

ReVision from 1A

eliminated or postponed to save several hundred thousand dollars.

Henry said, "That's kind of like the difference between jumping off of a 20-story building and a 17-story building."

The lack of funding commitment stems from a time-crunch created by ODOT's requirement to have Highway 101 paved by the end of September 2018 and the engineering, design and prep-work the city must do before they can submit an accurate cost estimate to ODOT.

In addition to ODOT, Reynolds said Lane County has committed to more funds, but at this point she has nothing in writing.

Henry said, "The question for the council is, do you want to be on the hook for that \$3.5 million? That is the decision

we should be making before FURA passes judgment on this and spends \$731,000."

After a prolonged animated debate, Henry asked for a council consensus roll call to see if the city council was willing to move forward on the possible \$3.5 million unfunded debt obligation. The council agreed three to two in favor to continue, with Henry and City Councilor George Lyddon voting against.

After the vote, Councilor Susy Lacer asked Interim Finance Director Andy Parks if the city could manage the debt service.

Parks said yes, but there might be some sacrifices to make.

The impassioned debate continued two days later when city councilors, staff and FURA board members met at the Florence Events Center to vote on whether to move forward with a supplemental budget and

to amend the MSA contract for design and engineering services.

City councilors carried the same pro and con arguments into the Wednesday meeting.

Henry and councilors Greene and Ron Preisler serve on the FURA committee, along with Ron Caputo, Dave Braley, Patricia Riley, Mike Webb, Judy Marsall and John Scott.

According to Parks, four agencies — ODOT, Lane County, Lane Area Commission on Transportation and the city's storm water fund — in addition to FURA will be contributing funds to the project.

Major funding disputes include a \$550,000 difference between what ODOT has offered and what MSA had estimated as the ODOT obligation toward the project.

Parks said DEQ may also have up to \$600,000 available for storm water funds that ReVision Florence might qualify for.

FURA directors voted to approve the supplemental

budget to increase the appropriations of the capital outlay by \$600,000.

Henry said, "We are sitting here today with a gun to our heads that says, either we do this and commit ourselves long-term, or we pull the plug. We should not be at this point. I wish there was a third alternative, to delay a decision until we get some kind of commitment from ODOT."

Reynolds answered, "In order to stay on the timeline, 60 percent design needs to be completed to ODOT on July 5, or they will no longer be doing this process with us. I don't believe you are going to have firm updated funding numbers from ODOT or the county before they even start on that work. You probably won't have additional funding numbers before the middle of May."

FURA Director Webb said, "I moved to Florence in 1988. (ODOT) had just widened Highway 101 north of Highway 126. A lot of things changed after that. The investment was made and it dramati-

cally changed the town. Sometimes you have an opportunity to do something. Especially when funds are as cheap as they are."

FURA Director Riley added, "If we do this right, the long-term benefits will be huge. This is the kind of thing that (urban renewal) investment dollars should be spent on."

Henry said, "I'm not against this project, actually, I'm in favor of this project. We started this project at \$5.5 million and we weren't going to have any debt. Somehow, the budget crept from \$5.5 million to \$6.4 million. Then it jumped to \$7.4 million."

The motion to move forward with the right-of-way project was passed by a vote of eight to one in favor, with Henry being the lone "no" vote.

"The will of the group has spoken. They are moving ahead," Henry said.

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Recent legal decisions have found that individuals who are involved in a volunteer capacity on land owned by an other can be held liable for injury or damages that occur on the land. This situation could dramatically impact field trips by limiting parental participation in off site activities.



MARK BRENNAN/SIUSLAW NEWS

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Front row: Ricky Huff, Celie Mans, Kaeli Ramos and Destinie Tatum receive Certificates of Achievement for their contributions to the Siuslaw School district at this week's school board meeting.

Blake asked the board to support a resolution to the Oregon Legislature that would indemnify the landowner from legal responsibility for these issues.

The school board unanimously passed a motion to endorse the resolution.

The next major item of business was consideration of a policy for the use of video cameras on school buses.

Siuslaw School District does not currently have an official policy regarding the use of video cameras on district transportation vehicles.

This lack of a permanent record of activities on school vehicles presents disciplinary and liability issues for the district.

Blake again presented the proposed policy, written by the Oregon School Board.

After a short discussion, the suggested policy was passed unanimously and adopted for immediate implementation by the district.

The remainder of the meeting was comprised of other reports and comments from the public.

The first of the public speakers updated the board regarding donations to enhance emergency preparation. The second speaker asked the board questions about the district's plan to address the how the change in the nation's immigration policy would impact students in the district.

Members of the board asked staff to gather information on both subjects for consideration at a later meeting.

Siuslaw Superintendent Andy Grzeskowiak followed public comments with a presentation of the Mid-Year Grade Analysis.

He also reviewed the current graduation requirements, noting some small changes that would enhance graduation rates.

One point that Grzeskowiak highlighted to the board were the 179 students that had made the Honor Roll so far this year.