

Schools: 'We don't have a lot of time to decide'

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years. Business Manager Mike Moha said the bond is similar to a loan on the full faith and credit of the district to repay. He said the district can afford it by redirecting the \$135,000 or so spent each year on building maintenance.

The bond would help repair a leaking roof at Warrenton High School, potentially purchase property near the grade school for additional parking and fund the construction of up to seven new classrooms over the next five years.

Jeffery estimates the district's enrollment will grow another 10 percent by then, with each new grade from this year going forward averaging nearly 90 students. "In five years, temporary measures will not work for us," he told the school board last week during a meeting to chart the district's future.

A bigger bond?

A small percentage of the \$2 million bond will be used to prepare for a possible larger, voter-approved bond to accommodate Warrenton's future enrollment growth, which Jeffery doesn't see peaking until 2024-25 at 1,159 students.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Kindergartners exercise in the new multipurpose room Wednesday at Warrenton Grade School. The room was remodeled from two-thirds of the former library.

"I've had several people come out and tell me you can pass a bond here no problem," Jeffery told the school board last week.

School board member Greg Morrill had his doubts the 5,500 residents of Warrenton would be willing to shoulder an amount similar to Seaside's bond of \$100 million, which would cover an entirely

new K-12 campus on higher ground.

"It's just really tough for an average voter in a small community to stomach those numbers," Morrill said. "We have to be up front about what it would cost an average household annually."

Board members also discussed scaled-back options, such as constructing a second

story to double the space the middle school occupies inside the grade school, or moving the bus barn from the high school to create more classroom space. But any expansion requires more parking, which the district is already running short on.

Multiple board members were open to moving the schools to an entirely new

campus, but want less expensive alternatives to give the community options.

Board Chairwoman Debbie Morrow said the district needs to hire a consultant to get the community's pulse prior to going out for a bond. One challenge, Jeffery said, is that Seaside can point to an impending earthquake and tsunami as clear reasons to move schools, whereas Warrenton faces more danger from flooding.

Board member Kelly Simonsen said the district also needs to be careful comparing its situation with Seaside's \$100 million ask for a new campus. "That might not be what we need," she said.

A return to Hammond?

Until the early 1980s, seventh- and eighth-graders in Warrenton attended Fort Stevens Junior High School, located on a now-vacant lot just south of Fort Stevens State Park in Hammond. Former principal Dick Hellberg said the school was vacated after the district consolidated kindergarten through eighth grade at the grade school.

But the need for more space has the district look-

ing at a potential return to Hammond, or another use for the property. Jeffery said the property could work as a modular middle school with a multipurpose gym space. The former junior high's gym was located on a nearby 1.5-acre lot the district also owns.

The district had an appraisal for the larger property, still zoned for a school, done four years ago, showing little value. But Morrill said the property could prove quite valuable if rezoned residential, subdivided and sold off.

The county owns a soccer field west of the intersection of Ridge Road and Eighth Street, a short drive from the grade school. Morrill said the district could also get more space by reaching out to the county about building a track around the field, allowing the district to utilize the field at the grade school.

Five years may seem like a long time, Jeffery said, but the district will need all of it to ensure class space in the short-term, plan for and secure a bond and construct whatever long-term solution it finds.

"We don't have a lot of time to decide," he said. "Every month we wait, the enrollment keeps increasing."

Debate: Next gubernatorial debate is Thursday in Medford

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reforming land-use laws to give counties more control over the cost of land and growth of urban growth boundaries. He said local governments also should to relax design standards and fees for affordable house.

"Otherwise, we won't have affordably built housing," Pierce said.

Brown said expanding urban growth boundaries wouldn't solve the problem.

She cited a \$70 million package passed earlier this year that dedicated money to building affordable housing and giving assistance to homeowners to avoid foreclosure. Lawmakers also lifted a ban on local juris-

dictions requiring affordable units in exchange for certain perks such as tax exemptions.

Brown promised to fight for more funding for affordable units and to outlaw no-cause evictions in the 2017 legislative session.

Thomason said the \$70 million housing package would finance less than 1,000 units. Thousands of more are needed to address the housing shortage.

He proposed subsidizing \$20 per square foot on the first 500 square feet of construction on affordable housing with guarantee of rents at \$600 to \$800 for units.

"We can build our way out of this," while stimulating job growth, he said.

Graduation rates

Moving on to the state's low graduation rate, Miller noted that Oregon ranks 32nd in the nation for per-pupil funding levels, according to Governing magazine.

"Setting money aside for the time being, what else do you think is wrong with Oregon education?" Miller asked.

Thomason suggested giving all high school sophomores the GED test to give them "a sense of accomplishment" and the ability to access jobs and higher education if they leave school without a graduation diploma.

Pierce said he would push for more teacher and leadership training and give students tracks to pursue in high school, including vocational

training and university.

Brown touted the Legislature's investment in early education and STEM (science, technical, engineering and math) education and said her new graduation guru Colt Gill — a new position she created — would be coming up with more concrete plans for addressing the problem.

PERS

During the debate, Brown and Pierce clashed again over the \$21 billion unfunded Public Employees Retirement System. Both repeated arguments they've made at past debates. Pierce has proposed rolling back future benefits for current and future employees

to help scale back the state's debt. He noted that Oregon is unique in requiring no contribution from employees.

"When I hear his proposals, I hear lawsuit, lawsuit ... back on the hamster wheel," Brown responded. Brown has said there are no apparent options to solve the unfunded liability apart from giving the Oregon Investment Board more power to get a greater return on the state's investments.

Domestic violence

Miller also brought up Pierce's comment at a Sept. 30 debate at the City Club of Portland suggesting successful women aren't victims of

domestic abuse. Pierce apologized again for his assertion, saying he has since studied up on domestic violence and knows it can happen to anyone.

Brown replied that she leaves it to voters to decide whether they "want someone who just spent the weekend learning about this issue or someone who has been investing her time and energy and resources in increasing penalties and making sure there were more resources available for more domestic violence services."

A recording of the debate will be broadcast at noon and 8 p.m. Friday on OPB. The next gubernatorial debate is scheduled for Thursday in Medford.

Court: Nondisparagement clause included in Barnett's retirement

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with him in ongoing prosecutions because of doubts about his credibility.

In Shah's brief with the appeals court, he noted that the 9th Circuit has upheld absolute immunity for prosecutors whose professional evaluation of a potential witness was "harsh, unfair or clouded by personal animus."

Absolute immunity, Shah argues, applies to civil rights

claims and "protects defendants regardless of any improper motive or result."

Sean Riddell, a Portland attorney representing Barnett, said in his brief that Marquis retaliated against Barnett for his free speech and led Seaside Police to curtail his work assignments and future economic potential, essentially attempting to end his career.

"Defendants should not be permitted to hide behind absolute immunity for unethical

conduct," Riddell wrote.

Barnett, a veteran Seaside Police officer, was a longtime detective before becoming a patrol sergeant. He was promoted to lieutenant last year.

Barnett received a \$20,000 cash payment from the city when he retired in March. The agreement included a nondisparagement clause that applied to both Barnett and city leaders and precluded the city from speaking about the former officer's character or reputation.

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