

Former mayor, new council members, loudly express differences

Before the regular Vernonia City Council meeting started at 7:00 p.m. on March 7, the council held a work session to meet with Jennie Messmer, Member Services Director of League of Oregon Cities (LOC), to begin the process of using the LOC for the city administrator hiring process. The council voted 3-2 to use that process at a previous council meeting.

During the work session, in response to Councilor Kevin Hudson's statement that some projects might be slowed down, Councilor Randy Parrow said the much needed Health Center, Vernonia Cares and Senior Center Project on Rose Ave. could be slowed. Councilor Willow Burch said she spoke to someone at CAT (Community Action Team) and was told they will still take care of the projects. Then CAT Director, Jim Tierney, spoke up to say those projects will be slowed down if they replace Bill Haack. Tierney went on

to say that he wouldn't quit working on the projects even if it took 10 years to complete.

At one point, Messmer asked if the council really wanted to move forward with this recruitment, saying, "It seems you're dancing around hiring the interim manager." Messmer also told council that Warrenton (a city with a population of 4,500) is paying their city administrator \$90,000, while Vernonia is talking about \$60,000. By the end of the work session council gave Messmer the go-ahead to start the search for a new city administrator.

When the regular council meeting started, council added a presentation by previous Mayor Sally Harrison to the agenda. Harrison told council she and 180 other citizens had concerns about the council using the LOC process to look for a new city administrator when, "We already have a capable, willing and knowledgeable person (Bill Haack)." Harrison went on to say, "We fail to under-

stand why you feel the necessity to go on a wild goose chase when what we need is right here. Because it's the city and the citizens who will ultimately wreak the havoc of your decision, we feel you owe us an honest, clear and concise explanation of your actions."

Burch responded, "I'm not going to apologize for my position, I think we have to go through the process." She went on to say that, in her opinion, Haack was not, "real forthcoming with information and he's been evasive." After that exchange, Burch and Harrison spoke over each other until Mayor Josette Mitchell used her gavel to restore order.

"Just be sure you're speaking the truth," Harrison then said, a statement that caused Burch to say, "I take offense to being interrupted. I have been voted an elected official of this city...and I will not argue with you."

Hudson's response to Harrison was, "My concern is first and fore-

most the dollars. I believe going through the process is the best way."

Councilor Marilyn Nicks told Harrison, "Under the constitutional provision, Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, you have the right to an unbiased, impartial decision maker, a fair process and Bill has the same right." (*Editor's Note: The 14th Amendment Due Process Clause prohibits state and local governments from depriving persons of life, liberty, or property without certain steps being taken to ensure fairness.*) Harrison finished her presentation by saying, "If you don't do the will of the people, the ones who put you into office can also take you out. I just want to remind you."

Speaking from the floor, Sandy Welch, Bill Sword, Scott Laird, Superintendent Ken Cox, School Board Member Jim Krahn, and Ben Fousek all spoke in support of Haack. The rest of the audience

seemed to mirror that support and no one spoke in favor of the search for the new administrator.

Mitchell, with council consent, appointed the following members to the newly formed Emergency Management Committee: Steve Scott, Fire Chief Dean Smith, Cindy Ball, Alexis Posley, Jack Lindsley, Heidi Lindsay, Catherine Helmer, and Dan Brown.

Council was asked, by Haack, to determine what to do about a \$245,600 grant (\$43,136 has been used) for the proposed Bicycle Skills Park. Council gave Haack permission to 1) negotiate an extension to Sept. 2013 to use the funds for an alternative project to develop the new Spencer Park on the old school site or, 2) to forfeit the funds, repaying the \$43,136 used. This acknowledges that the Skills Park is, "no longer a high priority for the City of Vernonia," and will not be completed.

