

# No fight over city budget

By **CRAIG MURPHY**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Just like that, a \$40 million budget was approved.

Keizer City Councilors had nine public hearings on Monday evening, most of which didn't take much time.

That was true of the last one, which concerned the Fiscal Year 2015-16 budget.

Councilors made up half of the Keizer Budget Committee, which met three times last month to go over the budget. Several minor tweaks were made to the budget in light of those meetings, which assistant controller Tim Wood went over on Monday.

By the time councilors opened the hearing for the budget, there were no audience members aside from the *Keizertimes*, thus the hearing was closed.

"It's remarkable," Mayor Cathy Clark said.

That was the lone comment made before councilors unanimously approved the \$40,066,500 budget. Per usual, the general fund took up the biggest chunk of the budget with \$10,332,900. Of that, \$6,523,200 was for police.

The sewer fund totaled \$5,604,500 while the administrative services fund was \$3,637,800. Other large funds include the water fund (\$2.9 million), the street fund (\$2.6 million), the transportation improvement fund (\$2.2 mil-

lion), the Keizer Station LID fund (\$1.7 million) and the stormwater fund (\$1.6 million).

Clark gave compliments. "Well done to our finance staff, (city manager) Chris Eppley and the staff," the mayor said. "You brought us a budget that was easy to understand."

Councilor Brandon Smith, who apologized for missing the budget process while in Europe, noted he had tried to find more funding for the parks matching grant program, which he started last year while chairing the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

"I promised I would try to find more for parks," Smith said. "I couldn't justify what was already done."

Clark has been going through the budget process since 2002, while this year was the first for councilors Amy Ripp and Roland Herrera.

"It was very educational," Ripp said. "It was a wonderful learning opportunity. We did our due diligence, to make sure we knew what we were approving."

Ripp noted trying to find small amounts of money for particular programs proved difficult.

"It was entertaining trying to find the money," Ripp said. "I wasn't afraid to push for what I felt strongly for. It was a little overwhelming. It was a

big elephant to chew, one bite at a time."

Ripp estimated she easily put in 80 hours reading, researching and meeting with Clark and others to get up to speed on the budget, in addition to the meetings.

"We put so much effort in during the process," she said. "After all the time spent in the budget committee, there's nothing left to discuss. You're already done all of the work."

Clark was pleased with the final product approved on Monday.

"I am so proud of the councilors and the community volunteers," said Clark, who became mayor in January. "Everyone brought their 'A' game."

Clark noted staff did "a lot" of prep work to bring the budget to the committee, which she felt represented a broad section of Keizer.

"That diversity added to the conversation," Clark said. "We represented the community well. Plus people really focused on the issues. There was never a hint of personal debates. The result is a better outcome. If you feel safe to have those conversations, everyone wins."

Ripp and Clark also both liked the transparency and ease for citizens to find copies of the budget.

"People watching at home could follow along," Clark said. "They knew what page we were on."

# Three critically injured in crash



Three people were critically injured when a Keizer woman caused a crash last Saturday, May 30. According to the Marion County Sheriff's Office, Melissa Aicher was driving home from the Woodburn Drag Strip with her 8-year-old son on Highway 219 when she didn't stop at a stop sign at French Prairie Road NE and Mahoney Road NE. She collided with an elderly couple from Newberg. That couple was taken to Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) via LifeFlight, while Aicher's son was taken there by ambulance. All three were listed in critical condition, while Aicher was treated and released from Salem Hospital. Alcohol may have been a factor.

# Urban Renewal Agency closed

By **CRAIG MURPHY**  
*Of the Keizertimes*

The Keizer Urban Renewal Agency has been closed.

The URA board – the Keizer City Councilors plus the mayor – met on Monday and approved a resolution to close the agency as well as the North River Road Urban Renewal Plan.

Such action was approved during the May 12 Budget Committee meeting, with formal closure to take place during the June 15 council meeting.

