

**CITY:**

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August following the resignation of Councilman George Anderson. Councilors Jackie Myers and Lori Davis were also sworn in after being reelected in May.

Councilman Rod Hardin thanked former Hermiston Mayor and, most recently, Councilman Harkenrider for his years of service.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you for a job well done," he said. "We're going to miss you."

Harkenrider stepped down from his seat in the council chambers, and City Manager Byron Smith presented him with a plaque honoring his service.

"It's been a pleasure to serve the city of Hermiston for 54 years," Harkenrider said. "Thank you very much, and I'll miss it."

In other council news:  
 • After an executive session to meet with legal counsel concerning current or likely litigation, council members approved a motion to prepare a settlement



SEAN HART PHOTO

From right, Hermiston City Attorney Gary Luisi gives the oath of office to new Hermiston City Councilman Douglas Smith and returning members, Clara Beas-Fitzgerald, Jackie Myers and Lori Davis at the City Council meeting Monday.

agreement and postpone further action on the proposed vacation of a portion of West Ridgeway Avenue until the Jan. 26 meeting. At a public hearing about the issue, Sallee Properties owner Rhonda Sallee said she would sue the city for damages to her property value caused by the vacation of Ridgeway between North

First Street and the railroad unless she was compensated.

• Council members approved a resolution to officially accept a \$2 million Community Development Block Grant to design and construct a new senior center. City Manager Byron Smith said several potential sites for the facility are be-

ing considered.

• The council adopted an ordinance authorizing a revenue obligation up to \$2.5 million to finance the final portion of the wastewater treatment plant. Finance Director Amy Palmer said the city expects to need about \$1.5 million to complete the project but recommended the larger authorization for

unforeseen expenses.

• Council members authorized the city manager to enter an agreement with Simplot to make changes to the business's water allocation in the regional water system. Byron Smith said Simplot was currently using 1,018 gallons per minute of potable drinking water and wanted to use its full RWS

allocation of 2,000 gpm as non-potable water. He said a non-potable water line was already being planned along Feedville Road, and the agreement requires Simplot to pay for a portion of the change to its water delivery system.

• The council authorized the city manager to enter an agreement with the Oregon Department of Corrections to utilize inmate work crews from Two Rivers Correctional institution. According to a report from Byron Smith, the program costs about \$500 per day for a 10-person crew and a correctional officer to supervise them. Parks and Recreation Director Larry Fetter said he intends to use the work crew one day per week during an eight-week trial period to perform certain tasks for the parks department.

• Councilors John Kirwan and Beas-Fitzgerald were nominated to serve as council president to preside over meetings in the absence of Mayor Dave Drotzmann. Each of the council members cast a ballot, and Kirwan was elected.

**ASPIRE:**

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dream of becoming a physical therapist.

Now a senior, Gutierrez has two plans: one for if she gets to play basketball after graduating, which probably would be at a community college, and the second for if she decides to enter a four-year university straight out of high school.

Cortaberria said Gutierrez brought in a notepad this year with a list of things she needs to accomplish now. Some of those immediate goals include requesting letters of recommendations, writing up a profile that teachers and her mentors can use to write those letters and finishing

her Free Application for Student Aid.

"She is very passionate about what she wants to do," he said. "She is very focused this year."

Cortaberria said it has been really rewarding watching Gutierrez grow as a student and mature.

"Watching her commit to a goal and the challenges that it takes, that has been the best part of this," he said of being an ASPIRE mentor. "It will be really rewarding to see her graduate and walk across that stage."

ASPIRE, which stands for Access to Student assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone, is an Oregon mentoring program that matches trained volunteers with middle and high school students to help

them develop a plan so they can reach their goals after graduation.

There are currently 12 ASPIRE mentors at Hermiston High School helping more than 100 students. ASPIRE coordinator Michelle Munro said ASPIRE mentors help students not only with getting into college, but also figuring out the right career path for them, with scholarship applications and essays, SAT preparation and more.

"ASPIRE is a program where mentors from the community meet with students on life after graduation," she said. "It is an amazing program."

Munro said they have ASPIRE mentors who are retired to those with full-time jobs.

ASPIRE mentor Ruth Carollo said she is a recently retired fourth-grade teacher and was looking for a way to volunteer for a program that would help youth. She said she had heard about the ASPIRE program and wanted to get involved.

Carollo said she is glad she did as the experience has been more rewarding than she could have ever imagined.

"The kids are very responsible and really interested," she said. "Many of them come because they want to be here."

Carollo said sometimes students' parents don't know where to start to help their children through the college application process, and, as an ASPIRE mentor,

she steps in and provides some extra help. She has also helped students narrow down which colleges they want to attend, what career paths they could potentially be interested in and more.

"We are kind of like a second set of parents in that respect," she said. "We help them keep going."

Carollo said some students already know what they want and how to get there. She said, for those students, she is mainly there to offer reinforcement and support. For others, she said, she helps them narrow their focus to decide what option would be best for them.

"We talk about their options," she said. "If they don't want to go to a university, we try to help them

find their interest and direct them to achieve a career. We have all these resources in how to assist them."

Carollo said one of the most rewarding parts of being an ASPIRE mentor is when her students come back after they have accomplished something and she sees how they are ecstatic about having doing so.

"Their faces light up," she said. "It is so rewarding."

Munro said anyone can become a mentor; it is not limited to those who have a college degree. After filling out an application, mentors are trained through the ASPIRE program. She said people interested can email her at michelle.munro@hermiston.k12.or.us.

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