



The City Newsletter

February 2011

Welcome to the
CITY OF JEROME

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JEROME'S GOVERNMENTAL AND ENTERPRISE FUNDS: A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR JOHN SHINE

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City Council

Council meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm at Council Chambers, located at 100 East Ave A, Jerome, ID 83338

Council Meets:

- February 1st
- February 15th

For a copy of the most recent agenda, visit our website or email: sfraser@ci.jerome.id.us

As Mayor, I often get asked, "Why can't the City just fix this problem or make that improvement with the money that it already has?" It's a GREAT question with a lengthy and difficult answer, so I will take a stab at it in this month's article. We have a long list of problems and opportunities for improvements and when I first began serving on the City Council I wondered the same thing. You might think that the City has one bank account that all the money goes into and we just direct those funds wherever we need to in order to take care of business. Unfortunately it's not that simple and that's not the case

Every business has a bottom line. That's how businesses measure their success in terms of profits and losses. The City of Jerome however has at least eight bottom lines. That's because there are eight different accounts, each with different laws, rules and methods that govern how the city services are to be set up, funded and delivered. That's one of the reasons city staff engages in a lengthy and extremely detailed budgeting process every year. In terms of budgeting and fund accounting, City services can be split into two groups: Governmental services and Enterprise services.

Enterprise services are treated just like any other private business, with two major exceptions. If we plan and budget poorly, we can't borrow to make up deficits and we can't go out of business if we're losing money. The income from fees for the service must pay for the costs of delivering that service. When there is a surplus it is called "retained earnings" because it has earned enough to continue operating in the black. When there is a deficit it is called a loss because it is running in the red. The City has four (business) enterprises: Water, Wastewater, Irrigation, and Sanitation. Each is run like an independent business with its own set of fees, rates, income, and expenses. For example, the Water enterprise cannot use money from the Irrigation enterprise (or the Fire Department for that matter) to maintain the wells, pipes or other parts of the water delivery system. It has to function on its own. Unfortunately the Water enterprise has been running in the red for years and with last year's rate increases we are only just beginning to reduce its deficit, but there is still a long way to go. The Water, Wastewater and Sanitation enterprises are all funded by the rates you pay on your water bill. Separate parts of your payment are allotted to each one. The Irrigation enterprise is unique, because only

the properties that are on the irrigation network pay a special assessment each year to maintain that system, whether they draw water from it or not. Irrigation fees also are used for managing storm water diversion, which everyone pays.

Government services are funded primarily by taxes, fines, grants and other revenue sources such as State Shared Revenue. In Jerome, there are four governmental services including; the Jerome Public Library, Streets, City Parks, and Administration and Public Safety. Each of these services has its own dedicated tax levy to maintain each service separate from the others. Even the Parks levy is very small it is separate from the rest of the City and its tax dollars can only be used for park improvements and not for anything else. Together all of these tax levies make up the total tax levy for the City, which for this year, 2011, is 0.009233005.

There are two State laws that were passed in 1978 to reign in property taxes throughout the State. This was great for people opposed to paying property taxes but this has also had the effect of restricting the City's budget growth. The first sets a maximum levy rate for cities at 0.01%. The second prohibits cities from increasing their budget by more than 3% from one year to the next. While in good years, this may have little impact on a city's operations, it does not leave cities the opportunities to recover from a bad year where there may be expenses beyond the cities control to avoid or budget for. The cost of not keeping up on routine or major repairs due to budget limitations only increases over time to the point where there is nothing the city can do to "catch up". This is especially true for the high cost of street maintenance, road repairs, water lines, sewer lines, and irrigation lines.

The City does have a few tools to make up for the deficits that can quickly overwhelm its budget. One tool is bond financing. A city can raise money for a major road project by passing a bond (which is like a loan) and going into debt to pay for improvements above and beyond the budget. General obligation bonds are typically funded by taxes but must be passed in an election



Mayor John Shine

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QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

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JOHN LOTH SPEICH APPOINTED AS CITY ATTORNEY

In our last newsletter we let you know a little bit about Rob Williams and his retirement as the City Attorney for the City of Jerome. The reins have officially been now handed over to John Lothspeich and he is ready to “take command”. We spoke to John about this added responsibility and got to hear his thoughts on this transition.

Q: Please tell our readers a little about yourself and your professional history.

I graduated with my Law Degree from the University of Idaho. I commenced the practice of law as a Deputy Prosecutor in Jerome County for approx. 2 years. I was appointed Chief Deputy Prosecutor in Twin Falls County where I served for almost four years when elected Prosecuting Attorney in Jerome County and took office in 1996. I served as Prosecuting Attorney until June, 2000, when I joined the present law firm. I have enjoyed working with so many excellent and professional public servants in the Magic Valley for the last 20 years.

Q: What do you foresee as one of the greatest challenges you will face as the Attorney for



the City of Jerome?

The challenges ahead will be to assist the City with strained resources and ensuring all needs are met for city residents.

Q: What are you looking forward to the most now that you are our Attorney?

I look forward to working daily with all staff to provide the best service possible to the city we call our home.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Our law offices are dedicated to provide the best legal services available to the City. Fortunately, Rob Williams remains our senior partner whose wise counsel I will seek often. I will endeavor to meet all legal needs for Staff, the Mayor and Council timely and with excellence.

So it appears that the City is now in the more than capable hands of John Lothspeich. We as City employees look forward to working with John. You can see by John’s responses that he takes this appointment very seriously and has what is in the best interest for Jerome at heart. We are very fortunate to have such a capable attorney to work alongside with.

MAYOR’S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

by 2/3rds of the voters. As we have seen with the County’s initiative to build a new jail, it can be very difficult to get 2/3rds approval. Another tool is through grants. The City has successfully applied for and received many grants in the past for various projects. Grants are great because it uses “outside” money to fund projects. Frequently grants still require a local match, where the City has to put some money into the project too. Grants also come with strings attached, like special requirements that can add a lot of extra time and cost to a project. Third, the City has some tools for making needed infrastructure improvements through the local Urban Renewal Agency. The Urban Renewal Agency (or URA) operates independently of the City to attract business, create jobs, build infrastructure and remove blight. This is done by using the taxes within its boundaries to pay for the improvements to benefit the properties within those boundaries directly. The City has three

such areas that have greatly benefitted from the use of this tool. Nevertheless it is a limited tool because it can’t pay for things that are needed outside of the URA boundaries and it can’t pay for non-infrastructure related expenses.

The challenge that Jerome faces is how the City will pay for the needed repairs and maintenance of its infrastructure now and in the future. This includes the water system, the sewer system, the roads, and the buildings for the Police Department, the Fire Department and City Hall. All of these systems are aging and deteriorating, and many are in need of repair or replacement. It pains me when I am faced with a decision to pay for repairs in a facility that is no longer serviceable for its intended use. We need to start coming together as a community and discussing these difficult issues. It will require us to make some tough decisions about our investment in the future that will have to be above and beyond our current level of taxation.

To comment on this article, email enews@ci.jerome.id.us

SNOW REMOVAL IN THE CITY OF JEROME

Snowstorms pose challenges for Jerome drivers, as current policy allows snow to accumulate up to three inches prior to city plow crews being called out. Main routes are always plowed and sanded first, followed by arterial and collector streets.

Only after the most critical and high-traveled roads are plowed and sanded can city crews begin plowing residential streets. Often we hear complaints from residents when their streets are not plowed immediately after a snow storm. While we understand this can be frustrating, the City must clear the main thoroughfares first, such as Main and Lincoln Streets, to ensure these well traveled roads are safe and passable.



Depending upon the amount of snow-fall, it may take more than **76 hours** for the initial plowing to be completed. City crews may not operate equipment beyond the limits of fatigue and safety. Side street clean-up is sometimes not completed until the second day following a large snowfall. Business area sidewalks and parking lot cleanup is the responsibility of the property owners. Residential and business parking should be as far out of the right of way as possible so that snow removal can be done in an efficient and safe manner. Even after the weather clears and the plowing is completed, city crews must then begin removing piles of snow that have accumulated in streets and corners.

It is always a pleasure in the morning to find the streets cleared of snow, and the snow hauled off of Main Street. Unfortunately, along with that, residents often find their driveways filled with snow. City crews are unable to clean driveways for private residents and pushing, blowing, or plowing snow back into the street after city plows have gone by poses a danger to motorists by causing ice build-up onto the street.

More than a dozen pieces of heavy equipment are needed to clear snow from Jerome’s streets, such as plows, backhoes, sanders, graders, and other equipment. **With the large snowstorm in November, the City spent \$43,608 in snow removal which includes 1564 man-hours at a cost of \$23,463. Equipment costs have totaled approximately \$10,255 (fuel, supplies, and repairs to equipment) with 230 tons of sand/salt distributed totaling \$3,890.**

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES:

INTERESTED IN CLEANING UP JEROME?

Jerome has several abandoned homes and vacant lots that are in serious need of cleaning up. These homes pose a safety risk to adjacent homes and detract from the neighborhood aesthetics. If you are interested in this volunteer experience, call Officer Marcos Noriega at 316-6494 or email mnoriega@ci.jerome.id.us.

VOLUNTEER AT THE JEROME ANIMAL SHELTER!

Have a soft heart for animals? Want to give back to the community in a unique and rewarding way? The Jerome Animal Shelter is always looking for new volunteers to help out walking dogs, feeding dogs, cleaning kennels, and transporting dogs to other shelters. If you are interested or would like more information, call Monica Harrison at 324-8189 or send her an email at hr@ci.jerome.id.us.

BECOME A VOLUNTEER



FIREFIGHTER!

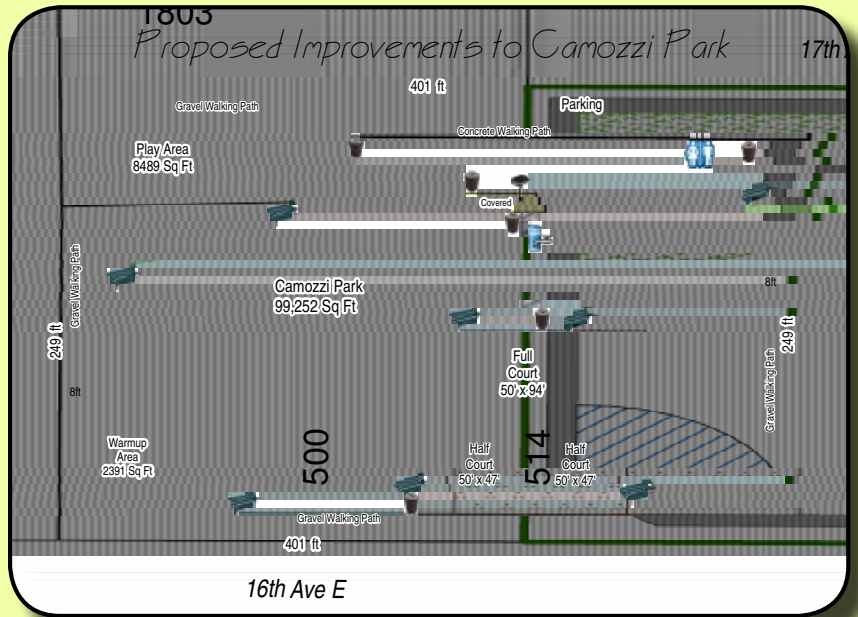
Fighting fires is a rewarding career but it can also be an excellent way to volunteer and give back to the community. If you already work full-time but are healthy, motivated, and willing to serve, contact the Human Resources Director to see if you are eligible to be a volunteer firefighter.

Questions?
 Call Human Resources at
 324-8189 ext 140

CITY APPLIES FOR GRANT TO UPGRADE CAMOZZI PARK

The City of Jerome recently submitted a grant application for the purpose of renovating Camozzi Park with some much needed improvements. The grant is offered by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation and is available to government agencies with a fifty percent match. Camozzi Park is located at 500 Avenue E and is one of the best situated parks in Jerome for residential access. After years of wear and tear, the park playground equipment and amenities have deteriorated to the point that they are unsafe. If the grant is funded, the renovation will replace the playground equipment, install a new walking path, basketball courts, a warm-up area, better picnic area, updated landscaping, and a drinking fountain. If the city is awarded the grant, work will begin on the park in the summer

of 2011. This renovation will ensure the park will provide a quality outdoor recreation venue for several more years and allow the Jerome residents to have an area that is a great place to enjoy during all seasons. The map here shows the concept plan for the proposed improvements at Camozzi Park. For any questions, please call either Micah Austin (324-8189) or Walt Appell (324-9669).



BUILDING DEPARTMENT MONITORING SAFETY

The Building Department reports that Jerome Cheese is undergoing an interior expansion/remodel to accommodate their mozzarella processing. As of this writing, five (5) building permits have been issued to them for various projects around Jerome. Also, a new long-term care facility, Ashley Manor, will soon be issued a building permit and break ground on construction. They will be located on North Lincoln, adjacent to Lincoln Estates. Beginning January 1, 2011 the 2009 Building Code update will be implemented. There are several significant changes with this update that will affect all building projects going forward. Handouts on these changes can be picked up at the Building Department in City Hall.



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¿PUEDO VER SU LICENCIA DE CONDUCIR POR FAVOR? (MAY I SEE YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE?)

The Hispanic population in America is one of the fastest growing population groups in this country today, and is expected to continue to grow rapidly in upcoming years. Similar to the rest of the nation, the State of Idaho and the City of Jerome are seeing increasing numbers of Hispanic residents.

Recently Jerome Police Officers had the opportunity to attend 3 days of Spanish language training offered right here in town. Through the efforts of Officer Berny Marquez, this training sponsored by the Western Regional Counterdrug Training Center (WRCTC), was available in Jerome at no cost to the City of Jerome. WRCTC is a government funded agency which provides tuition free training for law enforcement agencies.

Officer Marquez worked with WRCTC to not only bring the training to Jerome for City Police, but also to provide this opportunity for law enforcement agencies throughout Idaho. In addition to the 6 Jerome Police Department employees who attended the training, 27 law enforcement personnel from Idaho State Police and City and County

law enforcement agencies came for the training. This training was not only beneficial for police officers, but also other personnel. Ida Guillory shared her experience:

"This training was astounding. The instructor gave us ideas and techniques that can be used outside of class to help us continue learning phrases and remembering what we learned in class. She recommended repeating the phrases several times out loud. She also recommended that we listen to the CD's, which say the phrase and then have a pause for us to say the phrase out loud. While I am not on traffic stops, there are several circumstances where I do interact with the public. Learning Spanish is a valuable tool that will help me be more resourceful in my job duties, with the Police Department and the City."

The Police Department of the City of Jerome strives to accommodate the diverse needs of our community. Officer Marquez's success in bringing Spanish language training to the City of Jerome is an extremely helpful way to assist the Police Department in more effectively responding to these needs.



WATER DEPARTMENT DIVES FOR TANK ASSESSMENT

The water department had the A Street water storage tank inspected by a company that specializes in underwater inspections of water tanks using scuba gear. The results were very good, showing that the tank is in adequate condition to deliver

several more years of service. The tank will not have to be



inspected for another 3 years, when minimal maintenance will needed to be performed to ensure the tank remains structurally sound. The results are very good news for the community.

The use of the dive company eliminated the need to take the tank out of service for the inspection and was also more cost effective than attempting the inspection using in-house labor.

A PAW IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

Things are going to change a little for the adoption processes at the Jerome Animal Shelter come February 1, 2011.

Presently, the adoption fee for a dog is \$5.00. Once the dog is adopted, the new owners are given a coupon for a discounted rate for the spay/neuter. However, we have found that compliance with spaying or neutering a new pet is low. Many adopting families have told the veterinarians that they "just want one litter of puppies" and then they will have their pet altered. Given that one of the purposes of the shelter is to help control the animal population, this is obviously not acceptable. At any given time in a shelter roughly 90% of the population are dogs that are not spayed or neutered.

Another problem with having such a low adoption fee is that the dogs then become disposable items. We worry about dogs being abandoned when the novelty of adopting a puppy has worn off. Most people easily find \$5.00 for the adoption. Also, there are significant and real concerns of abuse for dogs that is perceived as being of no financial value.

