



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

The flat-top membrane roof of Enterprise High School will be replaced with a peaked roof this year in an \$8 million refurbishment project planned by the Enterprise School District. Other improvements, such as energy-efficient windows and HVAC, also are planned.

## Roof replacement major component of bond project

By RONALD BOND  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The Enterprise School District's plan for how it intends to use the funding from the bond tax levy approved by voters in November is in place.

Roof repair, HVAC update, asbestos abatement and installing energy-efficient windows are among nine projects that will be performed at all three schools in the district and paid for by the \$8 million the district has on hand — \$4 million from the bond levy 57% of voters said yes to late last year and \$4 million matching from an Oregon School Capital Improvement grant from the Oregon Department of Education.

The roof at all three schools will be tackled first, as Superintendent Erika Pinkerton called that the most urgent component of the project.

"We're in crisis mode with the roof, to be honest," Pinkerton said.

She shared a story of being at a Christmas play in the school her first year on the job and felt a drip of water hit her shoulder. She asked high school Principal Blake Carlsen, who was standing next to her, about it, and he pointed to a tarp on the ceiling full of water that was starting to drip.

A flat membrane roof is currently what is on the building, but there are

### ENTERPRISE BOND PROJECT

Below is a list of the projects the Enterprise School District will perform with the funding passed through a bond levy voted on last November.

For all three buildings:

- Replace membrane roof.
- Address stormwater runoff.
- Install hydronic water piping to serve new HVAC distribution system.
- Abate asbestos.
- Install energy efficient windows.
- Remove and replace damaged sidewalks.

- Remove and replace damaged asphalt.
  - Safety and security upgrades.
  - Remodel key restroom to ADA standards.
- For the high school and junior high school:
- Remodel and update science rooms.
  - Install elevator.

For the junior high school only:

- Remodel locker rooms.
- Install a ramp and a lift from the gym foyer to the gym floor level.

Source: Erika Pinkerton

times that there is standing water on it, and when the water freezes then thaws, it causes cracks in the roof.

"The installation quality was not at par," Pinkerton said of the roof, which she said was put in place about 15 or 16 years ago. "There were multiple issues when that roof was installed."

The new roof will have a pitch on it to allow better runoff.

Of the \$8 million in the project, Pinkerton said \$1.12 million is budgeted for the roof. She added that had the bond not passed, the district still would have addressed the problem, but it would have been building by building and not the three schools at once.

"The roofs, there are multiple leaks throughout the entire campus, (and) there are harder-hit areas than others," she said.

Construction on the roof is slated to begin in June.

The rest of the restoration or replacement projects will begin later in the year and will run through next summer.

Among them is another project of high importance — getting the school to ADA standards. That includes remodeling restrooms and upgrading wheelchair ramps currently in the school that are too steep, Pinkerton said. Part of the upgrades also include installing elevators in the junior high and high

schools, and at the middle school installing a lift and a ramp from the foyer to the gym.

"I'm really excited about the lifts," Pinkerton said. "There's going to be an elevator. Our ramps are going to be at an appropriate incline."

She said that because of the current ramp slant, portions of the school are more difficult to access by someone in a wheelchair.

"There are parts that they cannot (access) or they are not equitable," she said.

Other parts of the project, such as remodeling and updating the junior high and high school science rooms, are still in the development stage. The architecture firm on the job, Design West — based in Meridian, Idaho — is meeting with science teachers this week to look at the four rooms set apart for the subject and how they need to be improved, as well as other facets of the job.

Another part, which Pinkerton said should be completed by the summer of 2022, is replacing the asbestos flooring throughout all three schools. The superintendent said how much is in the floors is uncertain.

"You just don't know until you get in there," she said.

Pinkerton added a \$600,000 contingency is built into the budget for the remodel and upgrades.

## Joseph gets 'good surprises' in grants

Administrative roles focus of heated debate

By BILL BRADSHAW  
Wallowa County Chieftain

JOSEPH — The Joseph City Council received some "good surprises" from city Administrator Larry Braden, at its Thursday, April 1, meeting when Braden passed on word of two major grants the city is receiving.

According to recorded minutes of the meeting provided to the *Chieftain*, Braden told the council that each year, the city applies for a small-cities paving grant that, although it's usually only awarded every other year, Joseph was one of two cities to score high enough this year to receive a grant without affecting its eligibility for next year.

"We were notified a couple weeks ago that our application scored high enough that we actually will get \$100,000 this year and we're still eligible for the following year," he said. "So we're sitting currently on \$200,000 of paving that we're going to start going out for bid next month probably. For a town our size, that's really good news. We were not expecting that and I thought, 'No, this can't be right.' So I made the call and was told it's exactly right and they explained it to me. ... We're still 100% eligible for the upcoming (grant). We're looking at — if we play it right — we could possibly finish our goal, which is paving the city way ahead of schedule."

The other "surprise," Braden said, was the federal American Rescue Plan Act that President Joe Biden signed March 11 that will provide the city with \$229,109.

