

North Powder City Council Meeting
August 2, 2021
7PM Wolf Creek Grange

Attendance: Councilors “Big Mike” Morse, Jeff Grende, Vicki Townsend, Joyce Lawyer, and Justin Wright, City Recorder Beth Wendt, Public Works Director Rick Lawyer.

Others: Lindsey Thompson, George Marston, Jeff & Wynn Nielsen, Susie Wirkkala, Susan Ferguson, Carol Bouchard, Linda Dixon and Karlie Martin.

Mayor Mike Wisdom and Councilor Logan McCrae were absent.

Council President Mike Morse called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Public Comment: Karlie Martin complained that the Code Enforcement Officer has been putting a 25MPH speed sign in the middle of the road. It is a traffic obstruction, which is illegal. He has been told twice by the State Police to remove the sign and he still put it back. As a City employee, that is not okay.

Susan Ferguson, owner of the Huddleson building, would like to sell the building. She wanted to get a feel about how the Council would feel about approving a Conditional Use Permit for the building to have a business in front and an apartment in back. Beth interrupted as that is asking for pre-approval of a land use issue. No permit is needed to sell the building. It is in a Commercial Zone and as long as the uses are permitted uses, a Conditional Use Permit is not needed. When someone has plans to do something with the building that’s when we determine whether or not a Conditional Use Permit is needed.

Susan noted that when she bought the building there was a storm sewer easement behind the property. There are other easements as well. She thought there was a water meter directly outside the building at the corner where water was plumbed in. When the sidewalks were put in, the meter was taken out. She was told that there could be a connection from the alley but she would have to pay to have the water connected. She didn’t feel that was right, but we need to resolve this in order for her to sell the property. Beth said according to what she could find in the City records, there hasn’t been active water and sewer services at the Huddleson building since the late 1970’s or early 1980’s. Sue was sure there was water across the lot that came in at the corner of the building. Joyce noted that water comes through the alley, not the street. Sue reiterated that she was sure there were services to the building before the sidewalks were put in. She would like to see something done with the building.

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

Minutes: Big Mike asked for amendments to the minutes of the July 12, 2021 Council Meeting and Executive Session. Jeff made a motion to accept the minutes from both the July 12th Council meeting and the Executive Session. Vicki seconded. All were in favor.

Accounts Payables: Beth reviewed additions to the Accounts Payables. There were 3 spreadsheets. Payments to Eastern Oregon Title Co., for closing on the Fire Station, and Mad Hatter Motors, for rental of a VAC trailer, were already done. The second spreadsheet was for grant bills in the amount of \$4360.98 plus a payment to Dan Van Thiel for reviewing MAO for the wastewater project. We haven’t received a bill from Van Thiel yet. Additions to the regular bills included CenturyLink, Magic Valley Lab, mileage reimbursement to Beth for a special trip to La Grande to file paperwork with Eastern Oregon Title and to make a bank deposit and pick up mouse traps at Walmart for City Hall, DuBois Chemicals, Millers Hardware, a reimbursement to Joyce for weed eater string, Thatcher’s Ace, and USA BlueBook. We haven’t received bills from OTEC, Eagle Office Concepts, Dan Van Thiel, and Don McClure for Ordinance Enforcement. Beth noted that the next DEQ loan payment is due September 1st. The final payment is due March 1, 2022. If we pay the loan in full now, we will save about \$115 in interest fees.

Big Mike asked if we had the funds to pay it off. Beth noted that we budgeted to pay in full with this budget. Justin suggested to pay it in full since we have it budgeted. Everyone agreed. Regular bills came to \$82,714.62 without the missing bills. Beth thought OTEC would be around \$2000, Eagle Office about \$50, Dan Van Thiel approximately \$200, and about \$400 to Don McClure.

Jeff wondered if we were still contracting with Shawn (Wood) and if so, is Don McClure employed through Shawn. Beth agreed we need to clarify that. Vicki made a motion to pay the accounts payables with the exception of Don McClure. Justin seconded. All were in favor. Big Mike asked for clarification of the reimbursement to Joyce. Joyce noted that Rick asked her to pick up a spool of string for the weed eater while she was in town. She paid for it so the City is just reimbursing her for the cost.

