

**North Powder City Council Meeting
February 1, 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: Sherry Hart, George Marston, Jeff & Wynn Nielsen.

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

Public Comment: None

Agenda: Mayor Mike asked for amendments to the agenda. Big Mike made a motion to accept the agenda for February, 2021. Joyce seconded. Jeff noted that we need to remove swearing in new Council members. All were in favor.

Minutes: Mayor Mike asked for amendments to the minutes from January 4th and January 12th. Big Mike made a motion to accept the minutes from January 4th and January 12th. Logan seconded. All were in favor. Beth apologized for not having the minutes from January 26th finished.

Accounts Payables: Beth noted new AP spreadsheets were handed out. She reviewed the additions which included invoices from CenturyLink for \$317.80, OTEC for \$2204.13, Magic Valley for \$302, NAPA Auto Parts for \$144.68, D&B Supply for \$674.15, Thatcher’s Ace Hardware for \$220.13, Dan Van Thiel for \$500 of which part will be charged to the Wastewater grant, Northwest Playground Equipment for \$29,436.46, Rick Lawyer for a \$100 reimbursement, Bi-Mart for \$9.98, Robbins Farm Equipment for \$42.41 and DuBois Chemicals for \$530.67. Beth asked if we needed to keep Jimmy’s US Cellular cell phone. The consensus was to cancel it. Beth noted there was a DEQ loan payment included in the AP. The total came to \$60,909.08. The only bill received so far for the Wastewater Grant was Ducote Consulting for \$1000. Big Mike made a motion to pay the bills. Vicki seconded. All were in favor.

Library Report: Beth noted Maggie was in quarantine for 2 weeks. She is also dealing with a death in the family. Maggie suggested Susie could continue to be open on Saturdays and just check emails. Joyce proposed that Susie could work Maggie’s hours. Jeff thought we should leave it up to Joyce as the Library supervisor to work out the hours. Everyone was in agreement.

Public Works Report: Rick noted that Beth did the bridge report. There is some maintenance needed. Rick has been busy replacing the cutting edges on the backhoe. It also had a hydraulic leak that has been fixed.

Curt Martin would like for us to get back to the sewer line at the north end of 2nd Street as soon as possible.

The 1” meter needs to be replaced at the Fire Station as it is not reading. The fence has been put back. The hydrant needs to be turned and we need one more valve box.

As soon as he gets the backhoe up and running again, Rick will get started on the water line for Rich Daniels.

The heater at Well 4 had to be replaced and there is a pressure reducing valve at Well 3 that is broken. The cost to replace it is approximately \$4500 for a new one with a 3 year warranty or about \$2500 for a rebuilt valve with no warranty. Rick didn’t feel comfortable replacing the valve so we will have to hire someone to do that. We had an electrician looking at a transformer and inversion unit at Well #3. He will get us a quote as soon as possible.

The BOD, TSS and pH numbers at the lagoons have been good but the Ammonia is still high. Rick has been keeping the ponds about a foot higher than normal. He is trying to figure out what to do about the Ammonia.

There are some street signs that need to be fixed. It looks like at least one was run into. Between 1st Street and the 5th Street Alley Access there are about 5 signs that need to be fixed or replaced.

Rick wondered if the City was going to put in underground irrigation at the park.

Logan commented that didn't we receive a bill from DEQ and wondered if we would get one. Rick explained that he was able to provide additional information to them so they are still working on it. In the meantime, Rick was able to get cleared to sign the DMRs.

Jeff asked if Rick has been working with Ralph (Riomondo) yet. Rick has been on the phone with him a number of times but Ralph was pulled out of town on a chemical spill. Scott Miller, with Byo-Gon, thought there was still some residue from the truck wash that is cooking and curing at the lagoon.

Beth noted that Ralph will begin contracting services as of February 1st. He will not charge for services in January. Mayor Mike thought we should revisit the seasonal worker position and number of hours. He thought it was supposed to be part-time and seasonal, not year round. He has concerns with the consistency of weekend reads. 2020 was exceptional with projects and Rick was just coming on board and learning the job. Beth suggested the Council address it before we start the budget process.

Beth asked if Rick needed a decision from the Council about the valve needed for the well. Joyce wondered if it was still under the original 3 year warranty. We are working on year seven, so no. Rick reiterated that the difference in cost is about \$2000 and we will need to hire someone to replace it regardless of whether it is new or rebuilt. Well #5 is off-line until it is fixed. Joyce wondered if we would have the same problem later on. Rick thought not, as long as we move it away from the panel. He would prefer a new valve as it should have factory settings and a warranty. Mayor Mike wondered if there were concerns about Well 4 if Well 5 stays off line longer. Rick would prefer to get started on replacement ASAP. Jeff made a motion to buy a new piece of equipment with a 3 year warranty and come back to the council with an estimate for installation. Logan seconded. All were in favor.

Jeff wondered if the department supervisor had authority to approve expenses in an emergency. Beth thought the only thing was approval for up to \$500. We can look into changing that policy.

