

# The INDEPENDENT

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## Opinion

### How to approve new laws

The Vernonia City Council was presented with Ordinance 655, which outlines rules and regulations for the Water Department of the City. This was billed as an amendment for better clarification. 655 repeals existing Ordinance 642 and all amendments to 642. The summary presented to council indicates the last amendment made to this city law was in 2001. The summary also says that the Public Works Committee reviewed the suggested amendments. The last minutes provided to council from the committee were from June 22 and this ordinance wasn't mentioned.

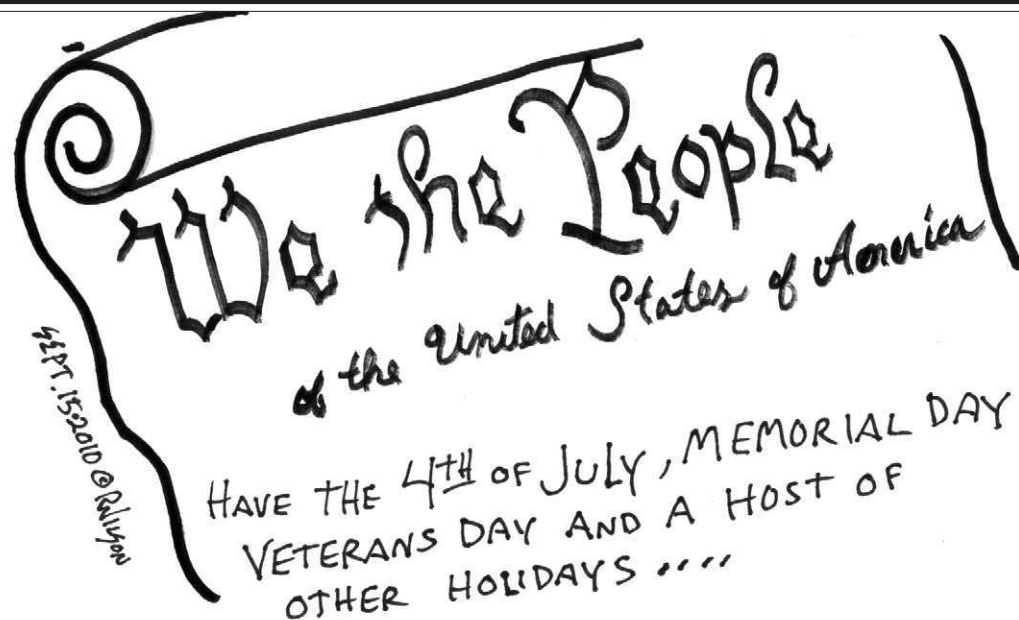
So what? First, it doesn't say Public Works recommended, suggested or approved the amendment. It doesn't say the Ordinance has been seen by anybody who is NOT on city staff or a committee. The city has, again, missed an opportunity for community input. How could they get citizen input? A meeting, a town hall, perhaps a survey in the water bill. Even Councilor Kevin Hudson, who also serves as liaison to the Public Works Committee, had comments and suggested changes, which caused council to set Ordinance 655 aside and have the Public Works Committee review it for further changes.

Second, section 8, Utility Charge Liens, in 655 includes this apparently new language: *In addition to a deposit, the City shall obtain a signed agreement from the owner of the premises that they accept liability for any charges accruing as a result of the provision of water service and that a lien can be filed against the premises if charges are not paid.* Then (*Resolution No. 14-08 No. 8 Fees for Liens*) finishes that section. Most of page 3 appears to be new language with no notations to help figure out from whence it came. Ditto almost half of page 4 and pieces of pages 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. If it sounds complicated, it's because it is. (Note: a copy of the old ordinance was not provided to council, but the entire section 8 is underlined, which usually denotes new language.)

Third, how, you may well ask, does council know how to vote on a mess like that? The answer is that the council summary 'recommends' what Council should do. Do you think staff will do all the work needed to amend a 9-page ordinance, and then recommend that council not approve it? In this case, the paragraph entitled "Staff Recommendation" says, "It is recommended that City Council Amend Ordinance No. 655 Utilities (Water)." The summary even tells them how to say it; under "Suggested Motion" is the sentence, "I Move to Amend Ordinance No. 655 Utilities (Water)."

### How's the water in Timber?

Timber has a bunch of dedicated people, who without apparent ego, got a big water project done. They just brought a new water plant online and under budget. See story on page 15.



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do ordain and establish this  
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### Out of My Mind . . .

by Noni Andersen



I find it interesting that many of today's Republicans are negating the long-held belief that their symbol, the elephant, has an outstanding memory.

People who are interested in public affairs (not the sexual affairs of people in the public eye) are aware that both unregulated

financial markets and profligate government spending are elements in our economic meltdown. Nevertheless, I'm amazed at those who insist that every problem was created by President Obama in less than two years! That would be truly astounding.

The tax rate for top income earners during the Eisenhower administration, in the 1950s, was about 90%. That was also a period of rapid economic growth, even while taxes provided veterans with higher education and subsidized mortgages. That rate was reduced to about 70% during the Kennedy administration. Today, Congressional lackeys serve their masters by shrieking that the sky will fall if the tax rate for the top one percent is increased from 36% to 39%. They shriek so loudly that, sadly, the middle class is being effectively exploited into believing that they will be harmed by that falling sky if the rich start paying for their own tax loopholes.

Too many Americans watch American Idol or Dancing With The Stars, not enough watch C-

SPAN.

David Stockman, President Reagan's director of the Office of Management and Budget, recently put his opinions in writing, "How my G.O.P. destroyed the U.S. economy", saying:

"If there were such a thing as Chapter 11 for politicians, the Republican push to extend the unaffordable Bush tax cuts would amount to a bankruptcy filing. The nation's public debt...will soon reach \$18 trillion." It screams "out for austerity and sacrifice." But the GOP insists "that the nation's wealthiest taxpayers be spared even a three-percentage-point rate increase."

According to Stockman, in the past 40 years Republican ideology has gone from solid principles to hype and slogans. He says: "Republicans used to believe that prosperity depended upon the regular balancing of accounts — in government, in international trade, on the ledgers of central banks and in the financial affairs of private households and businesses."

Today, he says, there's a "new catechism" that's "little more than money printing and deficit finance, vulgar Keynesianism robed in the ideological vestments of the prosperous classes" making a mockery of GOP ideals and resulting in "serial financial bubbles and Wall Street depredations that have crippled our economy."

"...in 1981, traditional Republicans supported tax cuts," but Stockman makes clear, they had to be "matched by spending cuts."

Today's GOP doesn't support extending unemployment benefits, only continued tax breaks for the wealthy, and subsidies to send jobs overseas. The principled conservatives are extinct, it's too bad Reagan didn't listen to them.