

**North Powder City Council Meeting
January 4, 2021
7PM Wolf Creek Grange**

Attendance: Mayor Mike Wisdom, Councilors “Big” Mike Morse, Joyce Lawyer, Jeff Grende, Logan McCrae, Vicki Townsend & Justin Wright. City Recorder Beth Wendt, Public Works Director Rick Lawyer. Others: Sue DeHaas, George Marston, Jane Wisdom, Tony Lasich, Mick Bastian, Dick Alexis, Roger Townsend, Jeff & Wynn Nielsen.

Mayor Mike Wisdom called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was said.

City Recorder Beth Wendt swore in Mayor Mike and Councilor Logan McCrae for a new term and new Council members Vicki Townsend and Justin Wright.

Public Comment: None

Agenda: Mayor Mike asked for amendments to the agenda. Big Mike made a motion to accept the agenda for Jan. 4, 2021. Joyce seconded. All were in favor.

Minutes: Mayor Mike asked for amendments to the minutes from December 14, 2020. Logan made a motion to accept the minutes from December 14, 2020. Joyce seconded. All were in favor.

Accounts Payables: Beth noted new AP spreadsheets were handed out. She reviewed the additions which included an invoice for AeroCMS for the new computers purchased with the CARES Act grant. We purchased 8 chrome books for the City Council for virtual meetings and a new laptop for the Public Works Department so they have the capability to do virtual meetings and trainings. It also includes an annual subscription for virtual meetings, a computer for hosting virtual meetings, and a service contract for the computers. The total AP came to \$17,988.74. Big Mike made a motion to accept the Accounts Payables for December 2020. Logan seconded. All were in favor. Jeff asked if we got a TV with the computers. Beth noted the TV and stand were purchased from Walmart.

Beth noted that there was also \$1000 for Ducote Consulting for the Wastewater Grant. We didn't have a bill from Anderson Perry yet. Joyce made a motion to pay the grant bills to Ducote Consulting and Anderson Perry. Big Mike seconded. All were in favor.

Library Report: Beth gave the Library report in Maggie's absence. The Library Board will meet on Jan. 7th at 6PM. They will take a look at plans for fundraisers for this year and talk about items to purchase with the Leo Adler grant.

The Library is still offering curbside service until further notice. To help with that they are offering free access to the Library2Go program which allows patrons to access eBooks and audio books.

Maggie has received materials needed to start planning the Summer Reading Program.

Thanks to the Ready2Learn program, the Library has 3 prizes for a drawing for January. Children 0-6 can earn one ticket per book checked out to be entered into the drawing.

Recorder Report: \$422.54 was issued in water credits for December. Since meters were not read in November, overages were only charged for use over 30,000 gallons which was base use for 2 months plus one month of freeze credits. Overages came to \$172.44.

City Hall office has remained closed to walk in traffic and closed on Fridays. Beth asked if the council wanted to continue with that. Logan asked if it made sense to do that. Beth thought it did up to a point. She thought some of her wages for Fridays thru the end of December could be applied to the CARES Act grant. Fridays are usually fairly quiet. Beth noted that she liked having Fridays off even though it makes some other days longer but people are used to having the office open on Fridays. Joyce

suggested we continue with the closures for January and we will revisit it in February. The Council was in agreement.

Beth noted that we still have masks and hand sanitizer from Union County to share with local businesses.

Mayor's Message: Mayor Mike wanted to see the Council come up with a vision for moving forward. He didn't have a sense of where we are going. Big Mike felt without a vision, we would continue to go in circles. Mayor Mike asked the Council to think about it so we can come up with a game plan for the next 90 days as well as 5 or 10 years down the line. Beth commented that a lot of City Councils have a "camp" or work session. Mayor Mike would like to make it happen as soon as possible. Big Mike wants to see a new Library and City Hall.

Mayor Mike hoped that each Councilor had an agenda for bringing something to the table; a reason to be motivated to serve the community. He personally felt each decision should be based on the question, "is it good for North Powder?", whether that means now or 10 years down the line. He reminded that we need to be mindful that we are spending other people's money.

The third point Mayor Mike wanted to make was, he has had the feeling in the past that we have been rushed into making a decision. We don't necessarily need to act immediately. There is nothing wrong with tabling a motion in order to gather more information. It shouldn't be taken personally if a motion dies for a lack of a second.

Mayor Mike reminded that as Councilors, you made a commitment to attend meetings as needed, not just the first Monday of the month. There will be a need for committee work and work sessions.

Public Works Report: Rick reported that the lagoons were shut down going to the river during the holidays. He will try to get them back to the river by this week. We are still running a high water level to try to keep the numbers down. It seems to be working as the numbers have been good. By spring he should be able to go back out on the boat to measure.