"That's also a lot of money for us," Braden said. "It's not in concrete, either, exactly what the program will look like ... it is COVID relief. We're going to have a lot more freedom to spend the money than with the CRF (Coronavirus Relief Fund) ... it's not a reimbursement. We get half up front and then half a year after that."

He said the two grants should help the city considerably.

"With those two grants for the city, those were two very nice surprises in the past month," he said.

In another matter, Braden introduced an issue that led to a heated exchange between Mayor Belinda Buswell, Councilwoman Kathy Bingham and elicited a couple comments from audience members. Braden said there appears to be confusion over the role of the mayor and the city administrator and the day-to-day function of what he is supposed to do.

"It's very frustrating for me to do my job. We currently are not compliant with the city charter. We are not compliant with the council rules and almost every single aspect of my employment contract has been violated. Doing my job in a functional, efficient manner is almost impossible right now. ... There are seri-

ous lines being crossed in the charter, the council rules and my contract," Braden said. "You, the council, need to make the decisions now, not later, and this talk has been going on for three months. You need to decide if you're going to support the charter, the council rules and in whatever capacity to support my employment contract to run this city. You will make that decision. You have to. Now, not later. It has to be done, because you have to decide what the role of the mayor is and you have to decide who holds administrative responsibility on a day-to-day basis. Is it the administrator or is it the mayor?"

Bingham pointed out that the mayor's duties are limited to conducting meetings and appointing committees.

"We as the council cannot be involved in running the city. That has to stop," she said, adding that some city residents appear to not understand that, either. "We need to send out letters to every single business, professional organization, consultant that the city has used to make sure they understand that their only contact is the public works supervisor, if it's a public works issue, or the city administrator/recorder. ... No one on this council has the right to call an attorney, has the right to call an accounting firm, has the right to call anyone we work with. That has to be the administrator."

Buswell said there appears to be confusion between her and Braden's understanding of her role as mayor.

"He has a set of personnel policies that also stipulates that the council will make certain contracts and that is where, when I spoke with Larry, we asked to have a document created ... I just want a document that clearly stipulates for him and myself that says what he's going to do from now on. We have conflicting documents."

After nearly an hour of discussion, it was agreed to abide by the city charter and council rules and leave the actual day-to-day administration work to Braden. Buswell, Bingham and others on the council voiced their support of Braden and his work and agreed there was nothing personal about the misunderstanding, but that it was purely professional.

The council also approved lists of long- and short-term goals for the city, which will help with the upcoming budgeting process that must be completed by June 30.

The list of short-term goals, aimed for completion in the next couple of years, includes a citywide cleanup day, work on the city's website, work on the city library and the city park.

The long-term goals, with a 2- to 5-year time frame, include developing an industrial task force to research possible industries for city, finish paving all city streets, committee for recreation space programs/community center and a community recreation center. Other goals were included in each, but were not audible in the recording. A list of each group of goals is to be posted at City Hall.

## 'Fire Stories' exhibit coming to Joseph Center

Chieftain staff

JOSEPH — A new exhibit of forest photos called "Fire Stories" will be on display at the Joseph Center for Arts and Culture April 23 to June 15, according to a press release.

The photos were taken from fire towers with Osborne panoramic cameras 80 years ago paired with modern replications from photographer/naturalist John F. Marshall. The contrasts show how fire and fire suppression have changed the Wallowa and Blue

mountain landscapes.

Fire Stories is a historic and contemporary exploration of wildfire in Northwest landscapes, according to the release. As humans, our relationship with fire is tangled with how we live on the land and use its resources, the release stated. Native Americans had long learned to live with fire and made it useful. European settlement brought a different sensibility and the tools and organization to control fire. Little was it known how fire is essential to the function of nature, and in attempting

to eliminate fire, man has brought worse fire on, the release said.

How does nature live with fire, and how can we? According to the release, these are questions that cannot be ignored in this unprecedented time. This exhibit will provide some answers and stimulate more thought and discussion.

Two special fire programs also are planned at no cost.

"Fire in the West" will be presented from 2-4 p.m. May 20. Stephen J. Pyne, author of *Fire in America* and *Between Two Fires*,

considered seminal texts on fire, will be the presenter via Zoom.

"The West is Burning" is a film that will be presented via streaming at the center at 7 p.m. May 27. It will be introduced by producer Cody Sheehy.

The Joseph Center is presenting the "Fire Stories" exhibit in partnership with Wallowa Resources. For more information, Megan Wolfe of the center is the coordinator and can be reached at coordinator@josephy.org or 541-432-0505.

## SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

### The Wallowa County Fair Board Scholarship(s)

will provide scholarship assistance to Wallowa County 4-H/FFA members. Applications are available from the Fair office for graduating high school students who will be attending college, vocational or trade school during the 2021 – 2022 school year.

Amounts will range from \$250 to \$1000.

Applications are available and can be picked up at the Wallowa County Fair office or e-mailed to you from [wallowacountyfair@gmail.com](mailto:wallowacountyfair@gmail.com).

Candidates must submit the following by May 15, 2021

1. Completed and signed application.
2. High school transcript or statement of GPA from Registrar.
3. Three letters of reference with one being advisor or leader.

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