



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Green grass grazers

A herd of deer graze their way across a field below Interstate 84 east of Pendleton on Tuesday.

PENDLETON

Committee sends diminished budget to school board

Layoffs reduced to seven after resignations, retirement

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

The budget committee's look at the Pendleton School District's proposed budget for 2017-2018 gave way to an impromptu discussion about declining enrollment.

With incoming superintendent Chris Fritsch in the audience, the budget committee — a group comprised of the Pendleton School Board and seven community members — unanimously approved a \$48.3 million budget at a meeting Thursday, a \$13.4 million decrease from the current fiscal year.

While much of that decrease is tied to the wind down in bond projects, it also includes a \$1.4 million reduction in the general fund, something that will be felt by students and staff next year.

The cuts

Although staff are making some sacrifices — administrators agreed to forgo cost of living increases and classified employees agreed to a step freeze on the pay scale — it wasn't enough to stop the district from reducing its workforce by 19.5 positions.

Despite the bleak figures, the workforce reduction situation actually looks a little better than it did a month ago.

Thanks to some educational assistant resignations and an administrator retirement, the district will only have to lay off seven employees instead of 10.

Michelle Jones, the district's director of business services, said if the district continues to receive retirements and resignations, it will try to fill those empty

positions with employees who are set to be laid off.

The only service that is eliminated under the budget proposal is the Pendleton High School business program, but it also necessitated the program's teacher be laid off.

It may be a drop in the bucket, but the district is also creating one new position this year.

Jones said the new Washington and Sherwood Heights elementary schools are too large to continue being staffed by a single secretary. A secretary is being shifted from a different part of the district and another will be hired to double the secretarial staffs at both schools.

While not connected with the general fund, the district is also eliminating the family advocate position at Washington, which was funded by a year-long \$150,000 grant from the state.

Jones said the district won't make any large technology purchases in the next fiscal year.

While the district usually buys about 200 computers a year to stay current on technology, it will refrain from any large-scale purchases, spending its hardware budget on licensing fees or emergency purchases.

By now, the factors the district attributes to these cuts is well known — a lack of state funding and declining enrollment.

State funding

In his budget message, interim superintendent Matt Yoshioka was unsparing in his assessment of the state education system.

"Currently, Oregon students receive approximately one year less K-12 cumulative instructional time than the national average," he wrote. "We have the second largest class sizes in the U.S., with six more students per teacher

than the national average and, not surprisingly, we rank near the bottom in graduation rates and closing the achievement gap."

According to the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators, the Oregon Quality Education Commission determined that the state would need to spend \$9.1 billion in the 2017-2019 biennium to reach the national average in instructional time and class size.

Jones said the district is anticipating \$7.8 billion statewide for the next biennium. The district is projecting its share to be \$22.86 million, down from \$23 million in this year.

The district also isn't counting on funds from Measure 98, a voter-approved initiative that allocated more funding for dropout prevention.

With the state not providing a clear picture on how much money school districts will get, Jones said they didn't want to count on that source of funding.

Declining enrollment

While the Oregon Legislature continues to wrangle with the state budget, a local issue is also hurting the district's bottom line.

Jones shared a slide that showed the district's enrollment in a prolonged decline.

According to an Oct. 1 headcount, Pendleton's student population has declined every year from 2011 to 2016, shrinking from 3,337 to 3,155.

The state determines its funding by student enrollment through a metric called average daily membership. Since part-time students are funded less than full-time students, Jones said the district is actually funded less than the raw headcount would imply.

When asked why enrollment was declining, Yoshioka said the spread of online

charter schools and the city's housing crunch were contributing to the decline.

Yoshioka said he recently had a conversation with Pendleton Mayor John Turner and was encouraged by the city's efforts to improve the housing stock.

The online charter school issue will take more legwork from the school district.

Yoshioka said the district has long seen more students transfer out than transfer in, but the ease of signing up for one of Oregon's many online charter school services has presented stiff competition for state money.

Yoshioka said the district is looking to start an online school of its own through the InterMountain Education Service District's IMESD Online program to bring back some local students back into the fold.

"The world is changing really fast," budget committee member Kevin Hale said. "It's about how you adapt to it."

The school board will adopt a final budget June 12.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

HERMISTON

City to consider waiver for mobile food vendors

East Oregonian

The Hermiston City Council will be considering granting a waiver to the city's mobile vendor ordinance to allow food trucks at First Thursday.

The council meets Monday at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

The Hermiston Downtown District, which hosts an event with entertainment and special deals in downtown shops on the first Thursday of each month, has requested that the city allow mobile food vendors to park in parking spaces downtown for four hours during the event.

The exemption is needed to allow vending from a public street instead of a private parking lot.

On Monday the council will also hear a presentation from the city's Rose Festival float committee, which is designing a "mini-float" to represent Hermiston in the festival's Grand Floral Parade on June 10 in Portland.

