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City signs Green as consultant

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Nick Green is no longer the John Day city manager but will continue to work for the city as a consultant — at more money than he was making previously.

Green's previously announced resignation was made official during the June 14 session of the John Day City Council, which opened the door for him to take on a consulting role with the city starting July 1.

Green's consulting firm, Catalyst Public Policy Advisors LLC, entered a contract with the city that was unanimously approved by the council at the June 14 meeting.

The contract allows Green's firm to provide consulting services to John Day for one year. The move makes Green an independent contractor and transitions him off the city's books as an employee.

The services Catalyst will provide include administration of the city's current grants portfolio and debt management for the city's loan portfolio. The firm will also be responsible for coordinating bridge loans for city projects such as the wastewater treatment plant and financial management of the city's urban renewal area. Catalyst will also provide asset management for the city's land sales and property transfers.

Catalyst is set to make \$12,500 a month for its consultation services, which works out to \$150,000 a year. The firm will be paid \$225 an hour for any additional services that are outside the scope of its normal duties, such as any additional grant writing requested by the city.

Terms of the contract state that Catalyst's compensation can not exceed \$200,000 a year.

As city manager, Green's total compensation from the city was \$107,526 in salary and benefits. He also received a 1% fee from many of the grants he brought in.

Interim City Manager Corum Ketchum is being paid a comparable amount to what Green made in that role.

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Green

Business and politics

Land deal could spark development in John Day, but critics raise ethical concerns

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

A local business's expansion plans could get the ball rolling on development of John Day's Innovation Gateway project, but they're also raising questions about how the city does business.

1188 Brewery owner Shannon Adair — who also sits on the City Council — has closed on her previously reported purchase of 2.8 acres in the Innovation Gateway, the large parcel of city-owned land centered around an abandoned lumber mill at the western entrance to John Day, and is set to begin developing the property.

It would be the first commercial development on the Innovation Gateway property, which the city acquired in hopes of revitalizing the local economy in the face of a shrinking timber industry and a declining residential tax base due to decreased population. Grant County was the only county in Oregon that saw a population reduction following the 2020 census.

The land sale is not without controversy, however. Because Adair is a member of the John Day City Council and the city did not put the parcel up for the public to bid on, some observers have suggested the transaction may have been unethical and perhaps even illegal.

Adair insists she's done everything according to the law and that there's nothing improper about the deal.

Expansion plans

1188 Brewing Co. has been looking for ways to expand since it started in 2012, Adair said. Those plans led to the creation of a new venture called 1188 Destinations.

The new company's plans for developing the 2.8-acre Innovation Gateway parcel call for a distillery that is separate from the brewing operations 1188 currently has in downtown John Day, as well as a restaurant with a different menu from 1188's pub fare.

Also proposed are a small number of cabins that would be rented as overnight lodging. Adair said plans for the cabins were inspired by conceptual drawings that an ear-



Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

From left, 1188 Destinations business partners Julie Bowling, John Spencer, Shannon Adair and Jeremy Adair sit outside 1188 Brewing in John Day on Monday, June 20, 2022. The partners plan to build a distillery, restaurant and other facilities as part of the Innovation Gateway development.



Contributed Image, File

An early site concept for the John Day Innovation Gateway.

lier would-be developer had produced for a motel with separate cabins.

"I saw the cabins and thought, I can do that. Definitely not something the scale of a hotel, but I can do cabins," she said.

A small outdoor pavilion that can be used to host musical performances is also planned for the site. Adair said big name musical acts like AC/DC probably won't be performing at the venue, but it will be a place that hosts live music. A number of walking paths and appealing landscaping will also be a part of the project, Adair said, adding that efforts would be made to segregate the area from nearby residences.

A matter of appearances

Adair's position on the John Day City Council and the property not going out for bid are at the heart

of ethical questions surrounding the deal that would make the plans outlined above a reality.

Adair signed a letter of intent to buy the property in December, with the approval of the City Council. That letter of intent was formalized during contentious discussions at the May 10 City Council session.

At one point, the council considered shelving the sale of the property and putting it up for the public to bid on. Adair said she was upset that the suggestion was brought up as she was under the assumption that she and the city had already come to an agreement.

Another concern was raised about the optics of withdrawing the letter of intent, with some in attendance questioning whether backing out of the deal with Adair would cause future developers to have second thoughts about the city's hon-



Blue Mountain Eagle, File

The John Day Innovation Gateway.

esty in making land sales.

The resolution to sell Adair the property passed 3-1, with Councilor Chris Labhart voting no. Labhart said he doesn't think Adair got a "sweetheart deal" but argued that the land should've been put up for public bidding. He stressed the need for transparency in land sales by the city.

Adair did not vote on the resolution to approve the sale of the property.

Ethical questions

A representative of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission declined to offer an opinion on the propriety of the transaction, saying the panel can only issue findings in response to formal ethics complaints.

Section 244.040 of the Oregon Revised Statutes deals with prohibited uses of public office. It says, in part, that a public official may not use or attempt to use their office for financial gain or avoidance of debt for themselves, relatives, household

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Linemen rescue stranded crash victim, dog

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

DALE — Good Samaritans jumped into the water Monday, June 20, and helped rescue a woman and her dog from a Kia minivan that crashed into Camas Creek on Highway 395 near the Grant/Umatilla county line.

According to Oregon State Police Trooper Mike Mayer, the van started sliding and the driver overcorrected and hit the gravel on the shoulder of the road, going around a curve before flipping over two to three times and rolling into the middle of the creek near milepost 53.

While the passenger was



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

A wrecked minivan sits in Camas Creek off Highway 395 on Monday, June 20, 2022. Two passing utility workers stopped and rescued the driver and her dog, who were trapped in the vehicle.

able to escape the damaged van, the driver and her dog had a tougher time getting

out. Two linemen with the Monument-based Colum-



Contributed Photo

From left, Garrett Warner and Jack Jewell. The two linemen for Monument-based Columbia Power Co-op saw the wrecked car in Camas Creek and stepped in to help.

bia Power Cooperative, Garrett Warner and Jack Jewell, pulled up on the scene of the accident roughly 15 minutes after it happened and

assessed whether they could run a rope to the vehicle and pull the driver and her dog

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