

**City Council Meeting**  
**October 2, 2023**  
**7PM City Hall**

**Attendance:** Mayor John Frieboes, City Councilors Vicki Townsend, Logan McCrae, Jeff Nielsen, Lindsey Thompson. Beth Wendt City Recorder, Rick Lawyer Public Works. Councilor Justin Wright was absent. Others: Susie Wirkkala, Barbara Weeks, Wynn Nielsen, Mike & Jane Wisdom, Gloria Reid, Sarah Goodrich, Joyce Lawyer, Don & Nina McClure, Midge Clause, Karlie Martin.

Mayor John Frieboes called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

**Public Comment:** Beth reviewed the Public Comment Procedure. There were no public comments.

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

**Minutes:** Lindsey moved to accept the minutes from September 11, 2023. Vicki seconded. Motion carried with 3 in favor. Logan abstained as he was absent.

**Accounts Payables:** Beth noted there were still a few bills that hadn't come in yet. The accounts payables to date came to \$16,149.62. Wastewater grant bills came to \$551,352.98. Vicki made a motion to accept the accounts payables. Lindsey seconded. All were in favor.

**Library Report:** Susie noted that most of the stuff from the Huckleberry Yard Sale had been cleaned out of the building. She still needs some help moving the desk.

Susie plans to do some deep cleaning at the Library this month.

Lisa Aichele was the only person to submit an application for the Library Director. The Library Board voted to recommend her for the position. Vicki moved to accept the recommendation. Jeff seconded. Motion carried unanimously. Beth will send Lisa a letter with an offer of employment.

**Huckleberry Festival:** Lindsey reported that the Huckleberry committee had their last meeting for this year. The committee is still considering starting on Friday with the main event on Saturday due to Shriners. They are still looking for volunteers. The next meeting will be the first Wednesday in March 2024. The missing generator has not been returned.

**Public Works:** Rick is getting ready to start irrigating at the Lagoons. He needs to check for broken piping and change some valves.

Hydrant flushes are scheduled to start October 11<sup>th</sup>.

We've had a lot of locates come up on both sides of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. We have to locate water, sewer, and some electrical conduits.

Rick's been working on repairs to the backhoe and tractor, trying to get ready for winter. The dump truck is also down for repairs.

Rick wants to schedule a meeting with Myron Miles and Anderson Perry regarding dredging

We still need to review the new NPDES permit as there are some things that seem impossible to meet.

**Mayor's Message:** John has been working on the entrance to town, by the Café. He talked to the County about mowing the weeds. The Saunders Company gave us a partial roll of road fabric and the County may have some more partial rolls. He asked for council permission to put down some round rock in the triangular area on the south side of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street at the interchange. RD Mac will sell us the rock at ½ price and Union County will haul it at no charge. John estimated we'd need about 60 yards of rock and the cost to the City would be about \$700. We need some volunteers to help. ODOT didn't think it would be a problem. The City will have to maintain it. Vicki made a motion to allow John to move forward with it if funds are available. Logan seconded. All were in favor.

The Rural Fire Department received a grant for equipment and they would like to help with some trees that are blocking right-of-ways and vision areas. John will make a list of trees and shrubs that need to be taken care of and bring it back to the council.

The State has prison crews available to do things like clean-up but they charge \$900 per day. They have another program where we could get about 6 people for about 2 hours per day on Fridays at no charge but we have to have someone to supervise. John is still working on that.

John and Ruth went to an Open House at the Grande Ronde Hospital for their new addition. It is an \$85 million project, funded primarily with bonds. It should be open July 2024.

Vicky Day has been having problems with her sewer. She hired a plumber and dug things out from her house to the property line and put in a clean out, but she is still have issues and would like the City to fix it from the property line to the main line. Vicky is supposed to be providing us with some information from when the plumber "cameraed" the line. It crosses the pavement to the main line. John thought we should dig it up on the gravel side first and if it's on the City's side, we need to do something. Logan agreed that a sewage back up should be a high priority. There are some issues with the lagoons that could jeopardize the dikes that need to be dealt with but this should also be a priority. John wondered if two weeks would be a realistic time frame. Rick thought there might be two or three changes of direction from the clean out to where it crosses the street and there are different kinds of pipe. It won't be an easy fix. John will let Vicky know that unless something drastic comes up, we will try to get to her in about 2 weeks.

