

EOTEC: \$1.1M set aside in 2017 transportation package to improve Ott and Airport

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earlier prediction by VenuWorks of cost overruns in the first two years. The county would also pay its \$105,000 portion of the final overrun on EOTEC's construction budget.

VenuWorks has also created a list of equipment, storage and other things needed to run EOTEC year-round. Under Murdock's proposal, the county would still pay \$595,000 for its half of that outlay. The Umatilla County Fair would also agree to increase its lease payment from \$10,000 per year to \$100,000 per year. The county plans to make those payments using the \$500,000 it will receive annually from Lamb Weston's enterprise zone tax payment.

The city would be expected to agree to build a storage facility, office space and conference room somewhere on EOTEC property for use by the fair. There are not currently enough offices in EOTEC's event center for all VenuWorks and fair staff, and the fair has been storing items in shipping containers on the property.

City manager Byron Smith said he envisioned an EOTEC board that would act as an advisory committee to the city council, which would be the governing board.

Drotzmann said that while transferring ownership to the city may sound like the county was giving up and walking away, he was thankful that the county was willing to make investments that it had already agreed to.

"The county acknowledges their responsibility,



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The city of Hermiston will take over full ownership and liability of the EOTEC facilities in spring 2018.

"This agreement creates budget certainty for the county and a location for the fair and rodeo, but also relieves the county of many of the burdens of day to day operations."

— **George Murdock**, Umatilla County commissioner

they own up to it," he said. "They don't just want to drop this on the city of Hermiston."

Murdock said he drafted the proposal the way he did because he recognized that the city wanted more control



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Umatilla County Commissioner George Murdock reads a proposal to dissolve the intergovernmental agreement where Umatilla County and the City of Hermiston would manage EOTEC on Monday in Hermiston.

of EOTEC's destiny, but the county also wanted to see EOTEC succeed and felt there was a moral and ethical obligation to see certain

things through.

"This agreement creates budget certainty for the county and a location for the fair and rodeo, but also

relieves the county of many of the burdens of day to day operations," he said.

Councilor John Kirwan pointed out that he had questioned before whether the city council should take the EOTEC board's place and it seemed like a good time to make the transition. He said it was obvious everyone in the crowded room wanted EOTEC to succeed, and a lot of good work had gone into making the project happen, but "if we don't change how we're doing it the results are not going to be good for anybody in this room."

The city and county signed their agreement creating EOTEC in 2013, but the two entities were working on the project long before that. The city of Hermiston donated the 90 acres where the project is located, and in April 2012 the county commission voted to sell the former Umatilla County fairgrounds to the Hermiston School District for \$3 million, which was then used as seed money for EOTEC.

The votes taken by both governing bodies on Monday did not dissolve the intergovernmental agreement yet, but rather directed negotiations to begin dissolving the agreement by March 1. While Murdock's proposal seemed supported overall, there were sticking points. The city council only wants to take the portions of Ott Road and Airport Road bordering EOTEC, for example, while the county commission expressed a hope the council would consider taking all of it. There is \$1.1 million set aside in the legislature's 2017 transportation package

to improve Ott and Airport, but Smith said it would take more than that to improve them to the standard needed to handle traffic during fair week.

While Drotzmann assured the audience there would be more time for public comment than just Monday's meeting, neighbor Chris Waime said he did not believe six weeks was enough time for the proposal to be vetted by the community. He also questioned, as a county taxpayer, whether the county was walking away from a huge investment before it had a chance to get a return on that investment.

When asked his opinion on the proposal, former interim EOTEC general manager Nate Rivera said part of the problem with EOTEC's lack of longterm vision has been that so many people involved in the project disagree on what the definition of a successful EOTEC is — one that hosts the best fair and rodeo possible, one that is profitable, or something else. He said they needed to decide on that definition, and to realize that their definition might not match that of donors and volunteers who had contributed.

Commissioner and EOTEC board member Larry Givens said it was "pretty tough" for him to take the vote after so much involvement in EOTEC, but he thought overall it was "one of the best moves we can make."

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MARCH: Special children's story time was held prior to the event

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Referred to as a peaceful protest against intolerance and injustice, a central theme among those who spoke was encouraging people to share their voice, including by going to the polls.

"Voting is a critical part of our democracy," said Karen Wagner of Pendleton.

Wagner said she's lived in and visited other countries where women can't vote. She urged people to recognize that voting is our right and responsibility and not something to be taken for granted.

