

Forum from 6A

to go to school. It's not just state or local law."

She said the district only requires proof of age of the child — "either through a birth certificate or affidavit process" — before the student can be placed in a classroom.

In closing, Chapman said, "We need to listen and be open to new voices and new ideas."

Mann-Heintz said, "The reali-

ty is, schools have to be strong in order for a community to be strong. We've lost professionals and businesses in this community because we didn't make that bridge between us retirees and the foundational educational schools that we're offering."

WESTERN LANE AMBULANCE DISTRICT

Shortly after 5 p.m., Sneddon brought in the Western Lane Ambulance District candidates.

Current board president Mike Webb, Director Position 5, and

recently appointed Director Position 3, Rick Yecny, are running unopposed. Webb is vice president and commercial relationship manager at Oregon Pacific Bank. Yecny is the chief executive officer (CEO) of PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center.

"Here's where the disclosure comes. It's a position I held for the last 20 years," Sneddon said of Yecny's position. "I resigned from the board earlier this year because I was seeing increasing conflicts in both what I was doing professionally at the time and with covering the news. I had already chosen not to seek reelection and stepped down in February."

For Director Position 4, 20-year board member Anne Stonelake is running against Larry Farnsworth.

Stonelake said she and Sneddon began serving on the board at the same time in the 1990s and that she was asked by the then-administration to run.

"Proudly I have done it. I have enjoyed every year of it. It's been a pleasure and it's been a well-run district," she said. "I believe I have been a good steward of your tax dollars."

Stonelake is retired from various organizations in the Florence area.

Farnsworth was appointed to be the citizen taxpayer advocate on a board managing the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for shared administration between Western Lane and Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue. His background is in Homeland Security, finance, business ownership and working with United Airlines.

"I feel like I have some unique qualifications," he said. "Aside from being an airline captain, I used to have a previous career in hospital administration. I was a senior financial analyst for a major healthcare company and also was director of patient-business affairs for two different large hospitals."

Webb described the process of the IGA that was implemented July 2016.

"The community wanted the ambulance and fire districts to work and play better together. We opened the door again to finding a way to create an agreement where management could be provided by one," he said.

Stonelake was the only dissenting vote on both districts' boards for the IGA.

Sneddon said, "Anne, you

have some concerns about the IGA."

"Without a doubt," Stonelake answered. "As this has gone on, I'm not against the IGA. To cut to the chase, I'm not sure I like the people who are managing it. I don't think we have the right players. I have stated in every board meeting that we need to stand alone, get our own manager, and get our office back in place and get it running well."

Farnsworth, however, fully supports the process.

"I do support the IGA that was implemented by both boards and which is working very, very well. I look forward to describing how it is working for the taxpayers today," he said.

He brought in a chart to demonstrate the order of administrative succession and said that, under the IGA, four and a half full-time employees now fill the roles of six full-time employees.

Ultimately, he said, it is fiscally responsible and saves the taxpayers money.

The real confusion, however, is that no one seemed able to quantify how much.

During the discussion, several numbers were claimed, but neither Webb, Stonelake nor Farnsworth had matching answers.

Stonelake said she has been asking for itemized statements and an easy-to-read format since Western Lane began exploring the possibility of the IGA after the district completed its strategic plan.

"I want it so that I can understand it, and I can take it to one of the people in the audience and hand it to them — if they're not a banker or a head of a hospital or wherever — just us plain working folk," she said.

Farnsworth said that much of the data is available to the public on the organizations' websites.

"Keep in mind the IGA was not Jim Langborg's idea," he added. "He was tasked with implementing it."

Sneddon summarized the discussion.

"Larry, your point is that it has been an open, transparent process. What I think Anne is saying is that she has specific questions and she doesn't feel like they've been answered well enough ... The key defining issue here is trust and trust in the fire chief and administrative team that the ambulance district is contracting with," he said.

He then encouraged listeners to look into the information that

has been presented.

SUSLAW VALLEY FIRE AND RESCUE

The next board makes up the second half of the IGA, Siuslaw Valley Fire and Rescue.

Running for Director Position 1 are former volunteer firefighters Crystal Farnsworth and Ned Hickson. Running for Director Position 2 are former Siuslaw Valley Operations Chief Marvin Tipler and President and CEO of Oregon Pacific Bank Ron Green.

"This is a good one to come right after the Western Lane Ambulance District because we've heard about the IGA that was enacted within the last year, and I think it has become a bit of an issue as well," Sneddon said.

He asked the candidates to explain why they are running.

Hickson said, "The reason I decided to run for the fire board is that I was with the fire department for about 5 years ... and I realized that I was really missing a lot of my kids' stuff." "In three more years, they're all going to be gone. I thought of how I can't get that time back. I decided that what I could do to be part of something that means a lot to me is to get onto the board. I could contribute based on my experiences as a volunteer firefighter, my business experience as a corporate chef and my many years in the community. I thought it might bring something to the board that would be unique."

Hickson is currently the editor at Siuslaw News.

Farnsworth has been a volunteer with the fire department for six years. She and her husband Larry own Heceta Self Storage. She also retired from teaching middle and high school.

She said, "I decided to run for the board with the intent and goal of perpetuating and encouraging the increased and more rigorous training that has been taking place at the fire department over the last three years. I want our firefighters, both the paid employees and the volunteers, to be really well trained, so when they show up at your house for your emergency, ... they know exactly what they're doing."

"I also think it's important as a board to hold the chief accountable for the things that have come out of the strategic plan. ... There are goals, initiatives and objectives within that document that we need to be aware of and stay on."

Green is the CEO of Oregon Pacific Bank and has financed municipalities like the fire district and other districts throughout his career.

"I should say, first of all, that all three of these candidates are (firefighters), and I appreciate their service. I'm not a firefighter. I'm a 28-year banker," he said. "As I look at why I ran, there are two very important members of this board who are stepping down. John Scott and Lori Gates both have quite a bit of experience in management and finance. I see a hole of knowledge that is on the board, and I think my skill set as a community leader and finance expert ... could lend a tremendous amount of financial input and an even perspective."

The final Siuslaw Valley candidate is Tipler, who retired in November after 35 years with the fire department. In his career, he also worked as an EMT with Western Lane.

"It's in my blood," he said. "I started with the fire department when I was 17 years old."

Tipler added that he began attending board meetings early in his career.

"I learned what a good board member is, what bad board members are and which ones just showed up. ... I decided probably 25 to 30 years ago that when I retired, I would be a board member someday. I always respected the board members who gave up their time, just like the volunteer firefighters, to be on the board," he said.

Sneddon said, "It's good that there are a lot of people involved. ... But it brings up some issues that are uncomfortable to talk about. It brings up some disagreements."

He directed the conversation toward the IGA and the role of the fire chief. Then he gave some background on the current board's decision to terminate Chief Jim Langborg in July 2015 and a public forum held soon

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Florence Food Share's Saturday Open Hours



Food Share will begin receiving an additional shipment of food from Food for Lane County on the second Friday of each month starting on May 12th; therefore, our Saturday open hours are changing. For the month of May 2017, Food Share will be open May 13th and 20th. Starting in June and for the foreseeable future, we will be open on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month.

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