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School board retains architect by slim margin

by SCOTT NEWTON

The Sandy Union High School Board Monday night agreed to put a \$3.5 million three-year serial levy before the public March 30, and to continue its contract with Richard L. Gessford and Associates, despite questions raised about that firm's involvement in the Welches School arbitration.

While discussing the long range plan, Board Chairman Pete Griffin brought up the Welches School problem, of which Gessford and Associates were the architects.

"You know, there are a lot of complaints, up there on the mountain especially. I'd hate to see us go ahead and jump into something until we get these complaints straightened out with the architect and so forth."

"I think we're kind of rushing things a bit," Griffin said.

"I'd be perfectly willing to address those issues," Gessford said. "I'm not sure what you're concerned about."

"If you're talking about what appeared in the paper then I will openly state that they are terribly misleading. They do not contain facts that I have on the case. Particularly the one that disturbs me is (the one) that (said) there was \$300,000 worth of cost overruns up there. This is an out-and-out

bold lie. It's not true."

"The status of the contract at the present time is that there is less contract obligation now than when we started."

An article in the September issue of The Mountain states, "The Welches School board has initiated litigation proceedings against the architect and excavation contractor to determine financial responsibility for up to \$300 thousand in additional construction related costs on the school's new building annex."

Richard Hoffmann, assistant superintendent at Welches School, said Tuesday that at this time they do not have litigation pending against Gessford and Associates. He said that there will be an executive session of the Welches School Board Monday night.

"I know that right now, until some things are straightened out, some people up there are a little unhappy," Griffin said.

"I'm not trying to say, 'Hey, he did something wrong,' or anything like that. All I'm trying to say is that right now we've got some bad, adverse publicity."

Robert Boring, board member, said that he is also concerned, but added, "We're already into this project a year, or more."

Griffin said, "I would like to see a lit-

tle bit more publicity saying, you know, 'Hey, he's right.' And I think he'll get it."

Leon Hamblin, vice president of Richard Gessford and Associates, said, "For those who get the opportunity, go up to see the school plant at Welches."

"We're very proud of it. We've got nothing to hide. It's real sad that articles come out (that) are untruths, half-truths (or) anything else."

"I sympathize with the board's position. We personally have busted our bottoms trying to serve the Sandy School District and I think to date we've done a very admirable job."

Wayne Johnson, board member, said, "Our involvement with this architectural firm, as far as I'm concerned, has been nothing but a positive relationship. They've gone to great lengths to develop this program for us."

"They've done some projects for us in the past. We have had no adverse contacts or dealings with the architectural firm."

Gary Cleland, board member, said, "My biggest concern is the economy the way it is today. It's (the renovations and the performing arts center) going to be tough to pass. It really is."

"You never get it till you put it to the test," said Superintendent Jack Peters. "It's hard to assess the pulse of the entire 750 square miles," he added.

Paul Tucker, board member, said "These people here (Gessford and Associates) are just par excellent, really, just par excellent."

Boring moved that they proceed with phase one and two of the long range plan, putting it before the public March 30 and finance it with a three-year serial levy.

Phase one covers renovations, while phase two is construction projects.

After some discussion about how much the architectural firm should be paid to continue working on the project, Gessford was asked to take the floor and explain how they would proceed, if hired.

After speaking for a few minutes, Gessford said, "We do have an ongoing contact with the district, which is not untypical of the way we work with other districts."

"And that standard contract does have a termination clause. And I will say publicly and I will say emphatically, the last thing on earth I want is to work with a client that doesn't want me as their architect."

"There is a termination clause in here," he said, tapping papers in front of him. "If you want to fire me, fire me. I'm not that hard to fire. If you don't want to work with me I'll quit."

Later in the meeting Griffin again mentioned the newspaper article.

"I can't address rumors that are unfounded," Gessford said. I met with the (Welches) school district Thursday night. Mr. Hamblin and I were both at the school board meeting. We asked for an executive session. And then we had a regular session, and we discussed the thing in detail."

