

North Powder City Council Meeting
March 7, 2022
7PM
Wolf Creek Grange

Attendance: Mayor John Frieboes, Councilors Joyce Lawyer, Jeff Grende, Logan McCrae, Vicki Townsend, Mike Morse and Justin Wright, City Recorder Beth Wendt, Public Works Director Rick Lawyer, David Rosingana, Librarian Maggie Guthrie.

Others: Dennis & Maja Lefever, Susie Wirkkala, Susanne Watson, Sherry Hart, Barbara Weeks, Craig & Cody George, Lindsey Thompson, Shorty Schwehr, Lynne Borisoff, Linda Dixon, Dave Rose, Jeff & Wynn Nielsen.

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

Public Comment: Barbara Weeks read a letter thanking the Mayor for looking at the library and considering another possible layout for the new library. Her letter also addressed the inspection of the fire station building. She was concerned about getting a structural engineer to thoroughly examine the walls for water damaged and dirt density under the building to be sure the building is safe. The letter also asked to address zoning ordinances that don't allow for "punching 6th Street through" until lots in all zones are filled. She felt it would be a way to allow new businesses and homes to come into the community. John responded stating that he did, in fact, visit with Maggie and they talked about possibilities for the library. However, when he and Maggie looked at the actual space being proposed by the Council, Maggie seemed to be okay with it. Barbara wanted to know how an "L" shape would work for Proctor testing. Maggie said she still didn't know how the testing would work.

Beth read a letter submitted by Wynn Nielsen. She commented that of the people who responded to the survey, 53 were opposed to purchasing the fire station vs. 47 in favor. Yet the council voted to purchase the fire station by a split vote even after a large percentage of the community showed up at the meeting to express their opinions against it. When asked who on the council had a connection with the fire department, only Justin admitted to it. Wynn felt many in the community have been dismissed and ridiculed by the council to the point they refuse to attend meetings. Anyone that isn't totally on board with what the council is doing is dismissed or demeaned.

Barbara Weeks wanted to know if the issue of zoning could be added to the agenda. John noted that the County Planning Department is working on some things and he would like to wait until we talk more with the County. Barbara wondered if it would be an open meeting. Beth said yes.

Agenda: Beth asked that the Powder Club RV Spots be removed from the agenda at this time and Lindsey Thompson could take the spot to give a report about the Huckleberry Festival. Mike motioned to accept the agenda. Joyce clarified the motion included changes. Logan seconded. All were in favor.

Minutes: Jeff made a motion to accept the minutes from Feb. 7, 2022. Mike seconded. Motion carried with 5 in favor. Vicki abstained as she was not present for the meeting.

Joyce made a motion to accept the minutes from the Public Hearing on Feb. 7, 2022. Mike seconded. Motion carried with 5 in favor. Vicki abstained.

Accounts Payable: Beth reviewed changes to the Accounts Payables and pointed out the bigger bills such as CIS, OTEC, Miller's Lumber, and payments for the wastewater testing equipment and supplies. The total bills came to \$27,197.20. Joyce made a motion to pay the bills. Logan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Library Report: Maggie is still looking for volunteers to help with some projects and to move things and clean out some of the older books.

The board has discussed some fund raiser ideas, such as an Easter Breakfast, raffles, book sales, and movie nights.

The Friday movies at the library are over for the winter.

The last of the Leo Adler Grant has been spent. She order some drafting calculators and charging ports. Vicki had a question about when the library board members were last updated. The only one she could verify was Jeff Nielsen. Maggie thought another board member was going to resign so she would be looking for someone new and it would be noted in the next newsletter. Beth interjected that the Barbara Weeks had been recommended for the last opening but the Council didn't vote on it. According to the ordinance, the Council needs vote on appointments. Jeff moved that Barbara be on the board. Joyce seconded. All were in favor. Vicki wondered if the rest of the board was up to date. Beth noted that the ordinance says they serve a 4 year term. She thought it would be a good idea to update anybody that has been on longer than 4 years. Vicki agreed. Beth will help research when each library board member was appointed.

Public Works: Rick introduced David Rosingana, the Public Works Assistant.

There is still a lot going on at the lagoons and the weather isn't helping. There is ice on the ponds. The lab is almost set up to do our own sample testing. Some of the samples have been good, but it's an on-going battle. Rick wants to do more flushing so he can go back to the river with the effluent water.

Some hoses have been ordered for the VAC truck. There is a leak in the power steering but Rick hasn't had a chance to fully check it out.

There are a lot of pot holes showing up because of the weather. Rick will try to put some temporary fill into the worst of them. There are also a lot of holes on the right-of-ways from people plowing snow.

The alley behind the motel needs some rock and dirt to fill in the hole from the water leak.

We still need signed permission from the 3rd property owner to fix the sewer line at the end of 2nd Street. In the meantime, there was another plug on A Street. It was jetted but Rick thought it was only a temporary fix. It needs another clean out on the City side.

We are still waiting for a mechanic to look at the air pump on the dump truck.

Beth noted that Rick is signed up for the "Short School" at the end of March. Rick interjected that he may have to cancel, depending on what is happening at the lagoons. It is a good class and can count toward his certification. But the problems at the lagoons are serious.

Jeff wondered if Rick had used the E.coli tester yet. Rick said he did once, but it is not certified yet.

Certification should be coming in June.

Rick will talk to Mark Putman about getting the signed paperwork to work on the sewer.

John hoped that the wastewater project would help with some of the issues at the lagoons.

Ordinance Enforcement: Shawn had to have another surgery and will not be available until the first part of April. John noted that Shawn is anxious to get back on it.

Linda Dixon said there is a pile of stuff between 2 sheds across from the Methodist Church.

Recorder Report: Beth noted that water overages in February were \$415.54. There were 26 freeze credits issued for a total of \$109.03. We used 1,421,824 gallons of water.

The Baker County Road Department isn't sure yet if they will be able to do our SCA grant project on 5th Street. They will try to have somebody come look it over to see if maybe they can squeeze it in, but suggested we might want to talk to some paving companies (which means we may have to put it out for bid). Since we have 2 years to complete the grant, Logan suggested we put it on hold and ask to put it on Baker County's and Union County's list for next year. Beth noted that Union County should be able to finish last year's project.

Information was given to the Council regarding a nomination to serve on an advisory committee for the Union Co. Commissioners to look at the Transient Room Tax allocations. Beth noted that we get \$2000 a year from the County Transient Room Tax. No nomination was made.

Mayor's Message: John talked to the County Sheriff and got a radar speed trailer put on 2nd Street. The Sheriff also put on some extra patrol but we could still use more.

John reiterated that he visited with Maggie about the library. That will be covered more under old business.

The Rural Fire Department put on a very nice dinner and invited some to the Council. It was all part of an effort to work together.

New Business:

Craig George- Union Sanitation: Mr. George noted that he sent a letter to the Council requesting an increase in garbage rates. This is the second increase from the County since the last time Union Sanitation increased rates. The first increase was for 1.5% and it was not passed on but the most recent increase is for 12%. La Grande has a provision to charge a fuel sur-charge if it goes over a certain amount. Mr. George would like to add that on to his fees if he needs to. The new rates would be \$25.37 for a 42 gallon can, \$29.91 for a 64 gallon can, and \$34.45 for a 96 gallon container. The charge is per month but is billed bi-monthly. Logan moved to approve the 13.5% increase with the ability for Union Sanitation to pass on the fuel sur charge to the residents of North Powder. Vicki seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Solutions 2021-2022 Audit: Beth noted that we need Council approval to sign the agreement with Solutions CPAs for this year's audit. They estimate the cost to be about \$12,000 plus about \$1500 to \$2000 for the cost of the Management and Discussion Analysis. Beth thought that was about what we paid last year. She added that is about what we would pay for any other auditor. Logan moved to accept Solutions CPAs audit agreement. Jeff seconded and all were in favor.

Annual Clean-Up Day: Beth remarked that the Annual Clean-Up Day is usually held in April around Earth Day, which is April 22nd. It was decided to have the Clean-Up day on April 30th. Beth will start making arrangements.

Community Connection Agreement: Beth noted that the Community Connections agreement allows for communications between the city and Community Connections to help low income families with utility bills. It's basically the same thing that we've done before, but it puts everything in writing. Logan made a motion to enter into the agreement with Community Connections. Mike seconded and all were in favor.

Linda Dixon commented that there was a mud hole next to the door at the Methodist Church where they do the Food Bank. She wondered if the City would donate some gravel to fill it in. The Council agreed to use the backhoe to haul a couple loads of gravel.

Old Business:

Huckleberry Festival: Lindsey reported that the Huckleberry Festival Committee would like permission to have a 2-day event this year. They have enough volunteers and security for vendors. She presented a map to show locations and parade route. They would like to spread out the vendors and add more family-fun-events such as a longer mud volleyball tournament, lawnmower races, bed races, tricycle races and a pie eating contest. They would also like to do an art exhibit. Jeff wondered how to handle overnight vendors. Lindsey is working with the Union County Chamber of Commerce to offer discount hotel stays. Logan wondered if out of town vendors felt one day was not worth it. Lindsey thought some of the long distance vendors did. Linda thought it was a good idea but it would be the vendor's responsibility to find overnight accommodation. Logan asked about road closures. Lindsey proposed that there would be some streets that would have sections closed for the entire event while others would only be temporary. They get a permit from ODOT to close 2nd Street for the parade. Logan made a motion to approve the multi-day Huckleberry Festival event. Justin seconded. All were in favor. Mike volunteered to help with a desert contest. Lindsey said they talked more about a pie-eating contest. They were concerned about making sure everything was up to code for the Union County Health Inspector.

City Hall and Library: Beth presented and explained a proposed floor plan for the library that she and Maggie worked on along with a scaled drawing of the current library. Both drawings were done to the

exact same scale in order to show the current size of the library in comparison to the proposed size. The main part of the Library would be in the center of the building with a door way to the area behind City Hall. The meeting area would be on the south end of the building and would be separated with a half wall that has windows on the upper half and a doorway to the library. The library would have use of the meeting area yet it could be closed off from the library during meetings. One of the current bathrooms would be made accessible to the library as well as two new handicap restrooms added on the south end with a small storage closet next to the restrooms for cleaning supplies for both City Hall and the library. A staircase would need to be added to access the loft over the mayor's office. Beth noted that she and Maggie also talked about how to handle proctor testing. The Council is trying to work with the library to make sure they have the space they need and at the same time make sure the City has the space that we need. We tried to come up with a compromise that will work for both the library and the City. If anybody has alternate ideas, Beth suggested they draw up a plan and present it to the Council as soon as possible, before a decision is made. The Library can't do anything until a decision is made and the Council can't make a decision without a plan. Joyce would rather knock out the south wall and extend the building so the library would all be on one end. She didn't think it would be real expensive to do that. Beth suggested she draw up a plan. John agreed and thought she should get an estimate. He thought it would be more expensive than Joyce thought. Barbara wondered if the City would be willing to pay for extra hours for Maggie to do proctor testing. She also commented that with the larger library, comes more hours. John noted that would be a discussion for the budget board. Jeff thought the Library Board should look at the proposed plan. Joyce felt the board needed to agree on it.

Logan reported that Jared Kmetic has started framing on the inside of City Hall but we are still waiting on windows. He hoped that by the end of the week we would be ready for the electrician to get started. So far we've spent \$6865 for doors and lumber. We should still be close to the budget. Jeff volunteered to help Jared stand up interior walls so he can continue to work while he waits for the windows. Logan suggested we could have a midway- open house for the community to see what is happening.

