

High appointed to Heppner City Council



Cody High

By Andrea Di Salvo

In a split vote, the Heppner City Council voted to appoint Cody High to a vacant councilor position at its regular council meeting Jan. 9 in Heppner. High will be filling out the remainder of a term left by newly-elected Heppner Mayor Corey Sweeney.

With three candidates, the selection of an appointee was the topic of some discussion.

"They're all three sharp candidates," said Sweeney. "I don't think we could make a really bad decision," agreed councilor Sharon Inskip.

Councilor and Morrow County Sheriff John Bowles was absent from the meeting, and councilor Dale Bates suggested holding off on the decision so Bowles could be present, and perhaps having a vote by ballot, but councilor Adam Doherty said he thought the decision should be immediate. Doherty moved to appoint High, who had been a former city council member and mayor.

"Familiarity and experience matters in city government," he said.

High was appointed with a 3-2 vote, with Bates and councilor JoAnna Lamb dissenting.

Sweeney, who was sworn in by outgoing mayor Jim Kindle at the meeting, also shared some of his goals for his coming term.

"I'm excited to be the city mayor," said Sweeney. "My goals for city mayor—to have the circuit court stay in Heppner, that's my number one goal for the city of Heppner. Number two, probably, would be the sewer project, not kicking that down the road any more, getting it done and taken care of. Three would be

working with Tamra Mabbott and the planning commission to see the growth we need in Heppner for housing and whatnot."

Council members Dale Bates, Sharon Inskip and Adam Doherty were also sworn in, and John Bowles was elected council president.

In other business, Heppner City Manager Kraig Cutsforth reported that not much had changed on the sewer project.

"I met with Anderson Perry, and I think they were more concentrating on our waste disposal than they were what we're doing with our rebuilding of our sewer plant, so I don't have a lot of information," he said.

He also reported that the final draft of the water management and conservation plan was with the state, and Cutsforth said they were waiting to hear back from the state on that.

"We'll know more about it in about 20 or 30 days," Cutsforth said. "It's now in front of the state for review. It only took us a year and one month."

Cutsforth advised the council that Feb. 13 at 6 p.m., before the regular council meeting, there will be a public meeting with a group working on economic development and lands assessment for the community.

"It has got a lot of information in it. I think it's worth coming and seeing," he said.

He also reminded the council that there will be a public meeting later this month for a goal-setting session. That meeting will be Jan. 26 at 5:30 p.m.

Cutsforth said he visited with the auditor and received a draft of the audit. He said he had done a cursory review and didn't see any issues but would be reviewing that more. He has continued to look for a street sweeper, "but it's not that time of year, so I haven't really seen any. There's not a large amount of them out there at the moment," he said. He also reported that the city had received complaints about the squeaky windmill at the museum and were able to get the windmill chained down, that the heater in the

shop was replaced, and that he visited with a Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ) representative regarding the CREZ meeting reschedule.

"Normally by now we would know what and if we were going to get any funds through CREZ, but they're going through some changes just like us, so that meeting has been rescheduled and we'll know here within a couple weeks what they're doing. We may be receiving funds from them," he added.

In other business, the council:

-Removed former councilors Jim Kindle and David Gunderson as check signers and appointed Corey Sweeney and Adam Doherty.

-Approved lease renewals for Dickenson Chiropractic and the Howard and Beth Bryant Foundation. Both leases were extended another year at a monthly rent of \$450.

-Passed a resolution ratifying various committee appointments. Added to existing appointments were Eric Chick, Adam Bergstrom, Trevor Rhea and JoAnna Lamb to the fire department advisory committee and Sharon Inskip to the St. Patrick's Celebration committee.

-Heard from Heppner Fire Chief Steve Rhea that the department had six lift assists, one secure landing zone, two motor vehicle accidents with injuries, one water heater explosion, one citizen assist, three motor vehicle accidents without injury, one motor vehicle accident with three extractions and 28 chief calls. He also reported working on the ISO survey review, awaiting ready to build option sheet from a company in Texas for a Type 3 engine for the Rural Fire Protection District and completing a VFA grant award for purchase of loose equipment. He said total department numbers for 2022 were 205 calls for service and 316 chief calls. Both numbers were up from 2021.

-Learned that Morrow County Sheriff's Deputy Colleen Neubert worked 152 hours and Deputy Daniel Thomas worked 161 hours, for a total of 313



Mayor Corey Sweeney

hours. Other staff worked 87.5 hours for a department total of 400.5 hours. Heppner had three theft complaints, 24 citizen assists, one stolen vehicle, four motor vehicle crashes, two juvenile complaints, one hit and run, 10 traffic stops, one animal complaint and five dog complaints.

-Heard from Heppner Public Works Director Chad Doherty, who reported that the water department made and installed lids on vaults, repaired a broken water line, fixed a water leak, replaced meters, responded to six frozen meters, and responded to two after-hours calls for meter shutoffs for broken pipes in homes.

The sewer department cleaned contact basins, did 11 septic dumps, cleaned sewers and replaced the packing and fixed the stroke on the sludge pump.

The streets department sanded and plowed the streets on multiple days and applied deicer multiple days.

The parks department picked up leaves in the parks and attended the Christmas tree lighting to turn on the lights.

"We had a good turnout. There were a lot of people there," he said.

The shop department took an excavator for repairs, burned a debris pile, changed the oil in two Rams, and met with the city manager and Perkins Door for overhead door repairs and installation of new power doors.

"We finally got someone to come out," said Chad Doherty. "That power door has been broken for probably six months. If anyone's trying to deal with overhead doors right now, you can't get anything."

"We've tried for months, and it's not just them," added Cutsforth. "It's happened to a lot of that industry."

County Republicans discuss need for PCPs

The Morrow County Republicans discussed the need for more Precinct Committeepersons (PCPs) at a regular meeting Jan. 12 in Heppner.

Committee Chair Clint Carlson spoke about the need for more Morrow County PCPs; PCPs represent their political party on the local level. He also spoke about the importance of having PCPs in case an appointment needs to be made to an empty legislative seat, as recently happened when State Representative David Brock Smith was appointed to fill the State Senate District 1 vacancy left by Dallas Heard.

"That's what we as PCPs do," he said. "That's one of our most important jobs."

Robin Jones was appointed PCP for Heppner. That still leaves one vacancy in Heppner, one in Lexington, seven in Irrigon and nine in Boardman. Ione PCP positions are full.

Also at the meeting, the committee discussed an upcoming fundraiser, a spaghetti dinner Thursday, June 22, 6-8 p.m. The committee discussed trying to get local elected officials to speak and give updates on their work. Mr. Carlson also mentioned the possibility of getting Bryan Dean

Wright, host of podcast The President's Daily Brief and former CIA agent, to speak. Wright is not local but has family in the area.

"I think he'd be really interesting for people to come listen to," said Carlson.

A location has not been chosen for the dinner, but committee treasurer Brian Snyder said he would look into the Port of Morrow as a location.

The committee discussed establishing a budget, and Snyder asked for guidance on categories so he could put together a rough draft of a budget to present at the next meeting. Categories included travel to state Republican meetings, office supplies and fundraisers as expenses. Income would come solely through fundraisers and donations. The committee also discussed other fundraising ideas, such as a mailer or reaching out via email or Facebook.

It was announced that an Oregon Republican Party (ORP) meeting is planned for Feb. 18. A new ORP secretary will be elected at the meeting.

The next meeting of the Morrow County Republican Party will be Thursday, Feb. 23, at 6 p.m. at the Morrow County Government Building in Irrigon.

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