The Fire Station water line is 99% done. The fence still needs to be put back and the hydrant turned. We need to get back to Klein's sewer line. Rick thought there could be a broken pipe. There are still a lot of roots coming thru the system. We need to look at easements for a manhole at that end of town. We can do some adjustments to keep the manhole on city right-of-way but we will need to do some work on private property.

Rick appreciated the help in getting the Christmas lights up along 2nd Street. He had an electrician look at a couple of poles. One of them needs some more repair work.

When the electrician comes back, Rick will have him look at the transformer at the well. He thought it would have to be replaced.

Scott with ByoGon has been working with Rick on troubleshooting at the lagoons. There is a lot of activity in the ponds, which indicates that stuff is working. Mayor Mike wondered if warm weather will cause spikes in the numbers. Rick thought sometimes it might. Our E.coli count is down and alkali is good, but the pH is still high. He got a new probe and it has helped.

Joyce asked if the wells were okay. Rick said there were a couple of action activities that need done for environmental, but his main focus has been on the lagoons. Jeff asked about "salt". Rick said it is supposed to be the same thing we have been using, but it is from a different company so he has had to make some adjustments in the chlorination and has to watch it closely.

Logan asked if Rick was getting what he needed from the Council. Rick commented that he has gone a different direction for a snowplow. Currently we are using the old Chevy pickup with a borrowed plow. It has worked well so far but we need to find out if we can purchase the plow or if we just borrow or lease it. Joyce asked if Rick found the piece that broke off the City plow. Rick said yes but he had to have help adjusting the governor. It's still missing a skid. Rick commented that they put some rock in potholes along 5th Street.

New Business-

Council President and Supervisory Positions: Big Mike volunteered to be Council President. There were no objections. Mike Morse was elected as Council President with 5 in favor. Big Mike abstained. Big Mike noted that people have been talking a lot about repair of the Library and City Hall.

Mayor Mike volunteered to act as the Public Works Supervisor. He felt he would be visible and handy and would like to become more knowledgeable about the City well and lagoons. Mayor Mike was elected as Public Works Supervisor by a vote of 6 in favor and 0 against.

Mayor Mike asked for a volunteer for the Library Supervisor. Jeff wondered if there was a job description for supervisors. Beth explained that the supervisors act as a go to person if someone in that department has a question or problem. They sign off on time sheets every month and do the annual evaluations. Mayor Mike expanded that the supervisor provides a communication chain to follow.

Joyce volunteered to be the Library Supervisor. 5 were in favor. Joyce abstained.

Mayor Mike noted that Logan has been acting as the Fire Department liaison. Logan would like to continue as such. Everyone was in agreement to have Logan continue as the Fire Dept. liaison.

Joyce has been acting as the City Recorder Supervisor and was willing to continue. Jeff volunteered to take the position. Joyce withdrew and Jeff was elected to act as the City Recorder Supervisor with 5 yes votes. Jeff abstained.

Mayor Mike wanted to reconnect and work with the school. He asked if anyone was interested in acting as a liaison with the school. It would require attending board meetings to represent the City and on occasion act as a go between for the City. Vicki was interested but was concerned that there is a "separation" between the City and the school and she didn't want to be expected to fix it. Mayor Mike thought a liaison was just supposed to be a pipeline of information between the two entities. Vicki agreed to be the liaison. Joyce noted that in the past we have had a member of the Student Council as a liaison. Mayor Mike thought it would be great to have a student representative again. Vicki was elected as the liaison with the school with 5 in favor. Vicki abstained.

Beth noted that since Shorty (David Schwehr) is no longer on the Council we need to remove him as a check signer on the City bank account. Joyce recommended Vicki Townsend to take his place. All were in agreement. Mayor Mike Wisdom and Councilors Mike Morse and Jeff Grende will remain. Beth explained that since Joyce opens and signs off on the bank statements, to keep our checks and balances, she should not be a signer. Beth will find out what needs to be done to make the changes.

Old Business-

Playground: George Marston noted that we received grants from the Burkel/Zoellner Foundation for \$5500 and the Leo Adler Foundation for \$12,000 thru the North Powder Community Partners. Checks have been presented to the City and thank you letters sent.

The Oregon Community Fund and the Wildhorse Foundation have started taking applications for grants. These were two of the major grant charities that we hoped to get funds from last year but one of them switched their funding to COVID relief and the other switched "off" altogether. The Oregon State Parks Grant cycle has also opened up for 2021.

