



THE INDEPENDENT

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Vernonia Mayor Josette Mitchell, from left, and Councilors Kevin Hudson and Willow Burch during the contentious May 2 city council meeting.

Council refuses to accept information of DPSST investigation of Vernonia Police Sergeant Kay

Included in the May 2 Vernonia City Council packet was information about an investigation currently underway by the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards & Training (DPSST) into misconduct by Sergeant Mike Kay of the Vernonia Police Department.

Before the council meeting began (see page 1 for full article on council meeting), Councilor Kevin Hudson asked to

have that item removed from the agenda, saying it should not be discussed until "due process" has occurred. Councilor Willow Burch agreed and Councilor Marilyn Nicks stated, "I've read it, there's no reason to discuss it tonight." Interim City Administrator Bill Haack pointed out that the item was not a discussion item but simply in the packet to provide information to council about the investigation. The item was not discussed at the meeting other than the acknowledgement that the information included is public record.

That public record starts with a letter from the Department of Public Safety, Standards and Training (DPSST) to Haack, dated December 9, 2010, stating that DPSST received information that Kay was the subject of an investigation relating to misconduct, and requesting any and all records relating to Kay.

DPSST has responsibility for

training, certification and maintaining professional standards of public safety personnel such as police, fire, etc., in the state of Oregon. Any public safety employee found to not uphold professional standards can be decertified and would then be unable to hold a position requiring such certification.

Please see Kay, page 4

ODFW sponsors Family Fishing at Vernonia Lake

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife invites young anglers to take part in its Family Fishing Event on Saturday, May 7, at Vernonia Pond from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The event is free and ODFW staff and volunteers will be on hand to assist youngsters who want to learn how to fish.

The lake will be stocked with
Please see Free, page

Council majority trumps up issue to fire Haack

Fails in apparent attempt to suppress public information

At the beginning of the May 2 Vernonia City Council meeting, Councilor Willow Burch asked to add an agenda item, to review the Col-Pac contract for the services of Interim City Administrator Bill Haack. When the time for that item arrived, Burch said, the "decision pains me...I'd like to make a motion to terminate the contract immediately." Gasps and groans from the audience met that motion. Councilor Marilyn Nicks seconded the motion before Mayor Josette Mitchell asked Burch, "Based on what?" Burch responded that it was based on, "lack of communications in spite of several attempts. I would like information on city spending, and that information has not been given." Burch's statement was made regardless of the fact that she, along with the rest of council, is on the budget committee, which already reviewed departmental spending. Burch continued, "I'm beyond confidence that he can run the city. I don't think I can trust him."

Mitchell responded that, "I personally feel like it is a personal matter. Nothing on behalf of our city has been done in a negative way...the rest of the state will laugh at us. I've been putting up with not very professional behavior from a majority (of the council)...If you can't give a basis I don't buy it. This is not even reality. Not one person has come to council or written a letter in agreement," with your position.

Nicks then spoke, saying, "I can't seem to get good communication. I've made the effort." She also quoted three specific

items in the contract, such as "Section 5 states he must attend all meetings and make recommendations on decisions." Her statement was seemingly prepared to discuss a contract that was not on the agenda until after the meeting began.

Please see Haack, page 5

Vernonia Police Chief resigns

see page 4

Vernonia Health Fair slated for Saturday

The Vernonia Health Fair, sponsored by the Vernonia Health Board, will take place at the school cafeteria (green building) on May 7, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Most of the services and information at the Fair will be provided free of charge.

Date corrected for visit by Robin Cody

Author Robin Cody will be at the Vernonia Public Library, Wednesday, May 11 at 7:00 p.m. to discuss "Vernonia's Community Reads" selection for 2011 - *Another Way the River Has*. The community is invited to attend. Refreshments will be served.

The wrong date was originally provided for this event.

Banks Plant and Book Sale starts Friday

The Friends of the Banks Public Library annual Plant, Book, and Art Sale, starts tomorrow, May 6, from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Schlegel Hall in Sunset Park. The sale will continue Saturday, May 7, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



Vernonia Police Sgt Mike Kay
FILE PHOTO