

North Powder City Council Meeting
March 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, Librarian Maggie Guthrie.

Others: Dan Willitts, George Marston, Lindsey Thompson, Angel Solorzano, Jeff & Wynn Nielsen, Sue DeHaas, Shorty Schwehr, Mike & Lynn Borisoff, Tony Lasich. & Eric Newman.

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

Public Comment: Lindsey Thompson reported that plans are in the works for the Huckleberry Festival. There is a new group of volunteers. They want to keep it traditional but with a fresh feel. They plan to include mud volleyball and a car show. They are looking for vendors. Sue DeHaas noted that the Huckleberry Festival operates under the North Powder Community Partners. Lindsey commented that they are talking about holding it mainly along E Street between the Post Office and Fire Station. Jeff remarked that in the past the mud volleyball has been done on 1st street next to the recycle area. Lindsey said they hope to get about 10 teams and looking for sponsorship. Sue interjected that plans are underway, but the event happening will depend on COVID restrictions. Mayor Mike invited Lindsey to give an update at the April Council Meeting.

Agenda: Mayor Mike asked for amendments to the agenda. Big Mike made a motion to accept the agenda. Vicki seconded. All were in favor.

Minutes: Mayor Mike asked for amendments to the minutes February 1st and the Special meeting on January 26th. Big Mike made a motion to accept the minutes from February 1st and January 26th. Jeff seconded. All were in favor.

Mayor Mike asked for amendments to the minutes from the meeting to put together a committee for the fire station on February 1st. Logan made a motion to approve the minutes. Jeff seconded. Motion carried with 5 yes. Big Mike abstained as he was not in attendance.

Mayor Mike asked for amendments to the minutes for the Special Meeting on February 17th regarding the wastewater project. There were only 3 councilors present at the meeting. Joyce made a motion to accept the minutes. Big Mike seconded. Motion carried with 3 councilors in favor. Jeff, Logan, & Justin abstained.

Accounts Payables: Beth noted that as it is early in the month we are still missing some bills. New AP spreadsheets were handed out. Additions included invoices from BioLycnceus for \$2205.41, DEQ for \$975 permit fines, Ladco Electric for \$1095, and just in case Rick doesn’t get a scholarship, \$250 to Eastern OR AWWA/PNCWA for the Eastern Oregon Operators Conference training. We are still missing a bill from OTEC, which usually runs around \$2000, and there may be a few more minor miscellaneous bills. The current AP total was \$8884.13. There was a separate spreadsheet for the wastewater grant bills for \$2779.81. Logan made a motion to pay the bills. Big Mike seconded. All were in favor. Joyce verified that Beth had approval to pay any additional bills that come in.

Library Report: Maggie introduced herself to the new Council members. She explained that she works with a lot of smaller libraries and they have a really good connection. The La Grande Library has donated an Enhanced Vision Reader for those who have a hard time seeing. The Library also has some large print books.

The Library is still pushing curbside service but will take computer appointments.

Maggie has started to order supplies for the Summer Reading program and is working on program activities. She generally plans for about 36 participants.

The Library Board met in January and they discussed fund raisers such as a Bake Sale, the Huckleberry Festival, movies and a yard sale. They will “play them by ear”.

The Hot Spots, purchased from the CARES Act grant are on order from AT&T. People will be able to get better internet connections. They can be checked out for a week at a time.

Maggie wants to purchase a new receipt printer with Leo Adler Grant money. She is also looking at using some of the funds for Science and Math kits that kids can check out, magazine subscriptions, summer reading program supplies, and to purchase books from the School book fair.

Jeff asked if Maggie was considering opening at partial capacity with COVID restrictions being lifted.

Maggie has been keeping an eye on reports from the State, but more particularly from Baker, La Grande, Union and Haines. So far Union is still not allowing people in. She is planning the Summer Reading Program to take place outside as much as possible or take-home kits.

Public Works Report: Rick commented that snow removal went well but was a challenge.

Rick found a valve for the well that was a lot cheaper than he originally quoted. He is working on getting one that is gear driven.

Rick is waiting for a non-windy day to burn the brush pile.

There were 10 meters that wouldn't read because of snow cover. Rick and Galen have been working on uncovering them.

Rick still needs to turn the hydrant at the fire station and switch out a meter.

The metal bin at the recycle center has been better. Additional signs have helped. Rick is looking for a plate to cover the manhole.

