



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Bonds will finance the renovation of Astoria Middle School.

ASTORIA, WARRENTON TRY TO CONTROL BOND COSTS

Lessons from Seaside

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Seaside voters in 2016 approved a \$100 million bond to build a new K-12 campus east of town out of the tsunami inundation zone. But the project has ballooned to more than \$120 million, largely because of the unforeseen costs of preparing the steep, forested hillside for construction.

Astoria and Warrenton, which passed significant new bond measures in November to improve schools, are planning for escalating costs in a busy, expensive construction market to ensure voters get what they expect.

Each school district started with a 10 percent contingency baked into the blueprints, while estimating between a 3 and 6 percent escalation in construction costs per year, along with routes to drop smaller projects if unaffordable.

“You want to make things adequate to fund your project, but you don’t want to make it too fat ... or you’re funding above what your taxpayers can afford,” said Scott Rose, a regional school bond consultant who worked with Warrenton.

Facing overcrowded campuses and tsunami dangers, Warrenton voters backed \$38.5 million in bonds to buy a master campus and build a new middle school, slated to open in the fall of 2021. The project is the first of multiple bonds the school district hopes to pass to relocate all schools to higher ground.

One of Rose’s first recommendations was increasing Warrenton’s proposed bond by \$6 million to better account for land preparation and construction costs. The school district is negotiating with the Nygaard family



DLR Group

The Warrenton-Hammond School Board asked voters for \$38.5 million in bonds to fund the purchase of a new master campus and build a middle school. Future bonds would relocate the school district’s other campuses.

on the purchase of about 60 acres on Dolphin Avenue.

Priority list

Mark Jeffery, the school superintendent in Warrenton, said the school district has created a priority list of projects that need to be funded and others that might be deleted depending on costs.

Buying the campus and constructing the middle school is the top priority, followed by building a new career-technical education center, replacing Warrenton High School’s roof, re-siding campuses and installing security vestibules, doors and cameras.

“It is our hope we will be able to complete at least the top five or six projects and are fairly certain we will get through the top three or four,” Jeffery said.

Astoria’s \$70 million bond is high-

lighted by a \$45 million modernization of Astoria Middle School, including a new, three-story academic hall by the end of 2021. The middle school and other campuses will receive another \$30 million in remodels.

Craig Hoppes, the school superintendent in Astoria, said the school district is focused on finding a contractor with the regional gravitas to attract subcontractors.

“We want competitive bidding to go on, so that we can get the best price we can,” Hoppes said. “It’s tougher to get big contractors out here. We’re hoping to use local subs ... as much as possible.”

Hoppes and Jeffery don’t see having the same challenges with wetlands, streams and leftover tree stumps that have plagued Seaside on its new

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Mental health director placed on leave

Reason was not publicly disclosed

By DERRICK DePLEDGE
The Daily Astorian

Amy Baker, who was brought in to fix Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare after a management breakdown in 2016, said she has been placed on administrative leave.

The reason behind the move was not publicly disclosed, but the decision stunned some of the staff at the mental health agency and surprised county leaders who believe the executive director was making progress.

Baker said she was informed by the agency’s board on Wednesday. “I respect this process and the community volunteers who serve on the board,” she said in

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Amy Baker

Four vie for council vacancy

Appointee will replace Jones on east side

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

Kevin Leahy, the executive director of Clatsop Economic Development Resources, is one of four people who have applied to fill a vacancy on the Astoria City Council.

City Councilor Bruce Jones, who represents the east side’s Ward 4, was elected in November to replace Mayor Arline LaMear. City councilors hope to appoint a new councilor to fill out the remainder of Jones’ term, which runs through 2020, at the council meeting on Monday.

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Mo’s coming to Seaside

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — Mo’s Restaurant is coming to Seaside.

The regional seafood and chowder chain has signed a long-term lease with the Shilo Inn for the hotel’s restaurant space overlooking the Promenade and Pacific Ocean, according to an announcement from Mo’s. The restaurant will start renovations this coming week and could open in the spring.

“The addition of Mo’s in Seaside is a great opportunity for our entire company,”

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Pelayos becomes local Mexican chain

Started with a food truck

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

A local family that started out with a food truck has expanded into a chain spanning both ends of Clatsop County.

Jorge Antonio Vazquez Pelayo, from Guadalajara, Mexico, founded Pelayo’s Taqueria, a food truck named after his mother’s surname that he bought from friends and parked outside



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Heather Vazquez runs the third location of Pelayos in the former Casa Del Sol on Roosevelt Drive in Seaside.

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