Huckleberry Festival Committee Report: Lindsey Thompson reported that the Festival went well with a lot of positive feedback. It has been suggested to have it become a two day event. One of the biggest problems would be the overnight stay; where to stay and security. There were a lot of positive comments: lots of fun, organized, controlled, great to see town come to life, etc. Lindsey thought the festival could use more accommodations for vendors. People from other towns would like to volunteer. Karlie asked if there were enough activities to warrant 2 days. Lindsey thought there absolutely were. The Huckleberry Festival made a net profit of about \$800-\$1200 for next year. Linda Dixon interjected that there were a lot of new sponsors this year. Big Mike would like to revisit the Dessert Contest. Jeff added that it was cool that the City provided water for the Mud Volleyball. Rick worked really hard to help line up power and to be sure things were going okay. Sue Ferguson noted that she used to donate electricity to the event until her insurance company told her not to.

Library Report: Susie Wirkkala reported that the Ready to Read grant application has been submitted. We are usually awarded \$1000 to use for the Summer Reading Program. Next year's theme will be "Read beyond the Beaten Path". It will focus on the outdoors.

This year's reading program will end with a celebration on Friday, August 6th.

Applications for the Leo Adler Grant are due August 31st as well as the report for the existing grant.

There was a great turnout for Movie Night on July 24th. The next Movie Night will be August 19th and the movie will be "Toy Story 4".

The Library will hold a book sale, silent auction, and raffle during the City-wide Yard Sale. The raffle will be for 10 yards of gravel, tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20. Silent auction items are a Family Bundle that includes ski lift tickets from Anthony Lakes and other activities and gift cards from local businesses, and a hand crafted toy box with donations from local businesses.

With funds from the La Grande Community Library Foundation, the Library will purchase some periodicals and an interactive "Growing-Up Digital Play table" that allows kids to play games while focusing on literacy and learning. However, it can't be set up until the Library is moved.

Public Works Report: Rick reported that we rented a VAC trailer from Nampa for \$1400 for a month. It needs a few repairs before it can be used. Baker City would like to sub-lease it for about a week when we are done with it.

Rick will pick up pond doctors from Baker on Wednesday. He hopes to get 2 or 3 of them. They will need some maintenance. They are solar powered.

The ponds are really starting to come to life. We haven't done a sludge judge yet because the solids are a lot more compacted that we thought. The treatments are working but it will take more time.

A couple of pumps went down. Rick ordered parts and should have at least one back on line by the end of the week.

The lawn mower needs some maintenance. They've done a lot of mowing but more mowing and weed eating is needed. They are particularly behind at the lagoons.

Big Mike was concerned about the hole by his house. Rick explained that he is going to dig on the other side of the sidewalk in order to make a new tap where the sewer line was broken under the wheelchair

ramp. This is one of the jobs he rented the VAC Trailer for. He also plans to use it for the school storm drain and some of the sewer problems at the other end of 2nd Street.

Vicki asked if we found out about the alley right-of-way (off 5th Street). Rick said we have a key. It is our easement. He thought everything was fixed but the city pipe has been exposed. He asked the Council for permission to cover the pipe. Jeff asked if it was exposed enough to check it out. Rick said there was some spliced wires but the pipe was not touched. A frost free hydrant was hooked into the meter. Jeff agreed that if Rick was okay with what had been done, he could go ahead and cover the pipe. Beth asked if we got Well #5 back on line. Rick is still working on that. He hopes it will get done this month as we have some testing that needs to be done before long.

Ordinance Enforcement Report: The only time Beth talked to Don was when he came in to report a dog bite. She told him to call Animal Control.