We took a big hit on e-coli at the lagoons. We had to take 5 tests, one every four hours, to Union. 4 of the tests were less than 2 and one was 110 which is still under the curve. Union was willing to step in on a weekend and run the tests, so we'll be getting a bill from them.

We are still waiting to hear from DEQ regarding the fines for the violations from March of 2019.

Rick has talked to Heather at Union about a liquid dechlor for the lagoons. It would mean no mixing and should be cheaper.

We did some additional tests on the water.

Jeff asked if the equipment, particularly the plow, was holding up okay. Rick said yes. We are still using a borrowed blade on the Chevy pickup. He has been doing some work on the dump truck. He is still looking for a small pickup with a plow. The worst time for plowing has been Monday mornings because they have to work around garbage cans.

Recorder Report: Water overages in February equaled \$458.44 less \$104.14 issued in freeze credits.

We still have masks and hand sanitizer to share with local businesses.

As of February 26th, Union County dropped to a moderate risk level for COVID so City Hall is opened to walk-in traffic again. Beth asked for permission to remain closed on Fridays for a while longer. The Council was okay with that.

Everyone should receive an email about mid-March reminding that SEI are due by April 15th.

We received information regarding the new round of Transportation & Growth Management grants for 2022-2024. The grants for things such as TSP updates, Safe Routes to School, Transit Development plans. The pre-application deadline is March 31st, however, we don't actually have to submit a pre-application in order to apply for the grant. Beth wondered if there was anything the Council wanted to do. She felt we already had a lot of other projects at this time.

We received a letter from Blue Mountain Humane Association asking for donations. Beth asked if the Council was interested in making a donation. Joyce wondered how much it would help North Powder if

we make a donation. Vicki wondered if they were asking for a specific amount. Jeff suggested bringing it to the Budget Committee and do a follow up with the new budget.

Mayor's Message: Mayor Mike surrendered his time to Dan Willitts for a Committee meeting report. He asked that questions be held until later in the meeting. Dan thought the consensus of the City Hall/Library committee was to ask for a 60 day extension on the offer to purchase the RFD part of the fire station so we have time to finish the roof inspection. It was discussed that we get a structural engineer in to take a closer look at the building. We received a report from Roger Hibbard regarding the masonry. It shows there are issues with cracks but nothing of particular concern. However, the building inspection report said there was no evidence of cracking. Dan felt we really should have a structural engineer check it out. He added that the building committee can't do anything until they know how much money the City has to spend. He suggested that once we have all of the inspections, the City Council should meet to go over all the things that need to be done before we touch the inside to remodel. We need to know how much money is available. If we spend \$90,000 to purchase the building, how much will we have to spend just to be sure its integrity is stable. Dan felt if there is such a big hurry to sell the building that we can't ask for an additional 60 or even 90 day extension, it makes you wonder if there is something underlying that we don't know. He reiterated that his suggestion is to figure out what has to be done to the building first and think toward the future. The roof has a 15 year warranty and we are already 12 years into it. He added that we did get a good report from Roger Hibbard but it should go back to the Council.

New Business-

Street Easements (Tony Lasich): Tony commented that in December he brought up the idea of deeding some of the street easements back to property owners. There are a lot of easements that are run down and not taken care of. Mayor Mike noted that it would be a process to do something. The right-of-ways are different sizes. He didn't know why or how that came about. If we reduce right-of-ways, it will impact property taxes, some more than others. It may not mean much to some, but to others it could be a big deal. Beth interjected that it would be a land use decision that requires an application and public hearings with notices sent to DLCD. It won't be an easy process. She thought every property owner would need to be in agreement and be included in the application. It will take time and a lot of effort. Tony wondered where to start. Beth thought he would need to get the property owners to file an application. There will be a filing fee. She reiterated that it won't be an easy process nor a quick one. Tony would like to see the whole town changed to a universal easement. Jeff noted that Center Street has the largest easement of 100'. There are only 3 streets that are not 80'. Rick added that there are utilities that could be affected. Beth remarked that it is doubtful that ODOT would agree to narrowing 2nd Street and the County may have control over E Street.

Solutions Audit- Beth noted that Solutions, CPAs have presented a contract for the City's annual audit for 2020-2021. The cost is estimated at \$10,180 plus about \$2,040 for the Management and Discussion Report. In the past when we have checked, Solutions was no more expensive than anyone else and they were cheaper than others. They have done the City audit for a lot of years and we have it down to a system so it goes fairly quickly and easily. Mayor Mike wondered about the paragraph regarding completion of work necessary for the audit. It would require an additional contract to have Solutions help prepare it. Beth commented that between what she does and what the accountant does, it has never been an issue. Joyce made a motion to stay with Solutions and accept the contract. Jeff seconded. All were in favor.

Clean-Up Day- Mayor Mike noted that the Clean-Up day has always gone over well. He asked the Council to pick a day for it. Beth thought it was generally done around Earth Day. Jeff suggested April 24th. He volunteered to help. Mayor Mike thought we should get in touch with someone from the FFA

to see if they would help again. Joyce made a motion to have the Clean-Up Day on April 24th. Vicki seconded. All were in favor. Vicki volunteered to get in touch with the school. Mayor Mike noted that Trinity Nesser was who approached him last year. Beth will get in touch with Union Sanitation. They suggested we set the dumpster up next to the well by the brush pile. Rick has a trailer we can use for tires. Beth will work on talk to Les Schwab, etc. Vicki wondered about having a wrecking yard come in to get rid of old cars. Jeff thought B&K would do that for free.

Old Business-

Playground: George Marston reported that we have applied to the Oregon Community Fund through the NP Community Partners for a grant to be used for playground equipment, construction, or phase 2 of the project. We applied for \$21,000. A thank you was sent to Mike Becker for the donation of a large rock for the playground. A check was sent for the deposit on the playground equipment. The NP Community Partners are in the process of finalizing a grant application from Wildhorse Foundation for \$20,000. Sue DeHaas presented a check from the Windmills for \$6000. Jeff Nielsen would like to volunteer to help with the playground. George thought the Windmill employees may donate some time as well.

CARES Act Grant: We received our computer equipment has been received but it isn't fully programmed yet. When they are done, each Chromebook will be programmed with individual e-mail accounts for every Council member. Beth asked if the Council wanted to allow access to anything other than log in for remote meetings on the computers. The answer was no. The Public Works computer will be set up separately. Beth didn't think the meeting software would do anything more than record a meeting. Jeff will check with Union to see what they use.

City Hall/Library: Mayor Mike noted that an inspection of the fire station was done except for the roof which couldn't be done because of snow. Hopefully, that can be done within the next few days. Some of the other concerns from the rest of the report could relate to the roof. Mayor Mike thought the committee was holding off until we get the rest of the report. Logan thought the consensus for a 60 day extension was just Dan's idea. The committee did agree to wait for the roof report and the masonry report before deciding if the structural engineering report was necessary. Joyce felt we should go with Dan's suggestion to ask for an extension so we can get all of the reports back and look at the results. Vicki thought we had everything except the roof inspection. She thought we were being inspected to death and we can't make a decision because somebody is always asking for another inspection. She agreed that the roof was very important. Mayor Mike reiterated that the roof has a 15 year warranty and we are on year 12. Logan reviewed the masonry report. It was done by Roger Hibbard. Logan noted that the bleaching agent was bleeding thru and flaking off. That means water was likely coming from both outside and inside from fire trucks as they were washed off and condensation built up. Structurally that means nothing at this point but we should do something about it within the next 20 years so it doesn't become a problem. There was no drilling done. If the City wants to pay Roger, he would do a more thorough inspection of the bond beams and do an actual assessment. The solutions would be pretty simple. If we were to seal the outside it would probably solve the issues. As for the cracks in the floor, Roger's take was that it is not connected with the foundation. It was probably not compacted well enough underneath. Cracks in the partition wall, cosmetically look really bad, and that is where he would drill to be sure there is a bond beam. It has been here for about 40 years and would stand another 100. Jeff Nielsen thought the only way to know what is going on is to pull down the soffit and look into the wall to see if there is water. He thought the building was low on the east side and should be checked to see if it is level. He also thought there was probably water in the blocks. There are some structural issues that need to be looked at. It is an expensive project and the City needs to be fully informed to know what is going on. Joyce reiterated that we should ask for an extension. Logan

