

North Powder City Council Meeting
May 3, 2021
7 PM Wolf Creek Grange

Attendance: Mayor Mike Wisdom, Councilors “Big Mike” Morse, Joyce Lawyer, Jeff Grende, Logan McCrae, and Justin Wright. City Recorder Beth Wendt, Public Works Director Rick Lawyer. Councilor Vicki Townsend was excused.

Others: David “Shorty” Schwehr, Susan Wirkkala, Faye Moore, Tony Lasich, Eric Newman, Carol Bouchard, Sherry Hart, Jeff & Wynn Nielson.

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

Public Comment: Faye Moore remarked that her great granddaughter is getting married in August and would like to use the gazebo in the park. If the City will supply the paint, Faye said her family would supply the labor to repaint the gazebo. Rick will see about getting some paint.

Shorty read a letter that was given to him about the March 30th special meeting regarding the purchase of the Fire Station. The author(s) of the letter wondered why 4 council members were so determined to purchase the building when the majority of the citizens at that meeting were against it. It was apparent that the 4 Council members had an agenda and were willing to erase the City’s budget for a number of years in an attempt to make the old fire station viable for a City Hall and Library. The author(s) felt the Councilors weren’t looking out for the best interest of the City and encouraged people to attend Council meetings to let their voices be heard. The letter was signed from “citizens for responsible representation”.

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

Minutes: Mayor Mike asked for amendments to the minutes from the Special Meeting on March 30th, the Council Meeting on April 5th and the Special Training Meeting on April 19th. Jeff made a motion to accept the minutes from all three meetings. Joyce seconded and all were in favor.

Accounts Payables: Beth reviewed the additions to the bills. We received a bill from Bingham & Bingham for \$1120 for February, March and April, Century Link was \$322.21, Magic Valley Labs for \$246, Ace Hardware total was \$174.04, Dan Van Thiel for \$300 for work on the purchase of the fire station, a reimbursement of \$21 to Beth for mileage for a special trip to Baker to pick up payroll and make a bank deposit, Kyla Richardson for \$50 and \$15 to the Winners Circle Trophies and Awards. Beth noted, for the record, that she doesn’t charge for mileage unless she has to make a special trip to town. We don’t have a bill from OTEC or Eagle Office yet. Eagle Office can wait until next month, but we will have to pay OTEC. That bill generally runs a little more than \$2000. Without OTEC, the total came to \$9,296.11. Mayor Mike wondered how we were doing budget wise. Beth thought we were doing okay but she is just getting started on preparing budget information for Jason. The Wastewater Project Grant Bills came to \$4521.22. Big Mike made a motion to pay the bills. Joyce seconded. Jeff pointed out an error in the invoice number for USA BlueBook. Motion to pay the bills carried unanimously.

Huckleberry Festival: Jeff reported that plans for the Huckleberry Festival are moving forward. They have a volunteer to take over the Car Show who has a donation for a big prize.

Library: The Library is planning 2 movie nights for this summer. Dates will be announced as soon as possible.

The Library plans to host a book sale and a raffle or auction for the Huckleberry Festival.

There are 6 “Hot Spots” ready for check out and 5 new Chrome Book Computers that need to be entered into the Sage System before they are ready for checkout.

The man who bought the Stanford building has donated a bunch of books and shelving units.

Sign-up for the Summer Reading Program is open now thru June 14th.

Carol Bouchard added that the City-wide Yard Sale would be in June. Beth thought it was supposed to be in August. Carol will verify the date.

Public Works: Rick noted that the Clean-Up Day went well. There was lots of support and a lot of clean-up was done.

The next injection at the lagoons will be done May 4th. Rick could use some help. They will measure the solids in both ponds and do an injection in each.

Rick is trying to get time to put in the Daniels water line. He needs a spotter.

We still have sewer issues at the A frames at the end of 2nd. It needs to be looked at.

Rick has been working on fixing up picnic tables.

We got more information about the fines from the DEQ. They have assessed fines for over \$6000. We have 20 days to respond to the notice. Rick could use some help with computer work because some of the errors are due to computer entries.