To date the Playground Reconstruction Project has received \$52,000 in grants and pledges. We anticipate another grant for \$6000 from EDP Renewables North America, through the Community Partners. George noted that last month we talked about the actual purchase of the playground equipment. He received updated pricing from Northwest Playground Equipment with the equipment cost and construction cost separated. They require a 50% deposit which is \$29,436.46. George noted that we have 3 options for construction. The first is to contract with NW Playground for \$21,600. The second option is Oregon Recreation & Parks Association Maintenance & Construction Section (MACS). Their request is due by January 25th and they require the equipment be ordered no later than March 1st. The estimated cost for this option is about \$3000. The work is done by a group of volunteer playground

installation supervisors and the City has to pay for food and lodging. They would meet with the City ahead of time to access the site and mark it out and then the City would do the excavation and drill holes. The third option is volunteer organization. La Grande has two certified inspectors on staff and they would do inspections but if something is wrong, we might have to pull things up and start over. Delivery time is expected to be 8 to 9 weeks with the balance paid on delivery. Joyce remarked that we have the funds to purchase the equipment. Mayor Mike wondered when we would know about the grant from the Wind Farms. Joyce thought we should have had something by now. Jeff thought the worst case scenario would be the City would have to cover about \$6000. He made a motion to go ahead and order the equipment. Big Mike said again that the equipment we have is dangerous and he didn't want to see anyone get hurt. Logan seconded the motion to purchase playground equipment. All were in favor.

The next question was how to assemble it. George repeated the three options. Joyce made a motion to "let them come in", the second option. George clarified that was to apply for the MACS playground installation workshop. Mayor Mike asked if that would be pending the 3 grants that are coming up. George thought they would cover some of it. Logan seconded Joyce's motion. All were in favor. Sue DeHaas noted that the North Powder Community Partners were willing to start writing construction grants for 2022 based on the \$38,000 we received in 2020. The grants should be available again for 2021-2022. If the Council is ready to move to the next step they would like to start applying for grants for a picnic pavilion and public restrooms for the playground park. Sue thought we might be able to get community volunteers to take care of the restrooms. She added that some towns close their park restrooms during the winter. George clarified that they would have water and sewer. Mayor Mike wondered if there was room to accommodate them. George felt there was plenty of room across the driveway to the pump house next to the City shop. He suggested the pavilion not be made of wood and the restrooms have stainless steel mirrors and urinals. Vickie wondered if the maintenance would fall to the public works. Sue admitted that it was a concern. Jeff moved to have the North Powder Community Partners start the grant process. Sue added that organizations are starting to notice North Powder and she didn't want them to forget us. Logan seconded Jeff's motion. Mayor Mike noted there was a motion to proceed with grant writing. All were in favor.

CARES Act Grant: Beth reported that we received a 65" TV to be used for virtual meetings. We need to talk to the Grange to ask if there is room to store it. It will be placed on a rolling stand. As soon as we receive the computers (ordered for the CARES Act Grant), Zach Johnson from AeroCMS will come in to set everything up and show us how to use it. The reimbursement application period starts January 19. Beth also suggested we apply to add some of her sick leave wages that were used when City Hall was closed due to COVID as a public health precaution. Jeff thought we turned back about \$2800. Beth thought with the TV and computer equipment we only spent about \$10,000 out of \$25,000. Her wages only came to about \$700. The deadline to spend the funds was December 30, 2020. Jeff wondered if Rick's sick leave would count. Beth will check to see if we can claim Rick's and Galen's sick leave as well.

City Hall/Library: Mayor Mike has asked a contractor to give a barebones idea of contractor expenses so we have a number to work with. He will contact somebody to get access to the City's part of the Fire Station. Joyce wondered if the contractor would also look at the Stanford building. She would still like to get a cost estimate as Jeff referred to. Jeff clarified that he was more concerned with how much money was in the budget and how much the City was willing to spend. He explained that the proposed offer for the fire department building included the basics of what we did on the offer for the Stanford building. It left a blank for a purchase price. The new fire building is almost finished so he thought the Rural Fire Department would be ready to sell very soon. He thought \$75,000 had been mentioned as a purchase price and he would like to offer that with a cap on what the City spends out of pocket. Vicki asked if the proposal would give the same due diligence as we used for the Stanford building. Jeff felt it