thought the reports were supposed to be funneled through the Council. Mayor Mike noted that no decisions would be made tonight. The building inspector suggested having a structural engineer look at the building. The structural report we had done last summer was just a casual walk through. They are willing to bring their professional equipment in and do an in depth evaluation for about \$500. Mayor Mike noted that we just received the masonry report and haven't had a chance to look at it. He thought it was not very in depth. Vicki wondered when our 40 days were up. Mayor Mike thought it was around the middle of March but the dates on the counter-proposal shifted that. We are still within that time frame but we still don't have a complete inspection. He didn't understand why there should be such a sense of urgency that we can't ask for an extension. Jeff didn't think the Rural Fire Department saw it as urgent. Mayor Mike thought there seemed to be a rush 6 months ago. It has come up in conversation that the City and the Rural Fire could look at the zoning and try to sell the building for the purpose it was built for. Mayor Mike reiterated that we need to know what is going on and follow up with the inspector's recommendations. He wondered what it would cost to have a thorough masonry inspection. Vicki clarified that if we need to have inspections, let's get them done within the 40 day period. Mayor Mike didn't think we could do that. If there isn't a sense of urgency, what is the problem with asking for an extension? Vicki didn't want to procrastinate. Mayor Mike didn't feel asking for inspections was procrastinating. Jeff G. wondered if the warranty on the roof would transfer with the purchase of the property. He was not against prolonging the decision to get inspections. But if we are going to do a drill inspection on the walls, we need to have written approval from the Rural Fire Department. What Logan brought was what the committee asked for, input from a professional. Logan thought a lot of what needs to be looked at closer were on the City's side. Joyce was concerned about not having enough money to purchase the RFD side and fix the City's side. Mayor Mike asked if the Council wanted to have a structural engineer look at the building. Joyce thought that was what the committee asked for. Mayor Mike added that was what the building inspector suggested. Jeff N. thought a structural engineer would look at the blueprints of the building to see if there is a footing underneath the doors that ties the walls together, and he should check to see if there is water secretion in the walls. Jeff N. remarked that cinderblock buildings are usually built because they are quick and cheap. That is not saying they aren't well built but we need to know for sure. Mayor Mike clarified that any boring would be done by a mason and agreed we should get permission first. Logan didn't think it was necessary to have an additional structural inspection. We had the same structural engineer do a report on the Stanford building and it was okay. But suddenly it is not okay for the fire station. Mayor Mike asked again if the City wanted to proceed with a structural inspection. Joyce made a motion to get a structural inspection. Big Mike seconded and wondered if we would get to see the report so he could make an informed decision. Mayor Mike noted that it would be done by the same people who did the Stanford building but it would be more detailed. There was no further discussion on the motion. The motion failed with Joyce and Big Mike in favor and Logan, Vicki, and Justin against. Jeff G. abstained. Jeff G. commented that he was asked by the committee to get a few quotes and was informed that we should be able to get City Hall into the fire station for approximately \$125,000. Joyce noted that did not include leveling the floor.

Wastewater Project: Beth commented that we met with Anderson Perry and Nick Ducote to discuss the Wetland Delineation. Along with the Wetland Delineation, we have to do a Mutual Order of Agreement with SHPO and the affected Tribes for the cultural mitigation. We will be required to do something educational about the Indian heritage of the area. It has been suggested we do something like a poster to be permanently displayed at City Hall and/or a sign to be put in the Playground Park. CDBG funds can be used to pay for them. We will know more as we get into discussions with SHPO and the tribes. Joyce asked if we were on track with the grant. Beth said since we weren't able to get the cultural resources and wetland delineation done and approved before the end of February, we will have to wait

until September to apply for a construction grant. It would award in December and construction would start in the spring of 2022. We will still have to irrigate this summer and probably next summer.

Ordinance Enforcement Report: Mayor Mike left a message for Shawn. He didn't know if Shawn was waiting on the City to call him or if the City wants him to just take care of things. Mayor Mike will follow up with him. Beth said Shawn made contact with some people and has started to follow up.