Rick is starting to fall behind on mowing and spraying weeds.

Some hydrants still need to be tagged. Rick noted that he completed flushing water lines. It went better this year than in the past. There are about 6 hydrants that are leaking and need maintenance and one that is out of service. Rick needs help to work on them.

Beth remarked that Galen has been out due to a knee injury since April 19th. Rick has been working 7 days a week since then. Galen is collecting Worker's Comp until he is released for light duty. WC will continue to pay up to 50% of his wages while he is on light duty. They will also pay up to \$5000 for equipment to help make his job easier. Some of the things mentioned were a zero turn lawn mower, computer software, a Tommy-lift tail gate, and a gator or golf cart so he doesn't have to walk from place to place. In the meantime, Rick still needs help. Mayor Mike verified that we have light duty work that Galen could do. Rick added that he could still use help with everyday stuff. We already have 2 people interested. Jeff asked what it would take to hire a temporary person. Beth will check with CIS to see if the position needs to be advertised before we do interviews. In the meantime, Joyce wondered if we could get some volunteers to help at the lagoons for Tuesday morning.

Rick noted that he was contacted by a contractor who would like to rent the sewer jetter for about a week. He needs to take it to Granite and will insure it and guarantee that it will be returned in as good as or better shape. Beth wondered if Rick knew the contractor. Rick did not but he was recommended by Baker City Public Works. Joyce commented that it is not being used. She thought the City bought it with the idea that we could use it in other places.

Rick hopes to get 2 pond doctors from Baker either this week or next. Beth asked how much they want for them. Rick said he wants to see if they work before negotiating a price but he thought they might be a gift. Beth asked what the Council wanted to do about the jetter. Rick thought it could be the start of developing a good working relationship with some contractors. There was no price quoted but they would need it for about a week. Jeff made a motion to rent the jetter. Joyce seconded. Rick will get a price. Motion carried unanimously.

The books and shelves that were donated to the Library need a place to be stored. Rick thought maybe they could be stored in the old fire station. He thought there would be plenty of room even with the playground equipment. Logan wanted to be sure they were really something the Library wants and we are not just storing stuff that we will later have to dispose of. He will check with the Fire Department to see if it would be okay.

Mayor Mike asked what we could do about getting Rick some help at the lagoons. Justin volunteered to help. Beth noted that anybody who volunteers needs to fill out a volunteer form.

Jeff felt we should hire temporary help as soon as possible. Beth noted that we have two applications already. Logan was fairly sure we would have to post the position. We will need a committee to review the applications.

Big Mike asked about the broken sewer pipe at his place. It has been broken for about a year. Mayor Mike wanted to settle the issue of the temporary public works person before we address that problem.

Jeff recommended the Mayor, as the public works supervisor, and Rick could be the interview committee and make a decision as to who to hire. Logan seconded the idea. The rest of the Council was in agreement.

Beth remarked that our SCA Grant project will be a two year project. The Union County Road Department will come in a patch potholes on the allotted streets this year, probably in August. Then they will come back next summer and redo potholes before resurfacing the streets. Since 5th Street is in really bad shape she wondered if the Council would be okay with asking the Union County Road Department to patch some potholes while they are here. We have an estimate of about \$100,000 to strip 5th Street to the bed and redo the entire thing. Beth didn't think we could do that this year but since they won't be here until August, we will be in our next budget cycle and maybe we can add a little more money to Street repairs to cover filling the worst of the potholes. Big Mike wondered how many other roads were like that and will there be an argument as to which should be done first. Beth thought 5th Street was the worst. We went with 3rd, 4th and F Streets because they are bad but they are part of the bus route and we could get all three done with the one SCA grant. 5th Street will probably take the entire grant amount of \$100,000 and then some. Most of the rest of the streets have been done fairly recently, other than 1st Street. Jeff wondered if we had an estimate to just patch on 5th Street. Beth said no because they felt it was so bad that it should be redone from the bed up. But they will do whatever we ask them to do. It is something to think about, but it would be a nice gesture for those who live along 5th Street. It would also help Rick since he has been so bogged down with other projects. Rick thought E to G might be sufficient for the time being and patch the rest for now. Beth noted that we could ask the County for some help with funding.

