



# Heppner budget committee approves budget for council review

## \$9.36 million budget includes millions in capital projects

By Andrea Di Salvo

The City of Heppner Budget Committee met recently and approved a fiscal year 2024-25 city budget in the amount of \$9,363,466. The budget still needs to be approved by the Heppner City Council, which will review the budget at its June 10 meeting.

The unusually large budget includes capital projects totaling \$4,377,203. A big chunk of that capital outlay is from a one-time Congressional Directed Spending (CDS) allotment in the amount of \$1.5 million. The allotment is intended for a rebuild of Gilmore Street and access to Pioneer Memorial Hospital.

There are also increases in funds due to other grants received or expected to be received. Those monies may be distributed among the various city funds—general, water, sewer, street, fire department, reserve, community development, St. Patrick's Celebration and debt service.

For instance, the city has begun work on an "aggressive" remodel of Heppner City Park. This project will be funded with grants and current city funds allocated for the purchase of playground equipment.

Planning of the city's water system master plan and wastewater studies will be completed in fiscal year 2024-25 with capital projects likely beginning in FY 2025-26.

Minus the capital outlay funds, the overall budget for the upcoming year is a 7.4 percent decrease from last year, \$4,986,263 versus \$5,316,257. The change is mostly due to slightly lower material and services costs and a reduction in the overall appropriated reserve and unappropriated contingency fund balances.

At the same time, Heppner City Manager and Budget Officer John Doherty said in his report to the budget committee that the proposed budget will allow the city to maintain current services, increase support in certain areas and address current capital needs.

### City Revenue

On the revenue side, Doherty said, most city income sources are stable aside from some large one-time receipts. He said water and sewer revenues will increase due to an adjustment for inflation, but total revenue has trended slightly lower than the estimated FY 23-24 revenue.

That said, Doherty said an increase of four per-

cent in city-provided utility charges is recommended to equalize inflation over the past year and keep utility costs at the necessary levels to fund future water and sewer infrastructure.

One line item that the budget committee did question was a drastic increase in the budgeted tax income to \$619,459. Fiscal year 2024-2025 assessed valuation for property taxes is budgeted at approximately 18 percent above FY 2023-2024, when compression is taken into account.

Doherty told the committee that the budget was changed to reflect actual income.

He added that Morrow County has a 99 percent tax collection rate, and the previous budget seemed conservatively low for such a high collection rate. Proposed tax income numbers come from the county assessor's office.

"Compared to last year's budget, that's really high, but the actual dollars have been flowing in," said Heppner Budget Committee Chair Tommy Wolff.

The budget committee still seemed concerned with the drastic increase in budgeted tax income, and decided to have staff double-check the numbers. The committee voted to

move forward with budget approval if the tax income numbers are valid but to revisit the budget if there turned out to be a large discrepancy.

In a later email, Doherty said the prior year property tax revenue decreased to \$4,800 from \$60,249, saying there had been a posting error in the city's books with current year taxes mistakenly posted to the prior year. The mistake has been corrected but did not change the projected income.

### City Expenses

Personnel costs will go up next year, as the city is budgeting a 2.5 percent overall cost increase for personnel services. Personnel costs are 15.2 percent of the total budget, less capital projects. The increase represents a four percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and revised Public Works pay structure, while still allowing for merit-based increases.

A big reason for the revision of the Public Works pay structure is to encourage staff retention and development. The city has instituted a new step system for employee compensation, which Wolff said helped the city encourage worker development.

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# Greenup's dominate rodeo circuit



Hunter Greenup, rodeos for Blue Mountain Community College. -Photo by Tiffanie Greenup

Hunter Greenup, who rodeos for Blue Mountain Community College, won the Northwest Region in the bareback riding. He will compete for the second

year at the College National Finals Rodeo in Casper Wyoming in June. Hunters' sister's Sierra and Savanna

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# Nicol buys and remodels old Heppner bowling alley



(L-R) Bobbette, Pat, Hanna Lovgren, Torri Nicol, Ellie Rinehart and Ali Lovgren in Schatzi's Salon - Photo by Torri Nicol



The new tanning rooms in the remodeled building. -Picture by Annalynn Black

By Annalynn Black

Tori Nicol, a Heppner resident, recently made a significant acquisition as she became the proud owner of her own salon building on June 1st this year. The building, located on Chase Street, has been in

Tori's family for quite some time, dating back to around 2006. Over the years, it has housed a variety of establishments including a bowling alley, an arcade hangout, a few restaurants, Tori's salon "Schatzi's" -Continued to PAGE TEN

# Heppner Jr/Sr High host annual Daytime & Nighttime Academic and Sports Awards

On Tuesday, May 28, 2024, Heppner Jr/Sr High School celebrated the achievements of its students with the annual Daytime and Nighttime academic and sports awards ceremonies. These events are a testament to the hard work and dedication of the students throughout the academic year. Recognizing both academic excellence and athletic skill, the ceremonies highlight the well-rounded development that Heppner High School continually encourages in its students. It is a proud moment for their families, teachers, and the community as these young individuals are honored for their accomplishments.

