

Heppner man appointed County to pay neighborhood council \$1300/mo to Port Commission

Kent Goodyear, Heppner, was appointed February 2 to fill a vacancy on the Port of Morrow Board of Commissioners.



Kent Goodyear

Goodyear is the marketing manager for Kinzua Corp. and is chairman of the committee working to prevent abandonment of the Heppner branch railroad.

He was appointed to fill the position vacated by Morrow County Judge Louis Carlson's December 31 resignation. Carlson resigned the position prior to his being sworn in as judge.

The commission appointed Goodyear on the recommendation of an ad hoc committee appointed last December to interview applicants interested in serving on the board of commissioners.

The committee also recommended that the commission hold off any appointment until after the March election.

Three commissioners—Larry Lindsay, John Bristow, and Matt Doherty, said they felt obligated to fill the position because of the time and effort spent by the ad hoc committee and the applicants.

Commissioner Bill Sharkey dissented, stating he opposed any appointment until after the March 31 election. Because three positions expire this year Sharkey said he felt it would be in the best interest of the port to wait and let the people decide who their representative would be and appoint that person. Sharkey said he could see no reason to make

The County Court voted to pay \$1300 each month for the next five months to the Morrow County Neighborhood Council. The council will use the money to pay rent, utility bills, and other operational costs.

The Court has discussed other plans for providing some funding to the service agency after it lost financing January 9 from the now bankrupt Blue Mt. Development Corp. but postponed action until the Neighborhood Council received official notice of non-profit corporation status.

"We've served four families with emergency food and eight with emergency clothing in the last two weeks," Neola Mackey, president of the council's board of directors told the court. The first part of January, she said rumors that the Neighborhood Center had closed kept people away.

The Neighborhood Council is continuing to operate with volunteer staffing because the executive board has not yet located funding to pay a co-ordinator's salary. They are, however, planning fundraising events (all money from fundraisers must be used for needy families and not for operating expenses, the council's by-laws say.) and are working to continue getting government surplus cheese and other commodities for distribution.

The Court asked Steve Anderson of Anderson-Perry Engineering out of LaGrande to draw samples and do laboratory tests on both piles of rock at the Boeing rock crusher site and report the results to the Court

February 11 with recommendations for special handling if he considers it necessary to make the rock usable.

Anderson asked the Court to remember that when they are awarded state and federal grants to build bridges and roads they may choose to hire a private firm to do the work.

In other business, the Court: heard from Assessor Greg Sweek that the Courthouse telephone system is not covered by a maintenance contract. The contract from AT&T would cost \$1500 per year. "We've been on the system for two years and had not needed maintenance so far," Sweek said.

Commissioner Rauch said that although he was in favor of reasonable maintenance contracts, he didn't consider this one reasonable.

approved an outstanding payment of \$13,071 for a mapping machine for the assessor's office. The equipment is installed and seems to be working, Sweek said. Training of personnel is complete.

appointed Cindee Henderson as backup person for Greg Sweek to keep the county's computer system running.

heard from County Architect Bob Smith that leaks in the Courthouse

scheduled for repair. Renovation of the Courthouse exterior was substantially complete January 1, Smith said; the guarantee on the work will end one year from that date.

heard the treasurer's cash report for January from Treasurer Margo Sherer.

discussed operation of Anson Wright and Cutsforth parks with Gay Harshman who is currently under contract to collect fees, keep order, haul garbage, and maintain both parks.

heard from County Health Nursh Pat Wright that Dr. L. D. Tibbles, Heppner, would no longer continue as county Health Officer. She said Dr. Clare Koznek of Heppner had indicated an interest in taking over the position.

Buffham a no-show at trial

Denis Buffham, Irrigon, did not show up for trial Tuesday morning in Circuit Court at Heppner. His attorney, Mike Kilpatrick of Mt. Vernon, however, was present. A warrant for Buffham's arrest on charges of Theft I with bail set at \$50,000 has been issued, Morrow County District Attorney Jeff Wallace said. Additionally, he expects Buffham to be charged with Failure to Appear.

Buffham was first arrested December 12 in connection with an on-going criminal enterprise which allegedly netted more than \$100,000 collected for hay that was never delivered. Buffham was under contract to deliver hay to the Irrigon Western Alfalfa plant.

He was arrested a second time December 22 when a Grand Jury returned an indictment charging him with the crime. He pleaded Not Guilty January 13 at his arraignment. Bail was originally set at \$800,000 but was reduced to \$5,000 on January 21. Buffham then posted bail and was released.

Heppner City Council

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has owned land here for 12 years, and has lived in Heppner for three years. He is a retired leadman for Reynolds Metal at Troutdale and has been active in Heppner Senior Citizens since moving here. He replaces Marvin Lane who has moved from the city.

Bid of E.F. Yadow, auditor, from Portland, to audit the city books was accepted. The low price of \$2,500 in a group ranging to \$7,850 was held over from the January meeting. The council members thought it was too low to take a chance on without checking out the company. Gregor, which had done the city's auditing last year, bid \$4,800, the same as last year. City Administrator Marshall Lovgren had checked with other cities which had used Yadow and found his work satisfactory.

City Administrator Marshall Lovgren said an amount of \$624 had been received for the city fire department, mostly from firemen's benefit held at Charlie's Pizza. This was not addressed by the budget committee

and the city should accept the donation and authorize its transfer to the fire department. The action was approved.

