

Lexington takes next steps toward joint transportation plans

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extra funds to it so that Lexington can participate with the consultant that's hired for their TSP update and we can, at the same time, get our TSP updated to include our downtown improvement plans," said Imes. "Which is what we originally had applied for."

She said it was not what the town had asked for fully in its application.

"We had asked for a lot more one-on-one consultant work," she said. "But it is still a good opportunity in my opinion."

The town's original plan ran from A to H street, but TGM is suggesting shortening the improvement zone to F to E street. She said it makes sense because there was less money than originally hoped.

"So it has to be shortened up, and I stressed that this area for Lexington is the main issue for safety," said Imes.

Former Morrow County Principal Planner Daisy Goebel, who has since resigned, participated in the meeting via Zoom. She said it also surprised the county planning department when they received the award and found out they had included a little extra scope for the town of Lexington.

"We definitely support if Lexington wants to move forward with the consolidated process through the TGM with Morrow County," Goebel said, adding that they wanted to make sure everyone had accurate expectations from the get-go.

"At the end of the day, the town had requested substantially more funding than what was awarded in addition to our award," she said. "That little pot of money that would be dedicated to the downtown improvement plan for Lexington is like a quarter of what was originally requested, and so I think we just need to be really smart and communicative about what that could best be utilized for, getting the most bang for your buck."

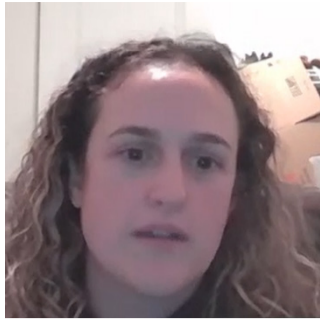
Imes said she understood Goebel's point but that she still considered even a reduced process a step in the right direction. Lexington Town Councilor Will Lemmon agreed, adding that it would also help with future grant funding.

"We've been applying for that grant for three years and have come up short, so for us to walk away from this, I feel like...well, no," said Imes. "I think it is an opportunity even though it isn't the full vision of what we had originally asked for."

"It's a great start," added Lemmon.

Goebel said she agreed but wanted to set the groundwork of good expectations.

"When I think about a downtown improvement plan, it usually has a pretty substantial economic



Daisy Goebel

element," she said. "It's not essentially just transportation related, and this scope would be just about transportation."

The project scope would still include sidewalks and pedestrian safety. It also doesn't preclude the town from going after further TGM grants.

"It's a good stepping stone to go for another grant cycle," said Imes.

The council voted 3-0 to move forward with the TGM joint grant.

"It's going to be a big lift, but I know you guys are able to handle it," said Goebel.

The next step will be for a committee to be formed for the county's grant. The town will have seats on that committee to address Lexington's downtown area. They would also conduct one outreach meeting in Lexington rather than the three the town had included in its original proposal.

"Because the public needs to be involved, right? The businesses and the people that live in the downtown area need to be informed and we need their input," said Imes.

Morrow County Emergency Manager Steve Freeland also spoke at the meeting and said he was working on flood alarms and evacuation training. He

is beginning with Heppner but plans to work through the rest of the South Morrow communities.

"Right now I'm negotiating with the state to kind of elevate our awareness on an alarm for any potential events, because by the time I get a notification, we have about 20 minutes at least in Heppner for a catastrophic event. We're working through some of those right now but absolutely coming down."

Meanwhile, he said the county emergency management department will do everything it can to support Lexington.

"Start getting a taste of what's going on down here and who the stakeholders are and how I can help," he said. "That's really what I'm here for, is to help support what you guys have going on."

Lexington Assistant Fire Chief Josie Miles reported that the fire department had one fire and three EMS calls for the month. The fire department is still waiting on quotes for the flatbed truck in the shop and will be applying for grants to help with that cost.

So far the town has only received one quote for the work, for about

\$15,500.

Miles also reported that two potential new volunteers may join the fire department after the first of the year.

Town maintenance director Larry Hess told the council that the parks are winterized. He said the A Street reroute project needs surveying, and he is sending out for quotes for that.

Hess also said he had been thinking of having a space where residents could bring yard debris once a month, possibly April through November, and he could burn it during the winter months.

Imes said she liked the idea of a community space.

"I think it's really good to have a place in the community for people to take their yard debris and whatnot," Imes said, adding that she would be one of them.

Lemmon also supported the idea.

"We'll just have to advertise that in the paper, flyers, social media and all that," Lemmon said.

Lexington resident and mayor-elect Sheila Miller also suggested having the service after major windstorms.

"We end up with limbs down, and it would be nice to have someplace to get rid of them right away," she said.

The council directed Hess to move forward with the idea.