combined it all of the steps onto a single sheet of paper. Rick wondered when we would have access to our part of the building. Logan said they have it until their contract expires at the end of June. Joyce was concerned that if we spend \$100,000 from the General Fund, according to Jason it would take about 6 years to replace it. We have about \$250,000 in the General Fund. Jeff thought it was more than \$400,000. Beth clarified that we have about \$270,000 in the General Capital Reserve Fund and \$400,000 in Water and Sewer Reserves. Jeff wondered if upgrades for water and sewer could come out of the water and sewer reserve. Beth explained that just because it is water and sewer doesn't mean it comes out of those funds. However, since City Hall is used for water and sewer business, we might be able to squeeze out a small portion of the remodel cost to City Hall, but not for the Library. Jeff thought we could buy the RF part and remodel it for about \$150,000. Joyce thought Maggie would want the City's side of the building. She also thought we would need a common furnace/utility room. Jeff disagreed. Beth interjected that we really need to decide on a floor plan. Jeff agreed but thought we need to decide how much we are willing to spend first. Big Mike agreed that we need a direction of what to spend. Jeff proposed offering \$75,000 for the building. Mayor Mike reiterated that according to Jason it would take about 6 years to replace \$100,000 in the reserve fund. Jeff asked what the City was saving the money for. He thought it was for a big project like this and it is time to use it. For \$150,000 he thought we could have a nice Library and City Hall. At this point it would be buying a box and we can do whatever we want with it. Joyce remarked that we could get grants for the Stanford building. Vicki commented that we don't have the grants and we need a new City Hall and Library. She would like to see the City buy the Stanford building but not for a City Hall and Library. Mayor Mike noted that the Stanford building was off the table at this point. Jeff thought we didn't have to do everything now. Logan added that if we proposed of \$75,000 to purchase the fire building we would have a couple of months to have work sessions and figure out what we can afford and decide if we want to enter into an agreement to buy it. The proposal is just to agree on a price and to agree on some terms up front. Vicki clarified that it doesn't lock the City into anything. Justin thought \$75,000 was a good deal and we could add another \$75,000 for repairs. He added that the Stanford building would require kids to cross 2nd Street and there is also the issue of the creek and railroad tracks. The fire station is next to the park. Mayor Mike reiterated that the Stanford building is not an option. He reminded that we are spending other people's money. He has shifted his focus on how to make the fire station work. Joyce wondered if Jeff had considered just redoing the City's part of the fire station. Jeff agreed it was an option but we should think about what it would be like to have someone else in the other part of the building. Vicki made a motion to accept the proposal and offer \$75,000 so we have something to sit and talk about. Logan seconded. Motion carried with 5 yes. Big Mike abstained. Joyce reiterated that it was just a proposal. Jeff wondered if we should schedule a work session to go over plans and get some contractors to look at them. Logan thought plans should be first but we need to see what the Fire Department says. Beth verified that there would be no changes to the dates which gives us 40 days after the Fire Department accepts it to get inspections, etc.

Joyce thought the City should look into purchasing the empty lot across from the Post Office so we have it for the Huckleberry Festival. Jeff thought the Huckleberry Festival should focus more around City Hall and the new playground.

Vicki wondered if there were plans to remove the old City Hall building if and when we get a new one.

Wastewater Project: Beth asked for permission from the Council to amend the grant budget due to the expenses involved with the environmental review process. It would eventually require an amended contract with Anderson Perry. We can check into the possibility of a grant from Business Oregon to make up the \$8500 difference so we don't have to take it out of the CDBG funds available for construction. Jeff wondered why they are asking for more money when it was projected in the contract budget. Beth noted that the Cultural Study has been more involved that was expected because of the

Indian artifacts that were found. Logan noted that we voted to have the Cultural person on sight when we broke ground but we recently found out they had to drill. Logan made a motion to approve the amended budget for the additional \$8500 and to see if we can get an additional grant from Business Oregon. Joyce seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Beth noted that we can earn extra points for the Construction grant application if we procure a grant administrator/labor standards consultant ahead of time. Nick will help us do this. We wouldn't have to do an RFP if the City attorney will determine that the design procurement was sufficient. The Council was okay with this.

Beth reported that permits and an MAO are in progress and awaiting confirmations. We still need to submit a CRI (Cultural Recourses Inventory) to SHPO.

We still hope to apply for a Construction Grant in February for award in April.

Ordinance Enforcement Report: Mayor Mike spoke with Sean Wood and he will coordinate with Rick to do a tour of the town. Mayor Mike thought the priority should be RVs, water and sewer Issues, and right-of-ways. When Sean gets a list we can start with letters and try to make it manageable for follow up. Logan agreed that it would be smart to limit the number of open cases.

Council Comments:

Vicki felt we have a good council and is glad to be a part of it. She felt it would be a Council that moves forward.

Joyce welcomed Vicki and Justin to the Council and looks forward to working with them.

Big Mike commented there is a lot to absorb.

Logan was glad to see members of the community in attendance.

Jeff welcomed everybody to the New Year.

Justin was glad to be a part of the Council and was looking forward to everything.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Wendt
City Recorder

Attest: