

Tuesday November 16, 2010

Nitro delays move on employee raises

by Mary Childress, For the Daily Mail

NITRO, W.Va. -- Nitro City Council's finance committee met prior to the regular council meeting Tuesday to discuss raises and salaries for city employees, but wound up delaying such talks until after the first of the year.

"We need to wait until the end of January to see what happens with the dog track," Nitro Treasurer John Young said. "We need to see what kind of revenue that brings in first. Then we'll see if we can afford raises or not."

Mayor Rusty Casto said council must see job descriptions from department heads before it can determine salary scales.

"If we're going to be able to give raises we have to know the job descriptions and different skill levels those jobs entail," Casto said.

Councilman Dave Casebolt asked if department heads could have their employee job descriptions to council by the next meeting. Casto thought that was possible.

"Even with job descriptions, we can't do anything until after we see what Tri-State brings in," Casto said. "I don't want to make a promise (of a raise) and can't deliver."

In other business, the ordinance committee is working on reviewing and rewording parts of Nitro's employee handbook for both non-uniform and uniform employees.

"Right now we're going over the drug-free workplace and travel policies," said John Montgomery, chairman of the ordinance committee. "We will probably have some amendments to bring to council in the near future."

The ordinance committee is going through the handbook one section at a time and will offer a completely new version to council in the future.

"This is a long-term project," Montgomery said. "It will take as long as it takes and we'll do as good a job as possible."

Gary Painter with the Presbyterian Church of the Covenant in Hurricane, spoke to council about a house in Nitro that was recently rehabbed through the efforts of Livingston Ministry, an arm of that church.

"We have finished that one house and are working on another we hope to have finished by spring," Painter said. "We don't want to be Habitat for Humanity; we think of ourselves as a safety net under Habitat. We think we can make a difference."

The group's theme is "Restoring homes and hopes." Painter urged council members to remember the group if homes for renovation became available.

Nitro residents are invited to meet with representatives from the Department of Highways and city officials at 2 p.m. Thursday in council chambers to discuss the Nitro-St. Albans bridge plans.

The mayor reported that the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources was interested in putting in a fishing dock at Nitro City Park. He said the DNR would fund the project.

Council voted to spend \$4,000 to upgrade a generator for the fire department.

Nitro Elementary School personnel will hold a boot drive starting at 8 a.m. Dec. 11 at 21st Street and Second Avenue to collect money for new playground equipment for the school.

Nitro's annual Christmas parade will be held at 6 p.m. Dec. 4.

It was also announced that Nitro city offices will be closed Nov. 25 and 26 for the Thanksgiving holiday.