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Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

The Blue Mountain Hospital District board quickly hired a new CEO in May, but in its haste it appears to have sidestepped the state's open meetings law.

Hospital hiring raises questions

In rush to bring in new CEO, Blue Mountain district board may have skirted state law

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Blue Mountain Hospital District Board of Directors acted swiftly to hire a new chief executive officer but in the process seems to have skirted Oregon law. In a May 9 special meeting, the board accepted CEO Derek Daley's resignation and announced that Daley's last day with the district would be Aug 3. A week later, in another special meeting on May 16, the board voted to have Chair Amy Kreger make an offer to Cam Marlowe, the hospital district's former



Marlowe

chief financial officer, to step in as the district's new CEO and "report back with the outcome." The public did not learn the outcome until early June. On June 4, in response to a request from the Blue Mountain Eagle, Kreger provided information on Marlowe's hiring and compensation, which includes a salary of \$320,000 per year, plus a \$50,000 signing bonus and a \$35,000 annual retention bonus after two years. In a follow-up interview on June 9, Kreger told the news-

paper that Marlowe would take the reins on July 11. In its rush to hire a new CEO, the board — the publicly elected governing body of the hospital taxing district — appears to have violated the state's public meetings law. There is no indication that Marlowe himself did anything wrong. In general, the law says, a public body such as the hospital district board should take deliberative actions on hiring and make other decisions during regularly scheduled open sessions. However, there are provisions for making such decisions in special meetings if certain requirements are met, includ-

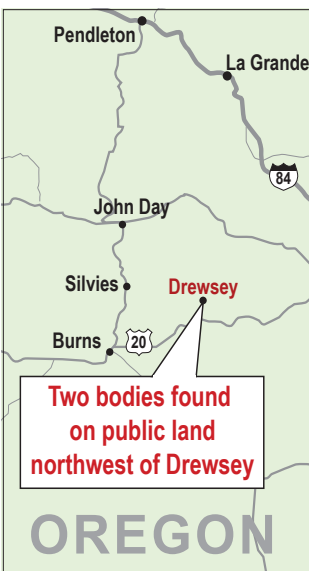
ing a requirement to give the public adequate notice. The hastily scheduled meetings in May appear to have fallen short of the law's public notice requirements. Public bodies, according to the Oregon Attorney General's Public Meetings Manual, must provide at least 24 hours' notice of and public access to a special meeting unless the minutes describe an emergency justifying the lack of such notice. Kreger said the board properly announced the May 9 and 16 meetings by posting the agendas in the hospital cafeteria and a nearby hallway. Moreover, Kreger said the May 9

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Missing mom and daughter found dead

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

SILVIES — Law enforcement officials have identified the bodies found Thursday, July 7, on public land northwest of Drewsey as those of a missing Idaho woman and her 16-year-old daughter. The bodies of Dawna Faye Roe, 51, and Gabrielle Michelle Roe, 16, of Caldwell, Idaho, who had been missing since July 6, were found in a 2004 Toyota van that belonged to Dawna just inside Grant County near the Harney County line, according to a Friday, July 8, press release from the Grant County Sheriff's Office. The cause of death is still under investigation, the press release noted. However,



according to Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley, no other individuals are currently being sought. Silvies Ranch employees

reported seeing a dead body in a van on Thursday, according to the press release. Grant and Harney County sheriff's deputies discovered a second body concealed in the van after Silvies employees led them to the area, McKinley said. The sheriff declined to be specific about exactly where the bodies were found, except to say it was a remote location about midway between Drewsey and Silvies. The deputies secured the area and called in the Major Crimes Team, which includes investigators from the Oregon State Police and the Grant County Sheriff's Office, along with state police forensics personnel. The case remains under investigation.

Calling the shots at dispatch

Former head of Grant County 911 center looks back on eventful career

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — In a 30-year career with the Grant County Emergency Communications Agency, Valerie Maynard was at the helm of the 911 dispatch center during some of the county's most significant events. From the 2015 Canyon Creek Fire that destroyed 43 homes, to the 2016 armed takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge that divided the community and put her at odds with the county's former sheriff, to a budget crisis that nearly shuttered the dispatch center, Maynard saw the agency through some troubled times. Maynard, who decided to step down in mid-March, looked back at her long and eventful career in an interview with the Blue Mountain Eagle. Maynard landed her first dispatch job in 1989 while living in Brookings after coming across an ad in the local newspaper. She recalled the job posting saying that no experience was necessary.



Rudy Diaz/Blue Mountain Eagle, File
Valerie Maynard, Grant County's longtime dispatch center manager, retired in March after a 30-year career.

"And that was all she wrote," she said. "I loved the career. I've always loved it." Three years later, in 1992, she and her then-husband moved to John Day. Shortly after, she landed a job as a dispatcher with the John Day 911 center. Maynard left the county twice when her husband's work, first with the Forest Service and then with the Oregon Department

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Subdivision getting fresh start

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — A long-forgotten housing development on Elkhorn Street in Canyon City is springing back to life again and could add over 40 homes to the community. Canyon Mountain heights is a 31-acre subdivision that was started 20 years ago but stagnated for well over a decade following the construction of a small number of homes. Then, earlier this year, the property was purchased by local steel-frame homebuilder Bruce Ward and his wife, Kimberly, along with other financial backers for \$675,000. Ward's first connection to the development came two years ago, when he purchased a pair of lots with plans to build on them. That led to a fair amount



Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle
Bruce and Kimberly Ward on the site of a new home lot they're developing at Canyon Mountain Heights in Canyon City on Monday, July 11, 2022.

of buzz from residents in the area. "All of a sudden, people were paying attention," Ward said. "You wouldn't really go up that road unless you're coming down from the airport the back way. You wouldn't just accidentally drive by that subdivision." The original developer of the subdivi-

vision in 2002 was an individual from Salem. Initially, the subdivision was broken down into 60 tax lots before being redrawn into 48 lots due to concerns that the lot sizes weren't large enough. Ward surveyed the land after his acquisition of the property and found four lots that were unbuildable for various reasons. One of the lots on the property spans 15 acres on the back hillside of the subdivision and acts as a buffer. Following the survey, 43 buildable lots were advertised for sale within the subdivision. Ward said acquiring that 15-acre buffer lot with the rest of the subdivision was very important to the project. The lot is steeply sloped, and his main concern was that building on it might

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