



Linn County NEWS



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Commissioners talk about garbage rate adjustments

ALBANY — The process of adjusting solid waste sanitation rates for the three companies that provide services to rural residents came before Linn County Commissioners Roger Nyquist and Sherrie Sprenger Tuesday morning.

Commissioner Will Tucker was not present.

Environmental Health Manager Shane Sanderson presented the commissioners with data provided by a consulting firm — Merina & Company — that focused on how inflation has affected the companies.

Rural sanitation services are provided by Republic Services in the Albany area, Pacific Sanitation in the Santiam Canyon and Waste Connections (Sweet Home Sanitation) in the Sweet Home and Brownsville areas.

In a written report, Sanderson noted that the county's Solid Waste Advisory Committee met on June 15 to consider rate increase requests. Merina used a 6% inflation rate in its calculations, but the current national inflation rate is about 9.1%.

After preliminary discussions, the commissioners agreed to continue the agenda item at the July 26 meeting.

The companies are provided franchises in an effort to ensure rural residents have consistent and reliable sanitation services. Without franchises there could be dozens of providers and many of those could come and go as the economy ebbs and flows, leaving customers without reliable service.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Thanked Fair & Expo Center Manager Randy Porter for the success of last week's county fair. Both

Nyquist and Sprenger agreed the fair was excellent, was received well by the community and had outstanding nightly entertainment with Sara Evans, Five For Fighting and Sawyer Brown. The fair used an electronic system to count paid admissions, compared to manual tallying in past years. There were 29,408 paid admissions this year, compared to about 28,730 last year. 4-H members, family members and volunteers are not included in those numbers. Nyquist thanked Porter for his 24 years of service — 22 of those heading up the fair. He will retire at the end of the year. Porter also reported that events are returning to the Expo Center, after a two-year slowdown due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

- Approved an agreement to provide HIV Early Intervention and Outreach Services to individuals in Lincoln County who are newly diagnosed or out-of-care. The contract is for one year, not to exceed \$327,000.
- Were informed by County Accounting Officer Bill Palmer and Treasurer Michelle Hawkins that the county ended the 2021-22 Fiscal Year solidly, with departments holding the line on spending and bringing solid carryovers into the new fiscal year. Staff budgeted knowing that income from state and federal grants associated with COVID-19 mitigation efforts would be going away. Hawkins said the county has also done an excellent job repaying loans from the Road Department. She said all loans will be paid off this year.
- Were told by new Planning &

Building Director Steve Wills that the county has waived \$113,381 in permits for families in the Santiam Canyon whose homes were destroyed by wildfires in 2020. There were 258 total permits issued in June.

- Awarded a contract for the Mill Creek — Folsom Road Bridge Replacement project to Bent LLC of Scio for \$768,386. Bids were opened at last week's meeting and then reviewed by the Road Department staff.
- Learned there were 50 births (23 girls and 27 boys) and 104 deaths in June. There were 1,205 COVID-19 cases.

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