



VOL. 130 NO. 12 8 Pages Wednesday, March 23, 2011 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## City looks to increase sewer rates to meet expenses and pay for needed upgrades

by David Sykes

Heppner needs upgrades to its waste treatment system, and sewer rates need to be raised to pay for it, an engineering firm told the city council recently.

Anderson and Perry engineering recently completed a study of Heppner's sewer system and concluded that an immediate \$3 per month increase in sewer fees will be needed to make up a \$29,000 per year deficit between expenses and money coming, and that will not even cover the cost of needed system upgrades.

The city currently has 742 businesses and household paying in \$23.10 per month, which brings in a little over \$205,000 to the city per year. Expenses to operate the sewer system are about \$229,000 per year leaving a shortfall that has in the past been covered by cash carryover and a one-time income from processing Spray's septic waste when that city went to a central sewer system.

"You need a \$3 rate increase or people (city workers) need to take a percentage cut in their wages and benefits to balance," Brett Moore from Anderson and Perry told the city council at its monthly meeting March 14. He said there would need to be future increases to make up for inflation and build up a fund to pay for needed repairs and improvements.

Moore said Heppner's population is not expected to grow much in the next 20 years, and that Heppner's treatment plant is in pretty good shape, but there is work that needs to be done on the rest of the system.

Moore said the main areas of concern revealed in the Anderson Perry study are:

1. The pipeline between the fairgrounds and Elder Street plugs up because of straw being flushed into the system.
2. Several homes in Heppner share sewer lines, which needs to be corrected.
3. Above ground sewer lines across the creek need to be insulated and updated.
4. Morgan St to S.

Court has root problems in the lines.

5. Lakeview Court system needs to be replaced because the pipes are too small for DEQ rules. The pipes are six inch and need to be replaced with eight inch.

6. The treatment plant needs several lift pumps replaced or modified.

7. Cleaning of trickling system at the treatment plant, and fixing the primary clarifier to keep water from going into Willow Creek.

"Your treatment plant will serve up to 1700 people," Moore said. "You do not have a capacity problem. However the city is in a situation over the last five years where you are spending more money than you are taking in," he told the council.

In a letter in this week's Gazette, City Manager David DeMayo said the city utility commission is recommending to the council that sewer rates be raised \$3 per month this year, and an additional \$2 per month at the end of the fiscal year. It is also recommending a small increase of 25 cents per month for the water department. Anderson Perry said additional increase would be needed over the years to account for a five percent inflation rate. The increases would not only allow the city to meet its immediate operational needs, but also set some money aside in a repair fund to do the needed upgrades to the system.

The council took no action on the rate increase recommendations.

### Cat Control

In other issues the city manager said there is an ongoing cat problem in Heppner. DeMayo proposed several solutions including a registration program that would require cat owners to have their cats picture taken and the animals registered. The registration would cost \$5 per cat per year and would prevent the animal from being taken to Pet Rescue if caught. "We are now paying for cat control with dog money," DeMayo said.

Heppner resident Dick Parris urged the city to do something. "I have dogs and they are spayed and neutered," Parris said he had 16 cats taken off his property in a two week period.

As another solution DeMayo said the city could set up a spay and neuter fund with seed money of \$1,000. Then people could make contributions to the fund to get stray cats fixed in Heppner. For poor people the city could pay for the procedure and then repay the cost over time when they pay their water bill.

It is general consensus with city officials that a problem arises because people will feed stray cats, but then not claim them as their own. "I took eleven (stray cats) in one day," said council member and county sheriff deputy John Bowles. "As fast as I could set the trap I would catch them," he said to illustrate the problem. "It is hard to regulate cats, because people will not claim ownership of them," Bowles emphasized.

### New fire truck loan

The city approved a loan of up to \$190,000 to purchase a new fire truck. The terms are seven annual payments of \$30,000 at 4.75 percent interest. The loan was sent to the city's auditors who said it complied with Oregon law concerning city's borrowing money.

In other business DeMayo said he would further investigate the purchase of a Housing and Urban Development, HUD, house at 160 S. Court St.

HUD policy allows the city to purchase the repossessed house for \$1. Alvin Liu of Heppner has proposed trading the city an old apartment complex on Chase St for the house. The city wants to acquire the property, tear down the apartments and put in a parking lot on the site. DeMayo was instructed to pursue the issue further.

### Police Business

In police business the council reviewed a revised sheriff deputy responsibility document. The city

## Scholarships available

Heppner BPOE #358 will once again this year offer scholarships to students in honor of the late Clarence Buchanan.

The current scholarship is for any high school seniors with parents/grandparents or step-parents/step-grandparents whom are members-in-good-standing of the Heppner Lodge #358. The application will be available at Heppner and Lone High Schools on their servers or from their advisors.

Anyone who needs a copy of the application can email scholarship chairman Tim Dickenson at dickensonchiro@centurytel.net or call/stop by his office (541-676-8990). Applications are due by April 15.

There will be other Buchanan Memorial Scholarships offered for second through fourth year college students, trade school students, and graduate school students due by June 30. Those applications will be released in the coming month.

Contact chairman Dickenson to be placed on a list to receive the application when it is released.



A couple of Leprechauns, Gracey and Shaylyn DeLoach, take in the St. Patrick's Celebration festivities this past weekend in Heppner. More photos page 8. Contributed Photo

contracts with the Morrow County Sheriff Department for city police services, and the council recently renewed the agreement for another year after much discussion with the county sheriff about deputy performance and responsibility. The revised responsibilities are listed below:

Deputy Responsibilities Assigned to the City of Heppner

1. At the beginning of the day shift check in at City Hall to ask for any updates or new cases that you might not be aware of. Make sure the City staff enters this into the daily log.
2. Each shift shall be responsible for driving/canvassing the entire City at least once per shift. This includes the City parks. A walk through of the park grounds would be appreciated. Homeless transients have been known to encamp along the creek near the parks. Drunks fall asleep in the public restrooms, bicycles get thrown into creeks etc.
3. Dog/animal issues. We have a kennel at the Wastewater (Sewer) plant. If you need it, please coordinate this with the PW crew.
4. If an assigned deputy has to perform an assigned duty that will take him or her out of our area for more than two hours please make sure that Dispatch informs the City so that they will be aware of the change.
5. At least once per day, if possible, the deputy on duty will walk the length of Main street, visiting the various businesses and interacting with the citizens as they "walk the beat."
6. At night, after the businesses shut down, the deputy will check the businesses in town to make sure the doors are locked. Dispatch will notify any business owner, whose door(s) are

found unlocked. The business owner will be responsible for correcting the situation.

7. The deputy on duty during the day will be provided a list of frequent code violations.. He/she will, using this list as a guide, and systematically inspect a portion of the City each day so that in a month and a half the entire City will be inspected for violations. Please coordinate with the CM and keep him informed of your progress, as you go.

8. At the end of your shift, if possible debrief the City staff on the day's activities (incident numbers etc.). Use your discretion as to whether you merely warn or cite an egregious code violation.

These responsibilities are secondary to enforcement of the criminal code and incidents requiring your assistance with other LE members or members of the public.

Monthly police activity report for February Traffic- There were nineteen traffic stops, one resulted in six citations.

Two juveniles were warned about not having lights on their bicycles.

Code Enforcement- 8 animal complaints were reported, resulting in one dog being transported to Pet Rescue.

A citizen called MCSO to report a beaver was damaging their property. They were contacted by a trapper.

Eleven code enforcement contacts were initiated, mostly for debris/trash and abandoned vehicles.

Two vehicles were tagged for tow.

Three lost dogs were reported to MCSO.

One noise complaint was

received. The occupants of the residence turned the music off when the Deputy asked them to.

Theft Complaints- A person reported items stolen from the back of a parked vehicle.

All Other- MCSO Deputies assisted Heppner Fire Department at a house fire.

A citizen contacted the Sheriff requesting assistance in retrieving clothing for some juvenile from a residence.

MCSO Deputy contacted a person regarding a civil complaint.

MCSO Deputy was contacted by a person complaining of harassing phone calls coming from a residence in Heppner. The Deputy made contact with the suspect and advised that person to stop.

A person called MCSO to report possible fireworks being discharged. It was determined to be a person doing construction.

Deputies found three vehicles with open doors/trunks.

A business door was found unsecured. The responsible person for the business responded and secured the door.

Two people called MCSO and reported they lost personal property somewhere downtown.

A person heard someone outside of their residence during the night time hours.

A person called MCSO to report they were receiving computer generated calls in an attempt to recover a debt owed by the previous resident.

A person called and reported two vehicles parked in front of CBE. Deputy made contact with the parties. Nothing wrong.

**REAL DEALS**

**NAPA KNOW HOW**

**TOOLS & EQUIPMENT**

**Selected Napa Hand Tools up to 40% off**

**THRU MARCH 31**

**Morrow County Grain Growers**

Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at [www.mcgg.net](http://www.mcgg.net)