

# County Commission agrees to third-party review of Somers

By KYLE SPURR  
The Daily Astorian

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners — scheduled to complete County Manager Scott Somers' annual performance review in July — agreed Wednesday to have a state institute help find an unbiased consultant to conduct a separate third-party review of Somers.

Somers encouraged the Board of Commissioners to pursue a third-party review last month. The review would be the first one completed since Somers became county manager in 2012.

On Wednesday, the board unanimously entered into an agreement with Local Government Personnel Institute, a state group tasked with helping local governments with personnel issues.

At the board's last meeting, Association of Oregon Counties Executive Director Mike McArthur recommended the board consider LGPI's services.

AOC offered to help in the process since Commissioner Dirk Rohne was concerned Somers was going to bias the

process by hand-picking his own consulting firms for the commissioners' approval.

Rohne made a motion last month to appoint an ad-hoc personnel committee to find a firm to evaluate Somers, instead of Somers picking firms.

The committee would have been made up of seven people, including a commissioner, the sheriff, the district attorney, a union representative, a former county employee and two area CEOs.

No other commissioners seconded Rohne's motion and the proposal died.

Rohne expressed support Wednesday of having LGPI find a third-party consultant.

"Our last evaluation didn't involve any third-party, so I don't think it would be redundant," Rohne said. "I think it's advantageous to move forward."

LGPI would develop a list of qualified consultants for the commission to choose from by next month. The review process could take up to two months once a consultant is found.

AOC plans to make its own recommendation for one



Scott Somers

of the consultants on the list. The selected consultant could offer a variety of review styles, including a popular "360 review," that collects input from people who surround the reviewed person.

An initial estimate for the cost of LGPI services — 61 project hours and travel — is \$10,315 for LGPI members and \$12,545 for nonmembers. The cost includes the selected consultant's services.

The board agreed Wednesday to become an LGPI member for the remainder of the fiscal year, until June 30, to save on the cost. The county will pay a prorated membership fee

of \$998.33, but will still save about \$1,000 from the non-membership cost.

Chairman Scott Lee suggested Wednesday that the third-party review and Board of Commissioner's review be bundled into one later this year. The board agreed to consider the idea at a later meeting.

LGPI's services include:

- Researching and compiling a list of qualified consultants;
- Presenting a list of qualified consultants, with recommendation, to the commission;
- Working with the selected consultant, board and county management to develop a scope of work and price;
- Scheduling and coordinating interviews for the consultant;
- Assisting the consultant in analysis and final presentation of final report;
- Responding to media inquiries regarding the process;
- Coordinating any follow-up.

Somers admits the third-party review is an extra cost since the traditional review by the board is essentially free. However, Somers said,

it is necessary and also in his employment contract.

Somers has been the focus of complaints in anonymous letters sent to the Board of Commissioners and The Daily Astorian that question his management style.

He has admitted a large number of changes have occurred in his time as manager.

Since March 2013, at least six department heads have left the county.

County Clerk Maeve Kennedy Grimes was fired in December after errors were discovered on the general election ballot. In addition, half the county staff were moved to higher deductible health plans and the Juvenile Detention Center closed.

Somers believes a third-party review may put some concerns to bed.

Since 2012, Somers' employment contract has stated the county must perform a "facilitated review" or third-party review. Based on previous experiences in other jurisdictions, Somers decided to opt out of that requirement and just have a review by the board.

"I'm kicking myself now

for not having a facilitated review done before," Somers said. "Hindsight is 20/20. I would have a document in the form of a performance review done by a third party."

### In other business:

• The board approved a letter of intent allowing the county to enter into good-faith discussions with Providence Seaside Hospital, Columbia Memorial Hospital and Greater Oregon Behavioral Health on the development of a freestanding Respite Crisis Center. The proposed 16-bed respite center will be opened as soon as this spring in the former Coryell's Crossing child care and preschool center at 326 S.E. Marlin Ave. in Warrenton.

• The board agreed to issue a letter of support to the state Legislature in support of a state transportation funding package that would benefit Clatsop County. The letter will show support for the state's pursuit of increased funding for transportation infrastructure, according to the county's Public Works Department.

# New food service committee to form for Astoria schools

By EDWARD STRATTON  
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria School Board decided Wednesday night to take a comprehensive look at the district's food service program, voting unanimously to have Superintendent Craig Hoppes form a food service committee.

The committee will not make a recommendation on whether the district should handle its own food, said Hoppes, but rather provide insight into food service operations and their future, to help inform a school board decision.

Heading the committee will be Business Manager Louise Kallstrom, who presented to the board in December on the basics and costs of food services.

Astoria, Warrenton-Hammond and Seaside are in a three-district contract with Chartwells, which started in 2011-12, said Kallstrom. The state allows the contract to be renewed every year for five years after the first. After five renewals, the school districts go out to bid; the sole bidder is usually Chartwells.

