

24 Years Ago This Month

The December 24, 1986, issue of *The Independent* included the following news story on the front page:

The Vernonia City Council, at their December 15, 1986 meeting, expressed considerable dismay at a request for an extension of time to complete the city's water plant.

The request for a thirty day extension of time, plus partial payment on the contract, was presented on behalf of contractor C.A. Taggart by Ed Crane of HGE, the engineering firm that is overseeing the project for the city. The request was based on weather problems and late arrival of material and equipment. Failure to complete the project on time will result in the city's having to pay additional interest on its construction loan; the water plant contract includes provisions that could cost the contractor as much as \$400 per day if he is responsible for delays.

Since the start of construction, approximately a year ago, no change order has been requested, Councilmember Joe Batty pointed out, and Councilmember Wells Oviatt objected to a delay based on weather problems because "I don't think the weather has been bad." A request for a change order during the year would have alerted the council to any problems that existed in the construction of the plant.

In response to questioning by the council, Gordon Munro, also of HGE, said that Taggart could not finish the project in 30 days, but recommended that the council allow a fifteen day extension and then assess the

situation. He added that the city might lose the cooperation of the contractor if they instituted damages right away.

After lengthy discussion, the council voted to extend the contract for 15 days and assess the situation at that time for monetary damages or other considerations.

Water pressure, or lack of it, was also considered by the council at their December 1 meeting, when a letter from the attorney for Arthur Ragsdale, 17718 Noakes Road, said that the city's water system failed to provide the minimum 20 pounds of pressure required by state code and demanded correction of the problem.

Superintendent of Public Works Mike Smith said that although the pressure is normally low in that area, the situation had worsened because of the need to lower pressure in the downtown area to avoid breaking pipes.

After discussion of the system's limitations and the fact that some of the users, including Ragsdale, are outside the

city limits, the council tabled any action and invited Ragsdale to the next meeting to discuss the problem.

Ragsdale didn't attend the December 15 meeting, but Smith reported he had checked the pressure at the meter and found it met the required 20 pounds. Other factors were decreasing pressure to the Ragsdales, Smith said, including the distance from the meter to the residence and another user between the meter and the Ragsdales. On the advice of the city Attorney David Frost no action was taken. "It looks like we are not at fault at this point," Frost said.

In other business the council extended the garbage service franchise ordinance for five years. The franchise is operated by Robert Prohaska's Nehalem Valley Sanitary Service.

The council rejected quotations received for purchase of a new lawn mower and instructed Smith to prepare a specification sheet and Request for Bid for distribution to Columbia and Washington County dealers.

Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



Golly Gee Whiz. I saw my first snow of the season December 1 on my way to Vernonia. A couple of piles of dirty stuff at Stub Park. Another surprise awaited me at the Senior Center. Was great to see and hear Bob, Everett, Larry and Dorothy sitting in with the band. Merry Christmas to you if don't see you until next year.

I think I goofed in my last article. I spend 9 hours and 45 minutes "a week", not a day, in treatment. Sometimes my fingers do not write what my brain is thinking.

You know winter is really here when you hear of your friends getting sick and going to the hospital. Have you had all of your shots yet? They are a pain but it's better than having to stay away from all the excitement of the Christmas Season.

When it stops raining and blowing, I'm going to deck my deck with lights and boughs – I may have to tie them down to keep them in my space, but if you grew up with outdoor decorations you can't do without them.

From what I saw along the streets and read in *The Independent*, Vernonia seems to be getting in the Spirit of the Season. Just remember to keep Christ-mas, not just holiday hoopla. If you're as busy as I think I am, put the tea kettle on, have a cup of hot tea or mulled cider, put on a Christmas disc, put your feet up, munch a Christmas cookie or fruit cake and go with the flow. You'll go through all of this again in twelve months.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all of you old friends.

Jacqueline & Shadow



Make sure your holidays are wrapped in safety.

One of the best gifts you can give your family for the holidays is a safe home. While you're decking the halls, check that you've done all you can to prevent fires. Make sure that all light strings, electrical cords and power strips are in good condition and suited to the job. Don't overload your outlets. Inspect and clean the chimney and fireplace before you ever light a match. Always use a fireplace screen. Keep your live tree well watered.

Warm wishes for safe celebrations from Columbia 9-1-1.



Columbia 9-1-1.
Always there.