He also said a budget hearing for the city would be held in June and the city should adopt the budget at that time. It is within the six percent limitation and there will be no vote.

Request for spending \$250 to build a records room to hold city files in the old city hall was approved. City Foreman Dave Winters said the old records were now in the same room with the legal evidence material and it was getting too crowded. The construction will cut six feet off the length of the old city hall room.

City Police Officer Merle Cowett asked about the police policy which states officers cannot "habitually loiter or linger in a place where intoxicating liquor is served." He said this was interpreted that he could not have a drink of beer and a sandwich in a public place in town with a friend on his day off. "The city council is controlling our lives when

we are off duty," Cowett said.

Chief Doug Rathbun said he did not like to see officers in a bar; that they lose their effectiveness if they are drinking with others there and the next night a fight starts that they have to go in to break up.

The council decided they could have a drink, but not within eight hours of time they were to go on duty.

Cowett also said he felt there should be a minimum of two-hour pay when officers are called for backup or in any emergency when they are called to duty during time off. At present they are paid only for the time they put in. He pointed out that they are not paid when they serve in court. Rathbun said "It would break the budget." Cowett was told to bring it up before budget time next year before any change could be made.

Rathbun said this is the year the city is scheduled to buy a new police car. The budget committee suggested getting a state surplus, but the city has always bought locally. He asked for direction. Councilman Jackson was appointed to work with Rathbun to determine where the best buy could be made and report back to the council.

Sheriff's Report

The Morrow County Sheriff's Office reports handling or dispatching the following business during the past week:

February 2: a deputy investigated a complaint of an animal problem at Hardman.

February 2: deputies responded to a family disturbance in the Lexington area. The disturbance was resolved upon their arrival.

During the week of January 27 - February 2, the Sheriff's Office assisted three disabled motorists.

February 3: a deputy investigated a report of a stolen boat from the area of the Port of Morrow. Complainant advised the Sheriff's Office on February 4 that the boat had been found.

February 3: the sheriff's office dispatched the Heppner Fire Dept. to a report of a fire at Kinzua Corp in Heppner.

February 4: a deputy investigated a report of Rape I allegedly occurring outside the Boardman City limits. Victim is a five-year-old female juvenile; suspect is a 14-year-old male juvenile.

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Lions Club president David Sykes (left), Carl Lauritsen, Faith Healy and Pennie Miller.

Money donated for medical equipment

The Heppner Lions club has donated \$100 toward the purchase of a portable defibrillator for the Heppner ambulance.

The EMTs are planning several fund-raising events because the total cost of the unit is \$7500. Donations may be made to any EMT.

The ambulance currently has to take the defibrillator from the hospital emergency room (not a portable unit) when they expect to have a heart patient. The unit is used for monitoring and stabilizing the heart beat.

Compromise was key to health care issue

The County Court last Wednesday announced an immediate but short term plan to meet part of the health care needs in the county.

The plan which resulted from a January 28 workshop with health care entities and the county court, provides for no increase in layers of government and holds the line on taxes.

Health care has been a much-talked-about, potentially divisive issue in the county since last October when north county citizens filed a petition with the county court asking formation of two health care districts.

North Morrow Medical Clinic board member Steve Rowe said the petition was intended to draw attention to the long neglected needs for medical care in the Boardman and Irrigon areas. Two medical districts, he said, was a concept which didn't say we think we deserve 80% of the money, but was a vehicle proposed to get our needs met. Now we're saying we're willing to back off, but we draw the line at increasing taxes to meet our needs.

Frank Pearson of the Pioneer Hospital Board made it clear that the hospital did not want to let capital expenditures, such as repairing the roof, wait until a long term problem such as major damage to the hospital building occurred. The board, he said, is willing to look at decreases in capital spending and negotiate a workable solution.

Steve Rowe of the North Morrow Medical Clinic Board said that since medical needs for North Morrow County residents had been deferred for such a long time, the hospital should be willing to defer its needs for a short time until equity is reached. "Meeting North end needs by increasing taxes won't work," he emphasized.

After negotiating and apparently reaching a "bottom line" for each side, they were still \$50,000 from reaching the goal of holding the line

on taxes. Don Eppenbach of the clinic board said that he supposed Irrigon could wait another year before its needs were met. Attitudes changed suddenly.

Both Pioneer Memorial Hospital Administrator John Hempel and Pearson objected because, they said Irrigon should be the last to reduce its current request since it had received the least over the years.

Negotiators quickly found items they could defer which would bring their total tax asking within the goal. Pearson said the Board would do its best to pare another \$30,000 from the hospital budget. Eppenbach said NMMC "could possibly kick another \$5,000 out of its budget." Steve Rowe asked if county road crews could repair the driveway at

the clinic, the \$4,000 cost could be reflected in their budget thus reducing the clinic's asking.

The workshop also offered ideas which require time for planning and could not be implemented in time for this year's budget process. They suggested the technical team consider using a physician advisor from Pioneer for the north ambulance, using the doctor at the North Morrow Medical Clinic as a weekend emergency doctor at Pioneer, and purchasing liability insurance for all entities as a group.



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Morrow County Grain Growers, Inc.

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