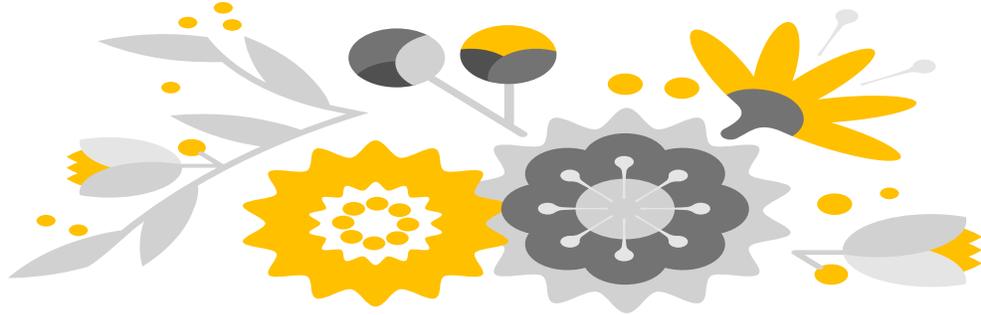




The WEEKLY

May 13th, 2022

The latest news, views, and announcements of Baker City.



INSIDE

Website Redesign Photo Contest

The City is looking for photos for the new website!

Jobs!

The City is hiring for multiple positions!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

May 24th –
6:00pm
City Council Executive Session

May 24th –
7:00pm
Regular Council Meeting

City Manager's Update

City Council met earlier this week and discussed ambulance service. They decided to instruct the City Manager to prepare a response to the Request for Proposals (RFP) from the county. In a work session on Wednesday of this week, the City Council reviewed the RFP in detail and gave further instructions to the City Manager.

As City Manager, I will be working over the next two weeks to prepare a submission. Council will review the draft submission and ultimately decide what the final submission includes. Simultaneously, city staff and I are working hard to complete the other important functions of the city operating smoothly. A Fire Department is one component of all that your local government handles, even though it has been in the forefront of what is happening as of late. Thank you to all of our staff who keep things rolling.

There is a lot of information floating around the community surrounding the ambulance service discussion. Some information is accurate and some of it includes complete fabrication. The city has received public records requests for different aspects related to [historical documents](#), [financials](#), [call responses](#), the [callback for service numbers](#), and more. To improve access to this data, I have instructed the City Recorder to add a page to our website where documents related to the ambulance service can be reviewed. That page is found [here](#). Check back often as we will continue to upload documents.

I realize many of you may have reached out to me via phone and email. I have responded to many, but the number of calls coupled with my responsibilities makes it impossible for me to speak to everyone individually. I apologize if you did not get a response from me.

In an effort to clarify some common questions I am receiving regarding the issue, please consider the following:

I. **Ambulance Service will not cease.** On October 1, 2022, the ambulance service will continue forward. Baker County is working to select a new provider. So long as the County does its state-mandated job, the ambulances will respond throughout the Baker ASA which includes Baker City. If someone calls 911, an ambulance will respond. Baker County

has released a request for proposals (which Baker City likely will respond to) and is scheduled to select a provider in the near future. I am saddened to hear from so many who have called me fearful and concerned that ambulance service will no longer exist in this County. Baker County is working to make sure that does not happen. I am confident they can do this.

2. **The Fire Department will still exist.** The Fire Department is not going away. It will still exist and it will still have adequate staff to respond to fire calls. The department will still be able to perform life-saving rescues in structure fires. Baker City responds to approximately 300 fire calls annually. The target staffing model is designed to handle the anticipated call volume. The staffing model is similar to other cities of similar or slightly larger populations and was explored as a staffing model in 2016. The other cities we have looked at actually run more calls than we are projected to run. 300 calls per year is less than 1 call per day. Most of our calls are what we refer to as smells and bells. In other words, someone smells smoke and our department responds to check it out or an alarm is going off and the department responds again to check it out. We average approximately 14 structure fires a year which vary from small to large.

3. **Insurance Rates are not going to skyrocket.** Our initial discussions with the officials providing ISO ratings to fire departments in the state indicate that we are not likely going to see a change to our ISO ratings. ISO ratings are in part what insurance companies use to determine fire risk for Baker City residents. We do not anticipate that our ISO rating will change at all. This will be confirmed in the near future as Baker City is up for review. The change to a fire response focus will be part of that review.

4. **SAFER grants are for fire, not paramedics.** Baker City consistently pursues fire department grants. Fire Chief Sean Lee currently is working with finance on two applications for grants which are in process of review. Since I have been here with Baker City, the city has applied for grants and will continue to do so. We consistently receive fire department grants and anticipate that trend will remain. A common grant of discussion is the SAFER grant. It provides for fire personnel and requires staff to be assigned to fire apparatus 51% of the time. It is not designed to provide for ambulance personnel. The city can and has pursued the SAFER grant, but it is not a source to fund ambulance services. Baker City received a SAFER grant and hired three firefighters on that grant in approximately 2017. The grant has expired and there is no funding source to replace the grant. The union was aware of this problem and stated so in a letter from October 2017 located [here](#) on our website.

5. **Baker City pursues past due accounts through collections.** Baker City uses Cam Credits to collect past due accounts. Overall collection recovery rates are 9% for Baker City. The national average according to Cam Credits is 11.1%. Since 2007, Baker City has submitted more than \$2M to collections for the ambulance.

6. **County has an RFP.** This will produce a long-term solution for this 31-year-old problem. The unsustainable nature of funding this service first shows up in a [1991 ASA document](#) produced by Baker County. It mentions the need to establish a sustainable funding source for the Ambulance Service. This issue has been kicked down the road for many years and cannot be pushed further down the road. We encourage the county to complete its process which will establish a long-term solution to this problem.

7. **LifeFlight will still provide lifesaving air transport.** Many of our citizens use LifeFlight. LifeFlight is a private ambulance company that in our area provides air ambulance transportation. They do a fantastic job and save many lives. I am unaware of any changes by Baker County to this vital service.

8. **The City has made cuts in its budget to fund ambulances.** I had a conversation with the newspaper about a month ago. I was asked if the city has had to cut other departments in order to fund ambulance services. My response was something like this. The city has not made extensive and obvious cuts to its budget directly attributable to ambulances. What the city has done over the years, is as expenses continue to increase, the city is forced to trim its budget. This means skipping projects which need to be completed, and foregoing necessary maintenance and upgrades on facilities. The fire department needs a roof, replacement fire trucks, SCBA bottles, and more. The police need important technology updates. Finance needs modernized software and a new cash register. The entire city needed new data servers and up-to-date software licenses. City Hall needs to repair and fix its foundation and install fire escapes. The list goes on. Projects and equipment mentioned have been either perpetually postponed or simply ignored because funding is not available. Projects, equipment, vehicles, and more have been trimmed year after year out of the budget until we arrive at a point where it is difficult to continue to trim further. The paper reported there have been no cuts, but the reality is that the city has trimmed the budget every year to maintain this service.

[Helpful Links with Information:](#)



- [Website Ambulance Page](#)

Above is a link to our website which goes to a page with Ambulance Service Information. The city will be providing data, history, and facts regarding the current ambulance service. This will be periodically updated.

We are Hiring!

Human Resources

We still have various jobs available at the city! Feel free to go to our website [www.bakercity.com] for more information on the following job opportunities.

Code Enforcement Officer – Open until filled.

The City of Baker City is accepting application for the position of Code Enforcement Officer in the Police Department. For a complete announcement, position description, and application, please click the link above or contact Stacy Spriet in Human Resources. The salary range is \$3,067-\$3,449 per month plus excellent benefits.

[JOB DESCRIPTION](#)

[APPLICATION](#)

Police Officer

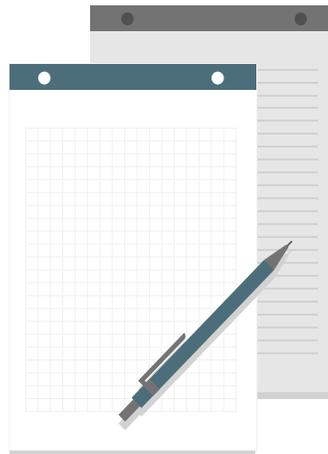
The City of Baker City is accepting application for the position of Patrol Officer in the Police Department. For a complete position description and application, please click the links below or contact Stacy Spriet in Human Resources. The salary range is \$4,517-\$5,090 per month plus excellent benefits.

[JOB DESCRIPTION](#)

[APPLICATION](#)



The City of Baker City provides employment opportunity to all qualified employees and applicants, without unlawful regard to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran's status, or any other status protected by applicable federal, Oregon, or local law. Our EEO policy applies to all aspects of the employment relationship—including, but not limited to, recruitment, hiring, compensation, promotion, demotion, transfer, disciplinary action, layoff, recall, and termination of employment.



Finance: Utility/Billing

Utilities 4/05/22-5/11/22

- 12 customers signed up for new water/wastewater service and 11 customers disconnected service from May 5th thru May 11th. This includes all service changes.
- Zone 1 was billed May 6th and included 96 residential and 256 commercial accounts. Of those accounts, 77 (23%) are signed up for direct payment and 27 (8%) are signed up for e-billing.
- Zone 5 was billed May 9th and included 470 residential and 17 commercial accounts. Of those accounts, 147 (30%) are signed up for direct payment, and 35 (7%) are signed up for e-billing.
- 3 residential customers (zones 2, 5, and 8) were shut off for non-pay. Of those 3, all paid and had services reinstated the same day.

**DOXO**

- As of 5/5/22 there were 760 customers who had signed up to use DOXO to pay their utility bills, as of 5/11/22, there were 763 total customers signed up. As of 5/12/22, there were 764 customers signed up.
- From 5/5-5/11, a total of 69 payments, in the amount of \$6,604.72, were made.



Planning Department

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Planning Commission hearing for Wednesday, May 18, 2022, was cancelled.



Applications

- A final plat was approved to divide one property into three at the intersection of Auburn Avenue and 20th Street in the Residential Medium-Density (R-MD) zone. Once the plat is recorded with the County Clerk's office, the land division will be final.
- The final plat for Phase I of the Park Springs Subdivision was signed by the Planning Director and recorded with the County Clerk. Now that the plat is recorded, the new lots can be sold.
- A new 6-lot subdivision, The Foothills, was approved off of Foothill Drive and Colorado Avenue in the Residential-Low Density (R-LD) Zone. Notice of the approval with an opportunity to appeal was mailed to neighbors within 100' of the project and all who participated in the hearings process on May 9, 2022. The appeal period ends at 5 PM on Monday, May 23, 2022.
- A replat was approved to divide one property into two at 2275 Virginia Avenue in the Residential High-Density (R-HD) Zone. Notice of the approval with an opportunity to appeal was mailed to neighbors within 100' of the project on May 10, 2022. The appeal period ends at 5 PM on May 23, 2022.
- A single-family dwelling was approved at 2237 8th Street in the Residential-High Density (R-HD) zone. This property was also approved for lot of record status, meaning the property was created below the minimum parcel size for the zone, but the property owner demonstrated the property has been that size prior to Baker City adopting lot size regulations. Lot of record properties can be approved for any use allowed in the zone so long as other Development Code standards, such as setbacks, can be met.
- A Conditional Use Permit was approved to replace an existing sign with an electronic reader board at the Baker Elks Lodge at 1896 2nd Street in the Central-Commercial (C-C) Zone. Notice of the approval with an opportunity to appeal was mailed to neighbors within 100' of the project on May 3, 2022. The appeal period ends at 5 PM on May 16, 2022.
- A Conditional Use Permit was approved to build a 1,728 square foot accessory building at 306 2nd Street in the Residential-High Density (R-HD) Zone. Notice of the approval with an opportunity to appeal was mailed to neighbors within 100' of the project on May 3, 2022. The appeal period ends at 5 PM on May 16, 2022.

Police Department



BCPD Weekly Report

- Over the past two weeks, BCPD opened 62 new cases and responded to 333 calls, making several arrests for outstanding warrants and detainers.
- New police officer recruit Emily Oller was sworn in as the latest addition to the Baker City Police Department! Please join us in welcoming Emily as she spends time getting to know our wonderful community! Emily has recently relocated from Bend, Oregon, is excited to explore the great outdoors in Baker County and is scheduled to start the DPSST Basic Academy in September. If you see her out and about, be sure to say hello.
- Sergeant Wayne Chastain, Sergeant Mike Regan, Officer Koby Essex and Officer Recruit Emily Oller attended a Use of Force Update and Review Session hosted by DPSST (Department of Safety Standards and Training) in Pendleton.
- **We're hiring!** Do you have an interest in serving our community? As a Code Enforcement Officer, you would have an important role in improving the livability for the people of our community. Code Enforcement Officers perform a variety of work in the interpretation and enforcement of codes and ordinances relating to property maintenance, animal, and parking ordinances; traffic regulation, related law enforcement activities to prevent crime, protect life and property. More information regarding this position is available at the City's employment page: <http://bakercity.com/2241/Human-ResourcesEmployment-Opportunities>.

Fire Department



MAINTENANCE/TRAINING/ FIRE PREVENTION – INSPECTIONS/ COMMUNITY EVENTS

19.0 Hrs.	Station and vehicle maintenance
24 Hrs.	Fire training
00Hrs.	EMS training
00 Hrs.	Safety training
00	Fire Prevention/Inspections
05	Community Events
07	Residential Burn Permits

05/03/2022-05/09/2022

EMERGENCY RESPONSES

The Baker City Fire Department responded to a total of 30 emergency alarms detailed as follows:

FIRE REPORTS	05
General alarms	01
Dispatched alarms	04
EMERGENCY MEDICAL	35
In-City Responses	29
Out of City Responses	06
Transports	25
No Transports	15
Airport Transfers	01
Out of town transfers accepted	00
Out of town Transfers rejected	01
MVA's	02
Doubles (2 simultaneous)	08
Triples (3 simultaneous)	01
Quads (4 simultaneous)	00
MCI's	00
Public assist	00
Emergency Call Back	
Requests for cover	20
# of staff requested	29
Staff response for cover	04
No staff response for cover	16

Public Works:**Public Works Weekly Update for 5/13/22****Water Department:**

A water leak last Friday on Birch Street was repaired. This particular area in the vicinity of Birch Street has been a major maintenance problem for many years. For an unknown reason, the Ductile Iron and Cast-Iron Water Lines and control valves in this area are subject to severe corrosion. Over time this leads to leaks in the pipes. Experts in the field from the Ductile Iron Institute were contacted years ago for assistance, but no cause for the problem was ever established. The 4" hole in the bottom of the pipe with pressure exceeding 80 P.S.I. caused a substantial amount of water to flow out of the trench and down the gutter.

Repair sequence:

- Area control valves were turned off.



Public Works:

- The area around the leak was excavated.



- Water that had filled the trench was pumped out.



Public Works

- A stainless-steel repair clamp was used to repair the 4" diameter hole.



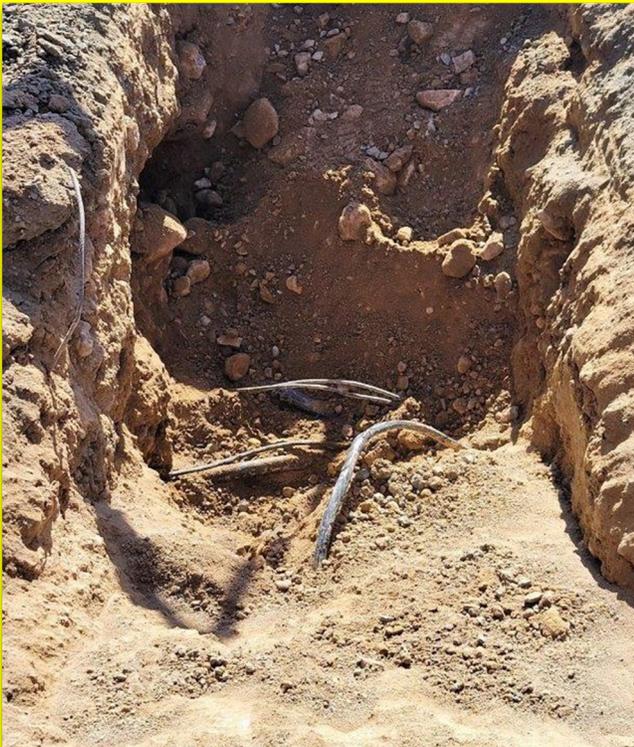
One water control valve was also replaced on Birch Street.

Public Works

Installation of the new 16" Ductile Iron Water Line on Indiana Ave. began Monday morning.



There were some unforeseen issues with the project. Several unmarked phone and other communication lines were discovered within the excavation zone.



Public Works

The end of an existing 8" waterline which had been installed by a contractor years ago as part of the Scenic Vista Subdivision had to be cut out of the way.



Public Works

New 16" diameter fittings were installed, and several sections of the new pipe were laid this week.



Public Works

On a much smaller scale. A broken valve on a water meter setter had to be repaired. Due to the valve being broken and could not be turned off, the water inside the copper meter setter was frozen using a pipe freezer, of course!

Once the water is frozen inside the line, the broken valve was removed, and a new valve was installed. Next, the pipe freezer is removed from the pipe and the water thaws in a few minutes, and service is restored.



Public Works

Fence repair work to protect Water Quality in the Baker City Watershed began this week. As well as fence repair in the Elk Creek Drainage area.



Public Works

Wastewater Department:

The contractor working at the Wastewater Treatment Plant continued to make progress this week.



A huge 28" hole was drilled through the side of the existing "Wet Well" chamber in preparation for the installation of new piping. City personnel had to be on-site the entire time to manually control the pumps to keep the level of the "water" inside the vault below the level of the hole being drilled.

Public Works

A resident on Balm Street was suffering from Sewer problems this week. The sewer main line was cleaned. No blockage was found but the resident said his lateral began working again.



Shared sewer laterals were discovered on 1st Street recently where two houses share the same sewer line from the houses to the mainline in the street. It is best if each residence has its' own sewer lateral.



Public Works

Street Department:

Many Blocks of city Streets were swept this week using the Elgin Mechanical Sweeper. The fire-damaged Elgin Cross Wind Sweeper is being repaired and currently is not available.

