

FIRE: Council wants to start public education on the bond immediately

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Despite the setback, Ciraulo said he was confident the city could find a new site well before November and said their efforts should be focused on finding one as close as possible to the intersection of Main Street and Dorion Avenue.

Ciraulo said property owners had approached him about looking at their sites after the St. Anthony negotiations fell through and he was prepared to set up a political action committee as soon as the council gave him the go-ahead.

The council wasn't convinced, with several councilors saying they've received word from constituents that they wouldn't vote for the bond without a definite site.

Citing the failed gas tax campaign, Councilor Chuck Wood said the city couldn't afford to make another late start to a ballot measure campaign.

Reaction from the public was also mixed.

Larry O'Rourke, a former city councilor and a member of the PAC that supported the failed 5-cent gas tax measure, said a fire station bond without a site would be a hard sell.

"If you thinking selling a \$10 million bond issue in this crowd in this city,

I don't know how that compares to asking for nickels for the gas tax," he said. "We didn't make it on the gas tax and I don't think we'd make on the \$10 million.

Some of those who testified also questioned why the city would demolish the old fire station when they could sell it to someone who could rehabilitate the building.

Councilor McKennon McDonald said selling an empty site might be more difficult because 911 S.W. Court Ave. is subject to the river quarter's stringent building codes.

Regardless of when the city placed a bond on the ballot, Councilor Becky Marks said the council needed to avoid postponing a campaign indefinitely.

"We can put it off until May, I understand that," Marks said. "But if we don't put some urgency into developing this project, we'll never get it done. We'll find all kinds of reasons not to get it done."

Even though the potential election date for a fire station bond is now over a year away, the council urged Ciraulo to start a public education effort immediately.

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TEACHER: Helps students learn to work through problems

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what I was supposed to do," she said. "School wasn't easy for me. I would have to work extra hard, so I know how hard it can be. I know everyone doesn't learn the same way, and I know how hard it is. I want to make a difference."

Kittelson went back to school to become an elementary teacher. She began her teaching career 15 years ago in Reno, Nevada, before she returned to Oregon for family.

For 11 years, she has taught Irrigon's first-graders from the same corner classroom at AC Houghton. The bulletin boards, walls and even closet doors are covered with materials, shapes hang from the ceiling, and every space is packed with information ready for children to reference.

While her students identify hexagons and recite the pledge of allegiance, they also practice being leaders and helping their fellow students.

Kittelson is a mediator, helping students learn to work through problems. She answers questions and picks out just the right shade of crayon. She is a triage nurse, applying Band-Aids to paper cuts and checking bumps and bruises. She is a friend and confidant who listens to children's stories and gives them the encouragement they need.

"People sometimes think

that 6-, 7-, 8-year-olds can't bring anything to a conversation, but they can," she said. "You have to listen."

But even first grade has its challenges.

Kittelson has had students whose parents have split up or have other issues at home. Two years ago, one of Kittelson's students died in a car wreck over spring break.

"It was really hard on me, but the kids were so supportive and sweet and understanding," she said. "People don't think first-graders are that in tune, but they are."

The atmosphere of the Irrigon school also plays into those relationships, Kittelson said. The students and staff all live in the same community, and community brings Kittelson full circle — her family came to Morrow County on the Oregon Trail and her great aunt Edith was a teacher at the old schoolhouse next door.

When she isn't in the classroom, Kittelson travels and enjoys camping and fishing. She makes the most of her small window of free time in July but always returns to her classroom.

"I am one of those people that even if I won the lottery, I would still work," Kittelson said. "I love my job!"

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OPIOIDS: Some users eventually switch to heroin

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The culprits are painkillers such as Hydrocodone and Oxycodone. Opioids work by changing the way people perceive pain. Once lauded as a less-addictive alternative to morphine, synthetic opioids are now getting a hard look. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that the country is in the midst of an opioid overdose epidemic with more than 200,000 overdoses a year. An estimated 2.1 million people abuse opioids, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently reported a drop in life expectancy for white women — one possible reason is the abuse of prescription painkillers.

The group assembled in Good Shepherd's board room gave Walden an unfiltered look at the struggle to subdue the opioid beast.

La Grande psychiatrist Joel Rice said he helps opioid addicts to break away by prescribing buprenorphine (sold as Suboxone). Critics say using Suboxone, which is also addictive, is simply exchanging one drug for another. But Rice considers the drug a critical tool to help people break free from painkillers.

"It's easier to get off of," he said. "You feel normal on it. You can rebuild your life so you have something to live for."

Rice said he isn't able to accommodate every patient who needs medication-assisted treatment — prescribers are limited to 30 patients initially and a maximum of 100 after a year. Holton is one of only



Staff photo E.J. Harris

CTUIR Housing Director Marcus Luke talks about drug usage on the Umatilla Indian Reservation with Congressman Greg Walden on Tuesday in Hermiston.

six Suboxone prescribers east of The Dalles, Holton said.

