

County Court news

By Doris Brosnan

The Morrow County Court did not hold a regular session on June 26 because Commissioners Wenholtz and Brosnan were attending a CSEPP conference. The commissioners did, however, via a conference call, adopt the county budget.

At their July 3 meeting, two members of the Rodeo Committee approached the court to request that the committee not have to pay the agreed upon amount to the county for the work completed for rodeo parking. In a lengthy discussion, the committee members talked about the need for funding for an equipment purchase, and the commissioners explained the details of the county Road Department budget that preclude "forgiving" the debt.

From the Public Works Department, Karen Wolff and Sandi Day reported on the status of the Fair Office needs in the absence of a secretary and the steps the Fair Committee has taken to address those needs until after the August event. The court approved the temporary hiring of Renee Yocom, with the understanding that Wolff and Day will assist as needed. Day presented contracts prepared for providers of various fair-related activities, and the court approved them. She also reported that Charity McElligott would be taking over chaperone duties of the Fair and Rodeo Court.

Bill Broderick of OSU Extension spoke to the court about a forestry education project for which some SB1608 funds could be used this year, as the 4-H camp did not materialize. He suggested a field trip to Portland to visit the zoo and the World Forestry Center. The court approved the alternative project.

Tobacco Prevention Officer Karen Masshoff and Director of Public Health Sheree Smith explained the Indoor Clean Air Act to the court. Further discussion of the enforcement provisions under the new administrative rules continued, and the commissioners maintained their position against the county's acting as an enforcement officer. They discussed the three sections of the agreement with the state but did not take steps to agree to any of the conditions.

County Judge Terry Tallman reported on an issue that involved a landowner's water right on property on which the county has a rock pit. Use of the water right by the landowner during the last five years has not been documented, a requirement for renewal by the State Water Resources Department. He further explained that the landowner will be left with some right, but none will be granted for industrial use at the pit. The court agreed to explore the possibility of documenting the county's use of the water right during the last five years.

Tallman also reported having received a thank-you letter from Governor Kitzhaber, for his participation on the Executive Review Panel. He also reported a letter from the Bureau of Land Management asking if the county would desire creation of a cooperating agency relationship with the Bureau, which would require communication on county-related issues. He agreed to inform the Bureau of the county's interest. The court received a letter stating that the county will not receive the housing rehabilitation grant applied for through the Housing and Community Services Office.

Executive Secretary Andrea Denton discussed with the commissioners the complexities of evaluating and developing salaries for CSEPP positions, which are federally funded but "county employees." After a lengthy discussion, Commissioner Tallman and Wenholtz agreed that the Program Manager's salary should be calculated from out-of-state external market numbers.

A representative of Wheatland Insurance spoke to the commissioners about the annual renewal of the county's workers compensation insurance through SAIF. He explained new rates and

voiced an opinion that SB 455 will cause rates to increase for two to four years. The court approved renewal of the insurance.

Public Works Director Burke O'Brien reported that the crew had cleaned up stockpile sites used for the chip seal projects and were then sweeping roads that will be striped. Potholes have been patched on Bunker Hill, Ella Road, Main Street, Paul Smith, and most of Kunze Road. Asphalt on Lindsay Road was processed into base material. The crew replaced a bent guardrail on Willow Creek Road, and the crusher crew had finished with chip seal rock and begun making road rock at the Skinner Creek pit. They have graded Blake Ranch, Loyd, and Upper Little Butter Creek Roads. The crew has also attended an annual mine safety training.

O'Brien noted that the county has several no-spray zones which are undocumented but verbally agreed to with some property owners. Dave Pranger, who is responsible for the county spraying, reported that a substantial number of landowners are now requesting that the county not spray and that the county has not had an effective system for tracking the requests and marking the right-of-ways for spraying and no-spraying. The court agreed that Public Works should draft a permit for handling requests.

O'Brien and Nate Arbogast of Morrow Development Corporation explained to the court that plan changes in the Court Street intersection project have adversely affected the county's plan to place a conduit for a fiber optic line under a new sidewalk below the courthouse. As that sidewalk will not be replaced, the county faced an unexpected expense or the use of an overhead line until an underground conduit can be placed during the work on Terrace Drive. The court agreed to the second, less expensive option.