To correct this problem, the Animal Shelter, along with the help of the local veterinarians, is establishing a \$50.00 adoption fee. This new fee will include the cost of the spay/neuter, rabies vaccines, and City license. In addition, the shelter staff and volunteers will then take the dog directly to the veterinarian of choice of the adopting family and, once the spay/neuter is complete, the new family will pick up the new pet from the veterinarian. This will allow us to ensure that the dogs receive all the vaccinations he or she needs and that there will be proper care for the dog after the procedure where the new pet owners will receive some education on proper dog health care, nutrition, and so forth.

Some may say "Will this increased fee decrease the odds of a dog being adopted?" The answer to this is twofold. First, it is true that a \$50.00 fee will be more restrictive for some

people than a \$5.00 fee. However, if someone is unable to afford \$50.00, our concern is that they truly cannot afford the all the financial implications of a pet such as food, healthcare, etc.

Also, due to our volunteer program, we have managed to develop wonderful relationships with the Humane Societies and rescue organizations. We are now able to move dogs to other places where they are in demand. That helps us control the population in the shelter so that we can make sure the right dog goes into the right home with the right kind of care.

This endeavor would not be possible without the support and assistance from the veterinarians in the City of Jerome. They are supporting this program and providing the much needed service at a very reasonable rate. The next time you see your veterinarian here in Jerome, thank him or her for assisting the Jerome Animal Shelter in controlling the canine population.



QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

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**Jerome
 Recreation
 District**

Upcoming Events for February:

Membership Specials

- 15% discount on yearly contract if paid in full
- 10% discount on yearly contracts if paid monthly through autopayments
- 3 month special: 3 months for regular price of 2 months, valid for use in January, February, and March

After School Program

- 3:10 pm - 5:30 pm (Mon- Fri)
- \$60 per child with each additional sibling receiving 25% discount
- Snacks, fitness, homework help, and open gym time
- Must have own transportation to and from the Rec Center
- Call today to reserve your child's spot

Kindergarten Basketball Camp

- \$15 per child
- Registration begins Jan. 3, 2011
- Camp is February 15, 17, 22, and 24 from 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Check our website for the latest information

www.jeromerecreationdistrict.com

Questions? Call (208) 324-3389

Events at Jerome Public Library

- Teens Book Club, February 1, 4:00 p.m.
- Valentine's Party for children and teens, February 11, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Fancy Nancy Party for children, February 15, 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Teens Craft Night, February 22, 4:00 p.m.
- Adult Computer Classes, every Wednesday at 11:00 a.m.
- Dungeons and Dragons games for teens, every Friday at 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

THE BIG READ 2011

Jerome Public Library will participate in The Big Read 2011 with this year's title, *The Call of the Wild*, by Jack London. Members of the Jerome community are encouraged to read *The Call of the Wild*. A discussion of this classic and unforgettable adventure story will be held at the Jerome Public Library on Saturday, February 12, 2011, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

The Big Read is a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Arts Midwest, and designed to revitalize the role of literature in American culture. Each year NEA provides grants and resources to communities throughout the U.S. to invite citizens to read the same book and come together to discuss and share.

Copies of the Reader's Guide for *The Call of the Wild* are available at the library and can be picked up in advance of the book discussion. Copies of the book are also available for persons who do not have their own copy.

Other events to celebrate The Big Read 2011 include:

Family Movie viewing of the movie *The Call of the Wild*, February 26 at 11:00 a.m.

Companionship between Dog and Man: A presentation discussing the relationship between dog and man, with information about the Jerome Animal Shelter. We will have dogs present from the shelter, to show and tell. March 5, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. Presenter, Monica Harrison.

FEBRUARY ISSUE STAFF WRITERS



Gina Jerke works in the utility office in City Hall. She reported on the Building Department for this issue.

Jeremy Presnell is a captain with the Fire Department. He reported on the Water Works Department for this issue.



Tony Preston has worked for the City for just over a year in the Information Services Department. He reported on Administration for this issue.



Pattie Metcalf was recently hired as the Library Director. She reported on the Police Department for this issue.



Monica Harrison is the Human Resources Director and has been with the City for over two years. She reported on the Animal Shelter and the new city attorney.

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