

## KCL seeks public library status

BY CHARLES GLENN  
*Of the Keizertimes*

Keizer Community Library is asking for \$125,000 per year over the next three years from the city's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) allocation in order to become a full-fledged public library and member of the Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library System (CCRLS). Members of the library board of directors joined representatives from the CCRLS as they made their case for the city grant at a council work session on April 6.

The organization has been staffed exclusively by volunteers for its entire 30-year history, but after the disruptions surrounding COVID and the general growth of the community over time, it was decided they needed to hire some professional help. This year, for the first time, the non-affiliated community library hired a part-time staff-member.

"Keizer Community Library has operated as an all-volunteer library since last September when we realized that it simply was not possible to allow a full-time volunteer library manager to do the entire function," said BJ Toewe, vice president of the board of directors at Keizer Community Library, who spoke to the council on April 6. "So we took money out of our savings and we hired a part time library manager."

"Our quest for funding with the city of Keizer is for \$125,000," said Toewe. "That would cover a full-time professional

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Patrons lined up at Keizer Community Library following a September redesign.

FILE PHOTO, Keizertimes

## Two new turf fields under review

BY CHARLES GLENN  
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Two Marion County commissioners appeared at an April 11 city council work session to advocate for two new turf sports/activity fields in Keizer and to discuss how to fund it.

In January, Marion County presented Keizer with a notice of funding award for \$2 million to help cover the cost of up to two all-weather turf soccer/football fields at Keizer Rapids Park. Part of the arrangement includes the city of Keizer contributing \$2 million toward the project.

The nature of the matching grant by the county means the funds contributed both by the city and county for the two turf fields would come exclusively from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) award, and not from the city's general

fund. The \$4.2 million total estimated cost of the project would include engineering costs, site preparation, the turf itself as well as the cost of installation, fencing, parking lot improvements and contingency funds.

"The reason why turf is important is because we have really rainy winters," said Marion County Commissioner Colm Willis during his address to the council. "Our fields turn into big mud puddles and they don't let the kids play in the winter because they don't want to destroy the field."

Willis told a story from his first year on the job about a group of 4H students - mostly children of farmworkers - who wanted to play competitive soccer and found a way to do that for a relatively low cost.

Willis said the kids had grown up together locally, playing soccer as a team or against each other since they were four or five years old. Their coach was able to obtain a license to play competitive soccer, and Oregon State University partnered with them to help cover the exorbitant costs of soccer in Portland under the university's 4H program.

"A lot of these kids - their families didn't have a lot of money, and in Portland, to play competitive soccer it can cost as much as \$2,000 a year," he said. "This 4H group was able to play for around \$100 per year."

OSU then pulled out of the program unexpectedly. City Councilor Roland Herrera asked Willis why.

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