

Banks Council seats new members, considers budget problems

The City of Banks again has a full staff to work on problems facing the city. Two of the most serious of these problems – the city's financial deficit and the dangerous conditions at the intersection of Oak Way and Highway 47 – were discussed extensively at the council meeting January 9.

Newly elected councilors Ryan Birr, Kathleen (Katie) Murdoch and Teri Branstre were sworn in and seated after brief statements from departing councilors Norma Stewart and Dana Campbell. Also sworn in was reserve police officer Jack Stone. The council then reappointed Brian Biehl and Kirk Andrews to the Planning Commission. Council also appointed Rhett Preston to the Planning Commission and Heidi Goff to the Parks Committee.

Mayor Bob Orlowski told the council that the city had started the 1999–2000 fiscal year with a deficit of \$25 thousand and the 2000–2001 year with a deficit of \$139,000. The large deficit resulted partly from the purchase of property at 140 Market Street for \$79,000 and partly from the expenditure of funds that were budgeted but did not materialize. The property, originally intended for the Banks Police department but not needed when the Oregon State Police office moved to Hillsboro, has been sold on a three-year contract for \$70,000, an 11 percent loss. According to Orlowski, the city has received only \$2300, thus far, on the real estate contract. Additional deficits resulted

from expenses incurred in anticipation of grant funds which were applied for but not received. Mayor Orlowski anticipates the recovery of \$15–16 thousand of the deficit this year through careful administration of city funds.

Orlowski somewhat reluctantly explained that the council has the option of putting a one-year levy on the ballot to pay all of the debt in one year. If that option were exercised, such a levy would increase the property tax for the city's general fund from \$1.96 to \$4.27 per \$1,000 of assessed value. This would increase the city tax on a \$100,000 home from \$196 to \$427. The police department is funded by a separate operating levy of \$1.80 per thousand.

The issue will be revisited at the February 13 council meeting.

Councilor Murdoch, who just completed a term on the plan-

ning commission, provided background on efforts to place a signal at the intersection of Oak Way and Highway 47. West Hills Development Corporation accepted the cost of intersection improvements, including a traffic signal, as a condition of the final plat granted for Arbor Village. The intersection improvements were to be triggered when an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) study indicated that a signal was necessary. West Hills, ODOT and the city have been negotiating since November 1999 when the completed study indicated the time had arrived.

The city has yet to see a final, approved design plan or a time-line for completion. Council directed the planning commission to take action to enforce the conditions of the final plat, impose a time-line for completion of the project and

report monthly on the progress of the intersection improvement project.

Council unanimously approved an ordinance that establishes procedures to be used in the event of a Measure 7 claim against the city. Modeled on an ordinance from the City of Troutdale, it is designed to be fair to all parties by not placing egregious conditions on the applicant and allows the city to establish the application fee at a future date. Under the ordinance the city may release a property owner from compliance with regulations to the extent required to avoid paying compensation. Several Measure 7 ordinances passed by Oregon cities are being challenged in court on the basis that they waive Oregon's land use regulations. Troutdale's ordinance, with the release from compliance, has not been challenged, according to City Attor-

ney Jim Lucas, who also explained that there is no guarantee that ordinances of this type will not be challenged in the future. Lucas went on to say that he could not recall any zoning changes made by the city in the last six years which could subject the city to a Measure 7 claim.

In other business council:

- Approved purchase of carpeting and additional lighting for the Scout Cabin from remaining grant funds.
- Approved initiating a search for a superintendent of public works.
- Received a report from Orlowski that the city will issue citations to property owners who have not agreed to comply with fencing regulations by January 19.
- Tabled discussion of including the cost of testing backflow devices in city water bills.

CPOs 8 and 14 schedule well water testing and water workshops

Who is responsible for your well water? You are! Rural residents are usually responsible for their own drinking water and waste water disposal systems. OSU Extension Service in Washington County is offering a well water testing opportunity and educational program to assist well and septic tank owners in protecting their family's health, homestead investment and community's water resource with proper care and maintenance.

Free workshops are hosted by CPO 8 and CPO 14, on Monday, February 12. One will be at the North Plains Community Center from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. and the other at Banks High School from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Well water tests for coliform will be offered by AM Test Labs of Tigard at a reduced price. Water for these tests must be collected in sterile jars provided for that purpose, and returned to designated collection

sites throughout Washington County, on either Monday, January 22 or Wednesday, January 24, by 10:00 a.m. The bottles will be available at the collection sites listed below for two weeks before the drop-off dates. Instructions will accompany the bottles. Water must be tested the day it is collected for accurate results. Cost is \$17.00 for each test. Results will be returned to the OSU Extension Service for distribution.

On February 12, OSU Extension Water Quality Educator, Gail Glick Andrews, will discuss simple things you can do to protect your well water and septic system and point out risky behaviors you may not

have considered. She will help well owners who have had tests done decipher their results. You do not have to have well testing to attend the educational program. It is open to everyone.

Free, confidential screenings of well water samples for nitrates, acidity (pH), and dissolved solids will be offered to those attending. Nitrate is the most common contaminant found in well water in Oregon. Collect a sample of your well water in a clean glass container and bring it to the program. The tests require less than a cup of water.

Drop off sites are as follows: ACE Hardware, Forest Grove; Top Notch Feed, Hillsboro; OSU Extension Service, Washington County (185th & Walker, Beaverton, Capital Center entrance D-1); Jim's Supermarket, Banks; North Plains Hardware; Skyline Ridge Neighbors (15000 W Skyline Blvd).

For more information, con-

tact your local OSU Extension Service, Washington County office at 503-724-2300.

Spaghetti dinner to benefit Washington, D.C. trip for students

A spaghetti feed and auction will be held Friday, January 19, at the Harris Center of Visitation School in Verboort, to help raise funds for a trip to Washington, D.C., by sixth and seventh grade students from Visitation School in Verboort.

The auction preview will begin at 6:00 p.m., with the spaghetti dinner scheduled for 6:30 p.m. A silent auction will be held at 7:30 p.m.

Ticket prices are \$6.00 for adults and \$4.00 for children ages 4 to 10. Children under four are free.

Tickets may be purchased in advance or at the door. For further information, call David Heesacker at 503-357-9086.

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