Other actions of the court included the following:

- approval of the purchase of a cell phone for the Planning Department;
- promotion of Sheree Smith to the position of Director of the Public Health Department;
- approval of the contract with the employee union;
- acceptance of the bid on the janitorial services;
- approval of equipment for the Public Works Department;
- approval of an agreement with Umatilla County for juvenile detention space.

At the July 10 meeting of the Morrow County Court, representatives of the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility updated the commissioners on the status of the incinerator project, including workforce numbers, surrogate trial burns, performance tests, descriptions of wastes, and disposal of wastes during construction. They noted their commitment to safety, and Commissioner Dan Brosnan emphasized the need for no "legacy waste" when the plant is shut down. They said there would be no drums left in igloos and said they look for "ways to do things smarter and better." They invited the court to tour the facility again.

Judge Terry Tallman opened a public hearing for the second reading of the proposed Speedway Ordinance. He did not take testimony. Carla McLane, associate county planner, pointed to the need for signatures on the findings of fact and noted the attachments to the ordinance. Tallman closed the hearing. As there had been no further changes to the findings, the court unanimously approved the ordinance amending the county comprehensive plan, transportation system plan, and zoning ordinance to allow for the siting of a speedway and related facilities at the Boardman airport. The time limit for appeal is 30 days after signing.

Sheriff Verlin Denton and representatives of Community Corrections spoke to the court about a proposed change in the parole and probation contract with Umatilla County. The change results from Umatilla County's wish to use the trained expertise in sexual-abuse cases of

the Morrow County Probation Officer in return for some covering of Morrow County cases by Umatilla probation officers. The commissioners had several questions of the officers and voiced confidence in Denton's evaluation of what he could see as beneficial for the county in this cooperative effort.

Denton also shared with the court a photo of the county's marine patrol boat that was sent to Portland to help provide security for the Navy fleet when they were there for the Rose Festival. He reported, too, that Morrow County would host the Oregon State Sheriffs Conference in September at the Riverfront Lodge and Riverfront Center in Boardman.

In response to a question from Commissioner John Wenholtz, Denton reported that the county has an agreement with Columbia Basin Dive Rescue for professional services.

Wayne Downy, of Threemile Canyon Dairy, approached the court about the question of certificates of occupancy, which the company expected to receive but has since learned have not been issued. The group discussed building codes, the position of the County Building Official, the county's liability issue, and the company's position that it has met requirements. The court explained that it would further discuss the complex situation with County Counsel.

Karen Wolff, of the Public Works Department, read a report to the court from Renee Yocom on the status of the fair, and the commissioners reviewed and discussed a list of maintenance requests from the Rodeo Committee.

Judge Tallman reported that the Small Business Administration has approached the court as it searches for space in the county for two computers for use in making inquiries regarding SBA programs. After discussion, the court declined placing one in a county facility. Tallman also reported that the Planning Director has discussed with DEQ and the schools the construction debris being stored around the county. She has learned that most of the debris will be used by the fire departments for burn practice, but one pile is not burnable and has left a question about a code violation.

Commissioner Brosnan reported a message from Heppner City Manager Jerry Breazeale concerning the curb and sidewalk project on Riverside Avenue. The city needs permission from the county, as part of the project will be on county property. The court approved the project, providing it remains within what was engineered and the city pays for it.

Representatives of McGee Financial offered a quarterly report to the court on pension-plan investments, down 5 percent from inception, though the market is down 15+ percent. The court heard the professionals' prognoses for fixed and variable investments and recommendations for the county plan. They agreed to come back in October to speak to the employees.

The court discussed with County Counsel Bill Hanlon the issue of the water right at a gravel pit, the one at which documentation of use needs to be supplied if the right is not to be canceled.

Public Works Director Burke O'Brien reported that the crew had started fog sealing on Patterson Ferry, Pole Line, Homestead, Tower, McNab Roads, and Eighth Street. They have started sorting riprap for the Juniper Canyon Project. He reported that selection work continues for the airport hangar replacement, and that the OYCC crew had been doing "a great job, quality work" at Cutsforth Park. At the park, the department is considering placement of some horse pens for equestrian users. Seven new campsites have been added and six other sites reconfigured.

O'Brien also reported vandalism at the Skinner Creek Pit on July 8, when someone turned on a fuel truck pump. O'Brien had reported the incident to the Sheriff's Office and to DEQ, and the department was cleaning the site. Three weeks

before, someone vandalized a grader.

He reported having made the changes in the no-spray zone permits and having added a requirement for pay of cost materials and labor to post signs, as well as a requirement to follow label directions for applications. The court agreed to have the County Counsel look at the permit.