Recorder Report: Water overages in January equaled \$309.18 with \$94 was issued in freeze credits. We still have masks and hand sanitizer from Union County to share with local businesses.

Beth suggested start thinking about Spring Cleanup Day. It is usually done in April close to Earth Day which is April 22nd.

Avista has a new subcontractor, Michels, who will be doing work in Union County starting in February. As of January 12th, Union County is still listed as COVID 19 Extreme Risk category. Beth asked if the council wanted to continue being closed on Fridays and to walk in traffic for the month of February. The consensus was to continue on as long as it is working to do so.

Beth noted that Vicki and Justin should have received an email from OGEC to set up their accounts for Statement of Economic Interest filing that is due by April 15th. Every councilor will receive an email about mid-March as a reminder of the SEI filing. Beth noted there were flyers included in Council packets with a webinar training schedule for filing an SEI. She thought they might be very helpful.

Mayor's Message: Last month Mayor Mike asked the Council to bring ideas for goals establishing a vision for the City. Joyce's goal was to keep improving the City and to work together. She felt we should try to listen to each other and work on communication without feeling pressured. She wanted to see a new City Hall and Library within the next 2 years. Big Mike's personal goal was to talk to at least one new person about their ideas and what they would like to see from the City. Vicki's goal was to bring people to the Council meetings. She wanted to be open and unified so we can do what is best for the citizens. Mayor Mike wanted to put together a work session to learn how to set goals and how to accomplish them. There are people who will help us figure out how to do that. People, both in town and out, want to know what some of North Powder's goals are for the next 2 years. Big Mike agreed we can achieve goals if we all focus together to make it happen. Mayor Mike will pursue a work shop.

George Marston interjected that the subject of goals has come up on several grant applications. He always puts that the goal is growth, whether through businesses or increased population. Mayor Mike felt that was a good starting point.

Mayor Mike would like to have each Council member do a ride-along with Rick so everyone has a better idea of what Rick is talking about during his reports and better understanding his job.

Mayor Mike noted that he met with the new Sheriff, Cody Bowen. Sheriff Bowen is in the process of hiring a new patrol officer and hopes to have 4 more to patrol the County. He was adamant about getting a more consistent presence in North Powder. Mayor Mike mentioned some recent thefts and problems that North Powder could use some help with. Sheriff Bowen would like to come to a Council meeting as soon as possible and would like to hear thoughts and concerns of the Council and North Powder citizens. If we can give him a couple of days advance notice, he will have a deputy present to provide backup for our ordinance officer if Shawn feels the need when he has to issue a citation. Mayor Mike noted that Shawn (Wood) will be focusing on the new RV ordinance, right-of-ways, and water and sewer connected to RVs. Shawn has a citation booklet. Mayor Mike noted that we talked about a trespassing clause that empowers a City employee to knock on doors. He will check with Union to see if they have something. Joyce thought there was something in one of the ordinances about a City employee going on private property to check water and sewer. Mayor Mike added that our new RV Ordinance allows for a City employee to enter private property to make sure an RV is properly connected to sewer and water. Joyce also wanted to work on fixing the issue of shared water meters. There are 4 or 5 places that have more than one living quarter using a single water meter.

New Business-

Street Easements (Tony Lasich): Tony was not in attendance so the discussion was tabled.

Old Business-

Playground: George Marston noted that he asked the Council to consider the purchase of the new playground equipment. A deposit of 50% is needed and delivery will be in about 8 to 9 weeks. The remaining 50% of the cost is due on delivery. The payment was included in the current accounts payable that was just approved.

George also asked the Council to consider Phase 2 of the playground which includes a covered pavilion and public restrooms. NP Community Partners is willing to write grants for 2022 construction. Based on the grants received so far, the Community Partners feel that similar amounts of \$38,000 would be available. A grant was submitted to the Oregon Community Fund by the Community Partners in the amount of \$21,600 to be used for either playground construction or for Phase 2.

The Oregon Recreation and Park Association has a group of playground supervisors and managers (MACS) that volunteer to help communities assemble playground equipment. As they require membership of someone in the community, Mayor Wisdom was signed up. However, due to COVID restrictions MACS doesn't know if they will be doing any playground assembly this year, but if they do, we are #2 on the list. If we have to assemble it ourselves or hire someone, the La Grande Parks and Recreation Department will send an inspector to watch over the installation.

George note that Mike Becker donated a monument granite rock for the City Park. Rick used the City dump truck to haul it. We need to send a thank you letter and a receipt for \$500 for the donation. Rick wondered where we would put the equipment when we get it. Logan thought we might be able to use the fire station.

Mayor Mike wondered if MACS knew before we paid the membership dues that they might not be able to do anything this year. Beth said they originally thought they could but it would be late summer or fall before they could be here. All of their people have other jobs but it will depend on COVID restrictions.

Joyce called the Windfarms. We won't get as much money as we originally thought because it didn't get processed in last year's budget. George noted that the Oregon Community Fund would make a decision in May on the \$21,000 for funding in June. If we get that, we should be okay to pay for the equipment and installation.