Recorder Report: Water overages in April came to \$325.31. There were no freeze credits issued.

We have a new ballot box next to City Hall so ballots can no longer be dropped at the City Hall office. The May 18th Election is basically for special districts.

The City has been contacted by someone with a program called "Project Med". It provides people with a place to return old and expired prescription medications instead of flushing them. They will provide envelopes for people to return medications. The envelopes would be picked up at City Hall and there would be no liability on the City because the user would be responsible for mailing the medications, not the City. Beth reiterated that Project Med would provide the envelopes and City Hall would only be a spot for people to pick up the envelopes. Logan thought it would be worth a try. There were no objections.

Beth noted that the budget process is coming up. The first meeting will be May 24th at 6PM at the Grange. She asked that if there were any requests for big ticket items, they should be submitted as soon as possible. So far we have had requests from the Public Works Department for a shedder/chipper for about \$5000, a used small dump truck with a snow plow for about \$20,000 and \$25,000 for an additional part-time public works person. Beth asked for a new printer/copier which would probably be leased and cost about the same as the current machine. The County Commissioners have asked that we submit any requests to fund projects. Big Mike wondered if we could add in something for fixing his sewer pipe. He agreed that he is responsible for his property but the City has to replace anything under the sidewalk to his connection. We still have an opening for one more person to serve on the Budget Board. It is a 3 year term and you must be a citizen of North Powder and registered to vote in North Powder.

The Blue Mountain Humane associations is asking again for a donation. According to the latest correspondence, they have taken in 2 dogs and 1 cat from North Powder in the 1st quarter of 2021.

Mayor's Message: None

New Business-

County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan- Beth noted that the County is working on a new Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan. They are trying to include everybody in the County. Beth had a sample of the plan if anyone is interested in looking at it and would like to make comments to the County.

Old Business-

“If I Were Mayor” Contest- Beth reported that there were only two entries for the “If I Were Mayor” contest. Kyla Richardson received the most Council votes and will receive a check for \$50. Beth will send certificates to the participants.

Playground: Beth noted that we are waiting for the equipment to be delivered.

City Hall/Library: Mayor Mike read a letter from a concerned senior citizen who felt it was important to make the Library the priority in the design as adults need a quiet place to relax and do research. Those without computers at home go to the library for such services. As the community grows the greater need is the children’s area but there is no space for the available programs. Because our library is too small and cramped many people don’t use it.

Mayor Mike also read a letter from Dan Van Thiel stating that he hasn’t received a preliminary title report yet. The report is on order, but the title company is backed up. He would not recommend the City acquire property without a title report evidencing clear title. He didn’t feel setting up an escrow was necessary as this deal is between two governmental bodies.

Susie Wirkkala questioned whether a Community Center was really needed at this time. We already have the grange for community activities. Including a Community Center in the new building stunts the ability of the Library to expand and grow with the needs of the City. She also wondered if there would be adequate emergency exits. The proposed plan doesn’t seem to have them. Mayor Mike responded that the Committee has met to discuss those very things. Susie wondered if they were open to the public. The answer was yes.