Other actions of the court included the following:

- extension of an agreement with the Region 12 Workforce Investment Board
- acceptance of an offer from a landowner for block 2, lot 3 in the Ayers Fifth Addition in Heppner;

- approval of the purchase of a welder and two air greasers for the Public Work Department;

- approval of the parking of a truck with a pump unit at an employee's home because the equipped truck will not fit through the maintenance-shop door and needs to be available for emergencies;

- approval of a permit for a sewer line installation under Washington Avenue;

- approval of a grant agreement modification with the State of Oregon for the Health Department;

- approval of the agreement with Umatilla County Jail for space, at daily rate \$2 lower than in the previous agreement;

- approval of a contract with Tim Holt for psychiatric nurse practitioner services;

- approval of contracts for respite care services with Ashley Cain, Cynthia Sumner, Clarissa Johnson, Deanna Hendricks, Debra Ann Black, Frances Ann Peck, Karen Woodward, Krystal Maynard, Mary Morehouse, Naomi Ruth Donahue, Tamara Reid, and Tia Warren;

- approval of a renewal contract with Laura Aviles-Valdez for services under the Safety Net Grant;

- approval of a renewal contract with the State marine Board for services;

- approval of a contract addendum with Carol Michael, extending the agreement to June 30, 2003;

- approval of an enterprise-zone abatement agreement with Pacific Chemical, to replace the agreement with Stanford Chemical.

At the July 17 session of the Morrow County Court, the commissioners reviewed the 2002 Needs and Issues Inventory countywide priority list. After a discussion, they approved funding awards to Lexington for water and fire equipment and for the water project, the Heritage Trail signage, the Ione rural fire district for safety equipment, the Boardman Chamber of Commerce for community marketing, the City of Heppner for the engineering design for sewer-main extension and the Irrigon water system master plan.

Planning Director Tamra Mabbott spoke with the court about the BAIC easement agreement, which was undergoing a final review. Judge Terry Tallman informed her of the Northeast Area Commission on Transportation's request that ex officio members be representatives of the counties' road departments and planning departments. Mabbott also informed the court of a meeting scheduled for the following day, July 18, with representatives of the DEQ. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss with the contractors and the school district the disposal of waste from the school project. Mabbott noted that land use and solid waste were issues. Commissioner Dan Brosnan expressed concern for the landowners and agreed to invite them to the meeting.

Executive Secretary Andrea Denton showed the court the latest diagrams of the proposed multi-agency building for Irrigon. The commissioners agreed that the cost estimate for the county's share was too much. Denton agreed to relay the message and to ask what the county's share of operating costs would be.

Judge Tallman reported having requested from ESD an analysis of past, present, and

future telecommunications costs for the county. He shared the information on costs projected by the Port of Morrow and said that use of fiber optics would create 75 times the present capacity.

Economic Development Specialist Martin Davis reported to the court that all of the property the county has shown interest in for an ATV Park is on the market and some purchase offers are on the table. He said he would be meeting with the Public Works staff on July 19 to discuss the property.

Commissioner Brosnan requested that Davis contact a representative of Lexington to offer assistance in identifying possible funding resources for a water-improvement project.

Public Works Administrative Assistant Karen Wolff reported for the department. The work crew had finished fog sealing on the chip-seal projects, had cleaned out ditches on Willow Creek Road where banks had sloughed off, had watered and graded rough spots on Spur Loop Road. They were installing vaults and a conduit in front of the courthouse for later installation of communications lines, and they had been removing old asphalt on Upper Rhea Creek Road near Ruggs.

Wolff reported having filed a claim for vandalism of the diesel tank truck at the Skinner Creek crusher site. She said that the department had an environmental consultant look at the containment of the spill, and he found their efforts above and beyond what was necessary.

Other actions of the court included the following:

- approval of a letter of response from the Public Works Director to the Rodeo Committee, addressing the committee's list of maintenance requests;
- review of a report of the status of the fair and approved contracts for that event;

- approval of a contract between Behavioral Health and Resource Connections of Oregon;

- approval of a contract between the county and NORCOR for juvenile detention;

- approval of a software contract for Behavioral Health.