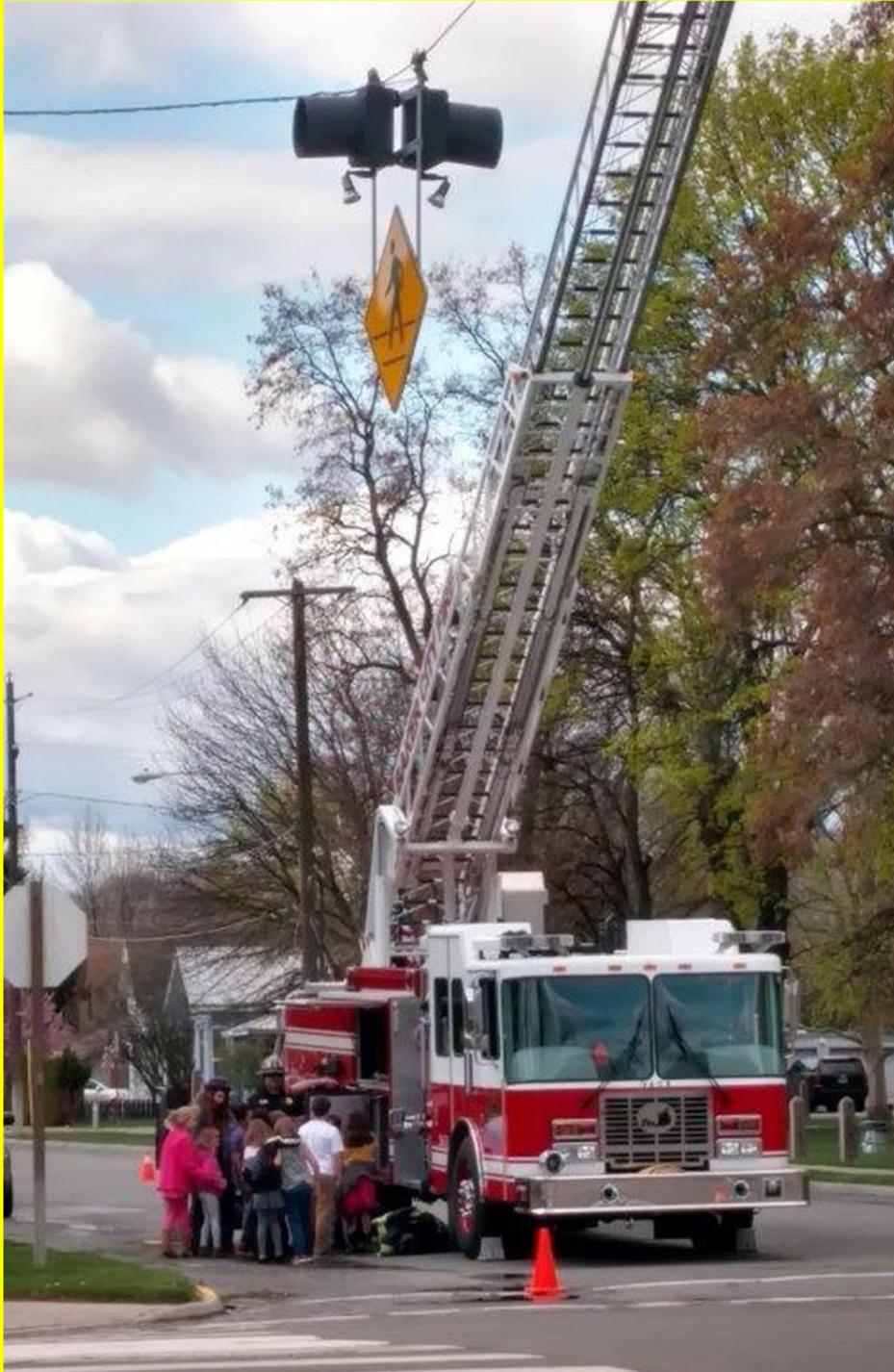


Debris swept from Baker City Streets was hauled to the Baker Sanitary Landfill this week.

Public Works

Community Interest:

Fire Department Personnel was observed last week performing educational Training for school children on Grove Street.



Have a great weekend!



Elected Officials

Mayor: Kerry McQuisten mayor@bakercity.gov

Acting Mayor: Joanna Dixon jdixon@bakercity.gov

Shane Alderson: salderson@bakercity.gov

Jason Spriet: jspriet@bakercity.gov

Johnny Waggoner Sr.: jwaggonersr@bakercity.gov

Dean Guyer: dguyer@bakercity.gov

Kenyon Damschen: kdamschen@bakercity.gov

