

HERMISTON

School district begins to re-examine post-bond survey results

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

After a summer hiatus, the Hermiston School District has resumed its discussion of a bond — what went wrong with the last one, and what to change when the district decides to pursue another.

The largest concerns people had were with funding and the budget, and with gaps in communication from the district.

Hermiston Director of Operations Brad Wayland presented the results of a survey the district solicited after the \$104 million bond failed in May, which put a pause on several planned expansion and improvement projects for the district. The bond would have funded a replacement of Rocky Heights and Highland Hills elementary schools, a new elementary school, as well as an expansion and renovation of parts of Hermiston High School.

More than 100 people participated in the survey, and those who completed it made 235 “thoughts,” or comments. Additionally, participants could assign “stars” to other comments that they agreed with.

The five main areas participants identified as important, in order, were: funding and budget, stakeholder engagement, project planning, facilities planning, and academics and staff.

Funding and budget concerns included the affordability of the bond, and the impact it would

have on taxes. The bond would have added 90 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value to Hermiston homeowners. Residents currently pay \$4.09 in education taxes per \$1,000 of value.

Participants also said they were concerned about the lack of voter awareness about the issues, as well as district communication with the community. According to Wayland’s presentation, participants suggested explaining more of the “why” behind the proposals, and discussing the reasons that alternatives were not selected.

Interim Superintendent Tricia Mooney said the district would continue to review these results.

“We’re looking at potential projects we can take off the bond proposal,” she said.

Mooney said the number of “no” votes in this last election and the one in 2008 that passed were almost identical.

“It was the yes votes that were different,” she said.

“Despite the efforts we put forward, there’s a lot of misinformation,” said board member Ginny Holthus. “How do we fix that?”

Wayland said the facilities committee would be working with district administrators to figure out the next steps.

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Semi loses load of potatoes near La Grande

LA GRANDE — The eastbound lanes of Interstate 84 shut down near La Grande for a couple hours Monday after a semitrailer hauling potatoes crashed and rolled.

Oregon State Police reported the semi rolled onto its side near milepost 253, about six miles west of La Grande. State police received the first report of the wreck around 4:25 p.m.

The driver was uninjured, according to state police, and the load of spuds covered much of the road near the crash.

The state shut down the eastbound lanes between mileposts 255 and 216 at Pendleton. The Oregon Department of Transportation reported the lanes reopened before 7:30 p.m.

To check about possible delays and weather conditions on Oregon state roads, visit www.tripcheck.com.

State dismisses mail theft case against Hermiston man

HERMISTON — Ryan Jeffrey Tremblay of Hermiston no longer faces prosecution for mail theft.

The Umatilla County District Attorney’s Office in February charged Tremblay with 14 counts of mail theft or receipt of stolen mail, a class C felony in Oregon. The charges stemmed from a grand jury indictment, which asserted he committed the crimes in 2015 and 2016 against 14 people.

Tremblay, 38, pleaded not guilty and was out of jail on his own recognizance.

Court records show deputy district attorney Matthew Dyal on Monday asked the court to dismiss the case against Tremblay because the state cannot prove the crimes beyond a reasonable doubt.

The motion to dismiss came a week before the case was to go before a jury for trial.

Morrow County rape case nearing trial date

IRRIGON — Rape defendant Eduardo Salas, 60, of Irrigon, has a pretrial conference Thursday in Morrow County Circuit Court.

Circuit Judge Daniel Hill is presiding over the case. Court records show the conference is the last before Salas has a readiness hearing on Dec. 12, about four weeks before he is scheduled to go to trial.

Those dates could change, depending on Thursday’s conference.

Salas has pleaded not guilty to one count of attempted first-degree sexual abuse, two counts of

BRIEFLY



A semitrailer hauling potatoes rolled onto its side Monday on Interstate 84 near milepost 253. Contributed photo by Oregon State Police

first-degree rape and nine of first-degree sexual abuse for harming two girls younger than 12 between April 1, 2016, and May 28, 2017.

Salas has been out of jail since posting \$10,000 bail on July 27, according to court records. Per the conditions of his release, he is residing with an adult who can monitor him and supervise any contact he has with any minor.

EO newspaper to be delivered by mail

PENDLETON — Beginning Wednesday, Nov. 1, all *East Oregonian* subscribers who are currently getting their newspaper delivered by a carrier will start receiving the *EO* by postal mail. The *EO* will continue to publish five days a week, Tuesday through Saturday.