Beth talked to ODOT about what could be done about speeding, particularly on 2nd Street. ODOT will not allow painting the speed limit on the street or putting up a flashing yellow light. They suggested flashing radar speed signs. They cost about \$4500 each. If the City is interested we can start talking about them. We can purchase a speed trailer so as long as it meets the required standards. Whatever we do, remember that ODOT has control of 2nd Street. Justin wondered why ODOT wouldn't just pay for a radar speed sign since it is their road. Beth thought it was because they have already done what they are required to do, including adding extra signs but they are willing to work with us. ODOT didn't say for sure they wouldn't pay for the signs, just that we can start talking about funding and who would pay for maintaining them. Joyce wondered about a camera that could take pictures of license plates so tickets could be issued. Linda Dixon noted that E Street is also a problem. Beth thought we should check to see if the County or the City is responsible for E Street. Karlie suggested the City could put money toward a police force instead of spending it on signs and cameras, etc. It would help with more problems than just speeding.

Jeff wondered if the Ordinance Enforcement person was looking at places other than on 2nd Street. Rick thought he had been working on A & B Streets. Jeff wondered what the City's jurisdiction is as far as enforcing ordinances on County or State roads. Joyce thought the City overruled in city limits. Linda was concerned about what is happening across the street from her. Jeff remarked that there isn't a lot the city can do on private property. Rick added that Don is making a list. If you have a problem, let Beth know and she can pass it on. Jeff thought we were getting better but it takes time.

City Recorder Report: Water overages in July were \$5649.35. We used over 8 million gallons of water. We received notice from SAIF that they are trying to contact Galen's Doctor to get a release for light duty. We are still waiting to hear back.

The Union County Road Department will be here the week of August 9th thru 12th.

Mayor's Message: None

New Business:

Liquor License Renewals: Big Mike noted that liquor license renewals were for C.J.s, North Powder Café and Badger Mart. Jeff made a motion to renew all of the licenses. Vicki seconded. Beth interjected that the hearing was to allow public comment. The City doesn't actually get to decide one way or the other, but we have to allow public comment before we can make any kind of recommendation. She reiterated that there was a motion and a second to approve the renewals. Big Mike asked for a vote. All were in favor.

Recycle Center: Rick noted that we caught a couple of people illegally dumping stuff at the Recycle Center. They came and cleaned up their messes. The metal dumpster is gone for a while but Rick hopes we can get it back later on. The cardboard dumpster has to be dumped about once a week, but since it would cost about \$10,000 for another dumpster, Rick thought we would have to live with dumping it every week. He reminded that it has to be completely full before they will dump it. He

hasn't had time to put up cameras but there has been a lot of help from the community to monitor the area. If it continues to be a problem, Rick thought one option would be to move the dumpsters down by the brush pile. Another option would be to fence it off and lock it. He monitors it every day. Jeff wondered if it was B&K that decided not to bring the metal dumpster back. Rick thought it was a mutual decision for now. He thought the City was supposed to get money for the metal but some of it will probably go toward cleaning garbage out of the bin. Beth wondered if there was a place to put a camera that would be close enough to do any good. Rick was trying to find a spot.

Old Business:

Playground: George reported that the old playground has been demolished and disposed of. The new equipment has been delivered and is being stored at the fire station. The final payment has been made. MACS, a group of representatives from the playground association of Oregon, would like a pre-construction assessment report. Stu Spence, the La Grande Parks & Rec director, has volunteered to have a technician help do the report. They will be here Friday morning. We have a list of things that MACS would like to see in the report. George thought we would also have a representative from NW Playground Equipment here during construction. We will need to move the equipment to the playground area before they get here. The Baker Co. Sheriff has volunteered a pre-pardon group of inmates to help with construction. The Windmills are planning to send several people to help as well. We have 4 possible crew leaders, one crew of inmates, and a possible crew from the windmills. George thought we would need another 8 to 10 volunteers.

George did a raffle during the Huckleberry Festival. Randy Dickson won the half pig donated by Rick and Connie Lawyer and Ashelee Cochran won the Bucket donated to the Huckleberry Festival by D&B Supply. He sold 42 tickets at \$5 each. The money is to be split between the Huck Fest and the Playground project.

