

CITY CHARTER REVIEW

Hearing on potential council election changes TBD

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

After kicking off a review of the Keizer city charter with a bang in November, the members of the task force slowed things down a bit at its Dec. 11 meeting.

The possibility of electing councilors by wards or districts received a lot of attention a month prior, the group is postponing that conversation for later and will likely hold a public hearing once a draft of the revised charter is available.

“I think it would be something we’d want to hear from a number of people regarding. There are any number of ways we could change it if we don’t feel the current way [of elect-

ing councilors] is adequately representing people,” said Kathy Lincoln, a member of the task force.

In addition to dividing the city up into wards, other election options include ranked choice voting. Any switch would likely require some education for voters before a public hearing.

Councilor Kim Freeman said it would be better to have a working draft of the document before the group begins holding hearings on individual topics.

“I think we should keep going and then present all of the recommendations at once. I think our citizens deserve our best work possible and

some of the ideas are going to take time to research,” Freeman said.

No major immediate revisions were discussed during the meeting, but members of the task force also briefly considered altering the terms of city councilors. There were no motions to change the current terms of two years for mayors and four years for city councilors, but task force member Pat Fisher floated the idea of making some council seats two-year stints. Fisher said it might broaden the pool of potential candidates without as much time to commit to public service.

Freeman and Garry Whalen, another member of the task force and former city councilor, thought it would be a difficult change.

“I like the idea, but I think it would be really hard for someone to come in for only two years,” Freeman said.

“It takes 12 to 18 months before you are really contributing,” added Whalen. “I think [four-year terms] create a more educated and stable set of decision-makers.



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The McNary Jazz 1 Band took first place at the Greater Valley Jazz Festival on Saturday, Dec. 7 at McKay High School. Front Row: Tessa Welterlen (Jazz Band Director), Gavin LaRoche, Torren Hamilton, Nathaniel Eggert, Nicholas Weathers and Julia DaSilva. Back Row: Felipe Hernandez Estrada, Jacob Zelenka, Joshua Coburn, Dante Olivo, Wyatt Kirk and Colin Vasas.

Perry wants advisory committee to address equity in schools

By HERB SWETT
For the Keizertimes

Superintendent Christy Perry urged the Salem-Keizer School Board on Tuesday, Dec. 17 to think about the possibilities rather than immediately forming an advisory committee on equity matters.

The occasion was a board work session for counteracting the problems that have kept minority students as a whole from equaling the achievements of students who are white, native English-speaking, straight, identifying with birth genders and without disabilities.

Perry and other administrators showed slides listing

the objectives of equity training, which were:

- Review board member team priorities.
- Define equity-based leadership.
- Understand psychological framing
- Set goals

Linda Myers, an assistant superintendent, defined equity as a system that supports all students and said it involves diversity (honoring individual differences) and inclusion (welcoming all people).

Another assistant superintendent, Kraig Sproles, said equity calls for working to understand the problems of minorities and seeking out different viewpoints.

Administrators divided people in attendance into small groups, with board members rotating around the groups to get their ideas. After they conferred with the groups, several board members discussed what they learned.

“I hope the invitations provided for us are followed through,” said Danielle Bethel.

Satya Chandragiri, who immigrated from India, added: “Thank you for the opportunity to listen to others’ experiences.”

Jesse Lippold, amember of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, said: “I was not trusting of my tribe (while growing up). You start to realize there is a difference.”

One idea on which several of the speakers agreed was that hiring more minority teachers and administrators would help achieve the goals.

“Probably the best part of this was you (Perry) telling me we needed to listen. I appreciate people sharing their experiences,” Board Member Sheronne Blasi said.



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