Mayor Mike asked for a committee update. In Dan Willitt’s absence Jeff Nielsen reported that the committee talked about how taking care of the outside of the building was a priority and fixing the windows so it can be heated. He didn’t know what would be done on the front but there was a preferred option for that and a floor plan. The committee also made a list of wants and needs. Mayor Mike wondered if there would be another committee meeting before the next budget meeting. Joyce thought Dan wanted to get a basic idea so we can start looking for grants. He wanted to stress that whatever we agree on can still be changed. Joyce noted that the Library board had some of the same concerns that she had about the location of the Library. The proposed plan puts it in the middle of the building with the restrooms in the addition. Jeff thought the library would use one of the existing bathrooms. Joyce insisted that we would have to rebuild it because we can’t have a “make do” bathroom for kids. Jeff thought the kitchen area and add-on bathrooms would be for the community center. Joyce suggested the mayor’s office could be on the opposite side of City Hall. Beth agreed it would make sense so the City Recorder didn’t have to pass through the Mayor’s office to get to a restroom or to access the storage area. Logan clarified that there were 3 ideas of what a floor plan could be. Joyce added that the Library wants more space so they have room to expand. City Hall doesn’t have a lot of equipment but the Library does. It needs to be the first thing we think about. Logan noted the question of whether or not a Community Center was really necessary was considered. There were pros and cons to it. There is an extra cost to put one in but the Grange is too small for a meeting area and the Rural Fire Department is outside City limits. Joyce noted that the Grange has a 75 person capacity. Jeff G. thought if there was a need, we could move a wall and add a door. He thought the project would happen in stages as we try to get grants. Susie noted that a lot of grants are going to be Library specific and won’t include City Hall. Jeff said the Community Center would actually just be a title for the room. If the Library needed it, they could use it. Logan added that the idea was that the Community Center would not have access to the Library but the Library could utilize the Community Center. Joyce would still like to see the Library at the end of the building rather than the middle. She had another idea for a plan that would add 2000 square feet to the Library. We need to have a foundation and a plan so we have something to show. Logan reiterated that the plans were just idea starters. Once the majority agrees on a plan, the first grant we apply for could pay for a draftsman, engineer, and architect to put plans together. Joyce insisted that we still need to do the outside first. Jeff G. wondered if we were going to run everything through Dan Van Thiel or was he just doing the title search. Beth said Dan ordered the title search and was not doing it himself. Once we have the title search,

he offered to help draw up a purchase agreement and closing papers. Logan thought Dan was acting in lieu of a realtor to help us work our way through closing. Beth reiterated that Dan is not doing the title search himself but the City will have to pay the title company for it.

Jeff was confused about what was meant by the accusation of a “hidden agenda”. He has heard that before. He asked if Shorty could give some clarification regarding the letter he read. Shorty said it was that the intent seemed to be to buy the fire station regardless of whatever else came along without looking at any other options.

Clean-Up Day- Mayor Mike was impressed with the help we had. He hoped he didn’t miss anyone with his “thank yous”. We filled 2 dumpsters and had at least 100 tires. Rick noted that the metal dumpster was overflowed and there was a lot of stuff left there that shouldn’t have been. Mayor Mike thought there was interest in doing another Clean-Up Day in the fall. Joyce felt it was encouraging to see people around town starting to take interest.

CARES Act Grant- Beth noted that we still need to get together with Zach (Johnson) to finish training on the new computer equipment. She asked if the Council wanted to try to do that before the Budget meetings. Logan thought it wasn’t really necessary because none of the Council was likely to join in remotely. Beth will get in touch with Zach to see where we stand for others to call in.

Logan mentioned that the next round of stimulus money would be similar to the CARES Act Grant. They are going to earmark money per town but the parameters have not been set. Beth noted that through the American Recovery Protection Act (ARPA), Union County is supposed to receive \$5.2 million. If we have some projects we would like some help with, now is the time to turn in a request. The City is earmarked to receive \$93,764. Beth thought we should receive about ½ of that sometime within the next few weeks and the other half would come next year. However, at this point nobody seems to know what it can be used for. Logan guessed it would be tied to an infrastructure project. Beth reiterated that now was the time to request help from the County. We could ask for help with things like the City Hall and Library project, repaving 5th Street, or additional help with the playground and park. Joyce wanted to be involved with submitting requests. Logan suggested we apply for \$500,000.

Wastewater Project- Beth reported that CDBG has approved the budget amendment to cover the added expense the wetland delineation & mitigation, cultural resources survey additional permits, preparation of the construction phase grant application, and \$4390 for the DSL permit. It doesn’t include the \$46,000+ for mitigation with DSL which will be part of the construction cost. The Council has already approved an addendum with Nick Ducote but now needs to approve the addendum of services for Anderson Perry. This will bring the Design grant total to \$317,890. We can receive a total of up to \$2.5million per project. The construction is estimated to be less than \$2million.

