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## Council told of changes at Providence

Two mainstays at the Providence Family Clinic - Vernonia, told the Vernonia City Council last Monday that they were leaving Vernonia.

Family Nurse Practitioner Laura Nichols is retiring and physician Mark Livingston is leaving Providence to expand his solo practice in St. Helens. Providence had previously closed their St. Helens clinic, Livingston said and, because he wants to stay in a semi-rural area, he started his private practice at that time. Another nurse practitioner will be coming to Vernonia to assist Judith Hargis.

City Administrator Mike Sykes told the council that a letter has been sent to the Oregon State University School of Pharmacy, encouraging interested pharmacists to consider locating in Vernonia.

The City has been dismissed as a defendant in the lawsuit filed by the county Historical Society against the Columbia County Board of Commissioners, Sykes reported. The Vernonia Pioneer Museum association was also dismissed as a defendant, Enid Parrow told the council.

tenants.

Alternative ideas suggested to protect the city from excessive unpaid bills included doubling the deposit required for service and shortening the time period before water is turned off.

When the topic was first discussed, at the Nov. 3 council meeting, another landlord had said she charged enough in the rent to cover the cost of water and sewer, but felt that excessive deposits could make it difficult for renters to qualify.

Councilor Glen Purvee also expressed concern about high deposit requirements because more than 50 percent of Vernonia residents are "low income," as determined by the U.S. Census.

Public Works Director Robyn Bassett will return to the council, January 20, with additional information, including an analysis of outstanding debt owed to the city.

### Vernonia After School programs funded

Vernonia's grant application to the Columbia County Commission on Children and Families, to renew the After School program, has been funded and will receive \$13,595 Sykes to the council.

The program includes a Head Start Activity Club, which will serve 50 children ages 6-11;

The Homework and Twilight Clubs will serve 45 children, ages 8-18;

### Water Ordinance changes discussed

Two landlords told the council, one adamantly, that they opposed a proposed change to the city's water ordinance which would require them to be responsible for any unpaid water/sewer fees charged to their

The Reading Enrichment Program will serve children from 5 to 12 years-old.

The after school programs are a cooperative program involving Community Action Team, the Vernonia School District and the City of Vernonia. More information is available from Vernonia Head Start, the school district and the Vernonia Public Library.

## Vacation of G Street approved

Prior to the Dec. 1 council meeting, a public hearing was held to take testimony regarding a request by Jim Brunzman for the city to vacate a portion of G Street.

The part of G Street discussed for vacation is on the west side of Rock Creek. It is platted but has never been developed. Wetlands that will not support development were included in the original plat map.

Following Brunzman's agreement to the access requirements of the Vernonia Rural Fire District, the Vernonia Planning Commission approved his request and recommended approval by the council.

Staff also recommended approval and there was no testimony in opposition to the vacation. Council unanimously approved Brunzman's request.

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