Finding her voice since attending the 2017 march, Daphny Chen shared from the microphone. The 17-year-old is president of Gay Straight Alliance, a student-led group at Pendleton High School that promotes equality.

"Last year I was in the crowd and was afraid to speak out," she said.

Chen said she was representing other young people who were either afraid to speak up or whose parents wouldn't let them attend the event.

Kids in step with women's march

Prior to the event, a special children's story time was held at the library. Assistant director Jennifer Costley said during the 2017 march she noticed the crowd gathering in the parking lot and she decided it provided a perfect opportunity to further include children.

Costley read "Let the Children March" by Monica Clark-Robinson and "The Pink Hat" by Andrew Joyner. Both newly published books



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Between 350 and 400 people gathered for the Women's March in Pendleton.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Atlas Garrigues, 5, carries a sign imploring kids and grown-ups to be nice to each other at the Women's March in Pendleton on Saturday.

provide age-appropriate information and serve as conversation starters. In addition, the group participated in a craft activity to make signs for the march.

"I'm glad that they are doing this at the library," said Ailea Villanueva. "It gets the

kids involved. It gets them involved with the community."

Chris Garrigues and Amy Marvin brought their 5-year-old son, Atlas. The couple said with the current political and social climate in the world, it's even more



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Between 350 and 400 people gathered Saturday for the Women's March in Pendleton.

important to educate their son.

"I think part of the solution is for parents to teach them about the issues," Marvin said.

Villanueva, who attended a women's march while snowshoeing last year on Trillium Lake at Mount Hood, brought her son, Gabriel Rock, 5, and daughter, Sophia Rock, 10.

After looking at ideas for signs, Villanueva helped create one that said "Boys will be boys." Only, with the second "boys" crossed out, replacing it with the words "good humans."

"We wanted something that would convey that the saying is not acceptable these days," Villanueva said.

Decked out with a pink hat and shoes with pink laces,

Sophia was set to march on Pendleton.

"Everyone should be treated the same no matter what gender they are and no matter what color they are," she said.

Preparing to embark on her fourth march, 8-year-old Violet Hall is looking to the future. With a sign that read "Future president 2045," the youngster said that's the year she will be eligible to run for president based on age requirements.

A recent Oregon State University graduate who went to school in Pendleton made it a point to return to town to participate in the event. Carrying a rainbow flag and sandwich board signs on front and back, Kayden Purnell carried a message of inclusiveness — and was pleased to see the diversity of people who turned out for the event.

Purnell said with the recent government shutdown, the women's march is especially relevant.

"This is a political movement at its core."

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BRENNE: 'He really did want to do the right thing for the right reasons'

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before Houk retired from municipal politics in 2016.

Houk said Brenne was a "team player" who was involved in Pendleton government during times of change for the city, including the conversion of the state hospital into a state prison, the growth of the travel trailer manufacturing industry and multiple Main Street revitalization efforts.

While generally keeping a positive disposition, Houk said Brenne was sensitive to criticism of the city.

"He really did want to do the right thing for the right reasons," Houk said.

Council President Neil Brown described Brenne as a man of integrity, and said though he may have often been silent at council meetings, he was an active force for the city. His work on the Pendleton Development Commission and writing grants made a real impact,

Brown said, and he always had Pendleton's best interest at heart.

"He knew where you just spin your wheels and where you get traction," Brown said.

On a personal note, Brown said Brenne was the councilor who made him feel comfortable when he first joined the council.

Steve Bjerke served with Brenne from 1997 to 2010 and recalled him as a councilor who could be counted on to provide good input during debates, rarely missing meetings.

"He was a person who was virtually always there," he said.

In written statement, Mayor John Turner called Brenne "a warm-hearted individual who always encouraged the council to consider the human side effects of its decisions," while George Murdock, the chairman of the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners, said he was an "important force in the

world of both social services and public service."

During the Jan. 16 development commission meeting, Brenne reported that he was working with city officials to secure grants for a boat launch on the Umatilla River and a team of interns that would help the city attract more housing.

The task of replacing Brenne now lies with the city council.

City Recorder Andrea Denton said the council will declare a vacancy at its next meeting and begin the process of appointing a replacement to fill the final year of Brenne's term. If the replacement wishes to serve beyond 2018, they will have to file for office by March 6 and run in the May 15 municipal election.

John Cook, a retired member of the Pendleton Fire Department, filed for the Ward 1 seat Monday.

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