

Local

5J: ODOT BOLI camp, summer reading program, school resource officer among topics

• BUDGET ADOPTED

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Kevin Cassidy, acting chair called the meeting to order “in the absence of Andrew Bryan who is in Great Britain.”

Gwen O’Neal acknowledged Jan Bonn for her years of service with Baker School District as she retired. Bonn began her career in 1974 in Tillamook, Oregon as a music teacher and has been with the Baker School district for the last 28 years.

O’Neal highlighted her career, touching on the many different positions Bonn has held from teaching music to teaching Kindergarten, 2nd grade, 3rd grade and 4th grade. Bonn also worked as a substitute in the Pine-Eagle District.

“This is a woman who knows how to move around,” said O’Neal. “She has worked in every elementary school in the Baker School District including North Baker and Churchill schools when they were still in operation and Haines and Keating. Thank you for all the wonderful years here in the Baker School District.”

The board agreed to modify the agenda as Jerry Peacock was present to speak to the board about a recent career camp for girls made possible by an ODOT BOLI grant.

“Thank you for allowing me to present what went on June 15th-17th, it was our first ever girls ODOT BOLI camp and it was even more successful than we had anticipated,” he said.

Out of the 13 girls that registered, 11 were able to attend.

“We felt really good about the turnout and commitment level,” he said. According to Peacock it was three days of intense fun and very hands-on.

The girls were exposed to power hand tools many for the first time, working with surveying, cement work, and welding, which was as Peacock said, “The most interesting of everything we did because they were extremely nervous and scared. In the end, they probably enjoyed that more than anything and some of them even said it might be something they’d want to pursue.”

The group also visited Triple C Redi-Mix where Casey Vanderwiele explained the Redi-Mix process and what they were looking for in employees.

The girls also visited Behlen’s paint and welding shops and were able to see women in industrial jobs and they also visited Ash Grove where the girls were able to sit up in the largest bulldozer in Oregon that had just been purchased.

Peacock said the camp had been extremely successful and thanked everyone for their great support saying when he called to make arrangements no one balked at all and just asked when they needed to work the group in.



Members of the 5J School Board met Tuesday.

The only complaint he received was from those participating that the camp was not long enough but all thought it was worthwhile for them.

Peacock said the girls used the word “inspired” a lot to describe the impact the experience had on them. Peacock said should the funding be available to do the camp again next year they will look at making it longer.

“Jerry, you and your staff should be commended for pulling it off and providing that opportunity,” said Cassidy.

Next Cassidy opened the Budget hearing turning things over to Doug Dalton, CFO.

“Last time we met, was the approval of the budget committee kind of a recap of where we were at, the budget committee approved the budget and moved it forward to the board so you’re here to adopt.

“Typically if there are any changes, this is the time where you get additional information about changes that occurred at the state level or within the budget. There are no changes, the budget is exactly as it was approved by the budget committee. What we predicted the state funding level to be is pretty much exactly what it was,” Dalton said.

The Board later moved to adopt the budget in a unanimous vote.

Jim Tomlinson briefly addressed the board on behalf of the Baker County Community Literacy Coalition.

This program is a private non-profit organization dedicated to provide literacy in Baker County. They provide volunteers in classrooms, last school year Tomlinson said, “We provided 52, half-hour sessions” reading with students and similar programs continue on in the summer with the summer reading program.

The summer reading program, available to kindergarten through 2nd grade students and is held every Tuesday and Thursday from 11-12 at North Baker School. The kids that participate in the program can also stay for the summer lunch program provided.

This year the program, coordinated by Susan Yen first grade teacher, is serving 56 kids.

Baker County Library also gets involved with a grant program called the STARS (summer time awesome reading) this year they are engaging kids

with a superhero theme.

“Every kid is a superhero, it is to help confidence and self-esteem,” said Thomlinson.

The Literacy Coalition provides free books for not only children in the schools but in social service agencies as well.

They also work with Head Start, YMCA, and recently added a new partner, WIC. Tomlinson also put into place a program with EOMA to give kids books when they go in for their doctor’s appointments.

There was new focus made to engage family involvement by partnering with Child Care Resource and Referral and by going into Recovery Village, the inpatient drug treatment facility where mothers and children stay together to give books. Through the program Thomlinson said the organization had “Given away about 2,500 books.”

Tomlinson went on to say, “Volunteers really make our programs, we typically have about 40 volunteers. Businesses, service and government organizations and individuals in town are vital in their support by providing either financial support or providing volunteers.”

Tomlinson spoke of a new program: “We are just getting this off the ground, branch librarian Donna Pearson has been in contact with Powder River Correction Facility to work with 12 inmate families, 19 kids to provide books to them.”

Tomlinson did make a point to mention they were shifting from purchasing books through Scholastic to purchasing more books locally so as to support business in our own community.

Another big issue that was discussed was the contract for the next four years that has been signed partnering the School District, the City and the County together to provide a School Resource Officer. It was understood that after July 1 a hiring committee would be formed between the three entities to hire the person that would fill the role.

One of interim superintendent Betty Palmer’s concerns was that this resource officer “Assist school staff with truancy issues, one of things that we are really working hard at, at the high school level, is to have better attendance.” She went on to say, “This person can also give referrals to the Police Department or Juvenile

Department and help to advise us through court system. This contract does go into effect as of July 1 and during the summer months when we don’t have students on campus this resource officer will just be a police officer in our own community. We do however anticipate that this officer will show up for in-service and training with our staff and then come right into the school year with our students.” Overall, Palmer felt like entering into this agreement was a good step forward for all.

The question was raised about the effect this may have on Haines and Keating schools to which Palmer answered, “We have agreements to use the resource officer in outlying places on occasion, too.”

It was brought up that to involve the county in the agreement Huntington, Pine-Eagle and Burnt River would need access to this officer as well, which was indicated would be allowed per the agreement.

The board tended to some housekeeping items such as going over a list of new hires, resignations including that of Baker Middle School Principal Minda Vaughn, resolutions allowing for a permanent tax rate, appropriations in the budget, establishing a fund balance and approving revisions to the student search policies, which would wait for approval because if concerns Chris Hawkins, also an Oregon State Policeman, had to its context.

He felt that in the revising more questions were raised than it cured.

Before the meeting adjourned new Superintendent Mark Witty spoke.

He said, “I would like to mention how good of a job Betty has done moving the district through this transitional phase.”

Witty pointed out that under her leadership some critical things have been done in her small amount of time.

“I think we are six months ahead of where we would have been as far as getting those things accomplished and moving forward. I’m very appreciative of what Betty has done and am really looking forward to working with her and the leadership team as a whole. I think Betty deserves credit for taking this district and really doing some quality work these last few months,” he added.

Witty takes the helm July 1.

Turbo

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The trainer who trained Turbo no longer trains dogs.

With the legalization of marijuana taking effect July 1, Turbo, who is trained to detect marijuana as well as other illegal narcotics, can no longer be used.

“There is no way I can say what he is smelling,” said Weaver. “I can no longer use Turbo to attain probable cause for vehicles and stuff like that.”

According to Weaver the benefit of having a dog in Oregon is, “You have the vehicle exception rule where if you have a dog with the established certification and if I were to come upon a regular traffic stop while another officer is filling out the paperwork I can run the dog around the vehicle. Then if the dog alerts, with the vehicle exception rule, I can get into the vehicle and look. We’ve done that several times.”

While Weaver can’t give an exact number of arrests that have come from “sniffs” Turbo has done, he has been instrumental in a lot of cases.

“It’s hard to say a number because there have been a lot of times when the State Police or even the County has called me out on the freeway or somewhere. The agency, officer gets credit for that arrest, if any. After his retirement we may still use him for special circumstances, like if Parole and Probation wants him or if the schools want to use him,” Weaver said.

Even with the legalization of marijuana, it will still be illegal for minors or those on parole or probation to possess marijuana.

In his years with Weaver the two have formed a strong bond and once retired, Turbo will lead the life of any ordinary dog, spent in the care of Weaver.

“We’ve got a black lab pup he can play with so it’ll be good,” he said.

Of course, according to Weaver that pup is eight months old and already outweighs Turbo.

“He is going to be treated more like a regular dog. Working dogs don’t associate much with family. When not working he has a kennel and dog house. I do go out and throw his toy a few times for him. It is not recommended that if it’s a working dog they be treated like a family pet. I don’t know that it would make a big difference though I mean they know what they are doing. All they want to do is find their toy because it’s all a game to them really anyway,” he said.

Weaver was unsure whether the K-9 program will be continued in Oregon—dogs throughout the state are being retired with the passing of measure 91. Prior to the passing of the measure, marijuana was illegal and all dogs were trained to detect the drug. Weaver sees the acquiring of new dogs, and training for each dog and each handler, as a very large expense for the state.

“The Chief has asked me (if we are successful at attaining another dog) if I wanted to be the handler. I told him I don’t need three dogs at home,” he said. “Also, I’ll be eligible to retire in four and a half years and like told the Chief, I’d really like to see the handler be somebody that is going to be here for a period of time so the a new dog isn’t bounced around like Turbo was. It is an increase in training to bounce them around, and that’s an added cost. Plus if you have someone that is with the dog all the time you’re not having to transition from one handler to the next. Some dogs won’t take to it—they’re a one-person dog. Luckily black labs aren’t known for that.”

Weaver added, “I thought I’d get to retire not too long after Turbo but with recreational marijuana, he gets out way before I do.”

When Turbo was asked if he had any big plans for retirement he simply wagged his tail, but according to Weaver, Turbo is sneaky and likes to go trash can diving when given the opportunity—so a little of that is surely on his agenda.

Meanwhile, there are ongoing efforts by The Hell’s Canyon Motorcycle Rally to try and muster up donations to replace Turbo. Back in 2007, the Rally raised \$30K to fund Turbo, and this year they’re working toward \$10K, which is the estimated amount for a suitable replacement.

Commemorative pins are for sale at various stores around Baker City, and will be available during the Rally itself next month. Donations can also be made online at www.hellscanyonrally.com/2015/05/turbo-retires-after-distinguished-career or by searching GoFundMe.com for “Turbo’s Replacement” by Steve Folkestad. So far the GoFundMe site has raised \$525 toward the new K-9 project.

Clarification

We were contacted last week by The City of Sumpter expressing concern that its citizens might be alarmed by a phrase in an article in our June 19 issue about their ongoing lawsuit.

On page 8, we report on a discussion between attorneys this week about an unauthorized irrigation system creating an allowance of waste getting into the “city water system,” resulting in a total of \$9K in DEQ fines. We first want to stress, as it states in the article, that these incidents happened years prior (2010-2012), not this year. We stand by our coverage of this week’s hearing, but also see how the term “city water system” as used could cause concern.

To quell the potential for rumors: We are not aware of non-disinfected recycled water leaking into the City of Sumpter’s drinking water supply. We have no reason to even think it. In checking with the DEQ, the terms “public water system” or “public water supply” and “City of Sumpter drinking water protection area” are all used in their documentation, and these terms encompass “state waters” around Sumpter, such as the Powder River. Leakage into those state waters was the focus of the fines. We sincerely hope this clarification stops any alarm before it happens. That full press release from the DEQ can be found here: <http://www.deq.state.or.us>. Search for keyword “Sumpter.”