

January 6, 2022

Nick Green, City Manager  
Ron Lundbom, Mayor  
Heather Rookstool, Councilor  
Elliott Sky, Councilor  
Paul Smith, Councilor  
Greg Haberly, Councilor  
Dave Holland, Councilor  
Shannon Adair, Councilor

Re: Request for Council to initiate Covid safety measures

At the November 9, 2021 council meeting, I expressed my concern regarding the City Council not adhering to safety recommendations regarding Covid. I observed no social distancing by council members or those in attendance, no requirement for masking and no direction by council to the public regarding adherence to safety guidelines. I suggested the council include at a future meeting a discussion on how to come into compliance with recommended safety measures.

The new variant, Omicron, is highly contagious and easily transmitted. The Oregonian today reported 4000 cases a day over the past week which is double the previous high from Delta and a 162% increase since last Thursday. Locally the Blue Mountain Eagle reports the Strawberry Wilderness Clinic currently has 15 staff with Covid. The Blue Mountain Hospital reports seven hospitalizations from Covid and is experiencing a surge in staff illness with Covid. The Blue Mountain Care Center in Prairie City reports five residents with Covid and in the last two days four of those residents have been transferred to Bend because the care center is unable to meet their needs. The care center is also experiencing staffing issues due to Covid. The Blue Mountain Hospital is coordinating with the County Health Department and Emergency

Management to request additional supplies, emergency ambulance services and transportation support from the state.

It is clear to me Grant County is in a crisis mode with Covid and emphasis should be placed on individuals practicing recommended safety measures. As a governing body the John Day City Council has a responsibility to model appropriate response to Covid and to ensure council meetings are safe for public attendance.

I participated in the January 5, 2022 Council meeting via Go To Meeting and observed a lacking of social distancing and limited masking.

I again ask the Council to address this serious matter and show leadership in the community. Covid is a serious problem facing this community; if you do not address this problem you then become part of the problem.

Thank you for your service to the John Day community and I look forward to Council action on this important matter.

Sincerely,  
Jim Spell