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Ian Murray chosen to fill vacant Heppner council seat

By Andrea Di Salvo

The Heppner City Council selected Ian Murray to fill the vacancy left by former city council member John Doherty at its October meeting in Heppner. Doherty, who was appointed to the council earlier this year, resigned from his council position when he was hired as the new Heppner City Manager.

The city council will soon have another vacancy, with councilor JoAnna Lamb planning to leave the council at the end of this year.

Of the four applicants for the current vacant position, the council members focused their attention on the two who were present at the Oct. 9 meeting. Council members said they felt both men were qualified and urged the other candidate to apply again when they began searching for Lamb's replacement.

Meanwhile, new Heppner City Manager John Doherty was present for his first meeting in his new role. He said much of his time so far has been spent getting up to speed on ongoing projects and setting goals for the coming months.

In particular, he has been working to wrap up the HB 2017 street project and the Oregon Dept. of Transportation's ongoing curb project, as well as



Ian Murray - Contributed Photo

catching up with the city's water and sewer projects and dealing with code complaints.

Doherty said the sewer project is still in process, with some draft plans only needing final signatures before being submitted to the Dept. of Environmental Quality for review. However, city engineering firm Anderson & Perry reported that there was a holdup on one of the plans due to a complete staff turnover in the DEQ Eastern Oregon region since 2019.

Once all the draft plans are complete and approved by the DEQ, the city can move forward with the design and seek funding.

Doherty also reported that the city's last water plan was drafted in 2002. Anderson & Perry is working on a new plan and should have a draft completed by about the end of the second quarter of 2024. Doherty said a water plan has about

a 20-year life.

"Basically, when we look at the new master plan, we want to think 20 years ahead," he said.

For instance, he said he and Heppner Public Works Director Chad Doherty had both considered the need for at least one backup generator upstream.

"[So] that we can still have water supply even if the power does all go down in the area," he said.

The council also approved a contract with Consor to inspect the 28 ADA ramps constructed as part of the HB 2017 street project. The ramps, which were completed two years ago, need to be measured in order to receive project funds back from ODOT.

Consor is the project manager for all of ODOT's ramp projects in the state. Doherty said Consor had told him there was a one-in-a-million chance all the ramps would pass inspection because of the time that has passed.

"These should have been inspected when they were poured," he said. "Ferguson should have inspected it at that time."

"Literally, it should be after the forms are taken off, they should be measured at that point," he added. "This should have happened before Premier left town."

However, he said, Ferguson is no longer in existence, which leaves the city

having to go to another firm like Consor.

On a positive note, the city does not necessarily have to spend money to redo the ramps if they do fail. Doherty said the inspection is one part of the process necessary to release the state funding for the process. Nor is the reimbursement "all or nothing," he said. Rather, it would be based on the percentage of ramps that pass inspection.

"To get any of that money released, we have to have the forms turned in," said Doherty. "Even if they all fail, we're still going to get money back. It's just, how much?"

Doherty said he had also been talking with ODOT regarding the city's concerns about the state's recent ramp project in Heppner. He said he had been told Heppner had much less input in the design phase of the project than other cities had.

"That has me kind of worried on what was signed off on," he said.

Doherty also told the council he had addressed several animal complaints, only one of which hadn't been resolved by the time of the meeting. In that case, a resident on Jones St. had a permit for a single horse on her property but had two horses, chickens, a rooster, and a goat. Lamb observed that it was a small property

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Peterson selected as new Port Commissioner



Joel Peterson - Contributed Photo

By Chris Sykes

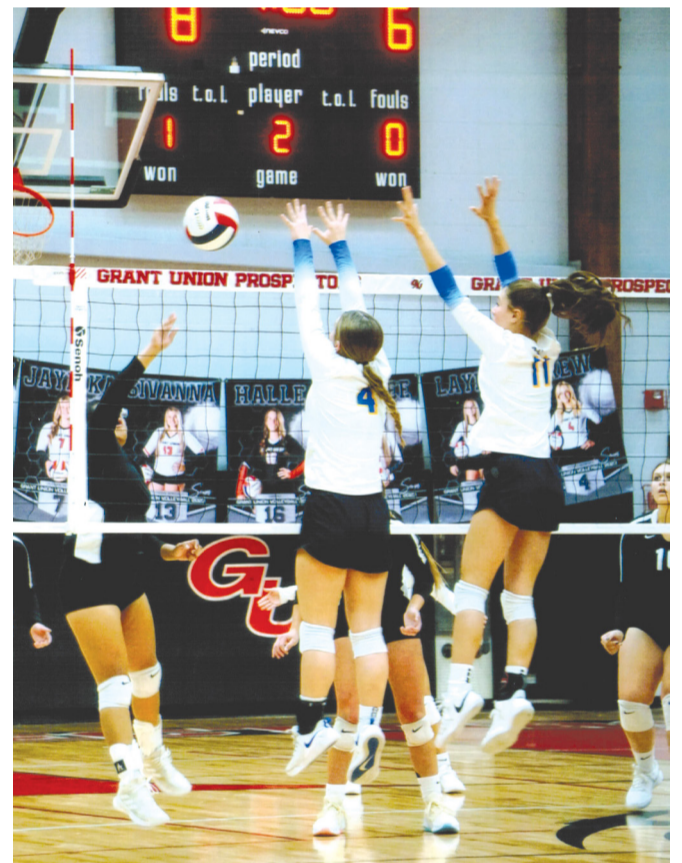
After almost a month of being unable to reach a decision, the Port of Morrow Commissioners finally approved a new commissioner to fill Jerry Healy's vacant seat. A special meeting was held on Monday to address the deadlock in filling the Commission vacancy. Previously, the commissioners were evenly split between

