

Questions answered on library-city hall project

(Editor's note: the following information concerning the proposed city hall/library building has been supplied by a panel of six citizens formed to oversee questions and answers regarding the proposed City Hall / Library Project. The panel consists of Judy Buschke, Patti Prock, Gwen Healy, Marsha Sweek, Bill Kuhn and Cyde Estes. Their objective is to identify the proper person to answer each question and to see that the answers get presented in an unbiased manner. Questions may be sent, anonymously, to Heppner City Hall, P.O. Box 756, Heppner, or e-mailed directly to Cyde Estes at cyde@centurytel.net. Names will be kept confidential and the questions will not be edited.)

Jerry Breazeale, Heppner city manager, presents the answers to the following questions:

A group of concerned citizens voluntarily conducted a survey of Heppner residents asking whether or not they favored the proposed Library / City Hall project. Over 400 people responded by answering the question and signing their name. Ninety-five percent of those contacted were not in favor of this proposal. These results were presented to the city council in early September. The city council has responded to this input with the promise to not raise taxes for this project without a vote of the people.

1) Why are some city officials unwilling to recognize the results of the survey conducted by a group of concerned citizens and presented to the city council?

Answer: The City Council did not dispute the results of the survey presented at the meeting of September 10. The consensus of the council was to continue with the scheduled mailing of city initiated surveys. At the next meeting, October 8, the council was presented with a proposal to conduct public work sessions to hear and discuss ideas and concerns about the project. The council voted five-to-two to accept a grant to have an outside facilitator conduct several community work sessions on the subject. Survey mailings would be delayed until after the public work sessions and until after questions regarding the project were answered in the newspaper.

2) The city council has taken a commendable step by requiring voter approval of this project. Why do we continue to spend administrative time when there are so many critical infrastructure and personnel needs in city government?

Answer: We believe that the public has a right to be informed about all aspects of the proposed project and to receive accurate and factual information. Only after all the issues are on the table and known by all those who care, should a decision be made to proceed or abandon the project.

3) Some officials have discredited the survey of 400-plus people because the people doing the survey were "known to be out to kill the project." What evidence do you have to support this accusation and what value is there in this making this type of statement?

Answer: We were aware that the survey was prepared and carried by some people who may have had a bias against the project.

4) Why haven't city officials aggressively marketed the choice commercial downtown property to the private sector, thus putting it on the tax roll and generating needed revenue?

Answer: This lot was purchased as part of the project to build the new public works shop which was erected on the west end of the lot. The intention was to use the east end of the lot for a new city hall building. As long as the site is being considered for public use, the city will retain ownership. If the council determines that it does not wish to proceed with a new building at that site, it may wish to sell the lot and use the funds for some other purpose.

5) Statements have been made by city officials that the new facility would have a positive economic impact on Heppner. The proposal suggests that, in this case around \$300,000 plus interest, would come from property owners to help fund this project. This disposable income, in most cases is money that would normally be spent with downtown merchants and other local businesses. Please explain how investing this money in a project that will not generate revenue, will help the local economy?

Answer: Under the scenario proposed, approximately \$1,000,000 would come from outside Heppner and the Willow Creek Valley for ultimate use in the city. Some of the money would be spent locally

for lodging, meals, and supplies. It is not known exactly how much of that money would find its way into the local economy. We are certain, however, that it would be more than would have been spent without the project.

Indirect benefits would include enhanced community image and livability. We know that community image and livability are areas where our community can set itself apart from other small communities to attract new residents and businesses.

6) I understand that the Morrow-Baker Partnership has committed \$50,000 this year and another \$50,000 next year to the project, if it proceeds. If not, the money must be refunded. Is this correct? If yes, will the money be used to offset the additional \$100,000 the city needs to earn or are these funds dedicated to another purpose?

Answer: The Morrow/Baker Partnership has committed \$50,000 to the project as a challenge grant. If the citizens of Heppner and the Oregon Trail Library District are behind the project and the two entities are able to raise the remainder of the funds needed, the partnership will release the money for the project. There is no guarantee for another \$50,000. The city and library district were invited to make another application in the next biennium to the partnership board.

7) The city talks about raising \$100,000 from private donations. Does the city have a firm commitment from any organization toward these funds? If no, please address why the city believes it can raise these additional funds.

