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Measures 6 and 11

Tax plans could bring changes

by JOHN KLINE

The showdown between proponents of ballot Measures 6 and 11, the property tax proposals listed on the Nov. 7 ballot, will go a long way in determining the spending patterns and levels of service for schools and other taxing districts for many years to come.

Special interest groups have been scrambling furiously for the past two months assessing the potential impact of the two measures and letting their various positions be known.

The two candidates for the state's highest office, Gov. Bob Straub and State Senator Vic Atiyeh, have lined up on opposite sides of the issue. Both made their positions known at Sandy-area Chamber of Commerce luncheons last month.

Straub is an ardent supporter of 11, the product of the special Legislative session held early in September. Atiyeh, who voted with the majority of legislators in putting Measure 11 on the ballot, is backing 6.

If neither measure passes, the present system will remain in effect. If both pass, the measure receiving the greatest number of yes votes will become part of the state constitution.

Because of the rush nature of putting the tax plans together in time for the November election, there are numerous questions and gray areas which will have to be ironed out by the Legislature when it comes into session in January regardless of which measure goes into effect.

Taxing districts in the state would have several months lead in time to prepare for whichever measure — if either — goes into effect. The measure receiving the most votes would take effect starting with the state's July 1 fiscal year.

The basic approach of the two proposals is quite different.

Measure 6 is copied almost word for word from California's Proposition 13 which passed in June. It calls for a 1.5 percent ceiling on property taxes with assessments rolled back to 1975 levels.

It also stipulates that property assessments could not increase by more than two percent annually under the same ownership. The net effect of that provision is that businesses, which pay approximately 63 percent of the tax bill in the state, would pay a lesser share of a locality's total tax because businesses change hands not as often as do homes.

Property that changes hands would be reassessed to current market levels at the time of the sale.

The greatest impact of Measure 6 would be on the schools because that is where the greatest portion of the local tax dollar goes. State government would not be directly affected.

However, it is generally believed the Legislature would provide some form of relief to schools from the general fund if Measure 6 goes into effect. That relief is not expected to be anywhere near the anticipated 30-40 percent deficits the schools could experience if the measure passes.

Should Measure 6 go into effect, payoff on outstanding bond debts would not be included in the 1.5 percent limitation. Bond packages approved by voters through the end of 1978 would be exempt from the limit. However, taxing districts which seek bonds for future capital improvements would have payoffs included in their tax limit.

Renters under Measure 6 would receive no relief other than that provided in the state HAARP program. And mobile home owners who rent the space for their homesites would not receive any relief.

A major question surrounding Measure 6 is how the 1.5 percent of property taxes collected in a locality will be divided among the several districts there. The problems get especially complicated when overlapping district boundaries are involved.

The legislators who shaped Measure 11 obviously did so with Measure 6 in mind. Its supporters wanted it to be more attractive to voters without being as potentially disruptive to local governments.

Measure 11 would shift much of the spending level from local property taxes to the state general fund. It calls for the state to pay half the property taxes on primary homes up to a maximum of $1,500.

The state general fund is fed by state income taxes. If Measure 11 goes into effect, it would cost the state an estimated $506 million in the 1979-81 biennium to pay the property taxes, roughly 20 percent of general revenue fund sources.

If such action occurs, spending at the state level would probably have to be cut in certain areas and no new programs would be established. Straub told the Sandy chamber audience that income taxes would not be raised to make up the deficit.

Measure 11 also provides "equivalent" tax relief to renters. How that relief will be made has not yet been determined.

It would also provide mobile home owners the same tax relief offered to standard homeowners up to the $1,500 maximum whether on rented or individually owned space.

Next week: A look at how the tax measures could affect schools and the fire district in Sandy.

Voters to decide fate of municipal court

The municipal court in Sandy is not dead — just yet.

Voters in Sandy will have the opportunity to decide for themselves in the Nov. 7 general election whether they want to continue the weekly municipal court which council voted to abolish in its budget cutting sessions six weeks ago.

