

CHARTER

continued from page A1

ers. Some of the proposed revisions, however, such as changing the mayor's term from two years to four and appointing rather than electing the municipal judge, were discussed at greater length by the council before the members arrived at the first draft. Because the charter will have to be approved by Hermiston voters before taking effect, councilors expressed concern that the municipal court judge issue might prevent the other necessary changes from being enacted.

After the first draft was completed late last year, the council instructed City Manager Byron Smith to present the information to residents at several outreach sessions to gauge public opinion about the proposed changes.

Before Smith delivered the feedback he received during the outreach sessions at Monday's meeting, resident Perry Hawkins spoke out during a public comment period, urging the council not to change the municipal judge from an elected to an appointed position. He said it was a "Bolshevik socialist idea" to remove the power to elect the judge from the residents.

"We seem to kind of forget a little bit of history that we had just a few years back when there was a little bit of concern of cronyism," he said. "... We don't need to have eight peo-

ple decide what we get to vote on and nobody else."

Hawkins said allowing voters to decide was the purpose of a democratic system.

"We are a democracy, and when you start setting up these little autocracies, you tend to get away from the whole purpose of you guys being there," he said to the councilors. "You were put there by the taxpayers. ... Let us choose who we want as a judge."

Councilman John Kirwan said voters ultimately will have the final decision when choosing whether or not to ratify the document on the ballot. After Smith provided his feedback from the outreach sessions, however, it was Kirwan who recommended that a possible change from an elected to an appointed judge be placed on the ballot as a separate amendment, so the issue did not prevent the rest of the charter from being approved.

Smith said few people attended the two public sessions, but three voiced concerns about the judge change and also recommended a requirement the judge be an attorney. He said Lions Club members voiced the same concerns, but Rotary club members pointed out that an appointed judge could avoid potential problems counties have with elected department heads. He said the Noon Kiwanis club did not mention the judge issue, except to recommend the term of the appointed judge have a limit to allow regular review.

Smith said he recommended minor modifications to the draft charter, stating the judge must be an attorney who would be appointed by the council for a four-year term.

Councilman Douglas Smith, a retired police officer, said he had experience with judges, but most people would not. He said he understood the

desire to vote for the position but cautioned the results could be based on name recognition rather than qualifications.

Mayor Dave Drotzmann said it is the city's job to manage all of its departments, including the municipal court. He said allowing the council to appoint the judge would allow it to select the best-qualified candidate through interviews and a hiring process.

Kirwan said only four other cities in Oregon have elected municipal judges and that the revision process was intended to modernize the charter. After further discussion, he recommended the judge issue be placed on the ballot as a separate amendment, so the voters could decide whether they want an elected or an appointed judge.

Drotzmann cautioned it might be confusing for voters if there were two separate ballot measures, but the council agreed it would be better to have two measures than one that was voted down because of the judge issue.

"I think putting it on there as an appointed position could be enough to bring it down, and I don't want that," Councilman Doug Primmer said.

The council directed city staff to prepare the ballot language for the revised charter in which the judge is elected, as well as language for a measure that would amend the revised charter making the municipal court judge an appointed position.

INFLUENZA:

continued from page A1

which may circulate later on in the flu season, according to the CDC.

This year, however, about 70 percent of the flu strains circulating are different or have changed from the original virus that was used to create the vaccine, according to the CDC. The H3N2 viruses that changed or "drifted" did not appear until after the vaccine was created for the Northern Hemisphere and, as a result, did not make it into the vaccine. Therefore, the vaccine isn't as effective as it normally would be, but it still provides some perks.

According to the CDC, the vaccination can still prevent some flu strains and can reduce severe illnesses that can lead to hospitalization and death. Schulz said people are 23 to 33 percent less likely to get sick if they receive the shot. If people do get sick after they had the shot, she said those people generally don't get as sick or for as long.

The CDC reports that, nation-wide, the flu activity this season has been similar to that of the 2012-13 season, with it being "moderately severe."

According to a Jan. 15 press release, the CDC stated that while manufacturers of antiviral medications reported there was no national shortage of the medications, anecdotal reports of spot shortages for flu medication have been reported. The CDC advised, for patients and doctors, it may be necessary to contact more than one pharmacy to fill a prescription for antiviral medication.

Schulz said she recommends, in addition to getting the flu vaccine, that people continually wash their hands and keep them away from their eyes, nose and mouth. She said if people are sick they should also stay home from work or school.

The flu, she said, "likes" the winter season. She said the wide spread of the virus results from people being in close proximity to each other as the temperature drops.

"We are a democracy, and when you start setting up these little autocracies, you tend to get away from the whole purpose of you guys being there. You were put there by the taxpayers. ... Let us choose who we want as a judge."

— Perry Hawkins
Hermiston resident

CRIME:

continued from page A1

nity Accountability Board has decreased through the years, but almost all of those youth successfully completed the program.

In 2014, 16 juveniles completed the CAB program, and 20 were referred. In 2013, 20 juveniles completed the program, and 25 were referred.

"I'm trying to be a glass

half-full, but it is tough to figure out what is going on, why things are working," he said.

One thing Edmiston said he would like to emphasize, however, is the flow of information between the Hermiston School District and the police department.

He said the two agencies work well together, which is one reason why the city could be experiencing such a significant decline in juvenile crime numbers.

"You guys are making decisions to be the best school district in Oregon," he said. "Having said that, I've got to believe that this movement throughout the last several years is specific to the wrap-around services that you guys are authorizing."

Edmiston said the CAB only works because of the people who volunteer their time. He commended the School Board on all its effort to support the program.

On a similar note, Ed-

miston said the city has had some success with the It's Just Dinner program, which it implemented last year. In that program, youth meet regularly with mentors and their families for dinner in the hope that it will inspire positive change in that child's life. The program is headed up by HPD chaplain Terry Cummings and other police chaplains.

Of the four youth who have been put into the program, Edmiston said two

remain. He said of the two who are no longer in the program, one probably wasn't a good fit to begin with, and the other didn't have the support from home for it to be successful. He said, however, he thinks it is important that the program continue. Edmiston said it is also important for the district to maintain a relationship and constant interaction between Youth Officer Erica Sandoval, the students and the staff at the

Juvenile Department. He said it is only through that constant communication and support from all agencies that HPD can be successful.

As a result of the downward juvenile crime trend, however, Edmiston said he thinks it would be appropriate to conduct a six-month study on the CAB program to see if any modifications need to be made to ensure the program remains effective.

NW FARM SUPPLY

Farm & Ranch Headquarters

FEED

FENCING

LIVESTOCK SUPPLIES

SPRAYERS, PUMPS, TANKS

AUTOMOTIVE

80411 Hwy 395 N., Hermiston, OR
(541) 567-5650
Store Hours: M-F 7:30-6 • Sat 8-5

870 N 4th, Walla Walla, WA
(509) 529-3253
Store Hours: M-F 8-6 • Sat 8-5

Rachel Dagley
Commercial/Farm Insurance Agent

Mike Stratton, CIC, CFP
One Responsible Source Agent

Todd Tennant
One Responsible Source Agent

Tonia Mulcare
Family Insurance Agent

Call us today to find out more about our "On Your Side" and One Responsible Source Service!

The Stratton Agency
Auto • Home • Life • Health

Nationwide
is on your side

1475 N. 1st Street, Hermiston • 541-289-3300
www.stratton-insurance.com
Hermiston • Pendleton • La Grande • Elgin