

Jewell: 'This is one of the more contentious budgets we've dealt with'

Continued from Page 1A

The school district's budget committee, including three of the five members on the Jewell School Board, voted 5-3 to approve the track renovations and several smaller projects. The school board will vote later this month to adopt the budget.

The track project is part of an overall budget of about \$22.5 million, including a \$5.1 million operating fund, more than \$800,000 in capital projects including the track and more than \$15 million in the district's investment fund, from which the funding for the track will come. Jewell receives between \$3 million and \$6 million annually in timber tax revenue.

"This is one of the more contentious budgets that we've dealt with ... considering some major projects," said Bryan Swearingen, chairman of both the Jewell School Board and the budget committee.

But the budget, he said, includes some projects the district needs to do.

Mike Stahly, another school board member, said



Junior Emma Guillen practices jumping at Jewell School's track, which will undergo more than \$700,000 in renovations this summer.

the district is getting a good deal at \$700,000 to renovate the track, with bids at nearby school districts coming in at more than \$1 mil-

lion. Astoria School District has been discussing options to renovate the track at Astoria High School, last rehabbed in 1989.

Megan Golden/Submitted Photo

Improving track

Fix said the track at Jewell School was likely installed in the early 1980s, and has been worn down over the years by

ultraviolet radiation.

"Running on this track is like running on the highway, and our kids' legs get beat up," he said.

The main track project includes demolishing the existing surface down to the concrete and adding 3 inches of asphalt and another 1/2 inch of synthetic track material from the project's general contractor Beynon, which specializes in running surfaces. At \$193,000, the new track will include a urethane layer to protect from the sun.

At the D-shaped crook at the north end of the track oval will be new areas for the long and triple jump and pole vault. The budget committee also voted to fund several options on top of the track project, including new discus and shot put areas on the south end of the oval, a built-in irrigation system, new football goal posts and a blue track surface for the school mascot, the Bluejays.

Exposed to heavy rains for much of the year without a working drainage system, the track and field can turn into a swamp, which Fix said also

makes the facility untenable for meets. Hunsaker said the project will help address the entire Jewell School campus' drainage issues by installing new underground pipes and catch basins and routing runoff from the track and uphill to the north and south, away from buildings.

"This will really address our water issues across the whole campus," she said.

Bringing track home

Fix said he still has not figured out when the last meet was held at Jewell School but is compiling a history of the track team. He envisions the newly renovated facility hosting league, alumni and other meets, bringing the community together.

Hunsaker said the district is looking forward to showcasing the campus and having athletes perform at home.

"Like any other sport, they want the opportunity to perform on their home facility in front of their friends and family," Hunsaker said. "They deserve that like any other event."

Boatworks: Tenants cannot extend their leases with the Port beyond 2019

Continued from Page 1A

Tongue Point

Port Commissioner Bill Hunsinger has been filling in as president for Commissioner Robert Mushen, who has not attended a meeting in person since experiencing a medical emergency during a contentious meeting in early April. Last Month, Mushen phoned in and said the issue was related to high blood pressure, and that he was still recovering.

Prior to Hill's presentation, Hunsinger had added a discussion of Tongue Point to the agenda.

"It seems like there's a change in direction of the Port in the direction we're going with Tongue Point," Hunsinger said.

North Tongue Point includes J&H, WCT and Pacific Coast Seafood, temporarily occupying one of the hangars while rebuilding its burned-down plant in Warrenton. Port Financial Director Will Isom said the Port has lost about \$250,000 a year at North Tongue Point over the past five years.

After 30 years at North Tongue Point, marine contractor J.E. McAmis recently moved to a location at the confluence of the Cowlitz and Columbia rivers in Longview, Washington, after failing to reach a long-term deal with the Port. Port Property and Contracts Direc-



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

WCT Marine & Construction Inc. employee Jeremy Milligan works to cut the outerskin of a ship in order to remove an engine in 2016, at North Tongue Point in Astoria. The WCT and J&H Boatworks warehouses are adjacent to one another and the businesses sometimes work together on repair jobs.

tor Shane Jensen has said, although the Port doesn't want to kick anyone out, tenants know they cannot extend their leases with the Port beyond 2019.

Even if the Port could

acquire North Tongue Point, Knight said, the purchase would be of land with tens of millions of dollars worth of problems. "I'm not saying we shouldn't do it, but we don't have the financial resources

yet," he said, adding the state has declined to help acquire the property.

Knight said he is still waiting for a meeting between the Port, economic development agency Business Ore-

gon, the state Department of Environmental Quality and state Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, about the possibility of putting North Tongue Point in a brownfield land bank. The change would

provide a potential avenue to acquisition and development as part of a cleanup of historical contamination at the site.

Port Commissioner Stephen Fulton, who lost to fellow Commissioner James Campbell in the May election, will end his four-year term next month. He said the Port needs to figure out immediately what it will do at North Tongue Point.

"I hate to kick the can to the next commission, but I think this should be No. 1 on your priorities, is what are you going to do about Tongue Point," he said.

In other news:

The Port Commission voted to have staff award a \$41,000 contract to Fox Erosion Control and Landscape Inc. to fix the deteriorated bioswale that has prevented the Port's new Pier 3 stormwater system from being activated. The Port had been required by July to activate a new stormwater treatment system to reduce the amount of copper entering the Columbia River. The agency's general contractor, Conway Construction Co., largely finished the project in November, but heavy rains eroded and compacted much of a bioswale in the system meant to leach metals from stormwater. Port Director of Operations Matt McGrath said Fox Erosion control is ready to start work within a week's notice.

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