"I think it is a little inappropriate to address this board with what happened up there. I will not go into details. There is no pending litigation against our firm from the Welches School District, regardless of what was printed in the papers."

"We have gone to the mat with other contractors on other projects," Gessford said. "We are not afraid of contractors, we are not afraid of a little adverse publicity and we are not afraid to have our nose out there on the firing line."

"Architects, if they are worth their salt, are going to be involved with problems," he concluded.

Boring, Tucker and Johnson voted yes. Cleland and Griffin voted no.

Joan Hay, deputy clerk, said Tuesday that it was her understanding that they would pay the architectural firm an amount "not to exceed \$10,000" for schematics and preliminaries.

(Continued on Page 3)

Voters fail last chance for SUHS 'B' ballot

by DAN DILLON

Sandy Union High School District voters Tuesday rejected a \$225,846 'B' ballot by a 650-526 margin.

The election marked the last time the school district could put the ballot before the public.

The ballot measure included \$219,346.03 which was approved by the public when it OK'd the district's 'A' ballot. Those funds were lost, however, when the money allocated by the Oregon Legislature for Basic School

Support was less than had been projected by the state when the school district built its budget.

"We present a balanced budget," Superintendent Jack Peters said Wednesday. "We don't borrow money to operate in the red." This week the school's administrators are sitting down with staff members and determining what areas will face budget cuts.

The management team's proposal will be presented to the SUHS Board at its Oct. 12 meeting for its action.

Peters cited the low voter turnout, 11.7 percent of registered voters in the district, as one factor in the budget's defeat. "Low turnouts are always bad for budget elections, in my opinion," he said.

This 'B' ballot had trimmed library and art room renovations, athletic field renovations and plans to hire a counselor from earlier 'B' ballot attempts when the shortfall from the state was recovered.

Purchase of one school bus was included along with the operating expenses.



John Thompson

Zigzag man candidate for senate spot

John C. Thompson of Zigzag Monday became the first candidate to formally file his candidacy for state senator from newly-established Senate District 14.

Thompson, a Republican, is currently executive secretary of the Hoodland Chamber of Commerce and was formerly employed by the Georgia-Pacific Corporation.

According to Thompson, his decision to file was difficult because four lawsuits have been filed challenging the new district's boundaries. The narrow, "helicopter" district encompasses the Sandy-Mt. Hood area, Estacada, Molalla, Canby, Silverton and south almost to Springfield. He said the lawsuits challenging the districts are charging "jerry-mandering."

Thompson said that his campaign manager will be Jim Peterson, editor and publisher of The Oregon Industrialist — a Beaverton-based magazine.

According to Thompson, Peterson has participated in 15 political campaigns in Montana and assisted in gaining voter approval for a school levy in Oregon.

Thompson said his manager has never been involved in a losing campaign.



Sandy firefighters doused some smoldering sawdust at a nursery off Burgs Lane Tuesday afternoon. Exact cause of the fire, which caused no significant damage,

was not determined but a cigarette butt or overheated visquine were suspected.

Photo by Dan Dillon

Herbicide spray fire sparks wide investigation

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

The brush fire that burned nearly five acres beneath Bonneville Power Administration transmission lines, injuring six Hoodland Fire District firefighters Sept. 6, has sparked an investigation related to the effects of herbicides when burned.

In August, BPA workers hand-sprayed a mixture of 2-4-D and 2-4-D-P mixed with diesel fuel. When the fire broke out in the treated right-of-way, firefighters battling the flames broke out with rashes and suffered from headaches, swollen bronchial tubes and watery eyes. They were treated and released at Gresham Community Hospital.

Representatives of BPA and the U.S. Forest Service said they felt the symptoms were the result of burning poison oak, however, some residents of the area say poison oak is nowhere near the site.

Charlie Augustine of Welches, former owner and operator of the Hoodland Telephone Company, said he knew the area around Homestead Road, where the fire occurred, well. "There is no poison oak at that location or anywhere near there," he said.

According to Frank Dost, professor of agricultural chemistry at Oregon State University and the school's toxicologist, an investigation into the fire is warranted.