two candidates, Jerry Reitmann from Ione, and Brian Thompson from Heppner. Taylor and Stokoe supported Reitmann, while Murray and Doherty favored Thompson.

Commissioner John Murray made a motion to appoint a different candidate (Joel Peterson) instead of the two they were an impasse on. After some discussion and questioning of Mr. Peterson, a roll call vote was conducted. The motion to appoint Peterson successfully passed with a 3-1 majority, with Joe Taylor, John Murray, and Kelly Doherty voting in favor, and Rick Stokoe voting against.

Following his appointment, Mr. Peterson was sworn in to take over the vacant seat, and the meeting resumed its regular proceedings.

Mustang Volleyball finishes 3rd at the BMC Conference game



Maya Payne #4 and Hallee Hisler #11 go up for the block against Irrigon during districts in Grant Union.

- Photo by Tylynn Cimmiyotti

By Tylynn Cimmiyotti

The BMC District Tournament at Grant Union on Saturday, October 21, 2023, was the final opportunity for the Heppner Mustangs volleyball team to secure a spot in the State Playoffs.

The Mustangs played two games against Irrigon and Stanfield. They won the first game against Irrigon with three consecutive sets, demonstrating their drive to do what needed to be done to make it to the next game. They fell to Stanfield in the second game with one set to three, although they gave their best effort and attempted to block and dig their opponent's

strong hits. Coach Wilson congratulated the team on their achievement and expressed her enthusiasm for coaching them for another week before the first round of the playoffs next weekend. The Mustangs finished the weekend third in the BMC conference and are tenth overall. Several Mustang players received All-League awards this weekend. First Team: Hallee Hisler. Honorable Mention: Katie Spivey-Libero, Morgan Cutsforth, Ava Gerry, and Maya Payne.

Heppner vs. Irrigon: Won, 3-0. 25-7, 25-20, 25-17. Stats: Ava Gerry: 6 kills, 9 assists, 6 digs, 4 aces.

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Mustangs lose to Tigerscots 14-0

Their first loss to Weston-McEwen since 2011 and only their fifth league loss since 1999



Caden George #42 of Heppner dives to block a punt by Weston-McEwen. - Photo by Robert McLean

The Heppner Mustang football team lost a tough game against the Weston-McEwen Tigerscots by the score of 14-0. The Mustangs are now 6-2 overall and 3-1 in Blue Mountain Conference play.

The game with the Tigerscots was a hard-fought game from start to finish that both defenses dominated. Both teams traded possessions early in the game and then Weston-McEwen scored a touchdown in the last minute of the first quarter to make it 7-0.

The Mustangs were forced to punt on their next possession. The Tigerscots went on a long drive that the Mustangs stopped at the eight-yard line. The half ended there with the score 7-0 in favor of the Tigerscots.

The second half

started off the same as the first, a defensive battle that saw the teams trade two possessions. The Mustangs forced a fumble that Nick Wenberg jumped on to give Heppner good field position. On the next play, the Mustangs fumbled the ball and Weston-McEwen recovered it. The Tigerscots scored again to make the score 14-0 near the end of the third quarter.

The rest of the game saw the teams battle but neither one of them could score again. Weston-McEwen won the game by the score of 14-0.

The Mustangs could only manage to get four first downs in the game and could only 127 yards of total offense. They had 63 yards rushing and 64 passing yards.

Weston-McEwen had 252 total yards in the game.



Mustang runner dragged down by multiple Tigerscots Friday night. - Photo by Robert McLean

Caden George completed 3 passes for 55 yards in the game and Mason Orem completed 2 passes for 9. Wenberg caught a pass for 28 yards, Orem had 1 catch for 27 yards and Cameron Proudfoot had 3 receptions for 9.

Caden George led the team in rushing with 49 yards on 10 carries. Orem was next with 12 yards and with 1 yard each were Proudfoot and Hayden McMahon.

Leading the defensive effort for the Mustangs was Caden George with 12 tackles. Caleb George was next with 10 tackles and Proudfoot finished with 9. Wenberg followed with 7 and Orem recorded 5 tackles. Landon McMahon and Tripp Stewart were next with 4 tackles in the game and Jaime Cavan

had 3. With 1 tackle each in the game were Hayden McMahon and Owen Guerra.

The Mustangs will travel to John Day this Friday to play the Grant Union Prospectors.

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