

the April 29 commission meeting, and the board agreed to have the agenda team decide whether or when to schedule this item for future board agenda. This does not mean the request will actually come before the board, unless the agenda team schedules it. A new county administrator, Steve Mokrohisky, starts Monday, May 5.

Sorenson says since those times, “the county has radically increased the cost of public records and radically increased the costs to nonprofit organizations to use public spaces for meetings.”

He says that “It’s important that the county recognize the importance of providing public information in a timely fashion and also that the information is provided at a reasonable expense.” Sorenson adds, “Opening up the public buildings to the public for reasonably priced space is vital.”

Lane County once asked former commissioner Rob Handy for more than \$2 million in fees to complete a public records request. At the hearing over that case, which Handy lost, former administrator Liane Inkster said she had never granted a fee waiver for a public records request.

While the cities of Eugene and Springfield have provided terminals where members of the media and of the public can access the emails of elected officials for free, Lane County does not, and charges fees for searching emails in public records requests.

EW asked Farr for comment on when Sorenson’s request will be considered. Farr says, “I will review Commissioner Sorenson’s request at an agenda meeting as early as next week.” — *Camilla Mortensen*

TRANSIT GROUP SEEKS INPUT ON LOW-INCOME NEEDS

The nonprofit Better Eugene Springfield Transit (BEST) will host a meeting May 14, during which they will hear concerns from Lane County human services providers about the community’s public transit needs. Laurie Trieger on the BEST board of directors says she anticipates the conversation will be about transportation needs of low-income individuals.

“A lot of working poor folks don’t work a traditional Monday through Friday, 9 to 5. So they’re folks who are needing to get to a job at all different kinds of hours of the day and days of the week,” Trieger says, “which is really challenging with our current transit system that doesn’t always have public transportation available at those off-peak hours or on the weekend.”

City of Eugene grants manager in community development Stephanie Jennings will present the results of a focus group and survey of low-income housing residents at the meeting. She says low-income housing residents have higher rates of use of alternative transportation modes — walking, biking and public transit. She says they also have concerns about affording monthly bus passes, getting to a bus stop, and night, weekend and holiday service.

ShelterCare Executive Director Susan Ban says most of the people ShelterCare serves are heavily transit dependent, including individuals with disabilities.

“Having a good transit system is really part of their quality of life,” Ban says. “All the activities of daily living that engage them in the community usually require some kind of transportation.”

Ban says investing in public transit is as important as investment in other forms of transportation such as roads and bridges.

This meeting is part of a series of community conversations BEST is having with business groups, community organizations, people with environmental concerns, neighborhood organizations, schools and school district representatives. Trieger says Lane Transit District respects BEST and is interested in hearing what the organization learns during the series of conversations.

“We will be synthesizing everything that we hear and learn and reporting back to the community later in June to put together what BEST understands might be the next steps with the themes that emerge from these conversations,” Trieger says.

The meeting will be from 10 to 11:30 am Wednesday, May 14 in the Bascom-Tykeson room of the Eugene Public Library. — *Missy Corr*



Whole Foods has its eyeballs on Eugene again, but no \$8 million taxpayer-subsidized parking garage will be attached this time to get folks riled up. The Texas-based corporation tried to build at the same location just south of Ferry Street Bridge in 2006. We noted then that the chain averages \$537,000 in sales per store each week. Even half that sales volume in Eugene would have an impact on established local stores, but Safeway, Albertson’s and Trader Joe’s are also chain stores, and the Natural Grocers chain is building on the north side of the bridge at the old Red Lion site. We are more concerned about the impact on smaller, independent grocery stores such as Kiva, Sundance and Market of Choice. Will Whole Foods try to wrangle some kind of subsidies or tax breaks from the city? We appear to be pushovers for such pressure. And we are concerned about what the store will look like and how it will affect pedestrian, bike and auto traffic in that key location. Do we trust city planners? Planners recently bent over and allowed Capstone to erect an uninviting concrete fortress downtown.

