



Dick Mason/The Observer, File

Deputy Morris Capers, with the Union County Sheriff's Office, on Friday, May 20, 2022, returns to his vehicle after checking out the Elgin Stampede Grounds during his patrol.

Elgin decides to stick with sheriff's office

By DICK MASON
The Observer

LA GRANDE — It's official: A new six-year law enforcement contract between the Union County Sheriff's Office and the city of Elgin is in place.

The Union County Board of Commissioners voted to ratify the contract at its meeting on Wednesday, June 29, eight days after the the Elgin City Council approved the contract on June 21. The city council did so after voting against a proposed contract to retain the services of the Union County Sheriff's office in May.



Bowen

The council intended to reestablish Elgin's police department to replace the enhanced law enforcement services Elgin has been receiving from the Union County Sheriff's Office for about 10 years. Had the Elgin City Council not changed course, the Union County Sheriff's Office would have laid off two of the three deputies that currently serve Elgin. The deputy who would not have been laid off would have been transferred to an open position in the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Union County Sheriff Cody Bowen said after the vote he would be writing letters to officially tell the two deputies, who would have been laid off, that their positions are secure.

"I will tell them that their jobs are no longer in jeopardy," Bowen said after the meeting.

Under the terms of the new contract, which took effect Friday, July 1, Elgin will continue to receive a minimum of 420 hours of law enforcement services a month. The city will pay Union County \$315,400 in 2022-23 for law enforcement services, \$337,603 in 2023-24 and \$350,771 in 2024-25 during the first three years of the pact.

The payments the city of Elgin will make during the final three years of the contract will be dependent on the cost of living increases granted to Union County's sheriff's deputies. The increases will be negotiated by the Union County Sheriff's Office with the Union County Law Enforcement Association.

Increases greater than 4% for materials and services would be negotiated between the city and county.

In another action item the Union County Board of Commissioners voted to adopt a total budget of \$58.447 million for 2022-23, up 14% from the 2021-22 budget. The spending plan calls for Union County to keep all of its positions and programs except for two corrections positions.

The corrections officer positions are being cut due to rising personnel costs and because some revenue the county anticipated receiving for the positions did not materialize, according to Shelley Burgess, the administrative and budget officer for Union County.

Burgess said four corrections positions were added a year ago with approval of the budget committee and that two of these positions are now being cut. She said at the time the budget committee believed the county would receive grants and other funding that would help pay for the four positions.

"The grants and funding we were hoping for did not come in fully," Burgess said.

Of the two positions to be cut, one is unfilled, which means the reductions will result in one layoff. In another action item, the board of commissioners voted on June 29 to approve the distribution funding from the Union County's Transient Room Tax, also known as its motel tax.

The board voted to provide the Union County Fair Association with a grant of just more than \$26,000 for a bleacher replacement project; a total of \$30,000 to the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show for the first two phases of its exterior lighting project, \$6,500 for the 2022 Eastern Oregon Film Festival, \$3,000 for the city of Union's Fireworks Committee for this year's Fourth of July celebration and just more than \$2,200 for the Union County Chamber of Commerce for its crop tour video project.

The distributions approved by the board had all been recommended to it by Union County's Transient Room Tax Committee.



Community Health Beat



What's new at BMHD?



Sports Physicals &



Back-to-School Immunizations

When: July 25th

Where: Strawberry Wilderness Community Clinic

Time: 8am - 4pm

Call ahead to schedule an appointment:
541-575-0404

All kids who attend will receive a Yeti water bottle

Saturday Same Day Appointments

Available for sudden, non-emergent symptoms.

Dates: July 9th & 30th
8am - 4pm

Call to schedule 541-575-0404

Cafeteria Open to Public

The BMH Any Thyme Cafe is back open to the public - come enjoy a meal with us!

Dine & Walk with a Doc

Join us the second Tuesday of each month starting in July for a complementary catered meal while you enjoy a talk on health and wellness topics from your local healthcare providers/professionals. After we eat, we'll take a walk around beautiful 7th Street Complex. A new topic will be presented each month.

What Time: Dinner will begin at 5:30 pm and a walk around the complex will follow.

Where: Dinner will be served at the Veteran Memorial Picnic Shelter @ 7th Street



When: July 12th, August 9th, September 13th
This is a FREE event and people of all ages are invited!

In collaboration with: John Day/Canyon City Parks & Rec, Community Counseling Solutions & Grant County Community Health Improvement Coalition

Locally Grown Prenatal/Postpartum Classes

Register now for August prenatal/postpartum classes by visiting our website. Classes are FREE, dinner is provided.

Dates: August 17th, 24th, 31st.
5:30pm-8:00pm

We're Hiring!

Recruiter | Human Resources - (Full Time)

Staff Accountant | Finance - (Full Time)

Activities Director | Care Center - (Full Time)

Referral Coordinator | Clinic - (Full Time)

Many other full-time, part-time & casual positions open, visit our website for more information & to apply.

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Blue Mountain Healthcare Foundation
Fundraiser Golf Scramble
Saturday, July 16th, 2022
John Day Golf Club



www.bluemountainhospital.org