**Recorder Report:** Water overages in September came to \$1188.05. We used 3,067,691 gallons of water.

The North Powder Homecoming Parade will be Thursday, October 12<sup>th</sup> at 1:30. The route will make a circle starting at the old gym, going down 4<sup>th</sup> Street to E, then to 2<sup>nd</sup> and back to G Street. Beth noted that the School will have to get a parade permit from ODOT for 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

Beth asked the Council to consider a work session to discuss projects, both current and upcoming, and prioritize them. She also noted that we still need to commit ARPA funds. A work session was scheduled for Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at 7PM.

We received another DLCD Planning Assistance Grant. This one is for \$2000. It can be used for wages and other costs dealing with land use issues.

We received a request from Community Connections to extend our agreement with them to provide assistance with water and sewer bills. The agreement would be extended thru March 2024. There is no cost to the City and it has helped a lot of people get caught up on past due water and sewer bills. The Council agreed to the extension.

The La Grande CHD is doing a Flu Shot Clinic on October 23 from 1PM to 3PM. They need a place to park their mobile unit. Beth gave them permission to park in front of City Hall. There were no objections.

The Grande Ronde Hospital is doing 3 free blood screening clinics this month. One in Elgin on October 7<sup>th</sup>, one in Union on the 21<sup>st</sup> and one in La Grande on the 28<sup>th</sup>. All clinics will be from 7AM to 10AM.

**Ordinance Report:** Shawn has been talking to people and sending letters. We received a complaint about a dog that bit a girl on her way to school. The Sheriff's office was contacted and Beth turned the complaint over to Shawn. Logan thought Shawn had a good take on handling things and was doing a good job. Beth added that he has tagged a lot of vehicles.

#### **New Business-**

**Council Letters of Interest:** Beth read letters from Mike Wisdom and Don McClure. Vicki suggested we give the candidates a list of questions and have a special meeting before the work session on Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>. John thought since both candidates were in attendance, the council could ask questions and make a decision now. Everybody was okay with that. Vicki asked what the applicants could bring to the Council. Mike has some City government experience. The City is still working on some things that he was involved with when

he was on the Council previously. He's the type of person to do due diligence and homework on things. He felt every council member should do that. He added that everybody who knows him, knows how he feels about North Powder and he would take the position accordingly. Don was raised with a sense of community. You can either complain or be part of the solution to the problems that face the Council at this time. He felt his business experience could help with decision making for the betterment of North Powder. Lindsey want to know what current project they were most looking forward to being a part of. Mike felt water and sewer should be top of the list. The systems are over 50 years old and are showing their age. It would be a black mark for North Powder if it takes an outside agency to clean it up. We all want North Powder to grow. If he were new to the community, he would want to know about the water and sewer systems and other infrastructure. So until we get that under control, it will be hard to expect people to want to move to North Powder. Don agreed the sewer system should be at the top of the list. But so should the safety of the community. Particularly the safety of our children. We have a highway that runs through town and accidents happen. Beautification is important if we want to attract people. We want to make a good first impression. Jeff asked how many years they thought we have before our infrastructures become critical. We just spent half a million dollars and we haven't even scratched the surface of some of the issues that need to be taken seriously. Mike commented that some of the infrastructure problems, particularly with water and sewer, have been inherited. But the City owns it now. He felt there have been steps taken in the right direction. The new evaporation pond is one of them. But if we can't get anything to it because of other problems with the overall system..... There are still a lot of things that need to be addressed. Don reiterated that sewer should be #1. But we have a problem with man power. There are only so many hours in the day and it will take a lot of man power to get them done. We have on full time person trying to get things done. It will take years to get things done with only one person. He acknowledged that it would be expensive, but things need to be done fast. Infrastructure is the first priority. Mike added that he has only been to a few meetings over the last few months but felt he was as up to speed as he could be. John asked if the Council was ready to vote. Jeff felt the whole council should be in on the vote. Vicki agreed. It was agreed to table the vote until the next Council meeting. Applications are closed. Karlie wondered how the missing council person would know what was said. John pointed out that it would be in the minutes. There will be a line item on the November agenda for a vote.