Council was informed by City Attorney Jack Hammond Monday night that abolishing the court requires a change in the city charter which can only be accomplished through a vote of the people.

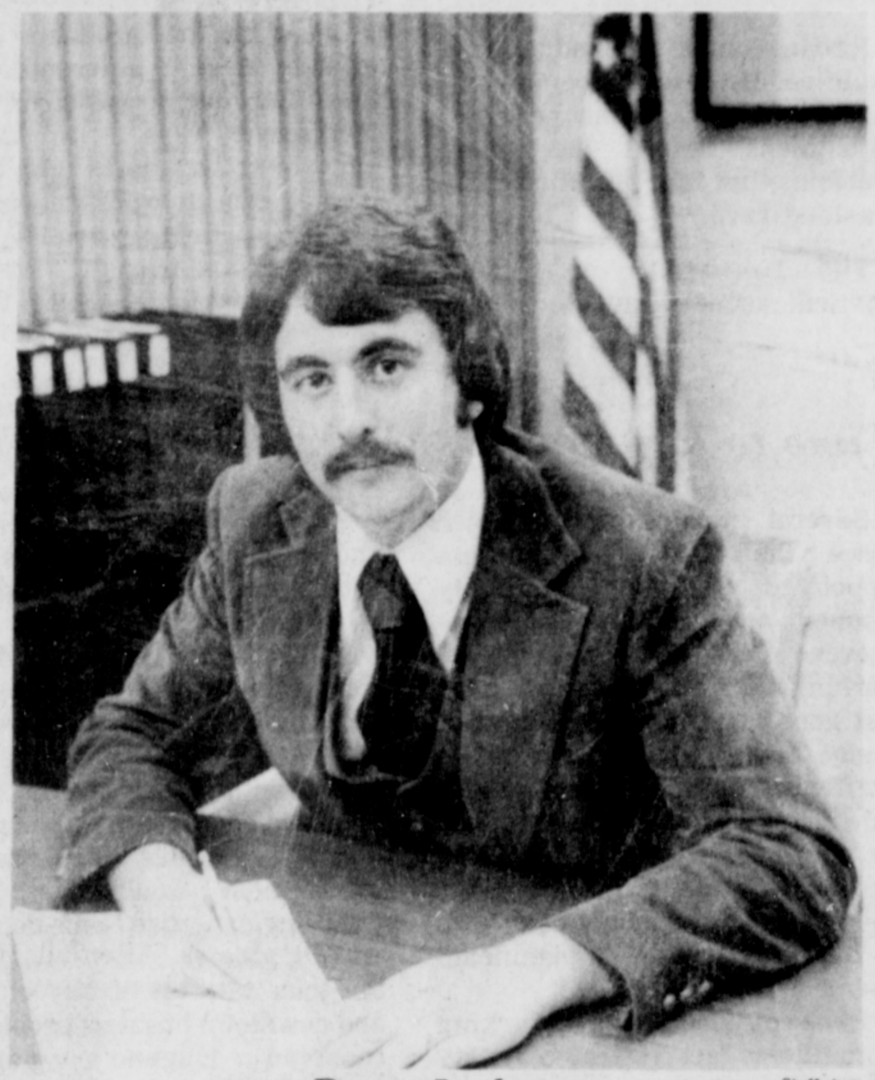
Council agreed at the meeting to put the question to the voters next month. If passed, the amendment would not do away with the court but would give the county district court equal jurisdiction over breaches in the city ordinance.

If that should happen, the municipal court would remain alive but only on paper. Council's decision Aug. 28 to discontinue the municipal judge after Nov. 30 would remain in effect.

Council took that action in an attempt to show the city electorate that cuts in the city budget would affect the level of services.

Elimination of the municipal judge would save the city $4,600 in salary plus an undetermined amount in administrative costs.

If the amendment to the charter does not pass, council will be forced to look elsewhere in the budget for funds to continue the court. The budget has already been sliced by over 25 percent after two levy defeats.