Answer: The city of Heppner and the Oregon Trail Library District included \$100,000 of local donations in the funding strategy. The commitment of \$50,000 from the Morrow/Baker partnership will fill half of that amount. It is anticipated that local and regional corporations will be approached with requests for filling in the remaining balance. The Morrow/Baker Partnership will also be approached to close a gap in funding. So far, all of the prospective agencies approached for funding have been supportive of the project.

8) I have been told that there is a good possibility that two new industries may move into the Port's industrial park at the Kinzua site. Can you address why the city is not waiting on this project for better economic times?

Answer: Many people and agencies are working very hard to locate industry in the South Morrow Industrial Park. Locating industry in the former mill site will not be an easy task. I believe that we need to continue to invest in our community in order to help attract new industry, business and residents. By moving ahead with this project we will be telling the rest of the world that we are here to stay and we will be able to meet the needs of community now and in the future.

9) The city talks about the cost savings we will realize by having a modern facility. Can you give us an estimate of the dollar amount the city will save with the new building vs. their current structure? This question has been asked in a public meeting and the answer was; "for one thing the city will not have any maintenance for 10 years". I am expecting a more realistic answer because we all know the city has to reserve money for depreciable items. I am looking for some figures on cost savings for day-to-day functions like heating, lighting, etc.

Answer: We do not have figures for cost savings from the new building at this time. What we can say is that a building constructed to current energy standards will cost less per square foot to heat and cool. Additional efficiencies will result from the two-story construction where the two floors will help insulate each other. Other energy cost saving features will be the passive solar heat component, thermal mass and possible groundwater heat pump. Since the new building will have a larger environmentally conditioned space, the total energy cost may actually be higher. In order to get realistic cost estimates for the maintenance of the new building we will need to go to the next level of engineering that goes along with proceeding with the project.

10) Has the city considered remodeling their existing facility?

Answer: Yes we have. In 1996 the city employed Timothy L. Rundquist, AIA, to address the needs of the city for work space, energy efficiency needs, and ADA compliance. Those reports are on file at Heppner City Hall.

11) Does the city have any current cost estimates to remodel their existing facility?

Answer: The 1996 study by Rundquist estimated the cost for meeting ADA requirements at \$72,090. Improving the energy efficiency of the building was estimated at \$36,850. Modifying and enlarging the work space for present needs was estimated at \$74,430. We have asked a local contractor to review the estimates and suggest current costs of the improvements.

12) Why is it so important for city hall to have more office space?

Answer: Currently there is not enough space in the existing office to move around safely while conducting routine activities. Walkways are frequently blocked by chairs or equipment that must be rolled placed in the isles for operation. Storage for work materials is severely limited. Fireproof storage is needed for permanent records. There is not enough room for a wheelchair to maneuver from the front reception area to the rear restrooms. A private office is needed for those activities which should have insulation from normal daily traffic. A conference room is needed for meeting with clients on proposed projects, for staff meetings and for staff training. A larger room is needed for city council meetings which is accessible to the public.

13) Can you explain the pros and cons of a general obligation bond vs. a revenue bond and why the city might be considering a revenue bond?

Answer: A general obligation bond is a bond secured by property in the city. Payments to pay the debt under a general obligation bond are provided through assessments against property value which are a form of property tax. The taxes are assessed by a formula expressed in dollars per thousand dollars of property value. General obligation bonds can only be secured against property by a vote of the people in the taxing district. General obligation bonds are considered the most secure and also may get the best interest rate. The disadvantage of the general obligation bond is that it is levied against property according to property value rather than according to benefit received.

A revenue bond is a bond secured by future projected revenue streams. Revenue bonds are commonly used for water and sewer bonds and assessed according to value received. Revenue bonds are less secure than general obligation bonds and may not have as attractive an interest rate. Revenue bonds secured by a revenue stream do not require a vote of the citizens unless the entity chooses to submit the proposal to a vote. Revenue bonds have the advantage of being tailored more to equity of service.

The city has proposed the revenue bond as a potential funding mechanism due to simplicity and equity.

14) If the city was to decide to contract with Morrow County for police protection they have projected an annual savings of \$40,000. Would the city consider using these cost savings to fund their portion of the new structure rather than issuing a revenue or general obligation bond? If no, can you explain why?

Answer: This certainly is a viable option. The annual cost to retire a \$250,000 bond at 4.75 percent interest is approximately \$14,000. If we used the cost savings for retirement of the debt for the project, the city would be able to construct the project without increasing taxes or fees.

15) I have heard concerns that the new structure would take valuable parking spaces away from the existing business. Can you address the issue of appropriate parking for the new structure?