Chamber Chatter

By Claudia Hughes
Executive Director

History is in the making as Willow Creek Valley's totally homemade pies are popping into ovens all around town in preparation for the Heppner Chamber's first pie baking contest. Bet the taste testers are pleased as men and women prepare to enter their specialty during "Celebrate Historic Heppner" on Friday, July 26. Pies must be entered between 8-10 a.m. at Sherrill Insurance, the event sponsor. There will be great prizes and the community will have an opportunity to take home the entries during the auction at the park that evening. The judges are a juicy, sweet secret—likely from out of town for their own safety! Proceeds will go toward projects to enhance Heppner.

Shoppers are encouraged to enter the Chamber gift certificate drawings for four \$25 gift certificates to be spent at member businesses. Look for the sign in the windows. The Morrow County Fair and Rodeo Court will be drawing the winners at 4 p.m. in the area next to the Post Office.

"Quilts In The Park", kids parade, historic displays, dunk tank, free hotdogs, courthouse tours, museum, old Heppner High School mouse pads, great sidewalk sale bargains, in-store drawings, music in the park and much more. Bring family and friends and just have fun in your hometown. Stay all day, shop, eat and play. Aren't we lucky to live here and have a great time while supporting our community!

Thought for the week: "The most important trip you take in life is meeting people half way." - Author unknown

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Obituaries

Paul L. Hart

Paul L. Hart, 68, of Hardman died of cancer on July 17, 2002 at his home. A memorial service will be held on July 27, 2002, at 3 p.m. at the Christian Life Center in Heppner. Mr. Hart was born in Pueblo, CO on July 13, 1934 to Lewis and Della Hart. He was the youngest of seven boys.

Mr. Hart was deaf most of his life but was able to speak and made all his own negotiations in business in addition to graduating from Buladet College in Washington D.C. with a degree in Animal Husbandry. During his life he worked as a mechanic, body and fender and repairman, but his true passion was truck driving. He drove truck for over 35 years with no moving violations or accidents. He traveled the Western United States and owned his own trucking company. His hobbies were gardening, woodworking, reading and construction.

Mr. Hart is survived by his wife Anna, four sons, Allen of Cle Elum, WA; Rocky of Hood River; Wayne of Forest Grove; and Ernest of Salem; two stepsons, Daniel Doyle of Hardman and David Doyle of Portland; brother, Ernie of New Mexico; and seven grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to Christian Life Center, P.O. Box 145, Heppner, OR. Sweeney Mortuary is in charge of arrangements.

Charles J. Doherty

Charles J. Doherty, 87, of Ione died July 14, 2002, at St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton. Recitation of the Rosary was July 19 at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Heppner and Funeral Mass was held July 20 at the church with the concluding service and burial at Heppner Masonic Ceremony.

Mr. Doherty was born July 2, 1915, to Neil and Margery Doherty of Ione. He attended the Lone Tree School near Ione but left after eighth grade to work with his father's sheep operation. He was employed as a bus driver with Ione Schools when he decided to get his high school diploma. He graduated from Ione High School three years later.

He served in the U.S. Army during World War II and was discharged in 1946. Then he returned to the Ione area and purchased his own piece of land to farm. Mr. Doherty was known to keep accurate and detailed rain records from his farm—dating back to 1955. He stayed on the farm until his death.

Mr. Doherty married Beverly Jean Bradshaw on February 8, 1958 in Corvallis. Mrs. Doherty was the Morrow County Extension Agent when they were married. Mr. Doherty was a member of St. William Catholic Church in Ione, the American Legion for 56 years, the Heppner Elks Lodge for 58 years, Willows Grange, and a lifetime member of the Oregon Wheat League. He served on the board of the Ione Rural Fire Protection District as well.

Survivors include his daughters, Joan Doherty and Margaret Doherty of Portland; sons, Rick of Beaverton and Donald of Fort Wainwright, Alaska; one grandson and one great-grandson. His wife, Beverly, preceded him in death in 1997.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. William's Catholic Church Memorial Fund through Bank of Eastern Oregon, Ione Branch, P.O. Box 106, Ione OR 97843.

Sweeney Mortuary of Heppner is in charge of arrangements.

Quilters welcome

Quilter's Round-Up at Artisan Village will sponsor the first-annual Quilts in the Park outdoor quilt show as part of the "Celebrate Historic Heppner" day on Friday, July 26. The show will run from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. and will take place in the park. Owner Bonnie Wenberg invites the community to share the heritage and love of quilts. Old, new, large and small quilts are welcome from both beginners and experts. Artisan Village is located at 288 N. Main Street in Heppner.