**Electronic Speed Sign:** Karlie Martin talked to ODOT about getting 2 radar speed signs for 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. ODOT has a grant that opens October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Two signs would cost about \$25,000 and ODOT would pay half and the City would pay the other half. Officially the City would be responsible for taking care of the signs, but there is an unwritten understanding that ODOT would actually do that. A Safe Routes to Schools grant might help pay for a sign. Another possibility is, if we can get a grant, the City could pay for a sign and the School could use grant money to put in a crosswalk with blinking lights. Speed through town is ridiculous. When the freeway is shut down, traffic goes through North Powder. All the City needs to do is send a letter to ODOT requesting signs at each end of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street (on Hwy 237). John reiterated that the City would still have to come up with at least \$11,000. Karlie thought the school might cover half of that. We should be able to work together to make it happen. Jeff added that it would be nice to have a "Welcome" sign at the west end of town. Karlie commented that there was an accident on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and if we had electronic signs, it may have slowed people down. It won't take care of all of the issues, but it might help. Beth will look into the ODOT grant.

**City Christmas Celebration:** Vicki reported that we have submitted a request to the Ford Family Foundation for the Christmas Chili Feed. It should cost less than \$300. If we don't get funds from them, she wondered if the Council would approve paying for it. We are working on getting grants or donations for Christmas lights and a tree stand. Don volunteered to pay for the Chili Feed if we don't get money from the Ford Foundation. The celebration will be Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. The parade will start at 5PM, followed by the tree lighting and caroling at City Hall, and then the hayride and chili feed at the Rural Fire Station.

Beth asked if the City wanted to do a Lighting Contest again. If so, does anyone have suggestions for how to handle judging? John thought we could work on it. Beth will contact OTEC about sponsoring the contest.

**Old Business-**

**Wastewater Update:** We are really close to finishing the project. We have an appointment for grant monitoring on Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>. Before then we need to decide what to do about the Section 3 requirements. The Council decided to hire Ducote Consulting to do a workshop and use grant funds to pay for it. Beth suggested a special meeting with Nick Ducote and Anderson Perry to talk about what still needs to be done and how to spend the remaining grant funds. A special meeting will be at 6:30PM on October 11<sup>th</sup>, right before the work session.

**City Hall/Library Update:** Logan commented that the framing of the meeting room was in. He hasn't ordered doors and windows yet as he was waiting for the building department to approve the plan. He will order them now. Jered will order carpet. In the meantime, Jered will continue to work on sealing the back of the building. He still needs to put metal on the back soffits and finish painting. Vicki wondered if we could start working on a bid for heating for the meeting room. Logan agreed that would be a good idea. We could get a dual mini split. Beth noted that if we think it will be less than \$5000, we can do an informal bid process. John thought that should be possible. Logan suggested spec'ing it according to what we did for City Hall.

Barbara asked if the French doors would open into the meeting room or into the library. Logan thought they would open into the meeting room.

Beth reported that the CDBG application for the library has been submitted. There are only 2 applications so hopefully we have a good chance of getting the grant.

**Council Comments:** John commented that we got a grant from Union County for the infrastructure for new street lights on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. He asked for Council permission to go ahead and advertise for bids. The conduit is already in place so this is just a matter of pulling approximately 2200 feet wire through it. The Council was okay with putting it out for bid.

Vicki wanted to express thanks and appreciation to Beth for working so hard behind the scenes, doing grants, taking care of people and the town, and a lot of other things. Vicki also thanked Joh for the amazing job he has done toward cleaning up the town. John noted there were a lot of other volunteers helping, too. He added that he has been trying to put together a downtown/Main Street appreciation group to help with beautification, not only on the main street, but all over town. Vick thought Jane's mom (DeEtte Taylor) wan an instigator in getting the historical sign on Hwy 237 and the sign at the Café. Jeff would like to see some kind of thank you to the people who have helped with the flowers on 2nd Street. John didn't want anything. Logan suggested a thank you in the newsletter.

Jeff asked if there was anything we could do to designate a parking spot in front of the house next to the Grange. Karlie thought that would set a precedence for other parking spots. Beth agreed. John thought we could check into what could be done.

Meeting adjourned at 8:26PM

Respectfully submitted,

Attest:

Beth Wendt  
City Recorder