In Umatilla and Morrow counties, newspapers will be delivered on the same day they are published and will be delivered to the current mailing address on record, which in some cases is a post office box. If subscribers would like their newspaper delivered to a different address, or experience any missed newspapers, please notify the *EO* circulation department at 1-800-522-0255 ext. 1 or circulation@eastoregonian.com.

Going forward, the *EO* will not publish a newspaper on postal holidays. This year, those postal holidays fall on Friday, Nov. 10 (Veterans Day observed) and Thursday, Nov. 23 (Thanksgiving). Look for bonus editions of the newspaper the day prior to these holidays — Thursday, Nov. 9 and Wednesday, Nov. 22 — which will contain special holiday sections as well as double comics, puzzles and TV listings.

In 2018, there are two postal holidays that don’t fall on a Monday: Wednesday, July 4 (Independence Day), and Thursday, Nov. 22 (Thanksgiving). Look for bonus editions on July 3 and Nov. 21 next year.

The *EO* traditionally does not publish a newspaper on Christmas Day.

Inland Musicians present weekend concerts

A pair of free performances will feature “Symphonie Nr. 101 ‘Die Uhr,’” which is the ninth of the 12 London Symphonies written by Joseph Haydn.

The piece is known as “The Clock” because of the “ticking” rhythm throughout the second movement. Presented by the Inland Northwest Orchestra under

the direction of R. Lee Friese, the performances are Saturday at 4 p.m. at the Enterprise Christian Church, 85035 Joseph Highway, and Sunday at 4 p.m. at Ukiah School, 201 Hill St.

Also on the program is “Concerto in Sol Minore” by Antonio Vivaldi. It features cello players Jane Bane of Enterprise and Tim Brown of Walla Walla. The orchestra features musicians from across Eastern Oregon.

Each of the concerts will be followed by receptions, offering audience members a chance to visit with the musicians, learn more about Inland Northwest Musicians and enjoy refreshments.

A nonprofit music organization, Inland Northwest Musicians was formed in 1999. Its mission is to offer free live performances throughout the region and to provide an atmosphere to support musicians in developing their talent. People are invited to join without auditioning. For more information, contact 541-289-4696, inwm@machmedia.net or visit www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

PENDLETON

Council members try new public outreach methods

East Oregonian

Pendleton City Councilor Scott Fairley said he has an uncle who lives in Concord, Massachusetts, where city budget meetings can attract more than 2,000 people.

Despite being roughly the same size as Concord, Pendleton’s public meetings frequently feature audiences mostly comprised of staff members and the media.

Fairley said he’d like Pendleton’s civic participation to hew closer to the Concord experience and is involved in two separate efforts to boost it.

The first is a joint meeting with City Councilor McKennon McDonald at Hamley Cafe on Nov. 4. Both Fairley and McDonald represent Ward 2, which covers North Hill, Westgate and the airport, but all residents are welcome to attend.

Fairley said the councilors will deliver updates on important issues like the fire bond and city council goals, but will otherwise keep the meeting “super informal.”

The main goals of the meeting, Fairley said, was to answer questions and hear citizen’s concerns that they can take back to city staff and the rest of the council.

This isn’t the only public outreach effort the city has made: City Manager Robb Corbett has held monthly “Coffee with the City” meetings with the public since 2015. Becky Marks, a Ward 1 councilor who represents the downtown area, South Hill and Riverside, has held a series of constituent meetings called “Straight Talk with Becky Marks.”

Fairley said he and McDonald plan to hold their joint meetings twice a year, with more meetings possible if there’s enough interest.

Operating under a similar premise, Fairley is also involved in a council effort to meet regularly with civic groups.

Fairley said Mayor John Turner recently tasked

Fairley and Councilor Jake Cambier with developing a “speakers bureau” that would visit with the city’s various committees and commissions in addition to civic groups like the Rotary Club, the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce and the Kiwanis Club.

Fairley and Cambier are currently compiling a list of groups to speak to. With the goal of launching the initiative by January, Fairley said they’ll look at council member availability to see who will participate in the program.

Fairley and McDonald will meet with the public at Hamley Cafe, 8 S.E. Court Ave., on Nov. 4 from 9 a.m.-11 a.m. For more information, call Fairley at 541-240-1825 or McDonald at 541-969-3345.

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