See Council on page 5

Community Calendar

VERNONIA

Alcoholics Anonymous	Mondays	6:30 p.m., 410 North Street
Alcoholics Anonymous	Thursdays (Big Book Study)	7:00 p.m., 410 North Street
American Legion Post #119	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., 627 Adams Avenue
Booster Club	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., VHS Library
Boy Scout Troop 201	Tuesdays	7:00 p.m., Scout Cabin
Boy Scout Troop 860	Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., LDS Church
Cemetery Beautification Comm.	2nd Thursday	6:30 p.m., Library
CERT	4th Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-3018
Chamber of Commerce	2nd Wednesday	For Info Call 503-429-6081
Community Coalition	2nd Monday	12:30 p.m. School District Ofc.
Cub Scout Pack 201	Scout Cabin	For Info Call 503-429-4250
Friends of the Library	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Vernonia Library
Girl Scouts, Neighborhood 4-2		For Info Call 503-819-0143
Izaak Walton League	3rd Thursday	For location call 503-429-7193
Kiwanis Club	2nd & 4th Tuesdays	6:30 p.m., New Hong Kong
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Tuesdays	6:30 p.m., New Hong Kong
Municipal Airport Committee	1st Wednesday	6:30 p.m., City Hall
Pioneer Museum		For Info Call 503-429-3713
Public Works Committee	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Cares Directors		For Info call 503-429-1414
Vernonia City Council	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Community PTA	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., WGS Library
Vernonia Garden Club	2nd Tuesday	1:30 p.m., Vernonia Library
Vernonia Grange	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., Grange Hall
Vernonia Health Center	3rd Thursday	6:30 p.m., 510 Bridge St.
Vernonia Learning Center	1st Wednesday	6:00 p.m., VLC
Vernonia Parks Committee	3rd Wednesday	6:30 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Planning Comm.	1st & 3rd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Pride	2nd Thursday	1:00 p.m., City Hall
Vernonia Ridge Riders	Last Thursday	7:00 p.m., Senior Center
Vernonia RFPD Board	2nd Tuesday	6:00 p.m., Fire Station
Vernonia School Board	2nd Thursday	6:00 p.m., District Office
Vernonia Sr. Center Board	2nd Friday	10:00 a.m., Senior Center
Vernonia Transfer Station	2nd & 4th Saturdays, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.	Behind VHS
Vern. Volunteer Ambulance Assoc.	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
Vernonia Volunteer Firefighters	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Fire Station
WOEC Directors	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., WOEC

MIST-BIRKENFELD

M-BRFPD Board Business Mtg.	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-BRFPD Board Workshop	4th Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Ambulance Drill	1st & 2nd Thursdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Fire Drill	1st & 2nd Wednesdays	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Helping Circle	2nd Monday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B SAR Drill	3rd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
M-B Volunteer Assoc.	1st Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station
Natal Grange	2nd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Natal Grange Hall
T.O.P.S.	Mondays	9:00 a.m., Main Fire Station
Upr Nehalem Watershed Council	For date call 429-0869	7:00 p.m., Main Fire Station

BANKS

Alcoholics Anonymous	Friday	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
Alcoholics Anonymous	Wednesday	7:30 p.m., Methodist Church
American Legion Post #90	2nd Tuesday	7:30 p.m., Main Street Post
Banks City Council	2nd Tuesday	7:30 p.m., City Hall
Banks Fire District #13	2nd Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Station 13
Banks Library Commission	3rd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Banks Planning Commission	Last Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Hall
Banks School Board	2nd Monday	7:30 p.m., Jr. High Library
Banks Youth Group	Sunday, Wednesday	7:00 p.m., UMC Youth Bldg.
Chamber of Commerce	1st Thursday	12:30 p.m., Fire District Office
CPO 14	3rd Monday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Everybody's Hometown Band	Tuesdays	7:00 p.m., BHS Music Room
Friends of the Library	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., City Library
Lions Club	1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m., Brown Derby
Sunset Park Assoc.	3rd Wednesday	8:00 p.m., Gun Club
T.O.P.S.	Wednesday	7:00 p.m., Administration Bldg.

COLUMBIA COUNTY (All meet in St. Helens unless otherwise noted.)

Board of Commissioners	Wednesday	10:00 a.m., Courthouse
Citizens for Senior Justice	2nd Tuesday	7:00 p.m., Sunset Park Church
Columbia Comm Mental Health	1st Tuesday	5:30 p.m., 58646 McNulty Way
Columbia Soil & Water District	3rd Wednesday	7:30 p.m., NRCS, 2514 Sykes
County Fair Board	2nd Monday	6:00 p.m., Fairgrounds 4-H Bldg.
County Parks Commission	3rd Tuesday	Times vary, 1054 Oregon St.
Mental Health Advisory Comm.	Quarterly	For Info call 503-397-7211
Comm. on Children & Families	3rd Thursday	5:30 p.m. OSU Ext., 505 N. Hwy. 30
Local Alcohol & Drug Plann. Comm.	Quarterly	For Info call 503-397-7211