

# Council deadlocked on parade fee

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

A highly divided Pendleton City Council was set to march forward on a parade fee ordinance until the discovery of a council rule forced them to halt.

With the council tied 4-4 at a meeting Tuesday, Mayor John Turner cast the first tie-breaking vote of his two-year tenure to pass an ordinance that would charge parade fees with a few notable exceptions.

But the council also deadlocked on a follow-up vote to codify the fee amount into a resolution, prompting Turner to ask City Attorney Nancy Kerns if he could break a tie on a vote for a resolution.

“Mr. Mayor, it looks like,” she said, pausing as she referenced the city council rulebook, “when an ordinance or resolution is voted upon by the council and does not receive a majority of yes or no votes, then the resolution or ordinance shall automatically be considered at the following council meeting and successive meetings if necessary until such time as a majority vote of the council is achieved.”

The revelation voided Turner’s initial vote and forced both the resolution and the ordinance to be moved to the next council meeting, extending a debate the council has engaged in since January.

The proposed law would assess a non-specific fee that would cover anticipated costs of policing the parade plus a 15 percent administrative fee.



A VFW color guard marches underneath a large United States flag at the start of the Fourth of July Parade on July 4, 2018, in Pendleton. EO file photo

Police Chief Stuart Roberts told the council that he started discussing the city’s parade laws not because he desired a fee but due to the frequency of 11th-hour parade requests.

But the most contentious part of the ordinance is a list of events that are exempted from the fee — the Little League, Fourth of July, Westward Ho! and Dress-Up parades.

During the public hearing, Pendleton resident Rex Morehouse questioned why some parades would be charged over others.

Councilor Carole Innes said she spoke with constituents about the issue, and some residents said they could understand why some parades like Westward Ho! were exempted because its popularity generated economic activity.

But Councilor Scott Fairley said he agreed with Morehouse, who ran against Fairley in 2016 for the Ward 2 seat.

“This ordinance essentially discriminates against the smaller events and I just don’t think as a council we should be supporting that,” Fairley said.

After Councilor Dale Primmer made a motion to pass the ordinance with a one-year sunset so the council could review the results of the law, Fairley asked him to amend it to remove the list of exemptions, but they couldn’t come to an agreement.

When it came to vote for the ordinance and the resolution, the same councilors contributed to the stalemates: councilors Jake Cambier, Becky Marks, McKennon McDonald and

Primmer voted yes, and councilors Paul Chalmers, Linda Neuman, Fairley and Innes voted no.

Turner said the council will discuss the parade fee ordinance further at a March 26 workshop, but will take no action.

In a less contentious vote, the council unanimously voted to contract with a new towing service for the first time since 1999.

Roberts, the police chief, said Blue Mountain Towing & Recovery has done good work for the past 18 years, but when he solicited bids, Frankie’s Towing & Roadside was the only company to return a complete bid.

The city’s contract with Frankie’s Towing is for three years with an option to renew for another three years after that.

# Local educators balk at Ways and Means proposed K-12 budget

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Local education officials took the Joint Ways and Means Committee co-chairs to task for proposing a budget they say will result in more cuts to K-12 education.

At a Ways and Means hearing in Pendleton on Friday, officials from the Hermiston and Pendleton school districts advocated for the committee to at least retain the funding level proposed by Gov. Kate Brown.

The governor is proposing an \$8.97 billion state school fund while the co-chairs have offered an \$8.87 million fund proposal. The added twist in the governor’s budget is that she’s also encouraging legislators to adopt a revenue package that would further boost K-12 education funding to \$10.7 billion.

Sunridge Middle School teacher Chris Demianew said lawmakers needed to fund schools at \$8.97 billion to maintain the status quo and the \$10.7 billion figure if it wanted to reinvest in education.

Citing the Oregon Education Association, Demianew said the co-chairs’ budget would result in the layoffs of 900 teachers across the state and more cuts to the Pendleton School District.

Hermiston School Board member Ginny Holthus also took issue with

the co-chairs’ budget.

“It doesn’t make sense to propose more instructional time and at the same time reduce funding,” she said.

Holthus suggested the Legislature fund K-12 using figures from the Quality Education Model, a formula that determines how much Oregon should spend to property fund education that hasn’t been met since its introduction in 1999.

Hermiston School District Superintendent Tricia Mooney said the “elephant in the room” was the Public Employee Retirement System. The system’s \$26 billion unfunded liability has caused local government agencies, including school districts, to shift more money toward pension payments instead of services.

Besides solving PERS, Mooney suggested legislators create an education funding plan that addressed the next two or three budget cycles, all while funding education at the quality education model.

“A failure to invest in Oregon schools today is a failure to invest in Oregon tomorrow,” she said.

For the people who testified in favor of K-12 funding and other people invested in local education, they won’t know whether lawmakers will adhere to their advice until closer to the legislative session on June 30.

## BRIEFLY

### Task force honors UCSO members for DUII efforts

PENDLETON — Two members of the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office will receive awards for their efforts to keep impaired drivers off the road.

The sheriff’s office announced the Oregon DUII Multi-Disciplinary Training Task Force selected sheriff’s Sgt. Josh Roberts as the “2018 DUII Trainer of the Year” and senior deputy Nathan Rankin as the “2018 DUII Enforcement Deputy of the Year.”

The nonprofit based in Albany aims to train and consult with law enforcement and other community and professional partners to curtail impaired driving. The task force will present the awards to the local officers at its conference in

April in Canyonville.

The organization recognized the sheriff’s office in 2017 as its “Agency of the Year.” The sheriff’s office in a written statement congratulated Roberts and Rankin for earning the awards.

### Saturday workshop highlights hydroponics

PENDLETON — People are invited to dig in and learn about hydroponic planting systems during a Saturday presentation at Pendleton Center for the Arts.

Participants will learn how to grow plants without the help of soil or sun. “Big Leafy Greens: Hydroponics with Richard B.” is Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon. The arts center is located at

214 N. Main St., Pendleton. The cost is \$45 for members or \$50 for non-members.

A master gardener, Richard Bertram will share about the planting system that can be used year-round and in limited space.

For information, call the arts center at 541-278-9201 or www.pendletonarts.org.

### Sheriff’s office rolls out vehicle repair vouchers

PENDLETON — The Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office in April rolls out a program to help drivers make minor vehicle repairs and avoid equipment violations.

The local law enforcement agency announced deputies will be able to issue an “Oregon Car Care” voucher to drivers of vehi-

cles with defective equipment, such as a broken headlight, taillight and the like. Operating a vehicle without required lighting is a traffic violation and a safety hazard.

The sheriff’s office is partnering with the Oregon State Sheriff’s Association and the Oregon State Police to participate in the program. The voucher provides a discount on automotive parts to purchase, repair or replace the defective equipment. Drivers can redeem the vouchers at the following businesses: Advance Auto Parts, Battery Systems, Baxter Auto Parts, Carquest Auto Parts, Clackamas Auto Parts, Milex Complete Auto Care, Mt. Angel Auto Body, Napa Auto Parts, White’s Collision.

“We understand that sometimes drivers have to defer maintenance on their vehicles to pay for other

necessities, such as groceries, rent, etc.,” according to the sheriff’s office. “UCSO’s participation in the Oregon Car Care Program allows us to help our citizens and their families fix these items, which improves the safety of their vehicles — and keeps our highways safer for all.”

For information about the program, visit www.oregon.gov/osp/CarCare.

### WW.Friends meet Thursday for dinner get-together

PENDLETON — An upcoming gathering of area widows and widowers will feature a baked potato bar.

WW.Friends meets each month for friendship and to share positive experiences. It’s not a grief support group.

This month’s get-together is Thursday at 5:30 p.m. For the location, contact Sandra Nicassio at sjnicassio@outlook.com, 541-276-4708 or 541-969-2450.

# Firefighters respond to drone crash fire at UAS Range

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

The Pendleton Fire Department responded to a small grass fire caused by a drone crash north of the Pendleton airport on Wednesday afternoon.

Interim Pendleton Fire Chief Paul Berardi said fire-

fighters responded to the call around 4:10 p.m.

Berardi said the department helped the group flying the drone locate the vehicle, which he estimated was about a quarter mile north of the airfield.

The fire was about 70 square feet in size, Berardi said, describing it as “min-

imal” and “non-eventful” before it was extinguished.

Berardi said he did not know what organization the unmanned vehicle was affil-

iated with, but added that officials from the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Range were investigating the crash.

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