Council Comments:

Vicki agreed that we still need to have the roof of the fire station inspected. She made a motion to proceed with the purchase of the Rural Fire Department based on the inspection reports that we have received already this month stating that the building is in good and sound condition at this time contingent on getting the roof inspected as soon as possible and contingent upon the favorable report that warrants a service life of 5 plus years and does not require any major repairs. She felt we needed somewhere to start. If the roof indicates the walls are bad, we go from there. Logan seconded. He then asked to amend the motion with a contingency to get a structural engineering report. Mayor Mike noted that the Council just voted not to do any further structural inspections. Logan felt without the motion there was no reason to do it. At this point it was more discussion than an amendment, but if the report comes back favorable, whatever that means, he felt it should be attached to the motion. Mayor Mike wondered if Logan was asking to amend Vicki's motion or was he backing up to the motion just voted on to not do a structural report. Logan wanted to add to the motion to continue with the purchase of the building and it be contingent on as long as Les Tipton's \$500 Structural engineering report comes back favorable. Beth reiterated that the Council just voted not to do a structural inspection. Logan felt that this would put an end to the endless inspections. Mayor Mike felt since the structural inspection was voted down, it should no longer be on the table. The only thing we can fall back on now is the completion of the roof inspection. Logan wondered if there was any reason why he couldn't amend Vicki's motion. Mayor Mike was confused and didn't know how to go about striking down a motion that was just voted on. Vicki commented that the structural inspection has not been completed because the roof has not been done. Mayor Mike clarified that the roof inspection and a structural engineering report were two different things. The structural engineer would look at walls, foundation, etc. Vicki still wanted to make her motion with an amendment. She wanted to know we are going somewhere and stop the arguing. Joyce commented that we haven't discussed this with the committee. Mayor Mike thought the purpose of the committee got skewed. It started out that the committee was supposed to see what we could do with the money we have. Logan interjected that they did come up with a tentative floor plan. Mayor Mike understood Dan to say there is no reason to go back to the committee until we know how much money they have to work with to put something inside. Tony took from the committee meetings that even if we get everything approved, we still don't have any money to fix the building. He thought it was nuts to not do structural inspection. Vicki added that now we are trying to amend the motion to put the structural inspection back into the mix. Beth noted that Joyce's original motion didn't include a time frame. It simply asked for a structural engineer to look at the building. The motion was denied with 2 yes votes and 3 nos. Jeff abstained. Logan agreed with Tony that it is nuts not to have a structural engineer look at the building. But it is even crazier to continue wasting the City's time and energy if we don't have an ending. Mayor Mike noted that the Council is prepared to spend \$87,500 if nothing turns up to change minds. Logan felt an engineer would come up with a list of things that need to be done. He thought some people would say there is no way we can pay for all of those things and get City Hall in there. He disagreed. As long as the engineer says the building is not going to fall over, we should trust him. If we don't move forward with this, the alternative is to stay in the building we are in now. Mayor Mike disagreed. There is still a commercial lot that could be purchased for about \$25,000 or less. Going back to Vicki's motion, we need to figure out what to do. He asked Beth how she thought we should handle the motion at this

time. Beth thought since there was a motion on the floor with a second that needs to be voted on. If the motion goes down, it can be presented again with the amendment. Vicki restated her motion as it was seconded to proceed with the purchase of the Rural Fire Department based on the inspection reports that we have received already this month stating that the building is in good and sound condition at this time contingent on getting the roof inspected as soon as possible and contingent upon the favorable report that warrants a service life of 5 plus years and does not require any major repairs. Motion carried with 4 yes. Big Mike and Joyce were opposed. Vicki asked if she could now make an amendment. Mayor Mike thought we should have wiped out the motion and so we could start from scratch. Beth added that if the Council didn't like the motion as read, they should have voted it down so it could be restated to include the amendment. Logan made a motion to do a recount on the last vote regarding the purchase the fire department. Vicki seconded. Motion carried with 5 yes. Big Mike was opposed. Vicki made a new motion to proceed with the purchase of the Rural Fire Department based on the inspection reports that we have already received this far that state that the building is in good and sound condition at this time contingent on getting the roof inspected as soon as possible and contingent upon the favorable report that warrants a service life of 5 plus years and does not require any major repairs and with a structural engineer verifying the integrity of the building. Logan seconded. Motion carried with 4 yes. Big Mike and Joyce abstained.

Joyce wanted to give a "heads up" that next month she will bring up the issue of people sharing water meters who should also be charged for sewer.

Jeff thanked Beth for all she does. She has a lot on her plate and still goes over and above. Rick, too. Jeff added that the City is looking better and we have a great crew. Logan agreed.

Jeff noted that since we have a deadline coming up on the fire station, he wondered if we should schedule another meeting before the 40 days are up. Mayor Mike agreed but wanted to double check the deadline.

Meeting adjourned 9:10PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Beth Wendt
City Recorder

Attest: