

District from 1A

were focused on a new job description for the position previously held by recently retired Administrative Chief Julie Brown and the district's end of year financial situation.

Director Larry Farnsworth questioned one aspect of the financial report in particular, the significantly over-budget charges for overtime for Western Lane's full-time employees.

WLAD Operations Chief Matt House responded by pointing out that there are seasonally relevant reasons for the apparent increase in labor costs, such as vacation coverage.

He also suggested that these overages would more than likely be reconciled when the end of year figures were factored into the district's final fiscal equation.

Farnsworth was also concerned with the information provided to the board. He indicated areas that should perhaps be changed or modified to more accurately reflect the district's financial situation.

House and Langborg were receptive to his suggestions, and said they would examine the information shared and the way it was presented.

Farnsworth also declared a

conflict of interest for the record, before the required vote to approve the monthly expenditures, as he owns a business that is renting storage space to WLAD.

Later in the meeting, House reported on the number of calls WLAD responded to during the month and the nature of those calls.

He also commented on the new software the district is using and the training status of WLAD's new Mobile Integrated Healthcare employee.

These comments were all positive in nature.

Director Dick Childs then asked about changing or adding to the information included in the Ambulance Report that runs weekly in the Siuslaw News. He suggested that WLAD provide more in-depth information to the public about the nature and location of calls.

This request was taken under advisement, as House and Langborg agreed to look into the possibility of modifying the information shared with the community.

The directors then approved expenditures for the month and scheduled the next board meeting for noon on Jan. 18.

Nicotine from 1A

One of the most common uses for the device is to help wean long-time smokers from actual cigarettes. A recent study published in BMJ that surveyed 160,000 people over a 15-year period found that smokers who vaped were more likely to quit.

The health benefits of the devices are still being debated. When the FDA took over regulation of the devices in 2016, they regulated the age of those who were allowed to purchase the product. But they held off on making official rulings on the health effects of the devices until further research could be completed.

A recent study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine found that e-cigarettes are associated with "substantially reduced levels of measured carcinogens and toxins relative to smoking only combustible cigarettes."

This is not to say that the devices are completely safe. Along with causing lung irritation, many of the producers of the juices used to create the vapors are not transparent in what chemicals they are actually putting into their products, as reported by The Atlantic last month.

Still, in a July statement, the FDA stated that it was delaying regulations on e-cigarettes, a possible sign that it may endorse the device as a means to get smokers to quit.

The CDC states that "E-cigarettes have the potential to benefit adult smokers who are not pregnant if used as a

complete substitute for regular cigarettes and other smoked tobacco products."

Quitting smoking is one of the main reasons that Michelle Overton, owner of the Glass Stash, decided to sell the devices.

"To be honest, both my husband and I lost both of our parents to cancer," she said. "And so that's why I'm so much against the cigarette smoking. You stink, and it's just not that attractive. And it really put both our parents in the grave."

When Lane County enacted the age restriction earlier this year, Overton did see a financial downturn.

"I would say, as far as our customer base is concerned, I've had to turn away maybe 25 percent," she said. "At first, it was drastic, but I'm making changes in the store to be able to make up for that loss."

Overton was unable to give exact numbers regarding the losses, but pointed out that the store has also been going through merchandise and management changes, which may have contributed to the lower sales.

One of the major complaints she sees is from younger military personnel arriving home after tours of duty.

The smoking rates in the military are above average, compared to the civilian population. In 2011, 24 percent of active duty personnel were smokers, compared with 19 percent of civilians, according to a Department of Defense report.

"I had someone in here yes-

terday who just got back from the military," Overton said. "He's 19 years old. He was upset because he can go fight for his country, but he can't buy tobacco. That just doesn't seem fair to me."

While the large majority of Overton's e-cigarette customers who are using the device to quit tobacco are over 50, she does see underage vapers attempting to come into the store.

"People have been waiting to be able to come into the store," she said. "At 15 years old, they want to come into the cool store. And we have to kick them out, saying, 'No, not until you're 18.' They say, 'I've been waiting for three years, and now you're telling me I have to wait until I'm 21?' I get that most often, probably more than anything."

One of the major arguments against the e-cigarettes are that they can be attractive to teenagers. Unlike traditional tobacco products, many of the inhalants are flavored, with titles like "Berry Cobbler" and "Gummy Bear."

There are conflicting studies as to whether or not e-cigarettes act as a gateway to tobacco use.

A 2017 study published in Pediatrics found that, even with the introduction of e-cigarettes, teen smoking is still decreasing rapidly, finding "e-cigarette-only users would be unlikely to have initiated tobacco product use with cigarettes."

But the CDC reports that 30.7 percent of teen e-cigarette users end up using tobacco products.

However, the CDC also reported that teen use of e-cigarettes has gone down in the past year. In 2017, 11.3 percent of high school students used e-cigarettes, down from 16 percent in 2015.

Another issue with e-cigarettes is the possibility of nicotine overdose. A recent device, called JUUL, is becoming more popular with teen smokers because it can be hidden in the palm of a hand and produces less vapors, according to a report by NPR. A single pod of JUUL juice holds the same amount of nicotine as one pack of cigarettes. Because of this, users can inhale more without realizing how much nicotine they're taking in, thus creating a greater chance of overdose.

"They're too potent," Overton said.

While she has received many requests for the product, she does not carry it in her store.

While the debate on how to completely illuminate teen smoking will continue for some time, the best way to permanently curb teen smoking is by being an example.

The 2017 Pediatrics study concluded that living with a smoker or having friends who smoke were the most likely causes of someone taking up tobacco.

"Kids start smoking whatever is available to them," Overton said. "If they have a family member that smokes cigarettes, and it's easy for them to steal cigarettes and start smoking, or if their friends have it, that's probably an easier option too."



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City Hall from 1A

"The total project cost of \$2,992,900 can be supported by our current resources with a 20-year debt service of \$216,000 annually," Messmer said. She added this would be financially feasible in the city's long-range financial plan.

During the meeting, the city council heard reports from Messmer, City Finance Director Andy Parks and architect Joe Slack with HGE Inc.

The presentations included project alternatives and cost savings options.

City Manager Erin Reynolds said, "There are a few different ways to slice this tonight."

Councilors had to choose to approve the project and, from there, which level of investment beyond the base level of construction.

Councilor Ron Preisler said, "I was looking at project costs that went up from \$1.9

to \$2.8 million. That's a very significant increase. ... I don't want to be a 'penny wise and a dollar foolish,' as the saying goes. We're talking about a lot of money in cost increases."

Councilor Joshua Greene, who attended the meeting via telephone link, responded, saying, "I do think that was a substantial increase in construction cost, but that was an economic change, and we don't have control of that."

Reynolds said construction costs continue to go up, and that putting off one aspect of the project, such as the basement remodel, could cost the city much more in the future.

"We are seeing this as true, and in architectural evaluations done for the school district most recently — they are seeing construction costs escalate like they haven't seen in the past," she said.

Reasonable increases in construction costs would be 3 percent a year, Reynolds said, but in the recent year, those costs have jumped 20 percent.

Port of Siuslaw

Commissioner Nancy Rickard regularly attends Florence City Council meetings. She talked about the Siuslaw School District's planning process for necessary maintenance and improvements for the school building.

"It's costing us so much more, just from not getting the bond. And the need there is huge," she said. "I hate to see a delay in the things that we need, because it's going to cost more and more. If there is any way at all to find the dollars, for both projects, the city and the school, then I think we need to do it."

This was supported during the public comments, when contractor Dan Lofy, with Lofy Construction, advised going with a metal roof, as the longevity of the roofing would clear the possible savings of switching to composite shingles.

Mayor Joe Henry said, "I guess we just need to decide. Are we going to nickel-and-dime this to death, or do we want to do it now and avoid that additional cost in the future? That's a council decision."

Councilor Susy Lacer said, "I'm looking at our goals up there, and right below City of Florence, it says, 'Oregon's Premier Coastal Community.' So yes, this project is coming in over what the budget estimates were when it was originally looked at two years ago. Yes, everyone knows construction costs are increasing. Yes, it's a lot of money. Yes, we the council are charged with being fiscally responsible with our taxpayers' money. I'm in favor of doing

the project as recommended, because we are trying to be, and our adopted goal is, to be a premier coastal community. We have a huge ReVision Project coming up. This remodel of City Hall is part of that to set a good example for the development of our fair city. I think it would be most cost effective to just do it now."

The city council discussed the design alternatives before ultimately going with the design as presented.

"My personal opinion would be to move forward with it, and we will have a beautiful City Hall we can all be very proud of," Lacer said.

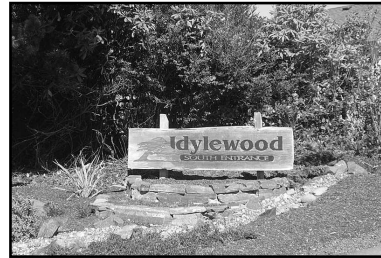
The council voted 4 to 1 to approve the \$2.9 million, with Preisler opposed.

"At the end of the day, it just makes sense to do it now," Henry said.

Messmer submitted a release affirming that the remodel will tie into the ReVision Florence project and to set an example for redevelopment in the area.

For more information, visit ci.florence.or.us/citymanager/city-hall-remodel-expansion.

Henry ended the meeting by saying, "This is the time of year for reflection and to say thanks for all the things in our personal lives, especially the way city council and staff work together. As a team, we have all these things in motion that will make us the premier Oregon coastal community — if we're not already. We've gotten a lot of recognition in the last couple of years, and I think we have to be thankful for that."

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