

David Russo helms HR School Board

Staff previews process for facility planning update

By KIRBY NEUMANN-REA
News editor

In its lone meeting for July, Hood River County School Board on Wednesday welcomed two new members and assigned a new chair and vice-chair.

Dr. David Russo accepted the gavel from former chair Jan Veldhuisen Virk, who said, "I just love this part." Next item of business was to elect a vice-chair, and that honor went to Kateri Osborne Lohr.

Tom Scully and Chris Reitz, both elected in May 2015, joined the board officially on Wednesday, and Superintendent Dan Goldman administered the oath of office. Reitz and Scully succeed Liz Whitmore and Bob Danko, who opted not to run for re-election.

Goldman told the board that for the next biennium, the final State School Funding figure from the Department of Education is \$7.4 billion statewide, higher than the \$7.25 billion discussed earlier in the Legislative session but lower than the \$7.5 billion needed to hold programs and services at current levels for most districts. Hood River School District had to cut \$1.4 million for 2015-16.

"The work we did made a big difference," Goldman said of lobbying efforts in Salem in recent months. "It was a step in the right direction at the end (of the session)," he said. "We have to be super-careful about our funds." He said in August he will present the board with specifics on state funding



Photos by Kirby Neumann-Rea

BOARD CHAIR David Russo and vice chair Kateri Osborne Lohr, below, listen during Wednesday's meeting in Parkdale; in the chair's absence, the vice-chair presides. Newly-elected board members Chris Reitz and Tom Scully settle in after taking the oath of office. At right is long-time board member Jan Veldhuisen Virk.



and its impact on Hood River schools.

The board also heard an update on facilities planning by architect Eric Holzer and facilities manager Danny Garcia, who with staff are going through every school in the district analyzing and photographing structural conditions in each room of every building. By the end of July, every space will have been visited and the data will be collated and ready to be used to determine priorities for future repairs and upgrades. A committee of staff and citizens will be appointed to work with district this fall to formulate recommend-

ed priorities that will go into funding decisions for facilities. That process will include public forums and interviewing community members and personnel who work at each site.

"We've seen nothing significant" in terms of deficiencies, according to Holzer, "but we are looking at what maintenance has been deferred and what needs to be taken care of to ensure the best learning environments."

In terms of current repairs, Goldman also told the board that brickwork repair at Hood River Middle School and asbestos abatement in the entryway of May Street school will be paid for this summer by the last of the capital expenditure bond funds approved by voters in 2011.

The board also approved a \$75,000 special procurement to replace the broken boiler at Hood River Middle School and ensure the heating system is up and running by the time school starts in the fall.



Photo by Patrick Mulvihill

ATTACK FROM ABOVE: helicopter dumps a load of water from the Hood River. All of the Gorge is in extreme fire danger status and a burn ban is in effect.

FIRE

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ation site.

In the meantime, engines roared down a gravel path that runs along the Middle Fork, heading for the fire. Ground crews sealed off a perimeter in order to defend four nearby homes (on the way to Lost Lake) and a piece of Kiyokawa orchard land.

An Oregon Department of Forestry helicopter hovered over the scene and dropped river water onto the blaze. By about 3 p.m., the fire was "controlled" but not completely "contained," said Parkdale Fire Chief Mike McCafferty.

According to McCafferty, fire crews were 40 strong at the peak of the fire. Equipment included 12 engines, a bulldozer (to clear a path through weeds to the fire), and an ODF helicopter. Parkdale Fire was the first de-

partment on scene because Dee lies in their service area.

Police reopened all roads by Tuesday evening, and most fire crews cleared out by 6 p.m.

ODF crews remained on scene through the night and spent the next several days "mopping up," said Greg Borton, WyEast Fire District Chief. They were also "gridding," which means combing the scene inch by inch for new hot spots.

As of Thursday, a cause of the fire was not determined.

McCafferty said the fire was the biggest of the summer so far in Hood River County. However, he said the Fourth of July weekend was surprisingly calm despite "extreme fire danger."

"I would say, fireworks-wise, people were very supportive on the extreme fire danger and no fireworks, (and) activities that cause havoc," said McCafferty.

While the County fire departments typically get 15 to 20 firework related calls be-

fore Fourth of July, they got only one this year.

"We had one small fire caused by fireworks," said Trammel.

McCafferty indicated that the countywide drought response, in which locals have strived to save water, is a mixed blessing. For fire crews, danger lies in dry fuels.

"The problem that's going on is the drought," said McCafferty. "So these folks are being conservative with water which makes fire danger more extreme because the grasses are dry, which makes us be on a little more of an alert to things ... it saves water in the long run but that's why there's dry ground."

Hood River County declared a drought emergency to Oregon Governor Brown in late June. Since then, local homeowners and irrigation districts have attempted to cut back on water use.

GENESIS

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younger, I was like, 'No, I don't want to work as much,' but now, I'm like, 'You need me to work? OK, I'll go in.'"

The Heights Ice Cream is open seasonally, from March until the first week of September, from noon until closing. "Closing" depends on how busy it is at the Taqueria, and could be anywhere from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m.

Actually, her parents opened the shop to compliment the Taqueria and bring an ice cream parlor to the Heights.

"We only had Mike's (Ice Cream) up until we started, so my dad wanted to put in something for the locals, because Mike's is downtown and we're on the Heights," she said, noting that there are many neighborhoods nearby.

Quezada works five to six days a week in four hour shifts. If she's opening the shop, she begins by unlocking the doors, preparing the ice cream (taking the caps off the tubs), placing outside chairs and cleaning, and then cleaning the inside.

"Sometimes, not a lot, some people will be waiting at the door when I get there, and I'll have to go right into

it," she said.

Then she serves customers and cleans until her shift ends. She currently manages two other employees, although a third should be coming onboard soon.

The stores most popular flavor: Tillamook Mudslide. It's also Quezada's favorite.

One awkward aspect of being a high school-aged manager: "I'm supposed to be the boss of someone I see every day in school," she said. "Like, sometimes I can say hi, but I can't really be their friend and their boss."

The best thing about her job — besides the 20 flavors of ice cream it carries from Tillamook, Cascade Glacier, Columbia Valley Farms and Blue Bunny — is the money she's been able to earn and save.

"I was able to buy my own car because I saved up. I paid the down payment of my car because the past two years, I worked and I was saving," she said. "The money is good for stuff like that, for necessities and for college."

While Heights Ice Cream doesn't do many events, they did sell ice cream at Jackson Park after the Fourth of July parade — around 800 cones worth — and will be at the Lavender DAZE festival July 18-19 at Hood River Lavender in Odell.

"It's crazy because you don't have everything on

hand, so if something goes wrong, you're going to have to improvise," she said. "And it gets busier at events than it does here."

The high school junior doesn't plan on going into business after college — she would rather pursue literature — but she does find there are advantages to the experience she's gained from her position.

"If I want to get a job (in college) ... my experience will help me get one quickly," she said.

And experience with customers made for an easier transition from Mid-Columbia Adventist Christian School to Hood River Valley High School last year.

"It's helped my people skills because I have to talk to random people every day. When I first started going to the high school, I didn't find it hard to talk to (other students), so that's how I made friends."

While she hasn't settled on a college yet, she does have a career plan.

"I don't want to be an ice cream scooper forever," she said. "I like reading a lot, and I want to write a book ... because I like that feeling that I get, when I'm reading a book and I'm like, 'Oh, my goodness!,' the feelings they make come out of you just by words."

MUSEUM

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according to Shuemate, during her time as director she raised \$1,400 at a wine tasting event, reached out to City and County leaders and implemented the main summer exhibit: "Outdoor Recreation: The Heart of Hood River County."

Staley, who helped Shuemate put together displays and historical pieces for the project, said she "exceeded my expectations on the exhibits we put up."

The Heritage Council has launched a nationwide search for a new director.

In the meantime, Gilbertson said, the museum will continue with its exhibits as normal, and consider adding paid hours to its AmeriCorps volunteer, Andrea Smith, who leads volunteer pro-

grams and museum activities.

"If there's some extra hours, we're gonna try to have her get paid for that," said Gilbertson.

Currently, the museum is hosting a gallery of paintings from the Hood River Art Club, and a bevy of other activities, including the Historic Downtown Walking Tours every Tuesday at 10 a.m. and Saturday at 4 p.m. until July 28.

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