Answer: Parking is always a concern with locating any business and especially in a downtown environment. Should the project move forward it will have to meet the requirements of the zone for parking. A lot was recently purchased by the city which fronts on Gale Street and could be used for off-street parking for staff and library and city hall patrons.

An observation of traffic generated by city hall patrons revealed that moving city hall from its present location to Main Street would not have much impact on Main Street parking. Most of the traffic generated at city hall is from people dropping off their water and sewer payments. After parking in front of city hall to leave the

payment, the customer may drive to Main Street and park in front of the Post Office to pick up their mail. Moving the building would possibly eliminate one stop.

Other methods of addressing parking for downtown businesses are also in the planning stage with the planning commission.

16) Several past city council members have questioned the purchase of the Shear property, using water and sewer funds. Can you address how the city was able to purchase the property using these funds?

Answer: Water and sewer are integral functions of city hall. All the billing, accounting, reception, complaints and much of the planning take place in city hall. Equipment purchased for city hall is purchased with a percentage of funds from these departments. These functions will continue to take place in the proposed new building. Water and

sewer accounts will pay a portion of the upkeep of the facility also. So long as the portion attributed

to water and sewer is reasonable, this is an acceptable use of the water and sewer funds.


Veterans to be honored at HHS

Heppner High School will hold a special assembly and lunch to honor local veterans on Wednesday, Nov. 7, at 11:30 a.m. Veterans are asked to arrive in the gym at 11:15 a.m.

Those who have not been

contacted and who would like to be a party of the assembly, may call the high school at 676-9138 and leave their name, rank, tour of duty, and if they plan to stay for lunch.

"The high school would greatly appreciate your attendance," said a spokesperson.



Heppner Day Care will be CLOSED Monday, Nov. 12 in observance of Veteran's Day

Good Luck At District, Ione Cardinals!



Ione Cardinals Volleyball Team: back row (L-R) Kristina Powell, Natalie McElligott, Salli McElligott, Diana McElligott, Tracy Griffith, Sara Peck; front row (L-R) Cyndi Heagy, Amelia Peck, Meghan McCabe, Caitlin Orem, Emily Key, Megan McCabe.

Ione Cardinals vs. South Wasco County Redside

Saturday, November 3 at Sherman County High School in Moro at approximately 3 p.m.
The winner of this match will play the loser of the first match (held at 2 p.m.) to see who will go to State in second place. The loser is out.

DON'T MISS THE PEP ASSEMBLY!

Thursday Night, November 1 at 6 p.m. in the IHS Gym

The following individuals & businesses say "Good Luck" at the District Tournament, Ione Cardinals!