Staff photo

Roger Jordan

Dallas administrator named city manager

A 28-year-old assistant city manager in Dallas has been named to the top administrative job in Sandy.

Roger Jordan was tapped as the new city manager in a unanimous vote by council Monday night. He will assume the job Thursday, Oct. 19, four days before the next city council meeting.

Jordan was the top choice of the council from a field of 33 who applied for the job. He was among five finalists interviewed last Thursday night by members of council.

Jordan holds a BA in political science and pre-law from OSU and completed his Master's degree in public affairs at the University of Oregon this year.

He served as an administrative intern in Corvallis in 1972 before moving on to Dallas the following year where he took a similar job. He was later hired as an administrative assistant there and was promoted to assistant to the city manager in 1976.

Jordan is married and has one child.

Man killed, another injured after ditch cave-in

A 10-foot wall of dirt crashed down on two workers putting in a sewer line on Dubarko Rd. around noon last Friday killing one and sending the other to the hospital.

Alan R. Hunt, 20, of Gresham died at the scene of the collapse after being crushed by the dirt. Robert Ash, 20, of Eagle Creek was taken to Gresham Hospital with cracked ribs and was released Sunday.

The two were employees of Crane Construction Co. of Gresham which is putting in the sewer line for the new Grass Meadows subdivision. They were working approximately 15 feet apart when the cave-in occurred.

There was no shoring on either side of the four-foot wide ditch.

Hunt had been with the company a year, according to a company spokesman. His father, Herman, was operating heavy machinery nearby at the time of the accident.

An investigation of the cause of the collapse is under way by the Worker's Compensation Department and the State Accident Insurance Fund.

It was Ash's second day on the job.

Rescue workers from the Sandy Fire Department and Alpine Ambulance dug simultaneously at both ends of the cave-in to free the men. Ash, who was not under as much dirt as was Hunt, was lifted from the ditch approximately 20 minutes after the crews arrived. Hunt was pulled out several minutes later.

Staff photos

ROBERT ASH is pulled from the bottom of a sewer line ditch on Dubarko Rd. by rescue workers last Friday after suffering cracked ribs from a cave-in. Fellow worker Allen R. Hunt, standing nearby in the ditch, was killed after being crushed by the dirt. The photo at left was taken the day before the accident showing an absence of shoring in the 10-foot ditch.

Parking lot solution eludes city council

by JOHN KLINE

Lawyers for landowners in the LID 4 downtown parking lot argued Monday night that city taxpayers should pay a portion of the cost overruns of the $108,000 project.

Lawyers representing three of the six LID participants — Cejka Hardware, Decker and Scales Store and the professional building on Shelly Ave. — stated that the preliminary city assessments against them were unfair and higher than original estimates.

The city acted as the agent for the LID participants. It sold low interest Bancroft bonds to finance the construction.

Council listened to arguments on behalf of the landowners involved in the project for two hours in the public hearing. The item was tabled until council's next session on Monday, Oct. 23.

At issue is how the cost of the parking lot will be divided among the six participants and whether city funds should be used to offset a portion of the overrun.

The cost of the project, originally estimated at $57,500, nearly doubled when the city was forced to go to condemnation on two properties used for the parking lot. An out-of-court settlement established a price of $3.50 per square foot for the properties.

City Engineer Dennis Peoples presented a breakdown of the costs involved in the project and a proposed formula for assessing the six property owners based on total land area of each building.

Under the formula, Cejka Hardware would be assessed $45,000, Art Bolster, owner of the professional building, $18,000, Carroll Rader, owner of the Frontier Building, $16,000, the Double Dragon Restaurant $16,000, Decker and Scales Store, $9,400 and TJ's Restaurant, $3,000.

Attorney Jim Jennings, arguing for Bolster, said he did not think it fair that a professional building be required to pay the same rate for the parking lot as that of a retail store with more foot traffic.

Jennings also represented Decker and Scales store. Paul Schultz represented Cejka Hardware. Both argued that city taxpayers should bear a portion of the cost overrun because city residents would benefit form the parking lot.

But City Attorney Jack Hammond

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