CARES Act Grant: Beth reported that we are still waiting on part of the equipment that we ordered. Zach (with AeroCMS) will deliver everything and set it up and show us how to use it. We can store some of the equipment at the Grange. Carol Bouchard will get us a key so we can lock it up. Beth noted that the grants were extended to June. We were awarded \$25,000 and have only spent about \$10,000. Beth asked if we could purchase another laptop computer that she could use to do some work at home. The Council was agreeable.

Joyce asked about using the grant for some wages. Beth pointed out that we can only use it for wages to pay employees hired specifically for COVID compliance issues. It doesn't apply to regular payroll. Rick asked if we could use it to purchase rubber gloves. Beth will check on it.

City Hall/Library: A committee has been appointed.

Wastewater Project: Beth reported that she and Mayor Mike sat in on a conference call with DSL. They want more information before approving a permit for Wetland Delineation. DSL was concerned about the hydrology and they want to do mitigation because they don't believe it will be self-sustaining. There is a cost to do mitigation. Beth didn't know how much or if it was a one-time payment or an annual payment. They were also concerned about the access road cutting of water flow to the wetland. Brett didn't think it would be affected. DSL sent a list of possible solutions and Anderson Perry (AP) has answered some of them. Beth felt that since it was rather confusing, she thought we needed a work session so Brett Moore and Nick Ducote could come and explain everything to the council. Logan asked if Brett Moore was moving the project along. Beth thought so, but there are things coming up that the Council needs to be involved in. DSL was aware that AP prepared the application but they want the City to be a part of it. Joyce agreed that the City should be taking part. Mayor Mike noted that conference call was a bit troubling because of the language and Brett had to remind them that we are doing a lined wetland with treated water. He liked the idea of having Brett come and explain the issue so we can all understand. Vicki liked the idea of a work session. Mayor Mike noted that a work session wouldn't necessarily be mandatory. Jeff thought it sounded like they didn't really want City involvement. Beth reminded that the Council is the representative of the City and the ones making the decisions, she felt it was important that the Council understand what is going on so when it comes to a decision, you know what you are approving. There hasn't been a lot for AP to report up to now. They have been preparing and submitting reports and applications and are finally get feedback on them. Beth reiterated that any decisions made, need to come from the Council and not from her. Beth will set up a meeting with Brett and Nick.

Rick wondered if the underground work on the sewer system at the end of 2nd Street would be covered by the grant. Beth noted that there is some work on the distribution (collection) system included in the construction plan as well as the wetlands, but we will need to check to see if that can be included. Rick wondered about the line in the café parking lot as well. Beth suggested looking at that Facility Plan.

Ordinance Enforcement Report: Beth noted that Shawn has been knocking on doors talking to people about moving RV's and stuff off right-of-ways. She received some calls and explained that Shawn is the City Code Enforcement person. If people can't find a survey pin, they can measure from the center of a street to get a fairly good idea of where the edge of the right-of-way is. Center Street has a 100' right-of-way, A & B Streets have 70', and all others have 80' right-of-ways. Mayor Mike reminded that knocking on doors was the first step to ordinance enforcement, ahead of sending a letter. Jeff suggested we have some kind of identification for Shawn. It could be just a letter but it should be signed

by the Mayor. Beth noted that so far, Shawn has billed us for 16 hours. He and Rick made a list of people who have violations and his first time through, Shawn just knocked on doors to talk to people. He will do periodic follow ups to be sure violations are being corrected but he will give people a fair chance to make corrections.

Council Comments:

Vicki commented that Justin Bingham will talk to the School Board to see if they would like to get back to working with the City.

Joyce noted she missed the last Library Board meeting. She was at City Hall when we received a complaint about burning after hours. The person said they called Colby and he said it was not his job to deal with that. Joyce thought it was in our agreement with them. Mayor Mike agreed we need to check the agreement. Jeff added that when he called Colby about a complaint, Colby said he only he uses are fire restrictions for the State. Beth thought it was in our agreement with the Fire Department that they would enforce our burning restrictions which are listed on the permit. Jeff wondered if we ever gave them a copy of the Ordinance. She was sure they were provided a copy of the permit which says enforcement will be done by a city employee or the fire department.

Big Mike noted that on his daily walks around town, he has noticed a member of the Sheriff's department or a State Policemen come by at least once a week. He was surprised to see them that often. Mayor Mike added that the State Police go through Piles Canyon on a regular basis.

Logan thanked Rick and Beth for everything they do to hold the town together. He felt the council accomplished quite a bit and thanked the Mayor for keeping everybody on track.

Jeff agreed with Logan's remarks and added that it is hard to be grateful with not being able to see everything they do.

Rick noted that he needs to set the brush pile on fire and it will likely burn past 6PMt since it is so big. Mayor Mike cautioned about the wind. Beth suggested he notify Colby and the Cafe before he burns. It might also be a good idea to post it.

Rick commented that there are a couple of damaged manholes. One is by the recycle center and if hit just right, the lid flips up. Rick put a cone on it until he can get a plate or something to cover the hole.

Meeting adjourned 8:43PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Wendt
City Recorder

Attest: