

IN BRIEF

Senate budget chief resolute on school funds

SALEM — Senate budget chief Kurt Schrader, D-Canby, offered assorted changes in his proposed spending plan Thursday but didn't yield any ground on the key education budgets.

That found no favor with House budget leader Wayne Scott. The Canby Republican said the Senate Democrats' refusal to bargain on

school funding shows why traditional House-Senate budget talks have broken off.

Talks collapsed Monday when House Speaker Karen Minnis, R-Wood Village, said she would form a new House-only budget panel because the Joint Ways & Means Committee was deadlocked on K-12 school funding, the biggest item in the budget.

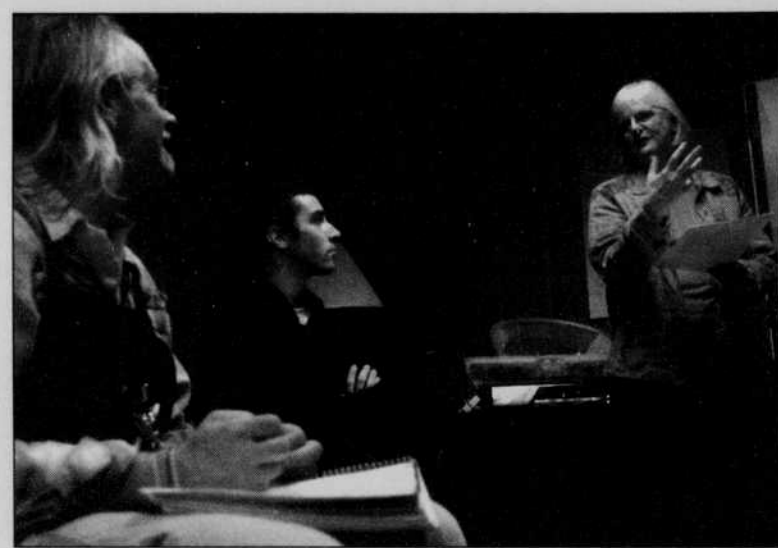
Separate House and Senate panels are expected to begin putting together their own budget measures on May 16.

House Republicans this week

raised their school funding proposal by \$25 million, to \$5.2 billion, leaving a \$125 million gap between the GOP number and the \$5.325 billion the Senate's majority Democrats want for schools. That's the big sticking point toward resolving a \$12.4 billion 2005-07 state budget.

Schrader didn't move from the Senate school aid figure in his new draft Thursday; some Democrats have said they wouldn't vote for less than \$5.3 billion.

— The Associated Press



NICOLE BARKER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Left to right: Drix Rixmann, ASUO President elect Adam Walsh and Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy were among those at the West University Neighbors meeting Thursday night.

West: Piercy also discussed police review board plans

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University's planning process, saying that the planning department's role in the University's arena plans is rather minimal.

"I oftentimes learn about it by reading the newspaper," Ramey said.

Also at the meeting, neighborhood association board member and University student Don Goldman lambasted Piercy and the rest of the city government for approving a tax break for Hynix Semiconductor, a company that Goldman said is undeserving of such breaks because of the number of toxins it is reportedly emitting.

"I can't believe you're actually thinking about doing this," Goldman said.

Piercy said state laws don't allow cities to pick and choose which businesses within an enterprise zone to give tax breaks.

"I'm not going to make a case for them because I don't owe them a thing," Piercy said, stressing that Hynix has obeyed all the necessary requirements by improving its environmental standards and providing the community with decent-wage jobs.

The city has been working with Hynix to improve its environmental sensitivity and much progress has been made, Piercy said. She added that the nature of the business, computers and manufacturing, is such that a higher amount of toxins should be expected.

"In the end it would be great if we could do computers without toxins," Piercy said.

Piercy also discussed plans for an external police review board that the Eugene Police Commission is currently in the process of putting together.

"It's been a long time coming," Piercy said.

Piercy said the community has been doing "incredibly great work" on the policing concerns in the city and invited anyone interested in participating to start attending commission meetings.

"The challenge to the Council and the community is to find a way to have an external review board that really works," Piercy said.

West University Neighbors Chair Drix Rixmann asked Piercy about the current happenings with development at the Eugene Water and Electric Board's riverfront property.

The city has been in a dialogue for many months about the possibility of a hospital being built near the river, and Piercy said she sees positive progress being made in the discussions.

Piercy said Arlie & Co., the company in charge of the development, has a reputation as a "speculator" but that it has hired some "creative thinkers" who are showing a willingness to work with the community to create a riverfront development project that works best for the community.

Rixmann said he hopes the hospital can be planned in a way that the developers will "not make it a box for sick people but make it a healing thing."

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