According to Monday's resolution, councilors approved the Urban Renewal Plan in September 1990. The plan was amended several times over the years, with the ninth and final amendment being adopted in February 2012.

Susan Gahlsdorf, Finance director for Keizer, said remaining there is still money in the Program Income Fund that will not be used by the end of this fiscal year. These funds can be used to repay taxing jurisdictions. Gahlsdorf told the *Keizertimes* on Monday closing the district means a couple of things.

"The most significant change is that tax revenue that was previously going to the Urban Renewal District will now go to the other jurisdictions; this will increase their future property tax revenues

received from Marion County," Gahlsdorf said. "In addition the city will repay each of the overlapping tax jurisdictions, except the Salem-Keizer School District and the City of Keizer, in accordance with the interagency agreements. Repayments will include the property tax revenues foregone during fiscal year 2014-15 plus interest. Payments are expected to be distributed within the next few months."

Gahlsdorf said the payments will primarily come from the city's general fund.

"These disbursements will represent full repayment of all amounts owed to these jurisdictions as provided for in the interagency agreements," she said.

The city did not enter into a reimbursement agreement with the Urban Renewal District, while the school district did.

"The Salem-Keizer School District has different terms set in its interagency agreement which calls for an annual payment over 10 years and repayment amounts do not accrue interest," Gahlsdorf said. "Furthermore, the amount owed to Salem-Keizer School District is significantly more than amounts due the other jurisdictions and it will take the full 10 years to repay them unless another source of revenue is identified. Repayments are expected to come out of the city's general fund."

A potential source of revenue could come if the Raw-

lins family repurchases its property in Keizer Station.

"If the Rawlins family exercises their option to purchase the foreclosed land, it will be a council decision on how to use the proceeds," Gahlsdorf said. "A portion of the proceeds could be used to pay the debt owed to the Salem-Keizer School District. A portion could be used for projects on River Road and a portion could go into the city's general fund."

Tim Wood, assistant controller for the city, previously noted the cost savings of closing the district.

"Closing the district one year earlier than originally anticipated will save the city approximately \$25,000 in additional interest expense," Wood said at the May 12 meeting.

Monday's resolution included an appropriations transfer of \$51,700 from the capital outlay fund to the materials and services fund. The resolution was approved unanimously.

"This has been a great thing for the City of Keizer," said councilor and former mayor Dennis Koho, who first joined council shortly after the district was formed. "We've done some wonderful things with it. But all good things must come to an end."

Mayor Cathy Clark echoed that sentiment.

"I'm proud we had projects, we got them done in a responsible manner and all can enjoy the benefits," Clark said.

# Forest Fair at CCC June 20

The Oregon Forest Fair is returning this month to Chemeketa Community College.

The event, taking place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 20, was held at Chemeketa 10 years. It's been held every year since, but this is the first time back at Chemeketa.

The expo and educational event is free and open to the public. There will be dozens of exhibits representing a wide

range of forest products and services, including four educational panel presentations.

The event is put on by the Oregon Small Woodlands Association. For more information, visit [www.oswa.org](http://www.oswa.org) or call Gene and Lynnette Henshaw at 503-623-5759.

When the event was last at CCC, Gene Henshaw noted about 750 people attended. He expects between that many and 1,000 people this year.

# death notices

• **David Bruce Barrett**, 84, passed away on May 21. There will be no services held at this time. Arrangements are being handled by Keizer Funeral Chapel.

• **John Sanford**, 84, passed away on May 23. A celebration of life will be held Thursday, June 11 at 3 p.m. at the Keizer Elks Lodge. Arrangements are being handled by Keizer Funeral Chapel.

# KEIZER CLASSIFIEDS

## GARAGE SALE

Park-wide Garage Sale at Starlite Mobile Park hall (behind office). June 4, 5, 6, from 8 am to 4 pm. At the end of Lancaster and Portland Rd. 0895

## RUMMAGE SALE

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