

Banks council continues move toward position of administrator

The potential benefits and costs associated with some form of city administrator were discussed by the Banks City Council at their April 13 meeting. A committee composed of council members Pete Edison and Ryan Birr, city employee Tim Grossnickle and community members Mark Ward and Wes Wingship was formed in November of last year to determine whether a change was needed and if it is affordable, and to set a timeline for making the change.

Birr reported that help from the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) and other cities has been invaluable and prevented the committee from being overwhelmed by the scope of the project. Presently, Banks operates under a strong mayor system, with the mayor directly in-

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involved in the day-to-day running of city affairs. However, examination of the city's charter reveals that the mayor should have fewer duties and not be directly involved with the administration of the city. Considering the population forecast and the strength of the city's budget, Birr said, the committee unanimously agreed that now is the time to consider such a move.

Edison continued the presentation, saying the committee needed direction from council and the budget committee in order to proceed, particularly in view of unapproved levies for library services and the police department. The current budget has a large ending fund balance that will be used to meet the needs of the library and police department in the 2004-2005 fiscal year, if necessary. However, once these holes in the city's budget are filled, the committee felt that money would be available to fund a full-time city manager's position in 2005-2006. The committee concluded that the city has the money, during the next fiscal year, to begin the process and prepare for a city manager.

Edison and Birr reported that success in completing this system change was greatest in cities where a citywide coordi-

nator was hired. A coordinator would serve as a central communication point, from the council and mayor to city employees, and vice versa. A coordinator would also be responsible for developing employee manuals and job descriptions. This position would not necessarily be a new hire, but could be an internal adjustment for one year. Council approved the addition of a budget line item for this purpose. The amount budgeted will be determined by the budget committee.

Officer appointed

Robert Richards was appointed as a new member of the police department. Roberts, a member of the

Banks Police Reserve for the last year, has worked in Newberg as a municipal court bailiff and reserve officer. Initially Roberts will be working with Officer Brian Bringman. Mayor Bob Orlowski told council that, following training, the department will move to a ten-hour day schedule in order to improve coverage and overlap shifts at critical times.

Technology Report

John Thies reported on his inventory of information assets and software for city hall, the police department and the library and noted that he found "a few things that were kind of scary." Thies' goal is to simplify the system and remove ele-

ments that impede performance. He recommended replacement of all city computers with new \$500-600 machines which can be networked together. He provided preliminary figures for the replacement of the computers, software upgrades and development of a network that will make the system more secure and easier to use.

In other business, council:
 - Appointed Kevin Strummer to the planning commission.
 - Approved population forecast update (3749 by the year 2024).
 - Granted Verizon access to city water tank property for 30 days for evaluation purposes.

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