The rest of the council's meeting will consist of consent agenda items and reports on city committees, city finances and the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center. There is no work session before the regular meeting.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SATURDAY, MAY 20
PENDLETON EAGLES STEAK AND LIVE MUSIC, 6-11:30 p.m., Pendleton Eagles Lodge, 428 S. Main St., Pendleton. Dinner from 6-8 p.m., music from 8 p.m. to midnight. Members and guests welcome. (541-278-2828)

SUNDAY, MAY 21
PENDLETON EAGLES BREAKFAST, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Pendleton Eagles Lodge, 428 S. Main St., Pendleton. Open to members and guests. (541-278-2828)

WHITE EAGLE GRANGE, 5 p.m., White Eagle Grange Hall, 43828 White Eagle Road, Pendleton. 5 p.m. potluck, meeting to follow. (Gail Wilson 541-276-3778)

MONDAY, MAY 22
BOARDMAN QUILT GROUP, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Boardman Senior Center, 100 Tatone St., Boardman. Quilt construction, quilting updates, education, history and friendship. Free. (Kathy Hyder 541-571-7009)

NARFE OF HERMISTON, 12 p.m., Desert Lanes Bowling Alley, 1545 N. First St., Hermiston. No-host lunch. All federal employees, retirees and spouses are welcome. (541-567-2648)

IRRIGON MOOSE LODGE TACOS AND BINGO, 6-9 p.m., Irrigon Moose Lodge, 220 N.E. Third St., Irrigon. Tacos from 6-9 p.m., bingo from 6:30-9 p.m. Open to members and guests. (541-922-1802)

WESTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, 6 p.m., Memorial Hall, 210 E. Main St., Weston.

VFW POST NO. 922 SOCIAL, 6:30 p.m., Pendleton VFW Hall, 1221 S.E. Court Place, Pendleton. (541-278-2720)

INLAND NORTHWEST MUSICIANS CHORALE REHEARSAL, 7-9 p.m., Harris Jr. Academy gymnasium, 3121 S.W. Hailey Ave., Pendleton. No tryouts; all welcome. No rehearsals June-July-August or Christmas-New Year. (RaNiel Dunn 541-289-4696)

TUESDAY, MAY 23
PENDLETON TOASTMASTERS NO. 154, 6:30 a.m., Pendleton City Hall community room, 501 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton.

1110, 8 a.m., Missionary Baptist Church, 125 E. Beech St., Hermiston. 8 a.m. weigh-in followed by meeting at 8:45 a.m. (Margaret Wetterling 541-720-0276)

HERMISTON STATE OF THE CITY BREAKFAST, 8 a.m., Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395, Hermiston. Join the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce and city officials for an update on city happenings, including the Harkenrider Center, EOTEC, Festival Street and more. Cost is \$10 for members, \$13 for non-members. RSVP required. Public welcome. (Debbie Pedro 541-567-6151)

GREENFIELD GRANGE PINOCHLE, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Greenfield Grange 579, 209 N.W. First St., Boardman. (541-481-7397)

BIBLE STUDY, 10 a.m., First United Methodist Church, 352 S.E. Second St., Pendleton. (Rev. Jim Pierce 541-276-2616)

"THE LIFE MODEL: LIVING FROM THE HEART JESUS GAVE YOU" BOOK STUDY GROUP, 1-2:30 p.m., Bowman Building, 17 S.W. Frazer Ave., Pendleton. (Pat 541-276-6671)

TOPS CHAPTER OR 1169, 4-5:30 p.m., Hermiston Assembly of God Church, 730 E. Hurlburt Ave., Hermiston. Use west side door. (Janell Bailey 541-571-7397)

STUDYING THE MIRACLES OF JESUS, 4-6 p.m., Good Samaritan Ministries, 319 W. Locust Ave., Hermiston. (541-564-1041)

COLUMBIA RIVER TOASTMASTERS, 6-7 p.m., Umatilla Senior Center, Umatilla.

AWANA, 6:30-8 p.m., Pendleton Baptist Church, 3202 S.W. Nye Ave., Pendleton. For children age 3 through sixth grade. (541-276-7590)

A SHARP PLAYERS ORCHESTRA REHEARSAL, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Pendleton High School band room, 1800 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. Intermediate orchestra for players of any instrument. (JD Kindle 541-276-0320)

PRELUDES ORCHESTRA REHEARSAL, 6:30 p.m., Blue Mountain Community College McRae Activity Center, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. For beginning strings players of all ages. (JD Kindle 541-276-0320)

Little Darlings!



This special section will be filled with photos of and messages for adorable little darlings from Umatilla County. Families will want to keep this special keepsake for their child and family for years to come.



*Olivia,
I loved you from the very start.
You stole my breath, embraced my heart.
Our life together has just begun.
You're part of me, my little one.
Love, Mom*

PUBLISHES:
June 28, 2017

DEADLINES:
June 08, 2017

Send in, or drop by, a full color high resolution photo, your child's name and a message to your child today!

Little Darlings
211 SE Byers, Pendleton, OR 97801
333 E. Main, Hermiston, OR 97838
or email
classifieds@eastoregonian.com

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Your Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Child's Name: _____

Message: _____

SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.





"Scramble for Scholarships"
Friday, June 9th
1pm Shotgun Start

Big River Golf Course - Umatilla

Golfers of all skill levels are being invited to participate in the 24th annual "Scramble for Scholarships" golf tournament. Four person teams can sign up together or individuals pairings can be made by the tournament committee. Your \$70 entry fee covers green fees, a box lunch at noon, and BBQ at the end, plus makes a charitable donation to the foundation to use in awarding scholarships for local health care students. Join us for a fun afternoon of golf for a good cause by calling 541-667-3405.

Entry deadline is June 7th.

Great prize holes and Hole-in-one on #1 & #9 wins a new car sponsored by Tom Denchel Ford and Hermiston Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram!