

**North Powder City Council Meeting**  
**April 4, 2022**  
**7PM**  
**Fire Station (340 E Street)**

**Attendance:** Mayor John Frieboes, Councilors Jeff Grende, Logan McCrae, Vicki Townsend, and Mike Morse, City Recorder Beth Wendt, Librarian Maggie Guthrie. Councilors Joyce Lawyer and Justin Wright were absent.

Others: Dave Hoene, Barbara Weeks, Shorty Schwehr, Don Clark, Tony Lasich, Scott Hartell, Dana Kurtz, Lisa Hill, and Jeff & Wynn Nielsen.

Mayor Fireboes called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was skipped as there was no flag.

**Public Comment:** Dave Hoene wanted to talk about the condition of houses in town and the fact that yards are not being kept up. Some houses and trailers have been torn down and messes left behind. One place had a big fire going every night. He didn't think burning was allowed outside of a barrel. John noted that you can get a permit to burn. Beth interjected that it states in the permit how big the fire can be. John added that at the time that happened, we were still working on getting an ordinance officer and Beth had talked to the people numerous times about their burning. Dave reiterated that the condition of the lot is a mess. Mike wondered what the rules were for burning a pile. Beth repeated that it is stated in the burn permit. Dave felt the City needed to find a way to clean things up.

Jeff Nielsen remarked that we need to enforce all of the ordinances.

Beth read a letter from Jeff Nielsen that was submitted at the March meeting. She apologized for overlooking it at that time. In the letter, Jeff N. questioned why North Powder doesn't have a Chamber of Commerce or a Museum. He also wondered what the City's plans were for the old fire truck and what the City planned to do to ratify the issue of a one-year contract with the Rural Fire Department. Jeff N. charged the City Council with overriding the vote of the people about how to spend their money. He felt the Council used their positions to berate and minimize opposition and questioned the behavior of some Councilors. It was a result of a long history of poor decision making that has led the City to where we are now.

**Agenda:** Mike made a motion to accept the agenda. Vicki seconded. All were in favor.

**Minutes:** Mike made a motion to accept the minutes from March 7, 2022. Logan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Accounts Payable:** New AP spreadsheets were given to the council with several additions. Beth noted that the accounts payables was higher than normal. She pointed out some of the bigger bills which included the payment to the Rural Fire Department for 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter services, USA BlueBook for hoses for the VAC truck, Millers Lumber for building supplies for the new City Hall, Realm Inc. for work on the valve at well 5, a reimbursement to MaryAlice McCrae for the City Hall cabinets and rental of a cement impact nailer, and Carpet One for the carpet for City Hall. The \$2500 paid to Nick Ducote will eventually be reimbursed once we get our CDBG contract signed. The total AP came to \$49,954.20. Beth remarked that we will need to transfer about \$10,000 from the LGIP account to cover the Accounts Payables. Mike made a motion to pay the bills. Vicki seconded. All were in favor.

**Library Report:** Maggie reported that Beth gave her a list of board members and how long they have been on the board. The board hasn't had a meeting to address their terms. There are 2 open positions and 1 is questionable.

Foot traffic has been pretty steady. There have been about 10 people per day of various ages. Mike wondered if the Library planned to purchase more books as it expands. Maggie said yes and she was open

to suggestions. Lisa Hill asked if the Library would take donations of books. Maggie said yes. Any books they don't put on the shelves, they put in the used book sale.

**Public Works:** Beth gave the Public Works report in Rick's absence. Rick has spent a lot of time trying to get the lab set-up so he can do some testing. It won't be a certified lab, but we will be able to get an idea of how things are going. They have also been doing some flushing and jetting. For a while it seems to help, but then we fall right back to being out of compliance again. The DEQ inspection that was to be later this week has been rescheduled to April 21<sup>st</sup>.

Rick has done some maintenance on the VAC truck and the backhoe.

Rick and David have been prepping the storage room at the shop in order to put tin on the roof and sides. They have been working on DMR and yearly reports.

We are still waiting on one signature for the sewer line repair on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

The last border pieces for the playground have been received and installed so we should be ready to do a dedication.

**Huckleberry Festival Report:** None

**Ordinance Enforcement:** Beth noted that Shawn hoped to be back by the end of the week.

**Recorder Report:** Water overages in March were \$317.53. There were no freeze credits issued. We used 1,135,103 gallons of water.

Union County Road Department is reconsidering trying to squeeze in the SCA Grant 5<sup>th</sup> Street paving project but make no guarantees. They will tentatively be here sometime mid-July to chip seal F, D, 3<sup>rd</sup>, & 4<sup>th</sup> streets where they patched last year.

There was only one entry for the "If I Were Mayor" contest. It was included in council packets. Beth asked if the Council wanted to send it on to State Contest. The answer was yes.

The next LOC meeting is Wednesday, April 13, 2022 from 11AM to 1PM in Irrigon. Beth asked for permission to attend. She would have get a sub for the day. She is looking into car-pooling with Union. Council gave permission for her to attend.

Beth noted that the Council should review the recommended Risk Management Plan supplied by CIS. We need to answer by April 22<sup>nd</sup> who will facilitate each goal and when it will be done. She suggested a work session to discuss the plan.

Dave Hoene wondered if the pot holes at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Center would be addressed during the paving project. Beth didn't know how it would fit into the project. John hoped that we could at least do a temporary patch.

**Mayor's Message:** John commented that the School would like to resurface their parking area and wondered if the City would be willing to let them have water to wash it off in exchange for the use of their new line painting machine. The Council approved the exchange.

John noted that he attended a Mayor's meeting in La Grande. They had an open discussion about different things going on in each town. One of the things they talked about was how the different agencies could work together to swap the use of different equipment to the benefit of everybody.

John talked to the Ag department at the School about getting some plants to hang on poles on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. They weren't able to do anything for this year but are interested in working on some for next year. We will have to set-up a program for watering and fertilizing. They also talked about making some hooks to go on the poles.

Vicki asked about the signage for the park. John said he hasn't had a chance to talk to the school about that yet.

**New Business:**

**Scott Hartell (Planning):** Scott handed out some information regarding Senate Bill 2. Union County has entered into a Grant Agreement with the Department of Land Conservation and Development to study and

implement the bill. The bill affords 10 Eastern Oregon counties the opportunity to look at re-zoning land for some sort of employment use. It is limited to 10 locations to re-zone property and a total of 50 acres. The grant requires that the County work with all eight incorporated jurisdictions to review their Goal 9 section of the Comp Plan. North Powder's Goal 9 Section Plan was last updated in 1983. It refers to the Ice Plant and two saw mills that have all been gone for a number of years. Scott felt this would be a good time to start looking into updating the Goal 9 Section and look at what we have vacant and available for employment opportunities. Historically, North Powder hasn't varied from the 500-600 population base. We have central water and sewer and we have great access from Interstate 84 and Highway 237. Scott wondered what the feeling of the citizens was regarding growth. Logan and Jeff G. thought it was split. Jeff G. added that lots of people move here because it is a small community and they don't have the hassle of traffic. Scott agreed that there was a significant number of retired people here. But if the City is interested in looking into updating the Goal 9 Section, he can help with introductions to a DLCD representative and help with grant opportunities. It would require holding multiple meetings. Logan felt there was a lot of opportunity to grow within the current City limits. There is a lot of bare commercial and industrial ground that could be utilized. He would like to see that developed before expanding the City limits. Scott noted they are looking at more than just empty lots. Dave Hoene commented that we have a limitation on sewer and water that would need to be considered. Scott verified that would be part of the update process. Jeff N. added that the sewer system was over 50 years old and is in dire need of upgrades. It is something that needs to be looked at whether the town grows or not because it affects everybody. John pointed out that we are working on the sewer system. Lisa remarked that bringing in some kind of industrial development could bring people from other nearby towns to fill the jobs and that would impact streets and traffic along with everything else. Barbara Weeks interjected that people want to move here. That's why she wanted to know what the city was going to do about getting even a portion of 6<sup>th</sup> Street done. John noted that the "6<sup>th</sup> Street" area is privately owned, and the property owner would have to initiate that. Scott wondered if anybody had ever been contacted by someone asking about available properties where a business could be established in North Powder. Beth remarked that she has been asked about allowable uses of specific properties, but not so much about what might be available. Dave asked if anyone knew what the plans were for the property across the freeway. Scott noted that an application has not been submitted, so no. Dana Kurtz felt there would be a lot of benefits to updating the Goal 9. It would take a lot of time but one of the benefits might be funding for projects. Jeff G. felt being off the freeway like we are, could be considered an advantage. On the other hand, we are right between Baker City and La Grande. He asked where people would find information. Scott said it could be on the City's website, but a lot would be direct contact with Beth. Updating our Goal 9 would give a better picture of where the City wants to go. Scott explained that Harney County has already gone through this process and they looked at a lot of rural opportunities. He asked if there was a business in town that is limited due to size or zoning of their property. John said nothing came to mind. Logan wondered what a new Goal 9 might look like. Scott said it might not be much different than it is now but it would have updated information. Dana agreed that our Goal 9 is pretty good, but it is old and outdated. She suggested we might want to update some of the policies and recommendations. Barbara wondered about small businesses. Scott said they are interested in any business whether it has one job opportunity or 100 opportunities. Jeff G. wondered about including low income families. Scott noted the DLCD doesn't require a small jurisdiction to do periodic reviews of the Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Ordinances. He suggested updating one goal at a time. Dave suggested forming a committee to work with the Council and the County Planning Department to look into development possibilities. Logan asked if we were to get a grant to update the Comp Plan, would Anderson Perry be able to help us. Dana said they could, but there are other planners around the state that do that kind of thing as well. Scott agreed that it would be nice to have somebody local who knows the area. Dana commented that if the city decides to do something, the County will already have done some stuff that we could use. Scott added that even if we don't do anything at this time, the information would still be there later on. This is just an introduction to what the County is working on and they will be back with more

information. He suggested the Council read our Goal 9 and think about how we might want to change or add to it.

Dave asked if Dana knew of any programs that would help people with funding to upgrade homes. John thought Community Development might do that. Dana suggested Regional Solutions or HUD.

#### **Old Business:**

**Park Dedication/Update:** Beth noted that the Council wanted to have a park dedication so we need to set time and date. We still have about \$5000 in grants and donations to spend. Suggestions have been made to get park benches, picnic table, gravel, garbage cans, fencing, and a drinking fountain. Informational signs are paid for but need to be done and we still need to get a recognition plaque. We will have some shrubbery to plant as part of our agreement with the Tribes for the wastewater project.

We asked for suggestions for a name for the playground and suggestions were: North Powder Hudelson Park, North Powder Oregon Trail Park, North Powder Pioneer Park, North Powder River Park, George Marston Park, North Powder Park, North Powder Huckleberry Park, and North Powder Play Park. Jeff G. moved to call it the "GM Huckleberry Park". Mike seconded and all were in favor.

Jeff G. suggested we set some of the extra funds aside to purchase additional wood chips as needed. Beth noted that the funds were mostly from grants for construction of the playground and therefore should be used as soon as possible. In that case, Jeff G. suggested some seating area for adults. Logan agreed that a couple of benches and a picnic table would be nice. Jeff G. wondered about a pavilion. Beth thought that was going to be next to the step. There was also talk about putting a culvert in the ditch between the park and the church in order to level the ground in the area behind the swing. John thought we could set a little aside for chips. He asked if the Council was okay with having Beth work on getting a couple of benches and maybe a picnic table and some garbage cans. Nobody objected. John will talk to the school about a date and time for the dedication so that the kids can be a part of it.

The extra border pieces have been delivered and installed. Beth will work on getting an inspection done as soon as possible.

**Annual Clean-Up Day:** Beth reported that Union Sanitation will bring in two dumpsters on Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. We have permission from Les Schwab in La Grande to bring in one trailer load of tires. B&K will bring in a metal dumpster for the day. They are still hesitant to leave it on a permanent basis. We can take e-cycle to either Baker Sanitary or to WastePro. So far, we've had two people ask for pick-up from three locations. We need to find somebody to take charge of pickups and somebody to man the site from 8AM to 4PM on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>. Jeff G. volunteered to take charge of picking up the junk. Jeff N. and Dave Hoene also volunteered to help.

**City Hall and Library:** Maggie said Joyce has some plans in the works, but she needs more time to complete them. John thought it would be a good idea if everybody had a chance to see where we proposed to put a wall. Vicki asked about Joyce's plans. Maggie said Joyce wanted to propose adding on to the building. Vicki would like to see us get to an end point. She asked if Maggie didn't like the proposed plans that she and Beth worked on. Maggie said that was not her ideal set up. Vicki wondered if it would be possible to have a proposal ready in a couple of weeks so the Council could have time to look it over before the next meeting so it could be voted on and it would be over. Maggie agreed this has gone on too long, but she didn't know if that was possible. There were a lot of things to get in order and she didn't think they had been given enough time to figure everything out. Vicki reiterated that the city needs to do something about a Council chamber, and we can't keep waiting on the library. Maggie thought if that was the case, the Council should just make their decision and the library would, unfortunately, have to deal with whatever is left over. Vicki didn't feel that was what we were doing. Maggie interjected that she has been asking questions about what the Council wanted to know, and she has been silenced. It is hard to get everything together. She didn't feel the Council was letting the library bring what they need to the table. John thought that's what we are asking her to do. Maggie interjected that she gave the Council a plan but

it was changed. Logan noted that the building permit for City Hall was done in December. He acknowledged that the library was asked to hold off until City Hall plans were final. We are three months into it and though that may not be very long in one respect, the city would now like to decide on a fate for the old the building. Part of the plan for the fire station is to include a Council Chamber. He thought if the library plans include expansion, it might be done in phases and that could make sense. But if the library plans to do the entire project with grant funds, it will most likely take at least two years. Maggie reiterated that there is a lot of planning that still needs to be done. The board is looking at a different idea but they need more time to get everything together. Vicki just wanted to see if we could come to an end. She agreed there was a lot to be done. Maggie reiterated that the library board was looking at something different and if the Council wants to work with them, the Council needs to be understanding and give them more time. Jeff G. interjected that there is no real hurry to get out of the old building. Maggie commented that she really wants out of that building but felt they needed more time to get their plans together. It is hard to get something together when she doesn't have a full board. Logan wondered if she needed a full board. Maggie thought so. Dave interjected that there needs to be a compromise on the space. In his opinion, it was simply a matter of deciding where to put a wall so the library knows what they have to work with. Maggie reiterated that they are working on another idea. Beth thought if there is not a full board they could continue to operate with what they have available as long as they have a quorum of those on the board. John suggested we move on and address this at the next Council meeting.

**ARPA Funds/Project List:** Beth noted that we still haven't received anything from the County. We still have to file a report by the end of April. The Council still hasn't officially decided what to use ARPA funds for. She wondered if we should use some of them to fix the sewer line at the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. We applied to the County for funds to do a study of the area to see what needs to be done for a more permanent fix. There has been no official vote as to how to spend ARPA money. Logan moved to use ARPA funds to fix the section of sewer line on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Jeff G. seconded. All were in favor.

**Wastewater Project:** We are still waiting for a contract from CDBG. Beth asked the Council for a vote to allow the Mayor to sign the contract as soon as it is ready. We also need authorization from the Council to allow Anderson Perry and Associates to start the bid process as soon as possible. Logan moved to authorize the mayor to sign the contract immediately upon receipt. Jeff G. seconded. All were in favor. Logan made a motion to allow Anderson Perry to put the project out for bid. Jeff G. seconded and all were in favor.

**Council Comments:** Jeff disclosed that Grende Heating LLC intends to put in a bid for the heating at the new City Hall. For the record, he added that there could be a potential conflict.

Mike thanked Beth for taking time to show him around the fire station and for helping him understand the proposed plans for the Library and Council Chambers. He also thanked Maggie for doing such a good job at the library and for always making it a pleasure to go in there.

Jeff added that he would like to see more support for the library board. Vickie agreed. John reminded that the library is part of the City and the board is there to help with organization and planning. Though we are competing for space in the fire station, we need to work together for a common goal. Barbara didn't think it was a matter of competing for space. The library is trying to expand space. She thought it upsetting because Maggie was allowed to continue with plans even after the Council had a building permit. Beth interjected that the building permit was for City Hall part only. No decision had been made for the rest of the building. Vicki reiterated that she would like to have a plan so we can move on. Barbara didn't think they could come up with an answer until they talk to some grant people. Jeff thought a grant writer would require a plan. Dave interjected that we have a limited amount of space and we just need to figure out how to make it work. Jeff wondered if the library board felt there wasn't room for expansion if they have the middle part of the building. Barbara didn't think it would meet the needs of the library and they really don't know what those needs are yet. Logan commented that as a point of interest, the La Grande library

has .6 square feet of space per capita. The City has proposed 3.75 square feet per capita for our library. Barbara noted that there is a lot of stuff upstairs over the old library that they still need to go through. John commented that it is easy to say "I need", but we have to work within our means. The proposed plan would allow the library to have access to the Council chamber when it is not being used. They won't be allowed to put bookshelves in the chamber because it needs to be open for the tables and chairs during meetings. The space could be used for reading, etc. Logan thought there would still be a lot of room for storage.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Attest;

Beth Wendt  
City Recorder