

City looks into new pool plan

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Following the second electoral defeat of a pool bond measure, John Day officials are trying to develop an alternative pool plan in a last-ditch effort to hold onto \$2 million in state grant funding.

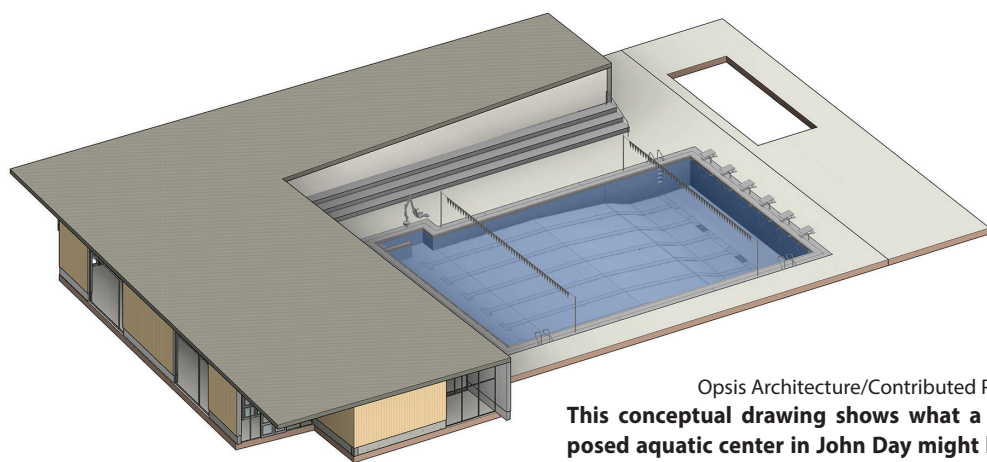
The \$4 million bond measure, which ended in a tie in the May election and failed by 76 votes in the November balloting, would have raised the lion's share of the estimated \$6.7 million needed to build a new community swimming pool at the Seventh Street Complex.

Most of the rest would have been covered by a \$2 million state lottery grant. Now the city will have to return those funds unless the money is committed to another viable pool plan by Jan. 15, when the lottery grant is set to expire.

The decision to pursue an alternative pool plan was reached at the Nov. 22 session of the John Day City Council.

The council was set to reject the \$2 million grant, which was tied to a plan supported by the failed bond measure, citing the amount of time it took to develop the current pool plan and the short turnaround needed to make any new plan a reality. An impassioned speech by former John Day City Manager Nick Green, however, convinced the council hold off on rejecting the funds while it tries to put together a lower-cost pool plan.

Green said it is up to Councilor (and Mayor-elect) Heather Rookstool to present a viable \$2 million pool plan to voters who voted against the \$6.7



Opsis Architecture/Contributed Photo

This conceptual drawing shows what a proposed aquatic center in John Day might have looked like if voters had not rejected a \$4 million bond measure. City officials are scrambling to put together a lower-cost plan.

million proposal thinking there was an alternate plan. Rookstool had raised the possibility of a \$2 million community pool in the Aug. 23 city council meeting.

"The timeline for making a decision on accepting the grant or not accepting the grant is the most pressing issue because it's related to issuing the (lottery) bonds. When Councilor Rookstool introduced the idea of a less expensive pool, I believe she referred to it as a plan. I think that muddied the waters for a lot of people because they believed there was another option that didn't require them to spend their tax dollars to have a pool," Green said.

"I would like to see evidence of her plan. I think she owes it to the taxpayers to produce something more tangible than a phone call she had with one pool contractor," he added.

The council acknowledged that the \$2 million pool idea put

forth by Rookstool never part of a formally adopted plan but agreed to the concept of using the \$2 million in lottery funds in addition to other funds for final design and construction of a pool facility. The city would have just under \$2.7 million available for that endeavor.

Rookstool relayed her willingness to restart talks with Anderson Poolworks about a low-cost pool option.

There are concerns with the low-cost option, however, most notably the timeline.

The current pool proposal was years in the making. Any new proposal would have to be pieced together in a matter of weeks to secure the lottery funding.

It's also unclear how the John Day/Canyon City Parks & Recreation District would react to an alternative proposal.

The parks and rec district board had agreed to operate the proposed pool facility at the Seventh Street Complex, which

would have included office space for the district. But the board has not indicated it would operate any pool facility other than the one that was defeated by voters earlier this month.

Not only that, but the board would need to approve the use of the Seventh Street site for the pool. No other locations have been proposed or approved for the construction of a pool facility.

The city council expressed a willingness to sit down with the parks and recreation board to discuss whether the district would be interested in running a slimmed-down version of the pool were it to be built, either at Seventh Street or elsewhere.

Board Chair Zach Williams would not say one way or the other if the parks and rec district would be interested in running a pool that differs from the one it signed on to run initially.

"We would have to discuss (it) in a board meeting after hearing the plan," he said.

John Day secures pair of grants

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — More grant funding is on the way for John Day.

The city is set to receive a pair of grants that total \$350,000. The grant awards were announced during the Nov. 22 city council session at the John Day Fire Hall.

The first is a technical assistance grant from the Oregon Department of Energy in the amount of \$100,000. The funds will go toward energy resilience for the new wastewater treatment plant.

The money will pay for planning needed to site solar panels to supply power to the facility, as well as other strategies for energy resilience. Those "other strategies" come in the form of on-site batteries for energy storage and the capture of energy through the purple pipe water reclamation system via in-line hydraulic turbines, among other ideas.

The city will also be receiving \$250,000 from the Oregon Department of Transportation for work on the intersection of Patterson Bridge Road and Seventh Avenue and the intersection of Seventh and Holmstrom Road.

Pre-construction photos show the intersection at Northwest Seventh Avenue and Patterson Bridge Road is deteriorating due to inadequate storm drainage and large vehicle travel over freeze-thaw conditions on the road. The intersection is also considered a safety risk due to the lack of a sidewalk and the road being unmarked at present.

Similarly, the intersection of Northeast Seventh Avenue and Holmstrom Road also suffers from degraded road conditions due to improper stormwater management. Additionally, the intersection of Northeast Seventh and Holmstrom is closed by the playground in the Seventh Street Complex due to water damage.

John Day chief planning official Nick Green said the timelines for the projects differ.

"Planning for the Department of Energy grant can happen as soon as the contract is awarded," he said.

The timeline for the road repairs is a little further out due to current weather conditions. Green anticipates the street improvements will be able to begin around mid-March.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

THURSDAY, DEC. 1 Senior Citizens Advisory Council meeting

• 11 a.m., John Day Senior Center, 142 NE Dayton St., John Day

The Grant County Senior Citizens Advisory Council will hold its quarterly meeting. The public is welcome to attend.

FRIDAY, DEC. 2 Carrie Young Memorial Dinner and Auction

• 5 p.m., John Day Elks Lodge, 140 NE Dayton St., John Day

The 30th annual Carrie Young Memorial Dinner and Auction will feature a donation-only dinner of spaghetti, salad and bread as well as live and silent auctions to raise money to provide Christmas presents and necessities to Grant County senior citizens and assisted living residents.

SATURDAY, DEC. 3 Blue Mountain Hospital Bazaar



• 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Trowbridge Pavilion and Keerins Hall, Grant County Fairgrounds, 411 NW Bridge St., John Day

Hosted by the Blue Mountain Hospital Auxiliary, this annual event will feature a wide array of holiday gift items, many of them handcrafted. Lunch, pie and coffee will be available. A portion of the proceeds goes to support projects of the Blue Mountain Hospital District.

Kam Wah Chung open house

• 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Kam Wah Chung State heritage Site, 125 NW Canton St., John Day

The Kam Wah Chung Museum will be open for hourly tours, and the interpretive center will be open for

shopping and a gift basket raffle. There is no entry fee, and refreshments will be available.

SUNDAY, DEC. 4 Skeet and trap shooting

• 10 a.m., Seneca Range, 1 mile west of Seneca on Shirt-tail Road

The Grant County Shooting Sports Club will open its skeet and trap ranges for practice shooting. The range will stay open as long as there are shooters. Cost is \$6 for 25 clay targets or \$20 per 100 targets. For more information, call 541-620-2516.

THURSDAY, DEC. 8 Emergency communications council

• 6 p.m., John Day Fire Hall, 316 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day

The Grant County Emergency Communication Agency Intergovernmental Council will hold a public meeting to discuss a new employee sign-on bonus, a dispatcher shortage loyalty bonus, the fiscal 2023 budget

and other items. To join the meeting by phone, dial 605-313-5406 and use access code 889135.

FRIDAY, DEC. 9 Holiday Showcase

• 6:30 p.m., Grant Union High School, 911 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day

This 24th annual event will feature special performances by Grant Union Gold and Body, Fitness & Dance.

SATURDAY, DEC. 10 Ugly Sweater Christmas Bazaar

• Monument Senior Center, 269 Main St., Monument

Wear an ugly sweater to be entered into a drawing. Tables are available at a cost of \$15. To reserve a table, call Jeanne Strange at 541-934-2001.

Timber Truckers Light Parade

• 6 p.m., Main Street, John Day

The annual parade of log trucks, big rigs and work vehicles decked out in festive holiday lights will begin at former Grant Western Lumber Co. site just west of John Day, then travel east on Main Street to Third Street Extension before looping back around to the Elks Lodge, where a chili feed and awards ceremony awaits the participants and their families. This year's theme is "Christmas Memories," and entrants can sign up at the former Grant Western Lumber site from 2 to 5:30 p.m. The entry fee is \$10. For more information, call Leslie Traylor at 541-620-4032.

Do you have a community event you'd like to publicize? Email information to editor@bmeagle.com. The deadline is noon Friday for publication the following Wednesday.

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VIOLENT NIGHT (R)

| | |
|-----------|------------------------|
| Friday | 4:00, 7:00, 9:30 |
| Saturday | 1:30, 4:00, 7:00, 9:30 |
| Sunday | 1:30, 4:00, 7:00 |
| Mon-Thurs | 7:00 |

STRANGE WORLD (PG)

| | |
|-----------|------------------------|
| Friday | 4:15, 6:45, 9:45 |
| Saturday | 1:15, 4:15, 6:45, 9:45 |
| Sunday | 1:15, 4:15, 6:45 |
| Mon-Thurs | 6:45 |

BLACK PANTHER: WAKANDA FOREVER (PG-13)

| | |
|-----------|------------------------|
| Friday | 3:30, 6:30, 9:00 |
| Saturday | 1:00, 3:30, 6:30, 9:00 |
| Sunday | 1:00, 3:30, 6:30 |
| Mon-Thurs | 6:30 |

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