Dost said he is bewildered at the effects the firefighters suffered, adding

that he has "never run across this kind of pattern with a herbicide mixture."

He said, "The theoretical calculations just do not apply here."

Dost questioned whether the herbicides mixed with the diesel fuel was what was actually applied to the right-of-way between Aug. 7 and 10.

"I'm not prepared to say this is exactly what they put on it," he said, "until it's thoroughly studied. I am bewildered because of the rash."

Dost said he would contact the Pesticide Analytical Response Center (PARC). That is a federal agency comprised of representatives of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Health.

He wants to get it involved because the effects of combustion of the chemicals could be a concern to other firefighters, particularly when the chemicals haven't had time to break down.

Ken Kuehn, assistant supervisor of line maintenance for BPA, said his safety office in Vancouver, Wash., is investigating the incident because BPA is concerned about the combustion effect of 2-4-D products.

According to Al Standford, BPA safety manager, Thomas Harrison of the state Department of Agriculture will investigate the matter.

Kuehn said, "The symptoms of the firefighters were exactly what some compounds of 2-4-D will produce," adding he seriously doubted that the her-

bicide was the cause. He said maintenance crews had used only five gallons of the herbicide in that particular section of right-of-way.

Dost said he and his associates are going to act quickly on their research because of the importance of the Homestead Road incident. He said there have been a couple of situations in the Mt. Hood area regarding herbicides. "It's an issue that needs to be confronted," he said.

"You've got people who got sick. It has to be looked into," Dost emphasized. "What actually was the cause is not known, but it must be looked into further. Right at the moment, I'm a little bewildered."

PGE studies options for upgrading dam

by MICHAEL P. JONES
Post Correspondent

Portland General Electric Company's Marmot Dam on the Sandy River is under study for possible upgrading of the fish passage facilities.

The current fish ladder was built in 1913 to transport migrating fish past the 38-foot diversion structure which generates 3.2 mega-watts, with an estimated output of 12,000 mega-watt hours at the company's Bull Run project.

Sherri Anderson of PGE said the company's recent relicensing agreement with the Federal Regulatory Commission (FRC) requires PGE to increase the amount of water flowing over the dam, meaning a loss of electricity.

She said that PGE has come up with

three options to meet the requirements of FRC.

The first option would be upgrading the fish ladder which would require that alternative provisions be made to guide salmon and steelhead around the diversion structure until construction is completed.

Bob Kallen, PGE Sandy district manager, said upgrading the ladder would be "sticky. It's like trying to live in a house under construction."

The second option would be construction of a new fish ladder on the other side of the river. That would meet FRC requirements. Anderson said the old ladder would be maintained and used to provide emergency passage for fish.

PGE's third option would require the company to construct a small-scale power plant and a new ladder at the Marmot site. This would allow utiliza-

tion of the overflow from the structure.

PGE says the third option "would make up for some of the power generation lost at Bull Run, as well as provide enhanced fish passage."

Carl W. Bell, superintendent of the Bull Run project, said the powerhouse at the Marmot site could produce 3,200 kilowatts of electricity just using what normally goes over the dam.

He said biologists from his office have worked closely with the state Department of Fish and Wildlife designing the facilities for fish. He said PGE is committed to maintaining the river's fish population.

Robert Short, PGE chairman of the board, said, "All these alternatives are being studied." He hopes that local citizens will give PGE officials their comments for that a "fully-informed

decision" can be made.

PGE is requesting interested persons or parties to visit the PGE office, 38250 Pioneer Blvd., Sandy, to get additional information on the dam's future plans, as well as have the chance to ask questions in person.

Photos of the area are on hand for public inspection and a sign-up sheet for special tours is available. The tours will occur Sept. 25 through Oct. 4. The company's fish biologist will be on hand for those tours to answer questions.

Anderson said questionnaires will be distributed to get the public's opinions on the three options.

A decision on the Marmot site will be made in late November. For more information or to request a speaker, call PGE's Sandy office, 668-4158.

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