The district is looking at programs that lose money, and

Kallstrom's report showed an average loss of more than \$18,800 per year over the last six years. The drop has been driven in large part by a continual drop in daily food sales, which decreased from a high point of \$274,804 in 2007-08 to \$171,725 last school year. Kallstrom said it was due to declining enrollment and lowering participation.

She said the costs of the district operating its own food service program would likely be similar, but that it might be able to save money because it doesn't worry about a profit margin.

"At the end of this year, we're up for renewal," said Kallstrom in December, adding that Astoria would have to let Chartwells know by April if it decided not to renew. When Astoria was previously dissatisfied with the prices and went out for bid, she said, Chartwells lowered its prices.

Warrenton said it would be interested in buying food in bulk with Astoria, she said.

### The food team

As currently thought of, it will include Kallstrom, one or two school board members, two district cooks, four

parents, one or two administrators, a student from Astoria Middle School and a student from Astoria High.

Board member Jeanette Sampson recommended creating an application process for the food service committee, which has drawn interest.

"I think it might create a biased opinion," responded Board Member Grace Laman, also an adjunct nutrition instructor at Clatsop Community College, adding that the committee needs the perspective of parents currently utilizing the school's food services. Hoppes concurred that

some people not using the system might have a biased opinion, adding that he would work to make the committee truly representative. Board members Shawn Helligso and Martin Dursse supported having Hoppes decide appointments, and the school board decided to use his draft report on membership as a guideline for appointments.

Hoppes said the food service committee will form and start meeting monthly by March. Eleven months from now, the committee will report back on its findings to the school board.

# WDFW OKs razor clam dig starting Sunday

OLYMPIA — Razor clam diggers can count on an eight-day opener beginning Sunday and start planning trips to Washington's beaches in March, state shellfish managers said.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) approved the upcoming dig, which runs Feb. 15-22, after marine toxin tests showed the clams are safe to eat.

Dan Ayres, WDFW coastal shellfish manager, said the best digging typically occurs one to two hours before low tide. No digging is allowed at any beach before noon.

"We're expecting a good turnout this upcoming Presidents' Day weekend," Ayres said. "Tides will be early enough the first few days that diggers can en-

joy some daylight on the beach."

Under state law, diggers are required to keep the first 15 clams they dig. Each digger's clams must be kept in a separate container.

- Sunday, 3:47 p.m.; 0.2 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- Monday, 4:37 p.m.; -0.5 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- Tuesday, 5:24 p.m.; -0.9 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- Wednesday, 6:08 p.m.; -1.1 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- Feb. 19, 6:51 p.m.; -1.1 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- Feb. 20, 7:33 p.m.; -0.7 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks
- Feb. 21, 8:16 p.m.; -0.1 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks, Copalis
- Feb. 22, 9:00 p.m.; 0.6 feet,

Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Mocrocks

Shellfish managers also announced a new schedule of proposed digs through March, which includes an opening tentatively set for March 5.

"We're announcing these dates so people can make plans for digging in March," Ayres said. "The proposed digs include an opening for the Ocean Shores razor clam festival."

Below is the list of proposed razor clam digs, along with low tides and beaches:

- March 2, 4:46 p.m.; 0.5 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- March 3, 5:26 p.m.; 0.4 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- March 4, 5:59 p.m.; 0.4 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- March 5, 6:30 p.m.; 0.5

feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors

- March 16, 4:15 p.m.; 0.3 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- March 17, 5:08 p.m.; -0.2 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- March 18, 5:57 p.m.; -0.5 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- March 19, 6:42 p.m.; -0.5 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- March 20, 7:26 p.m.; -0.4 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks

Seasonal switch to morning tides

- March 21, 7:55 a.m.; -0.5 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
- March 22, 8:42 a.m.; -0.7 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors, Copalis, Mocrocks
- March 23, 9:31 a.m.; -0.6 feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors
- March 24, 10:21 a.m.; -0.3

feet, Long Beach, Twin Harbors

All diggers age 15 or older must have an applicable 2015-16 fishing license to harvest razor clams on any beach. Licenses, ranging from a three-day razor clam license to an annual combination fishing license, are available on WDFW's website at <https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov> and from license vendors around the state.

WDFW has razor clam recipes as well as advice on digging and cleaning clams on its webpage at <http://1.usa.gov/1w2F1hV>

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Muffy we will hold onto our memory of you.  
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Muffy, like checking the weather & leaping to Schy Pie's bed.  
Where faithfully you would lie by her head.  
Muffy you had such a pleasant meow.  
& a soft purr we wish we could hear now.  
Muffy, sweet, fuzzy & gray.  
An angel before & after your final day.  
Muffy we love you infini-much.  
We can still visualize you gently extending your paw to touch.  
Muffy we know where you are today.  
You'll always be at your Schyler's side no matter how far from home she may travel away.  
Your spirit lives on with each of us, each day.  
Muffy... Forever in our hearts you will stay.