HJSH Daytime Awards 2024

### Mr. Morgan- Math

Geometry: Claire Lindsay, Hayden McMahan, Elijah Quilter, Hailey McDaniel.

Algebra 2: Elizabeth Finch, Lily Nichols, Rylee Palmer, Loren Trujillo, Caleb George.

Algebra 1: Lizzy Ginn, Isa Payne, Darby Spivey, Avia Botefuhr, Mary Ashbeck.

Algebra Connections: Shad Greenup, Kadie Henrichs, Aden Lathrop.

Math 111: Caden George.

Mrs. Spivey- History/Lego Robotics/Psychology/Computers and Word Processing

Outstanding Achievement: Owen Guerra, Most Improved: Kaden

King.

World History: Healy Hisler, Jules Archer, Landon McMahan.

Most Improved in World History: Ava Gerry and Zaleta Masterson.

Mr. Fowler- TSA/Technology/Wood Manufacturing/robotics/Digital Design

Jr High TSA: Abby Roley, Naomi Prophet, Cici Stefani, Khloe Rodriguez.

JH High TSA Structural Engineering 1st Place: Brodie Ogden and Ketch Fennern.

Outstanding Into to Engineering Student: Keeley Nairns.

Outstanding Robotics Student: Loren Trujillo

Outstanding Woods Manufacturing Student: Karver Wilkins

Mrs. Payne- Spanish/Health/Senior Seminar

Outstanding Achievement in Spanish III: Katie Spivey

Outstanding Achievement in Spanish IV: Caden George and Irelynn Kollman

Outstanding Achievement in Health: Jules Archer and Hailey McDaniel

Outstanding Achievement in Spanish I: Claire Lindsay

Most Likely to use his Spanish speaking skills: Landon McMahan

Outstanding Achievement in Spanish II: Loren Trujillo and Rylee Palmer

Mrs. Adams- JH Language Arts/JH Social Studies/Daily Living/Citizenship

Excellence in Ancient

Civilizations 8th Grade: Darby Spivey and Lizzy Ginn

Excellence in Ancient Civilizations 7th Grade: Kord Dickenson, Melannie Castellanos

Above and Beyond Award: Tenley Rosenbalm

Most Improved 7th Grade ELA Student: Teddy Bunch

Most Improved 8th Grade ELA Student: Naomi Prophet

Outstanding Improvement Award: Max Lindsay

Reading Rockstar: Avia Botefuhr

The Extra Mile Award: Emma Patterson

Kind Classmate Award: Brigham Jensen

Artfully Creative Award: Lyn Waller

"Yes, I Can!" Award: Savanna Greenup

The Kindness Counts Award: Carmine Albitre

3rd Place in the District Math Contest: Austin Quilter

Keeping me on my Toes: Landon Tuttle

Civics Bee Essay Extraordinaire: Eva Worden

Most Improved State Testing: Mikalie Duncan and Mason Haugen

Mrs. Dickenson- Food Science/Ag/Ag Leadership/Plant Science

Excellence in Plant Science: Claire Lindsay, Brooklyn Hendricks, and Jules Archer

Excellence in Intro to Ag: Eva Worden, Jace Wilson, Gage Heideman, KC Anderson, Kaden King, Olsen Anderson, and Lizzie Ginn

Excellence in Integrated Ag: Claire Lindsay, Brooklyn Hendricks, Natalie Piper, Caylan Proudfoot, Caleb George.

Excellence in Vet Science: Isabelle Ogden, Landon McMahan, Owen Guerra, Piper Kelton, Journey Cavan-Harris, and KayeleeJean Davis

Excellence in Floral Design: Piper Kelton, Isabelle Ogden, Avree Lathrop, Olivia Ogden, Riley Archer, and Kayelee-Jean Davis

Excellence in Advanced Ag III: John Lindsay and Katie Spivey

Excellence in Ad-

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# Ball's team qualifies for National 2024 Division III OTF Championships



Allison Ball, Whitworth University Graduate. -Photo contributed

Alison Ball recent graduate of Whitworth University Spokane, WA and her 4x100 relay team just recently qualified for the

National 2024 Division III Outdoor Track and Field Championships held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Their team came in with a very respectable 14th out of 16 in the nation. GO PIRATES!

Ali is the daughter of Duane and Stephanie Ball of Cashmere, WA, former Heppner High School graduates. Also, granddaughter of Les and Kathy Payne, Umatilla, OR. Phyllis Armitage, Wenatchee, WA and Diana Ball, Heppner.



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