City Social: Vicki got prices for water, hot dogs, and ice cream. We are still hopeful that the Ford Family Foundation will pay for the food. She and Jeff will start getting in touch with the school and others about music. It will be August 28th in the park next to the fire station from 11AM to 2PM. Beth noted that the representative from the Ford Family Foundation would like us to do a small survey about what people like about the community. Jeff suggested we could have signage showing the potential of what the fire station will look like. Vicki thought if there were leftovers, we could donate them to the park work crew.

Fire Department Contract: Beth noted that the Rural Fire Department made some revisions to our proposed agreement. They only want to renew for 1 year instead of 5. Jeff said that's because there are so many changes right now. He thought they were asking for a higher percentage. Beth noted that Logan suggested it could be based on the Consumer Price Index but Jason thought the City couldn't afford that. We proposed a 3% increase for the new contract which is \$4970 per quarter. Jeff interjected that we need to approve the amended agreement. Beth thought the changes included 1 year instead of 5 and there was some stuff removed from the equipment list. They left the old #1 Parade truck, a gas powered roof-saw, and a 24' aluminum ladder. Joyce commented that Haines doesn't pay for fire service. It comes from their property taxes. Beth noted that the city of Haines is part of the Haines Rural Fire District. Joyce was concerned that the City isn't getting enough information about water use because we have to report it to the state. Jeff wondered how hard it was to keep track of water used, including flushing. Rick said he keeps track of water used when he flushes. The RFD agreed to provide an estimate of how much water they use outside of what is metered. Rick thought what we were asking for was water that goes into a truck but is used for something other than fires. They did agree to provide a monthly report. Everybody else who uses bulk water has to provide that information. Beth noted that there is a clause in the agreement that has been there from the beginning that says the RFD will coordinated activities with the City. She thought that meant if they use water for

something other than firefighting, like for the Huckleberry Festival, or parades, etc. the City needs to know about it. It's not that the City is objecting to them using water for those things or that we expect them to pay for it but the City needs to know they are taking the water. We are accountable to the citizens and the State for all water use. Jeff thought it was something for Logan to talk to the RFD about or Beth could send them a note.

Joyce wondered if the City's Parade truck was going to be kept at the new fire station. Jeff moved to accept the proposed contract from the Rural Fire Department. Vicki seconded. All were in favor.

Joyce commented that if we were to annex into the rural fire district now, they would lose about \$10,000. If we continue to increase what we pay them, why would they even think about annexation? Jeff thought that was a conversation for another time. He didn't think the RFD was opposed to it at some point. Joyce added that the money we pay for emergency services comes out of the City taxes that could be used for something else, such as law enforcement. Vicki thought we should have a work session to talk about it.

Baker City Resolution No 3881: Beth noted that this was an issue that the mayor wanted to discuss. Jeff suggested tabling the issue in his absence. All agreed.

Wastewater Project Update: The MAO for the DEQ permitting and the MAO with SHPO and the tribes have been approved and are waiting on signatures. We are still working on the Elders in Residence to finalize what will be an acceptable payment. Hopefully they will accept \$5000. Nick is working on the Construction grant application. Hopefully the design grant will close in the next couple of weeks and we can apply for the construction grant in September.

City Hall & Library: All of the paperwork has been filed and the payment has been made for the purchase of the fire department. We are waiting for everything to be recorded. If it hasn't already happened, it should be final any day and we will get the final paperwork.

Council Comments:

Joyce commented that she isn't against the fire department but she is looking out for the people of the City. Big Mike agreed that sometimes things don't seem to go the way they should be going.

Vicki said we have to quit nit-picking. She is really tired of hearing about a conflict of interest. Not only is her son on the Fire Department but Joyce's son works for the City. Karlie thought at times that could be a conflict but it is a small town. She thought it was a joke that the City and the fire department haven't come together and work on "it". She thought there was a split between the City and the School. Vicki interjected that we all work hard for the City and we are trying to get back with the school. Justin interjected that there are three entities involved, The City, the Fire Department, and the School. We are trying to bring them back together. Karlie reiterated that the city is right on some things and the fire department is right on others. There is a lot of give and take in order to move on. Big Mike agreed that things need to be solved.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Beth Wendt
City Recorder