- Steve, Rose & Grace Crum
- Fred & Mary Sherman
- John, Janna, Jamie & Julianna VandenBrink
- Anda Kay, BEO Financial Services
- Mike & Diane Stuart
- Scott, Cindy, Brenda, Camie, Brad, Kemmerly & Logan Burrig
- LeRoy & Betty Smith
- Gene, Kristy, Jory & Erin Crowell
- Tom, Arlynda, Charissa & Billy Gates
- Helen Pettijohn
- Hank & Kathi Pointer
- Dennis, Janet, Jennifer, Curtis, Jason, & Brendan Thompson
- Helen Crawford
- Justin, Stacie & Payton Miller
- Dennis & Janet Stefani
- Darrin & Henry Padberg
- Pete & Laurel Cannon
- Frank, Cathy, Ryan & Allison Halvorsen
- Edith Matthews
- Peg Leg Farms
- Butch & Helen Heideman
- Loren & Della Heideman
- Loa & Mark Henderson
- Dana & Tonya Heideman
- Aaron & MaryJane Heideman
- Dobyns Pest Control
- Wheatland Insurance
- Jordan Elevator
- McGregor Company, Ione
- Dot Halvorsen
- Joe, Linda & Stacey Halvorsen
- Dustin, Karen, Ashley & Hannah Padberg
- Clint & Maureen Krebs & Family
- Del & Linda LaRue
- Robin & Melissa LaRue & Family
- Joe & Jeri McElligott & Family
- Paul, Charly, Jeremiah, Salli & Diana McElligott
- Joe, Anita, Marc, Caitlin & Zac Orem & Macarena
- Dick & Loa McElligott
- Ashley, Cathy, Adam & Meghan McCabe
- Marvin & Tanna Padberg
- Kevin, Lori & Megan McCabe
- Ron, Terri, Kyle & Kaylee Palmateer
- Keith & Judy Rea & Koby
- Bill Rietmann
- John, Kerry, Nathan, Jeremy & Brenna Rietmann
- Dick & Nancy Snider
- Jim, Monica, Luke & Adrienne Swanson
- Dorothy Stefani
- Steve & Vicki Wagenblast
- Tim, Shelly, Emily, Abby & Justin Key
- John, Barbara, Johnny & Adam Collin
- Bob & Bonnie Ball
- Eric, Brandi & Morgan Orem
- Steve, Camille, Amelia & Sara Peck
- Lyle & Virginia Peck
- Virgil, Debbie, Kelly, Korey & Karl Morgan
- Karl & Sierra Morgan
- Joel, Lea, Gus & Oskar Peterson
- Betty, Cody & William Bergstrom
- Gary, Becky, Jeff & Miranda Hunt
- Morrow County Grain Growers
- Les Schwab Tire Center
- Skye, Penny, Sybil, Cayle & Kip Krebs
- Louis & Betty Carlson
- Dave, Debbie & Mike Radie & Ashley
- Bank of Eastern Oregon, Member FDIC
- Duane, Linda, Jacob, Adam & Paul Neffer
- Jim & Gayle Eynetch
- John & Rhonda Powell & Family
- June Crowell
- Dick & Jannie Allen
- Fran & Dave Barnett
- Skip & Barbara Pettijohn
- Doug & Nancy McKay
- Glenn, Kelly, Tracy & Jennifer Griffith
- Beecher's Cafe & Staff
- Betty Gray
- Rod, Glenda, Jenna & Paul Taylor
- John & Linda Bristow
- Kevin, Linda, Stephanie, Dustin, Mason, Kirk, Bailey & Ally Haguewood
- Bob Hubbard
- Jerry, Lisa & Ann Rietmann
- Ken & Julie Nelson
- Paul, Terry, Shannon, Kara & Tim Clay
- Dean & Florene Robinson
- Nancy, Kristen & Kara Miller
- Dale, Karen, Barbara, Stephanie & Thomas Holland
- Joe, Donna, Emily & Mary Rietmann
- Ruth McCabe
- Gregg, Shelly, Tanner & Evan Rietmann
- Buzz, Jeanette & Jim Logan
- Roland & Donna Bergstrom
- Katherine Lindstrom
- Brian & Lori Sullivan & Family
- Terri, Ryan, Cory & Jaysi Bennetto
- Perry & Kathy Morter
- Keith, Yvonne & Austin Morter
- Betty Rietmann
- Kelly, Debbie, Richard, Derek & Dalton Campbell
- Dave, Beth, Cyndi, Amanda, Tori & Aimee Heagy
- Ione Market, Norm, Barb & Brian
- Jim, Eileen, Miranda, Colin & Taylor McElligott
- Mark, Becky, Till & Cyd Tullis
- David Stevens & Cynda
- Brian, Sharon, Andrew, Allysa, Allen, Alex & Anthony Rietmann
- Ryan & Allison Rudolf
- Howard & Dianne Mullins
- Rick & Anna Peterson & Family
- Wayne, Dianna & Shawn Hams
- Les, Kim, Jared, Olivia, Kelly, Lacey & Seth Thompson
- Gar Aviation
- Jan & Bob's Signs
- John & Kathy Marick
- Ione Band
- Toni & Eva
- Bink, LynDee, R.J. & MaKenna Ramos
- Sam & Jane Esterbloom
- Loyal & Betty Burns
- Craig, Theresa, Katie, Paul & Matt Hams
- Clint, Sharon & Tiana Camarillo
- Floyd Burrig
- Bill, Joan & Tim Doherty
- Ralph, Ann, Clay & Beth Morter
- Bob & Phyllis Ferry
- Tom & Marlene Pointer
- Steve, Laurie, Brown, Aaron, Tyler & Elizabeth
- Dick & Rosie Graham
- John, Helen & Arthur Ekstrom
- Nancy & Herb Ekstrom
- Carl, Kelly, Sheena & Nick Christman
- Bill, Sharon & Kim Morris
- Don & Eunice McElligott
- Gerald & Linda Wilson
- Henry & Robin Krebs & Missy
- Gary, Suzanne, Emily & Amanda Rea
- Office Cafe
- John & Chris Mollahan
- Rudy & Jackie Bergstrom
- Devin Oil Co.
- Murray's Drug