The council also discussed the upcoming income survey needed to pursue a grant for the town's water project. So far, the town had not met the return threshold needed to qualify for the grant, but were hoping the door-to-door survey Dec. 21 would help.

Morrow County Commissioner-elect Gus Peterson was also at the meeting to introduce himself. He said he would not be able to be at every meeting, but he did intend to be a regular.

"I want to be continually present and be actively involved and have people know where and how to find me if they want to talk to me," he said.

Peterson said he could be a resource for county issues, and Miller suggested making that a two-way street with the town giving input to the county.

"We would also like to know when and if the opportunity comes up that the city could come to be involved in the county stuff, as well, in order to keep our foot in the door," said Miller. "Because sometimes—most of the time—Lexington is overlooked. We're the last ones on the list, and we do have some major projects that we would like to keep going."

In other business, the council approved Bobbi Gordon to use Lexington Town Hall for an AARP tax clinic. AARP volunteers would most likely use the town hall four or five Fridays in February through April.

Mustang JV cuts out Loggers in 59-17 win

The Heppner Mustang junior varsity boys' basketball team won its game last week against the Vernonia Loggers by the score of 59-17.

The JV Mustangs started the game out scoring early and often as they raced to a 15-5 lead at the end of the first quarter. Jace Wilson scored seven in the quarter, Alakae Rodriguez had six and Tripp Stewart two.

The second quarter is where the real damage was done to the Loggers' hopes of winning the game. Heppner was able to consistently pass the ball inside to Gage Heideman, who was then able to score 17 points in the quarter for the team. Jace Wilson also contributed six points and the Mustangs tallied 23 in total for the quarter to lead 38-8 at halftime.

Mason Seitz led the team in scoring in the third quarter with five, Mason Haugen recorded three and Wilson two as the Mustangs stretched their lead to 48-17.

The fourth quarter was played with a running clock because the Mustangs led by more than 30 points at the end of the third quarter. Heppner held Vernonia scoreless in the quarter and put up 11 points of their own. Wilson led in the quarter with five, Haugen had three more, Darby Spivey scored two and Seitz made a free throw. The final score of the game ended up 59-17 in favor of the Mustangs.

Wilson led the team in scoring with 20 points. Heideman finished with 17 in his one quarter of play. With six points each were Seitz, Rodriguez and Haugen. Finishing the game with two points each were Stewart and Spivey.

The next game for the JV boys' team is on Dec.

30 at 1:30 p.m., when the Mustangs host the Dufur Rangers at Heppner High School.

They then finish up their pre-season schedule on Jan. 4 when all the Mustang teams travel to play the Riverside Pirates. Those games in Boardman will start at noon.



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The County is offering one FREE voucher for every Non City Morrow County resident household. This voucher will be good for one free 4ft X 6ft X 2ft (\$15.00 value) load of waste at one of the two Morrow County transfer stations. Note: that the disposing of large items; mattress, couch, refrigerators, freezers, and other large appliances can be disposed of for free at any time; paint, Oil or latex based, and electronics included.

These vouchers will be offered at a first come first serve basis, be sure to check in and pick up your voucher at The Planning office located at 215 NE Main Ave. Irrigon, OR 97844, hours of operation are Mon - Fri 8AM-5PM - Or the Public Works office, 365 West Highway 74, Lexington, OR 97839. hours of operation are Mon.-Thurs. 6:30AM-5PM

The Voucher is good for one FREE 4ft X 6ft X 2 FT (\$15.00 value) and will begin January 4, 2025, to June 29, 2025. So don't stress over times, don't stress over days, tackle these pesky to-dos on your time. Voucher expires June 29, 2025. Only requirement is to present proof of County residence at the time of voucher pickup.

For information regarding 2025 City clean up initiatives or other projects be sure to contact your local City Hall.



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Iron Order MC Donates to Heppner Neighborhood Center



The Neighborhood Center's Kelly Fritz (far left) with Iron Order members "Hangfire," "Stateside," "Gestapo" and "Ten K" with "maidens" Calypso and Nextime.

-Photo by Kamille Holtz

The Iron Order Motorcycle Club (IOMC) East Desert Crew recently donated 31 bicycles, along with

helmets, backpacks, hats, gloves and toothbrushes, to the Neighborhood Center in Heppner.

According to their website, the IOMC is an independent and neutral men's three-piece patch motorcycle club. They are not affiliated with any other motorcycle clubs, associations, or alliances. The club is not classified as one-percenters, law enforcement, a veterans' motorcycle club or a riding club.

Founded in 2004, the IOMC enjoys giving back to the community, especially during the holiday season. They extended warm wishes, saying, "Merry Christmas!"



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