Pending legislation would lift the cap after a year for substance abuse specialists. With this in the works, Rice is considering starting a new clinic in Pendleton in order to fill a gap in Umatilla County.

Rice said he sees patients from every walk of life, from millionaires to people who are homeless.

Michelle Frizzell, a therapist who works with Rice, also sat at the table. Frizzell knows the struggles their patients face because she went through them herself. She broke her foot and was prescribed painkillers.

"That was the beginning of a 10 year addiction to opioids," she said.

When she became determined to break free, she couldn't find a doctor nearby to help her. She regularly traveled more than five hours

from her Milton-Freewater home to Marysville, Washington.

"The detox is so bad — so uncomfortable emotionally and physically," Frizzell said. "I was driven to travel long distances for Suboxone."

By the end of an hour and a half, most around the table had commented. Walden asked questions and described pending legislation. He distributed a list of a dozen opioid-related bills.

The legislation increases access to treatment, reduces overprescribing, seeks best practices, requires more stringent review of opioids and makes opioid reversal drugs more accessible. One bill educates teens and adolescents injured in sports about the dangers of addiction. Another funds the improvement of electronic prescription drug monitoring to help prescribers know if their patients are already

getting prescriptions from other sources. The Reducing Unused Medications Act would allow pharmacists to fill only part of a prescription. If pain persists, the patient could go back and get more pills.

Getting a handle on opioid prescriptions is only one aspect of this murky mess. The tendency for opioid users to eventually switch to heroin, which is cheaper and easier to procure, is another.

Holton said he is optimistic about subduing the opioid monster, but he knows heroin will bring additional trials.

"I'm convinced we're going to fix this," he said, regarding opioid addiction. "But we'll have to meet again down the road about the heroin crisis."

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SHOOTING: Sregzinski has an arrest record going back to 2011

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county's Juvenile Justice Center.

Primus also stated Milton-Freewater officers Scott Clayton and Jesse Myer and detective Morgan Dunlap were involved in the exchange of gunfire with Sregzinski. Clayton has worked for the Milton-Freewater police force for 10 years, while Myer has been there for two years and Dunlap for one. The trio remains on paid leave.

Oregon State Police led the investigation and detective Trampas McCrae stated the facts support charges of attempted aggravated murder, unlawful use of a weapon and felon in possession of a firearm.

The affidavit provided the following account of police taking down Sregzinski.

Dunlap and Myer were in an unmarked police car Thursday, April 28, at about 7:15 p.m. when they saw a 2007 Ford Focus fail to maintain the lane on Turbyn Road near Eastside Road, Milton-Freewater. Dunlap was driving, and Myer reported the Ford's violation to the police department's dispatch when the car stopped.

Sregzinski was behind the wheel and alone. Myer checked Sregzinski's Wash-

ington driver's license and found no problems. Then Clayton rolled up, and the trio of cops noticed three guns inside the car.

The officers told Sregzinski to get out of the Ford but he drove off, and police gave chase. Myer during the pursuit told dispatch Sregzinski said he was not going back to prison.

Sregzinski has an arrest record going back to 2011, according to McCrae's affidavit. The first arrest was for unlawful discharge of fireworks, then nine more follow, including for burglary and theft in May 2012, three counts of firearm theft in September 2014 and burglary again in September and November 2015.

Sregzinski ended up taking Cemetery Road into the Milton-Freewater with cops on his tail, then onto South Main Street and through the parking lot at Rite-Aid, 102 S.W. Second Ave. He then headed west on Second and a few blocks later turned north on DeHaven Street, which borders the middle and high schools, then onto Southwest First Avenue.

The chase reached 50-60 mph on those residential roads.

Police then reported shots were fired Sregzinski's vehicle. Myer thought it was

a shotgun.

Clayton used his car to take out the Ford, ending the chase.

"Once the Ford Focus was disabled," according to the affidavit, "Sregzinski stepped out of the vehicle and fired shots at the officers."

The next radio transmission stated Sregzinski was in custody and shot. Primus reported Sregzinski suffered the wound in a "lower extremity," but he has not been more specific.

McCrae searched Sregzinski's car and, in addition to the shotgun and shells, there was a smartphone and a Fender guitar bag containing a white towel and an ammunition belt. And detective Karl Farber with the state police bomb squad took the bottles of gun power.

Sregzinski faces charges of attempted aggravated murder would be in line

with what Primus charged Bryan Alberto Corona, the 24-year-old Pendleton man who fired at state police during a car chase in January near Pendleton. Police also maneuvered to crash his vehicle, and he suffered multiple injuries when an officer struck him with a police car.

In that case, Corona was in circuit court in Pendleton on Tuesday and pleaded guilty to the following: two counts of attempted aggravated murder; one count of unlawful use of a firearm; attempt to elude; and two counts of recklessly endangering others.

Court records also show Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer will hand down Corona's sentence Tuesday, May 10.

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