they go out in the woods and make decisions on their own.

"We're looking for very experienced, very fit people," Kahler said.

Smith

Continued from Page A1

Coit writes that the file also contains documentation of a phone call that Palmer made to Smith to catch him in a lie about his whereabouts after being informed by Smith's accuser of his GPS-tracked location.

Additionally, Palmer testified that when he left the Grant County Sheriff's Office after losing the 2020 election, he put all of his employee files in a taped manila envelope and gave it to the county's human resources manager.

Jamie Kimberly, an assistant Oregon attorney general acting as a special prosecutor in the trial, argued against the motion to continue the case, saying that Smith's accuser objects to any additional postponement.

Kimberly said while the state "unfortunately" discovered new evidence the day before the trial was originally set to begin back in October, the prosecution has since "owned" its part in its response.

All along, however, the prosecution has argued that Smith's personnel file and items related to it are not relevant to the case since the

Oregon State Police, not the Grant County Sheriff's Office, investigated the criminal allegations.

Kimberly said the prosecution is concerned the case would continue to drag on due to motions the defense has filed based on evidence that it retrieved through discovery in another case — a civil suit filed by Smith's girlfriend, Haley Olson, against the county. Kimberly said Smith's attorneys have sat on that discovery material for months.

Motion to disqualify prosecutor

In a hearing on the motion to dismiss, Jim Carpenter, Grant County's district attorney, testified that Palmer had emailed him asking for assistance in finding a legal avenue to arrest Olson, who claimed on social media that she had documents that proved Smith was innocent of the charges brought against him.

Carpenter said he directed Palmer to work with Gretchen Ladd-Dobler, Wheeler County's district attorney, one of the special prosecutors, along with Kimberly, who was handling Smith's case.

Palmer also testified that he shared statements Smith made in his Loudermill hear-

ing with Ladd-Dobler, which Smith's attorneys argue was a violation of Smith's Garrity immunity rights.

Under a Garrity immunity, an officer cannot be compelled, by the threat of severe discipline, to make statements that may be used in a subsequent criminal proceeding.

In light of Carpenter's testimony, Smith's attorneys have filed a motion to have Ladd-Dobler disqualified from the case and called as a witness.

Circuit Court Judge Dan Bunch has not yet ruled on that motion.


During Monday's hearing, Bunch emphasized that he has not seen anything to make him question Kimberly's integrity.

He said he knew that she was doing her "level best" to gather information.

However, he vented his displeasure with some of the other parties involved in the discovery process.

"I would have thought high school students could have done a better job of just collecting the darn information and getting it to me or to you," Bunch said, "and I'm frustrated."

As of press time, a new start date for Smith's trial had not been set.



Grant Soil & Water Conservation District

2022 Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 18th, 2022
6 PM

Grant County Fairgrounds Pavilion, John Day, OR


Grant SWCD is pleased to present Bayer Corporation representatives Kent Pittard, Justin Hossfeld and Harry Quicke to discuss the effectiveness and economic benefits of using Rejuvra to control invasive annual grasses. Grant Weed Control has been working with Bayer Corporation and Oregon State University Extension Service for several years and witnessed the impacts on annual grasses stands within Grant County.

All attendees are welcome to join the District and the Bayer Representatives the following morning (May, 19th) for a tour of treatments areas within Grant County. A sign up sheet will be available during the meeting for interested parties.


Please Join us on May 18th to learn more about this exciting opportunity to control invasive annual grasses on Grant County's rangeland!

KERRY McQUISTEN

for GOVERNOR



- ✓ 7th generation Oregonian.
- ✓ The Mayor of Baker City who stood against the mandates.
- ✓ A small business owner NOT a politician.
- ✓ The ONLY candidate with hands-on ranching, farming, mining and logging experience.
- ✓ An executive-level business background.



Winner of Restore Oregon NOW's 2A Freedom Defender Award!


"Kerry is a warrior for our freedoms."
—Dr. Kelli Ward, Arizona Republican Chair, President Trump's First Lady of Election Integrity

"Kerry McQuisten is the leader Oregon needs."
—Cody Bowen, Constitutional Sheriff, Union County

"I encourage all rural Oregon voters to gather their support behind Kerry, and not allow their valuable votes to be split elsewhere in the primary."
—Former Oregon State Rep. Greg Barreto

"If you seek better access, health and productivity from our forests and public lands instead of smoke and bad decisions, elect Kerry."
—Utah State Rep. Ken Ivory, Founding President of American Lands Council

ENDORSED BY 100s of Oregon Organizations, Businesses and Individuals at www.KerryMcQuisten.com



COMMON SENSE. CONSERVATIVE. GRASSROOTS.

KerryMcQuisten.com | Paid for by Kerry McQuisten for Oregon | #YourMAGACandidate