The final Notice of proposed activity in a 100-year floodplain and wetland has been published. Comment period expired April 23rd.

We started negotiations for the MAO for Cultural Resources with the tribes. We talked about putting in an informational kiosk in the park and doing something at City Hall. SHPO and the tribes thought those were good ideas but weren’t enough. They will think it over and provide other suggestions.

Our application to DSL has been accepted and we are now waiting for the 30 day public comment period to expire before they will grant approval. Public comment expires May 15th.

Mayor Mike read Amendment #1 for the Agreement for Engineering Services, Job No. 888-14, to make revisions to the original agreement with Anderson Perry & Associates because of modifications to the budget due to changes in the estimated amount of work required. The total budget amendment came to \$39,900. Beth noted there was a question about the \$4000 listed for a Conditional Use Permit. She thought it was already paid. She suggested that the Council approve the budget amendment contingent on verification that the City doesn’t have to pay the \$4000 out of pocket. Logan made a motion to accept Amendment No. 1 to the Agreement for Engineering Services, Job No. 888-14 contingent upon settlement of the \$4000 for a Fill Removal Permit to be covered by CDBG. Justin seconded. Jeff amended the motion

to confirm that the \$4000 difference was for a Conditional Use Permit, not the Fill Removal Permit. Motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance Enforcement- Beth noted that Shawn has been coming in on Mondays but wasn't here today. He has seen improvements on right-of-way clean up. Mayor Mike asked if Rick noticed the same thing. Rick said there are some camp trailers starting to show up again. Mayor Mike will touch base with Shawn. Joyce thought there was a place on Center Street that had somebody in a trailer. Justin didn't think anyone was actually staying in the trailer.

Joyce wondered if the City should write a letter if we find out a place is using water that is not metered. It is on the City main water line. There is a trailer that is next to the house and their son is living in it. Mayor Mike thought we should start with verifying that there is problem then send a letter stating that it needs to be metered. Joyce said there is another place where the water has been shut off for over a year and someone has been living in the trailer using the sewer but they aren't paying for sewer. Logan thought we should pass it on to Shawn to investigate. Joyce commented that it's this kind of thing that makes it hard on the budget. Mayor Mike will get with Shawn.

Joyce remarked that when the water ordinance was re-done, it allowed that people can share meters. That means they don't pay the base. There are several places that are like that. She wondered if we wanted to correct that. Rick knew of 3 or 4 places that have a house and some kind of additional living quarters that are not metered separately. Joyce added that if they go over the base amount they pay extra for water but they don't pay for sewer. Jeff G. thought it was hard to go back on something that has been allowed since meters were put in. Rick added that there are some places that simply got missed and they need to need to be addressed. Jeff understood the problem if a meter was just missed. But if a single meter was put on the same property and the City knew the circumstances...

Rick just wanted to be consistent. Jeff wondered who would be expected to pay for the meters. Beth interjected that at the time the meters were installed, each property owner was given the choice of having one or more meters installed where there was an active account. But they were also told that if they wanted more than one, they would have to pay for additional meters. It was the property owner's responsibility to make any corrections on their side to connect to the meters. Because the grant funds were limited, the City could only provide a single meter to each active account. Property owners had to pay for additional meters or inactive services. Unfortunately, there have been a few places where services were inactive that were overlooked and either were not capped off or didn't get a meter installed. Shorty thought when something is converted to a living space it should be metered. Logan noted that if we know there is a direct line to a house for a service, it should be metered. He made a motion to disconnect the water and have a meter put in. Rick felt having a shared meters should be changed. Beth interjected that there was a motion on the table to either meter a direct line for a service or have it disconnected. Jeff seconded Logan's motion. Motion carried unanimously. Beth will send a letter and give notice that something needs to be done.

Council Comments:

Joyce was sorry to bring everything up but she felt it was stuff that needed attention.

Logan thanked Rick for letting the Council know what he needed. He hoped we were able to provide some solutions by hiring a temporary employee.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Beth Wendt
City Recorder