



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES



Ione community invited to meet superintendent candidates

The Ione School District has narrowed its superintendent search to four finalists and is inviting district staff and the community to meet them Thursday, March 18 from 5 to 6 p.m. at the Ione High School gym.

Each candidate will speak briefly to the entire audience and then be available to meet and answer questions with small groups. Mask wearing and social distancing will be enforced during the event.

Information about each of the four candidates follows:

Kevin Dinning has a master's in educational leadership from Concordia University and a Bachelor of Science from University of Idaho. His present position is middle school principal at Bonner County Middle School in Idaho. Previous Positions include being the high school principal at Bonners Ferry High School in Idaho and a teacher for Abu Dhabi Education Council UAE.

Daniel (Dan) Koopman has his doctorate in education from the University of South Dakota, educational specialist school administration and Master of Education school administration from the University

of Idaho. His present position is instructional dean at Southwestern Oregon Community College. Previous positions were center director at Blue Mountain Community College and elementary principal in Boise Public Schools.

Tracey Johnson has a Master of Education and a Bachelor of Arts-education from Concordia University. Her present position is elementary principal at Ione Community Schools. Previous positions include principal in the Morrow County School District and a teacher in Oregon Trail School District.

Spencer Byrd has an educational specialist degree from Western Illinois University, a master's degree-education leadership from Northeastern Illinois University and a bachelor's degree from Olivet College. His present position is superintendent in Serena Schools, Illinois. His previous positions were superintendent in Meridian School District, Illinois and high school principal in East Aurora Schools, Illinois.

For more information about the Meet the Candidates gathering, please call the Ione School District at 541-422-7131.

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in several months so the new zone members will be planning an organizational meeting in the future in preparation.

In other business the commissioners voted to give all elected officials except the sheriff and the treasurer a three percent cost of living increase. This is an increase over last year when they authorized only a 2.5 percent salary increase. The commission was following the recommendation of the county compensation committee which met earlier. At the same time the commissioners voted to give the non-union represented employees of the county a 2.5 percent cost of living increase in the coming fiscal year. It was

pointed out that the non-union employees also get step increases which commissioners say effectively together gives them a five percent increase.

In other business the commissioners authorized public works to dispose of two old trucks that have been replaced with new ones this year. The commissioners also authorized finalizing the deal taking ownership of property on Riverside Ave. in Heppner belonging to the city of Heppner. The property is being donated by Heppner for use in constructing the county's new sheriff storage facility. Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District also donated land to the county for the new facility.

moved in the city park and will be working with the county to get the rock swept up from town streets now that winter is over. Lamb said he received a bid of \$2,500 from a company in The Dalles to remove one of the larger trees in the park but is getting other price quotes as that is quite high. Lamb also told the council he had passed his pesticide application exam and was now a licensed applicator.

-The council took no action on a request by Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack that the council pass a resolution "to address parking in the direction of traffic" along Main Street. The council was unsure why he wanted the resolution and decided to take no action. Councilmembers were open to having the sheriff come to a meeting and explain why he needed it. Lexington's main street is a state highway that runs through the middle of town, which should be covered by state laws already.

-Community Development Director Gregg Zody from Morrow county attended the meeting, introduced himself and left some applications for businesses who might want to apply for county business COVID-19 grants.



Mayor Juli Kennedy swears in elected councilmember Curtis Thompson to the town council.



Janette Eldrige, new town recorder

water rates from \$47 to \$48 per month. There will be an annual review until rates reach \$50. The raise is necessary to pay for increased expenses.

-Voted unanimously to move forward with a zone change application from local businessman Sam

Bellamy. Bellamy owns the former school building property and wants to change one of the lots on the back side from commercial to residential.

-Approved a request from Ray Papineau to forgive all but the base water rate of \$47 on a \$185 water bill he received because of an undetected leak. His son Jay was at the meeting and said he now has the leak fixed but did not know it was leaking previously and does not know where the water was going.

-Heard a report from town maintenance man Scott Lamb who said he has planted some flowers in the park in preparation for the Easter Egg Hunt, was looking at having some trees re-

property use violations. The planner will also assist the county planner when not doing code enforcement. The major focus of the job, however, will be trying to get problem properties around the county cleaned up. Commissioners have, for some time, expressed frustration in getting junk cars, old tires, wrecked RVs and other junk cleaned up off of properties. Commissioner Don Russell has been especially frustrated in his efforts to get property owners to clean up their land.

Presently the county code enforcement, as it is called, is handled by the sheriff's office. Often times sheriff deputies are assigned code enforcement only when there are no other pressing or emergency duties to perform, and code enforcement, or property clean up, is placed on the back burner and does not get done. Commissioners hope the designation of a full-time staff person to the job will see better clean up

results. Salary for the position will be \$47,556 with additional benefits of \$40,984 to bring the total salary and benefit package to \$88,540 per year. Commissioners will move some other salaries and funding around to make room for at least part of the salary in the budget.

In other business at recent meetings the commissioners voted to name all three commissioners as board members of the newly formed Columbia River Enterprise Zone III, (CREZ III). The board makes decisions not only on tax break deals with new businesses applying for the zone's tax exemptions, but also how monies collected in lieu of taxes will be spent. The new CREZIII replaces the expiring CREZII. Each commissioner will also pick their own alternate for the board.

In other CREZIII business the commissioners recommended that Greg Sweek be appointed man-

ager of the new zone. Sweek is currently manager of CREZII. Sweek has extensive background and knowledge of not only enterprise zones, but also property taxes. He is the retired long-time tax assessor for Morrow County and has worked on enterprise zone issues for many years. "He is one of the more knowledgeable people around the state when it comes to enterprise zones," Russell said when recommending Sweek for the job. Russell said the Port of Morrow, who is partner with the county on the new zone, is also favorable to having Sweek as the manager of the new zone. There are reportedly businesses interesting in locating in the enterprise zone and beginning tax break negotiations

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Lexington looks at May Day Parade

By David Sykes

The town of Lexington is looking to do something it might not have done before: have a May Day celebration and parade. Mayor Juli Kennedy says there is some interest by local people to put on a May 1st parade in town. "I don't know if Lexington has had a parade before," she said at last week's town council meeting in announcing the plans. She says some people have offered to help put it together and an organizational meeting is scheduled for next Tuesday March 23 at 6:30 p.m. at the town hall. "It will be fun, a fun time," Kennedy said. The town's Facebook page says there has been great response and Kennedy invited everyone interested in helping to come to the meeting.

In other business at the March 9 meeting the "new" town recorder was introduced. Janette Eldrige has come back to work for the town, having held the position previously.

In other action Mayor Kennedy swore in councilmember Curtis Thompson. Thompson was earlier appointed to fill a vacant position and then was elected to the position.

In other business the council:

-Voted to raise base

County creates two new positions

Emergency Manager and Compliance Planner added to staff

By David Sykes

Morrow County commissioners have added two new positions to the county staff. One is an emergency manager whose main responsibility will be to coordinate disaster and crisis response within the county. "The focus of the Emergency manager is preparation, response, recovery and mitigation for any major emergency that might affect Morrow County," the official job description says. Salary for the job will be \$57,804 a year with another \$45,934 added in benefits for a total yearly cost of \$103,738. Commissioners say at least half of the cost will be recovered through federal grants to the county. The position will be under the supervision of the county administrator.

The other newly created position is one of compliance planner working out of the planning department enforcing compliance with county codes, mainly property clean up and illegal

Residents line up for COVID vaccines at fairgrounds



The Morrow County Health Department set up a tent at the fairgrounds and administered COVID vaccines while people stayed in their vehicles. Vaccines are administered by appointment only and are now open for those who are 65+ as well as ages 45-64 with underlying conditions. Anyone interested in making an appointment to receive their vaccine are required to complete an interest form that can be found on the Morrow County Health Department Facebook page.

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