ARPA Funds/Project List: Beth noted that it is coming up on time to file the first report on how we will spend the ARPA funds. She didn't think we had to commit them just yet, but we do need to decide soon. John noted that the County still hasn't decided how they are going to spend their money yet. They want to be sure the County has everything they need first, before they commit anything to anybody else. Joyce wondered if we needed to know what we are getting from the County before we commit our own funds. Beth thought it would only affect how we spend our ARPA funds. We hoped to get some help from the County for certain projects, but we can still use our ARPA money, the City's reserves, or other grants to proceed.

Wastewater Project: Beth commented that we are still waiting for the funding contract from Business Oregon. The release of funds is expected to be done in about 2 weeks and we can do our first draw for some of the administrative expenses. We can't award a construction contract until the funding contract is signed. We also have a resolution to update the Section 3 Plan. Basically that means that because the grant is federal money coming from HUD, if there is a job opening, low income people will be given a preference when hiring. It doesn't mean that a contractor has to fire or put somebody on hold, it just means that if a job comes open during the project, somebody from the low income bracket would get preference. It is as much on the contractor as it is on the City to see that happen. Beth added that between the requirements of the Section 3 Plan and Fair Housing Resolution we have to make all new facilities handicap accessible. Jeff understood that we needed to pass the resolution but felt it was a form of discrimination to have to hire someone because of wealth. Beth thought they still needed to be qualified to handle the job. Beth read Resolution 2022-R1 to update the Section 3 Plan to comply with HUD regulations. Logan made a motion to pass Resolution 2022-R1. Mike seconded. All were in favor.

Council Comments:

Joyce had 3 issues. First she wanted permission from the Council to talk to the attorney about someone who has been using water from another place because the meter was shut off due to non-payment. She thought the water was coming from the house next door. This has been going on for a number of years. John agreed we should address the problem but we need to investigate and find out what is really going on first. Maggie suggested we see how other cities handle these situations. Everybody should be held to the same standards. Dennis suggested we could ask the County Sheriff to investigate because in a sense it is stealing services. Jeff agreed that we should investigate to see what is going on before we can take legal action. Joyce didn't feel comfortable just sending a bill. Logan proposed we send the landowner a letter stating that we understand someone is living there and using the sewer without paying for it. We need to do something to get his attention. We are willing to work with him but we want compliance. Jeff didn't think we could go back on the sewer, but we could send a letter and let him know we expect him pay. Logan reiterated that ultimately we want compliance and if we have to we will plug the sewer and turn him in to the DEQ. Vicki liked the idea of a letter. Mike agreed as it would document it. He felt we should consult our attorney to see what is legal. Logan made a motion to send a letter to the property owner at 3rd and C Streets and other homes that we know are using services without paying for them. The letter should include the back amount that we believe is owed. The intent is to get them to pay for services. We need to be careful about accusing someone without giving them the ability to respond. Mike seconded. All were in favor.

Joyce commented that she contacted the Ford Family Foundation and Maurizio is interested in supporting the library but we need a plan and the community needs to be behind the library. Mike wondered what she meant by getting behind the library. Did that mean if we improve the library, more people would want to use it? He thought that would be a good selling point. Maggie interjected that they want to see actions, like the surveys that the library did and fundraising activities that show support. They have already done a few surveys.

Joyce thought it was about time to schedule another ethics training. Maggie wondered how often we were supposed to do those. Beth didn't think there was a requirement. We just do them periodically to make sure everybody is updated and offer them to new council or board members. It has been about 3 years since we have done one.

Logan asked when the SEI filings were due. Beth noted that emails will be sent out beginning March 15th and the filings are due by April 15th.

Jeff wondered when we would get the park barriers. Beth thought they were supposed to ship by the end of March. Jeff wanted to add a Park Dedication to the next Council agenda. Beth noted that the last newsletter asked for suggestions for a park name. So far we haven't received any. We also need to figure out what we are going to do about a couple of signs for the park. Both have been paid for. Logan commented that without George Marston the new park wouldn't have happened. Jeff moved to get a \$100 gift certificate from the Steakhouse for George Marston in appreciation for all his work. Justin seconded. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest;

Beth Wendt
City Recorder