Nearly 100 **McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center** workers, elected leaders and community members rallied last week for “good jobs and quality patient care.” Hospital caregivers who are members of SEIU Local 49 have been in contract negotiations with hospital management for six months. “The most recent available data shows McKenzie declaring a profit three times higher than the state average,” reads a statement from the union. “Despite these profits, the hospital has recently laid off workers while remaining caregivers continue to face rising health-care costs and eroding benefits.” A federal mediator is now involved in negotiations.

Negotiations are beginning with **School District 4J** and the Eugene Education Association. The two sides will exchange first contract proposals from 4 to 8 pm Thursday, May 1, and the session is open to the public. Track progress (hopefully) and find a meeting schedule at eugea.org or at 4j.lane.edu.

In other labor news, a coalition of unions, community groups, student groups and social justice organizations will host the third annual **May Day Solidarity Fair** from noon to 5 pm on Saturday, May 3, at Central Park in Corvallis. Music, art, food and a broad spectrum of activist conversations will be “celebrating the broader labor movement and all struggles for social, economic and environmental justice.” Free. Contact Tony or Lisa at anarres@peak.org or find the event on Facebook.

Startup Weekend events will begin Friday, May 2, at the UO EMU building. Local CEOs, founders and “startup veterans with track records building and selling companies will be there to assist you in pursuing your own success,” according to organizers. Find details at eugene.startupweekend.org or call (503) 539-8014.

Mid Lane Cares, a nonprofit serving the Fern Ridge community, will host Project Community Connect from 11 am to 3 pm Saturday, May 3, at the Olivet Baptist Church, 88150 2nd St. in Veneta. The event is a one-day, one-stop opportunity for anyone in need to receive free medical and dental services, haircuts, social services referrals, a hot meal and more. Families are welcome and child care and face painting will be provided. See midlanecares.org or call 935-4555, ext. 102.

Mountain Rose Herbs is organizing the second year of the **Free Herbalism Project** with a celebration from 11 am to 5 pm Sunday, May 4, at Mount Pisgah Arboretum. The free event is a benefit for Occupy Medical and the American Herb Association and will feature a plant walk, lectures, workshops and information booths. See mountainroseherbs.com.

May is Historic Preservation Month and a reception, presentation and tour are planned at 7:30 pm Sunday and Monday, May 4-5, at the nonprofit **WOW Hall**, 291 W. 8th Ave. The WOW Hall, aka Community Center for the Performing Arts, is undergoing a restoration project funded in part by the Oregon Cultural Trust, the Kinsman Foundation, the Historic Street Lamp Restoration Project, the UO Archives and others. Call 912-4721, email jpincus24@gmail.com or visit wowhall.org.



PHYLLIS HADDOX

The daughter of parents who each became a teacher while she was growing up in Sacramento, Phyllis Haddox majored in education at Sacramento State and found work as a reading specialist at racially diverse Del Paso Heights Elementary, where she had gone to grade school. “The district had adopted the Direct Instruction model,” says Haddox, who came up to the UO in 1971 for training in DI, a highly scripted and fast-paced teaching method for young children, with its founder, Siegfried Engelmann. “The motto of our model is, ‘So that they shall not fail.’” She finished a master’s degree and began a career in DI, training teachers, establishing and evaluating programs in low-income schools around the country. She also earned a doctorate in special education in 1984 and became an assistant professor at the UO. Since retiring 10 years ago, Haddox has had time for Argentine tango and volunteering. She stepped down as board president of NextStep Recycling last year to devote more of her efforts to KindTree-Autism Rocks. She is in charge of decorations and entertainment for the third annual KT-AR Adult Prom fundraiser, to be held at 7:30 pm Saturday, May 17, at the Vet’s Club Ballroom, 1626 Willamette, featuring live music by the Joanne Broh Band with guests Gus Russell and Deb Cleveland. Fancy or funky prom attire is encouraged. The prom will also serve as Haddox’s wedding reception. She will marry John Marshall on Friday, May 16. Find details about the prom at kindtree.org.

HAPPENING PEOPLE

BY PAUL NEEVEE