

# Local / Politics

## County: Local disaster declared in advance of solar eclipse

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Durflinger said that the collection of taxes owed to the County by Charter Communications has been further delayed, due a recent Supreme Court case.

The job description of the position of Program Coordinator, part of the County Health Department, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. Martin explained the purpose of the creation of two positions of this type, which will be at Range 8 on the SEIU (Service Employees International Union) wage table.

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Rail And Public Transit Division Agreement No. 31985, between ODOT and the County, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. According to the agreement, the County will receive not more than \$134,000 from ODOT, for associated projects.

Amendment No. 1 to the Professional Services Agreement between attorney Kenneth A. Bardizian, P.C. and the County, for indigent defense services to County Justice Court, not to exceed the budgeted amount, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols.

A County Mass Notification system purchase, from Boise-based Alert Sense, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. Yencopal discussed the details with the Board, which included four bids, Alert Sense being the low bid, at \$4,200 for the base unit. The County currently uses the Code Red system, and that contract expires on August 21, 2017, but the transition will be a smooth one, and users will be notified in advance, Yencopal said.

Order No. 2017-138, Designating A Sole Source Provider IBM I Power 8 Baker County Technology Department, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. Lee discussed the details with the Board, including the cost of the replacement server, at \$40,042.54, from Manage Incorporated, which was

anticipated over several budget years, the life cycle of the server, and to be expended from the Server Replacement Fund.

A County Fairgrounds grandstand bid request was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. Sid Johnson & Company was approved, having the low bid of two bidders, at \$59,980 total for grandstand project work; and \$44,687 total for southeast fence and sidewalk project work.

The first public hearing was held in the matter of Order No. 2017-140, Adopting A Fee Schedule For The Baker County Juvenile Department. Erickson explained the purpose of the order, a need to increase the detention fee, from \$140.00, to \$180.00 per day, as determined by the Norcor Juvenile Detention Center. Elms had a couple of brief questions, but no public comment was offered otherwise. There will be a second hearing on the matter, scheduled for Wednesday, 19, 2017.

Order No. 2017-134, Authorizing The Sale Of County Owned Parks Identified As Shanghai Creek Park And Puzzle Creek By Private Sale, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. Spencer and Elms discussed the order with the Board (the Parks Department budget is out of balance about \$50,000 for Fiscal Year 2017-2018, prompting the liquidation of some properties), and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will determine the specifics of the sale of the properties, during its next meeting.

Order No. 2017-139, Appointing A Member To The Baker County Cultural Coalition, was approved, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Harvey. Roberta "Lynne" Proudfoot was appointed, her term set to expire on July 1, 2018.

Resolution No. 2017-1024, Appropriation Of Unanticipated Funds In The FY (Fiscal Year) 2016-2017 Budget To Be Expended In The Non Departmental Department Of The Parks Fund, was adopted, with a motion from Harvey, and a second from Nichols. \$18,540, received from the Oregon State Weed Board (OSWB)

Grant, was added to Park Maintenance, for a new total of \$34,540.

An emergency Declaration Of Local Disaster, in anticipation of the Total Solar Eclipse event, was approved, with a motion from Nichols, and a second from Bennett. Yencopal discussed the details with the Board, and per the declaration, the following are included in the request: additional funding to prepare and prevent loss of life and property damage; declaration of State of Emergency, to enlist the National Guard to provide air and ground medical resources, and to allow rural fire emergency medical responders to transport to a higher level of care; to direct the Oregon State Fire Marshall (OSFM) to be prepared for an Emergency Conflagration Act; to be prepared for a Proclamation of Public Health Emergency; ODOT Emergency Waivers, to allow for additional driver hours for the delivery of fuel and food; to make available mobile fuel tanks from the National Guard; and to request Governor Kate Brown contact the Honorable Secretaries of the United States Department of Agriculture, the United States Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management, to provide additional resources.

Resolution No. 2017-1025, Temporary Permits For Commercial Gatherings And Events Related To The Solar Eclipse, was adopted, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Nichols. Kerns discussed the resolution with the Board, which states that the number of visitors expected to the County far exceeds the existing lodging capacity, forcing visitors to gather and stay in areas not traditionally used or zoned for those purposes.

According to the resolution, with respect to commercial events or commercial gatherings of less than 3,000 people, between August 15-31, 2017, in all land use zones in the County, the enforcement of certain zoning ordinances is temporarily suspended, by the granting of permits for such gatherings. Kerns said this is "very temporary," as indicated by the resolution.

## Stop election manipulation

Submitted by Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson

I need your help. The Oregon House Rules Committee will soon vote on an amendment to institute a special election next January.

This special election will waste millions of your tax dollars, will suppress voter turnout, and will keep voters in the dark.

As Oregon's chief elections officer, I take seriously my responsibility to ensure a fair election process and encourage maximum citizen participation in our democracy. I strongly believe that the A7 amendment to Senate Bill 229 should be rejected because it manipulates the election process and keeps voters in the dark. These political shenanigans are unacceptable.

