

NEWS

CITY BUDGET PROCESS ALLOCATES MILLIONS TO RESERVE FUNDS

Without much discussion, the Eugene City Council unanimously approved a supplemental budget Dec. 10, including \$2,258,355 increased revenue in the General Fund, which is now facing an approximately \$3 million budget gap, down from \$5.9 million earlier in 2013. A total of \$1.5 million was sent to the replacement fund for the rebuilding of City Hall. Supplemental budgets are passed when the city's income or expenditures are different than predicted in the fiscal year's original budget.

Bonny Bettman McCornack, a former city councilor who was a leader in the campaign against the failed city service fee vote in May, says that supplemental budgets are often passed without enough review. "That's typical of this mayor and council — not to question the mayor and city manager and not to look under any rocks or behind any corners," she says. "They have delegated all of their fiscal responsibility on behalf of the taxpayers to the city manager." While the Budget Committee often deliberates over amounts in the tens of thousands of dollars, she says, millions of dollars can be allocated during the supplemental budget process without debate.

Mayor Kitty Piercy writes in an email, "Supplemental budgets all contain items that have been previously vetted and usually have a hearing and are passed at the same council meeting unless a councilor or citizen[s] have objections."

On the city manager's recommendation, City Council allocated \$1.5 million to the Facility Replacement Reserve for the City Hall project, \$584,726 to the Reserve for Revenue Shortfall fund, \$400,000 to the General Capital Projects Fund and \$100,000 to the Equipment Replacement Subfund to pay for fire turnout gear and hydrant replacement.

Putting money into the City Hall fund deserved more scrutiny, Bettman McCornack says. "That was a huge issue that we raised during the fee campaign, that they are diverting general money into this City Hall fund and rebranding it one-time money," she says. After years of attempts to build a lavish City Hall, she says, voters should get the chance to vote on a bond for a responsible design.

Piercy says that the way the city is funding its City Hall rebuild shouldn't surprise Eugeneans. "The council has had many council meetings and much discussion regarding city hall and plans to move forward," she writes. "Council voted some months back to move the city hall renovation forward and we are on schedule to do that. We have also discussed ways to cobble together funds for this work over the next couple of years."

The largest component of the supplemental budget was the marginal beginning working capital (MBWC), which is the difference between the funds the city predicted it would end the year with and the funds it truly had.

During the public hearing prior to the council's vote, speaker John Barofsky raised concerns about the availability of the supplemental budget document prior to the meeting. "It was not online until this afternoon," he said.

On the same evening, the Budget Committee, which will reconvene in January, decided to look further into six different strategies for closing the General Fund gap. — Shannon Finnell

ACTIVIST ALERT

- The Lane County Chapter of the **ACLU** will present a free program on "Human Rights and Mental Health Care: Managing the Intersection" from 5:30 to 7 pm Thursday, Dec. 12, at the Eugene Public Library. Speakers will include clinical social worker Ron Unger. Contact lanechapter@aclu-or.org for more information.

- A benefit for the **Egan Warming Centers** will begin at 9 pm Friday, Dec. 13, at the Oak Street Speakeasy at the corner of Oak and Broadway downtown. Music will include Mood Area 52, Caroline Bauer and Elizabeth and the Slow Kill. A follow-up benefit will begin at 8 pm Friday, Dec. 20, at Speakeasy featuring five local punk bands, The Wobblies, Pirate Radio, X Boyfirends, The Get and Cuntagious. \$5 donation requested.

- **Friends of Trees** has rescheduled its canceled tree planting event for 9 am Saturday, Dec. 14, and will gather at the parking lot behind its offices at 12th and Lincoln. Call 915-1601.

- A "**Bicycle Holiday Swarm**" is being planned for noon to 2 pm Saturday, Dec. 14, along South Willamette Street to show support for local businesses and "let them know you'd like to see a street design that supports a 'Willamette for All' outcome with on-street bike access and a better walking environment." Contact Shane MacRhodes at 556-3553.

- **Muralist Esteban Steffensen** is leading the Our Children's Trust youth in the creation of a mural on the side of Arriving By Bike at 27th and Willamette from 1 to 5 pm Saturday, Dec. 14. A dedication will be at 2 pm and a video will be shown at 4:30 pm. These youth are calling attention to their local Climate Recovery Ordinance which they have submitted for consideration to the Eugene City Council. Related events will be part of the Second Saturday South Willamette Art Walk. Contact Julia Olson at (415) 786-4825.

- **Rabbi Arik Ascherman**, senior rabbi at Rabbis for Human Rights in Israel, will discuss "A Rabbinic View of Human Rights in Israel" at 7 pm Saturday, Dec. 14, at Temple Beth Israel, 1175 East 29th Ave. RHR advocates for Palestinians, Bedouins and Jews within Israel and in the Occupied Territories. The event is free and open to the public.

- The **Cascadia Wildlands** 11th annual Wonderland Auction is from 6 to 10 pm Saturday, Dec. 14, at the EMU Ballroom on the UO campus. Nearly 200 businesses have contributed to the fundraising event. See cascwild.org or call 434-1463. \$40 in advance.

- Bikers, unite! The second public meeting on the 2014 **repaving of West 13th Avenue** between Garfield and Washington will be held 6 pm Monday, Dec. 16, at the Eugene Faith Center, 1410 W. 13th Ave. The city's proposal to add bike lanes during the repaving is the meeting's topic. See more at eugene-or.gov/13thAvePaving.

POLLUTION UPDATE

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is accepting comments through 5 pm on **Monday, Dec. 16**, concerning a Clean Water Act discharge permit application for industrial stormwater discharges from **Metal Products Company** in Springfield. Visit goo.gl/ScwdH to see the company's stormwater plan, and goo.gl/iMDQb to comment. Metal Products Company's permit application was prompted by a notice of intent to sue letter sent by **Oregon Clean Water Action Project** on behalf of Willamette Riverkeeper.

Doug Quirke/Oregon Clean Water Action Project

HAPPENING PEOPLE

BY PAUL NEEVEL



KEMY JOSEPH

"I was a troublemaker as a kid," says Kemy Joseph, the seventh of 10 children of divorced parents in Miami. "I was kicked out of school in fourth grade." He got arrested twice in eighth grade, but turned things around in high school, where he captained the cross-country team and produced videos that helped him win a scholarship to study film arts at the University of Miami. There, he joined a campus club called Random Acts of Kindness. "It was a big turning point," says Joseph, who became club president in his senior year. "We offered free hugs and high fives on campus. In junior year, I started wearing paper signs with a message like, 'Being Kind Changes Lives.' I wore one every day for four years." In 2009, he enlisted friends and started a new nonprofit, U R Awesome, Inc., to sponsor food and clothing drives, benefit 5K runs and other events. In 2012 he led the U R Awesome World Kindness Tour on a donated Genuine Scooter, visiting, speaking and performing kind acts in 22 states, two countries and the Oregon Country Fair. Two months later, he moved to Eugene. He offers U R Awesome Kindness Coaching services to some local schools for free and raises funds on Indiegogo. Learn more at urawesome.org. In the photo, Joseph and co-penguin Katie Dunn pause after a free-hugs outing at the UO.

lighten up

BY RAFAEL ALDAVE

After this past weekend, I'm glad that most folks in the climate-change movement have stopped referring to it as global warming.