

Our City

Last week the City Council approved three major purchasing resolutions for our Water and Waste Water Departments. When running all day everyday things tend to wear out, especially in the Waste Water environment, and if not replaced promptly cause serious financial issues. Much of what you pay on monthly sewer bill goes into that department's capital improvement fund for just such an occasion. In one case a blower has to be replaced as air is used to mix the waste water materials and keep the bacteria alive that digest it. In the second case control units need to be repaired and moved from the outside of a building to the inside where they won't be exposed to the elements. A few months ago the Power County Press asked the candidates running for city office if we have been frugal with your tax monies and my response was yes that we had made the best financial decisions possible given the information we had at the time. Hindsight being 20/20 we should have had the control units put inside the building when it was built as it may have deferred this repair longer. With some luck after Hunt Electric moves and repairs the controllers they will last longer in their new environment.

It is surprising sometimes how one small change can affect an environment. For the past two months the Student Resource Officer (SRO) position for the high school has been discussed by a committee chaired by Superintendent Jensen, School Board member Beck, with County Commissioner Lasley, Sheriff Jeffries, Deputy Sprague, Police Chief Wilkinson and me. Last week we found out that the grant that was to help pay for getting the position started was not received. At this point funds do not exist in the School District, County or City to fund the hiring of a new officer for the SRO position. That being said I would like to commend all involved for their unified vision of what is best for our community. If you happened to drive by the high school last Friday night you would have seen the majority of the County law enforcement officers parked outside as they were on the inside familiarizing themselves with all the facilities. It was agreed upon at our meeting last Thursday that the County would staff the SRO position at the High School with current Sheriff's Deputies to the extent possible and the City would do the same at Hillcrest, the intermediate school, middle school and Academy. Don't get the wrong picture here though, as kids get older their tendency to stray from the straight and narrow increases in some cases so while the high school SROs are only at that one facility their responsibility is every bit as much as that of the City's at the other four schools. My thanks as Mayor and a teacher goes to the Sheriff, his deputies, our Police Chief and his officers for making this whole thing work. Once again, we see many going above and beyond the required to make our students safe and our community better.

I was encouraged too about the future of our community as a Boy Scout Troop attended last Wednesday's Council meeting. When it came time in the agenda for public comments or questions each of the troop members asked insightful and relevant questions. I mentioned three capital improvement payments above; the third was for a mini-excavator. One of the Scouts wanted to know why we needed to spend over \$47,000 for that piece of equipment. Councilman Pankratz gave a very good answer. Another Scout wanted to know how the City could plow streets in the winter with so many cars parked long term on them; which led to the explanation of the parking ordinance amendment that will be voted on by the Council at our next meeting. A third Scout asked, "What ever happened to the emergency road to Willow Bay?" That answer was also given, probably in more detail than the Scout really wanted. As a

group Troop 103 asked as many very good questions as have been posed to the Council in my tenure as mayor. Well done gentlemen! And, thank you for your civic mindedness.

My late thanks also goes out to John Hunt for volunteering not only himself but the use of an additional bucket truck two weeks ago as he helped the City crews put up the Christmas lights. He then came to the rescue when it was discovered that once the lights were up many didn't work because of a power issue which he fixed for us last week. I have known John since he was in 8th grade and I have never known him to be anything but a gentleman with a kind and caring sense of generosity and citizenship.

I thank John Hunt, the Power County Sheriff's Office, the City Police and Troop 103 for making American Falls the best place to live.

Until next week...