The Oregon Constitution gives you the right to overrule the legislature through the referendum process. This protection ensures accountability and safeguards fundamental rights.

This amendment does

just the opposite. It is a political ploy to undermine accountability by increasing power for politicians at the expense of the people.

The key problems with this amendment include: Suppresses Voter Turnout: A special election in January is expected to suppress voter turnout by approximately 14%, thereby excluding over 270,000 Oregonians from the political process.

Wastes Taxpayer Money: A special election in January will waste millions in taxpayer dollars that could have paid for more teachers or expanded voter access.

Disrupts the Holiday Season: A special election in January means that the holidays will be disrupted with robocalls, political telemarketers, nasty TV ads, and campaign junk mail. This will prevent you from enjoying the holidays in peace with friends and family.

Deceives the Voters: This amendment subverts the nonpartisan process for drafting a ballot title by injecting partisan politics

and political bias into the process.

Please call House Speaker Tina Kotek at 503-986-1200 and Governor Kate Brown at 503-378-4582 to ask them to join me in opposing the manipulation of your and your fellow Oregonians' vote.

View my video statement here: <https://youtu.be/6UjdRacwnw>

Thank you.

Dennis Richardson

PS You can also email the members of the House Rules Committee to make your voice heard:

Rep.JenniferWilliamson@oregonlegislature.gov

Rep.MikeMcLane@oregonlegislature.gov

Rep.DanRayfield@oregonlegislature.gov

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## Parrish says Democrats are stripping voters rights

Representative Julie Parrish (R-Tualatin/West Linn) chastised Democratic leadership for passing amendments to SB 229, which would grant the majority party broad and overreaching powers to manipulate election dates and draft ballot titles. Rep. Parrish likened the effort to attack Oregonians' rights to refer legislation to the ballot akin to voter suppression and an abuse of power by majority Democrats.

"Amendments to this bill have popped up at the eleventh-hour; they're designed to circumvent our normal election process," said Rep. Parrish, who testified in opposition the SB 229 amendments this afternoon in the House Rules Committee. "Like many bills in these last few days, citizens of this state are being stripped of their ability to provide input. Today's committee work session on newly introduced partisan amendments to an otherwise unanimously bipartisan bill from the Senate, allowed not one everyday citizen to speak their con-

cerns. It's precisely why people support the referendum process."

Rep. Parrish was specifically critical of several provisions of the -10 and -11 amendments, including:

Arbitrarily setting a special election date for any measure passed by the Legislature during the 2017 session and referred by Oregon voters to be held on January 23, 2018, which would inevitably drive down turnout;

Grant lawmakers the authority to draft ballot titles for potential referendums and remove nearly three weeks of the public comment process voters currently enjoy under the existing law. The drafting would be done by a partisan committee made up of a majority of legislative Democrats;

Allow lawmakers to draft explanatory statements for potential referendums;

Requires millions of additional taxpayer dollars to be spent in order to facilitate a special election held in January.

Require elections work-

ers in 36 counties to have to cancel holiday plans with their families to run a special January election. Oregon currently has four regularly calendared elections in March, May, September and November.

Representative Parrish noted in the testimony that as someone who grew up in the social system with government-sponsored healthcare, her aim in a referral is not to gut Medicaid, but to hold it accountable for the billions of dollars the state has potentially overpaid and the loss of hundreds of millions in failed IT software projects by a mismanaged state agency. Further, Parrish believes there were three other bill possibilities which could have covered a Medicaid shortfall. None were given hearings by House Democrats.

Following Representative Parrish's testimony, the House Rules Committee adopted the controversial -11 amendment and referred SB 229 to the Joint Ways and Means Committee for further consideration.

## Walden praises VA whistleblower law

Continuing his support for legislation to improve the care Oregon veterans receive at Veterans Affairs, Rep. Greg Walden applauded a new law that would increase accountability at the VA. The Department of Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act of 2017 will streamline the process for removing poor performing VA employees and expand whistleblower protections for those who reveal wrongdoing in the agency. Walden said this legislation is a big step forward in reforming the VA and getting veterans the care

they deserve.

"One of the commitments we made to the American people, especially our veterans, is to improve the situation at the VA," said Walden. "We all remember the stories about wait times, where veterans actually died waiting to get access to care, and where the VA actually lied to Congress and the American people about their wait time lists. We're changing all of that with legislation the President has now signed into law, called the Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act. This sets up a streamlined process

to deal with the management issues faced by the VA when it comes to VA employees who aren't doing their jobs or are misleading. They can be replaced and we can get good people in positions quickly. This will be really important for those who every day go to work at the VA to do their job, and do it well and help veterans and they see things that aren't going right. We give them additional protections as whistleblowers so we can get the VA in the place it should be to provide world-class care for the people who protect our freedom."

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