

City Council approves \$125 million budget

By Debbie Howlett
Of the Emerald

The Eugene City Council unanimously approved a \$125 million budget Wednesday, only two days before the start of the fiscal year, when the city would have theoretically run out of money.

The majority of budget debate at the City Council meeting was about a one-half staff position cut in the city's human rights division.

"We have to face the fact that a cut in human rights might put (the program) 'at

risk,'" said Councilor Mike Lindbergh.

Lindbergh added that City Manager Mike Gleason has said the cut would not affect services because of a reorganization of the department, and that the existing staff would be able to deal effectively with the situation.

"We haven't really helped," said Council President Emily Schue. "We simply forget — or whatever. This is not just the staff's responsibility, it's the responsibility of all of us."

"To say that human rights is

'at risk' is an overstatement, an exaggeration and bull," said Councilor Brain Obie, who said also that the "overstatement" of the impact of cutting one-half staff position is "irresponsible."

The budget, which has been through two public hearings and more than 20 budget committee and subcommittee meetings, appropriates nearly \$44.5 million for the city's general fund — which is supported largely by property taxes.

An increase of \$2.25 million to nearly \$21.3 million in total

property taxes levied will increase Eugene residents' taxes about 80 cents to \$9.13 per thousand dollars of assessed value.

The council also discussed funding of the Bookmobile, which had been sliced from the budget earlier. The council asked Gleason to report back to them on alternative funding methods for the bookmobile and parts of the city's library system.

In other council business, G.V. Stathakis, from the "Crossroads Neighborhood Alliance," a newly formed "Citizen's Action Coalition" addressed the council about a \$600,000 federal jobs bill grant the city has chosen to use for work on Roosevelt Boulevard.

Stathakis says he disagrees with the city's decision and the city should allocate \$10,000 for a Task Force, a "broad based coalition," to

come up with a plan for the Crossroads Neighborhood that would fit into the criteria for the grants.

He explained the Crossroads Neighborhood as being the area near the intersection of Broadway and Franklin Boulevard.

"We (The Crossroads Neighborhood) are ready for Charles Kuralt, for national media attention" Stathakis said.

Obie asked if the city could channel the Crossroads Neighborhood through regular grant blocs. Lindbergh answered that the council had agreed, in earlier years, to discontinue "individually funded activities."

Mayor Gus Keller asked Stathakis to let the council "work are way through" the problem.

"Your way has taken over a year already," Stathakis said.

Condon lease moves closer

The University's two-year lease of the Condon Elementary School building and grounds moved a step closer to reality Monday.

The proposal was unanimously approved by the Eugene school district's Building Site Review Committee, and the committee recommended that Superintendent Terry Lindquist approve the lease, with the stipulation that Condon neighbors be allowed to continue to use the playground and auditorium or cafeteria.

The University plans to lease the surplus school-district 4J building, located at 1787 Agate Street, for \$50,000 annually. They will use it mainly for computer education for teachers.

The State Board of Higher Education approved the leasing arrangement at its Friday meeting.

Two representatives from the Fairmont Neighbors Association who spoke at the public hearing, Marna Broekhoff and Darcy Marentette, said they had no quarrel with the lease proposal, but would like some of the facilities to remain open to neighborhood use.

Broekhoff said the building has been used "almost nightly" by the Fairmont Neighbors Association and others for meetings and other activities, and she would like to see the auditorium and cafeteria remain open to such community use.

The playground was designed, funded and built by parents, Broekhoff said, and it should be left intact.

The University would probably be willing to make the facility available for use by the community, said Robert Gilberts, University dean of education.

The University plans to use the cafeteria for micro-

computer labs, but the public would continue to have access to the auditorium, says David Rowe, University planner.

"We've assured the folks in the neighborhood that their

needs will be met," he said.

And neighborhood use of the building is likely to continue after the two-year lease period, Rowe said. "We're thinking about that as a long-term commitment."

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