

VOTING from page 1A

Out of the 403 ballots received, only 401 were countable. For instance, one vote was discarded because a resident sent a vote in through an opinion poll the estate had sent out earlier in the year, not on an official ballot. That "yes" vote had to be discounted.

And not all of the ballots received had countable votes. In one instance, one resident had sent in one ballot

with a "yes" vote, and another with a "no." Both ballots were discounted.

In another instance, an envelope was completely empty.

"That was probably in protest," Nelson said. "There's people who feel strongly about not changing the declaration. It's like making amendments to the U.S. Constitution. There's people who feel it's a bad idea just on principle."

Because of the controversy surrounding the vote, Florentine Estates

worked to ensure that the vote count was open to the public and transparent.

As for the voting process itself, residents sent their votes in via a sealed envelope which did have the resident's lot number written on it. This allowed the vote counters to record who voted, but it did not show who voted for what. Instead, the vote counters discarded the envelopes without looking at the ballots, tossing the envelopes aside and placing

the ballots in a bin, unorganized.

Once the ballots were removed from the envelopes, the number of ballots were counted, and work began on recording the votes.

There were two teams of two vote counters at work. One would read off the results of the ballot while the other would record the vote. When one count was done, the ballots were switched between the two teams, who again counted the same votes.

There was a snag in the process

when both team's votes didn't match.

"One group had 45 and 5, the other group had 44 and 6," Nelson said. "If they don't match, we have to recount everything all over again."

So, the votes were recounted until both sets matched. The process took three hours in total.

Once completed, the Siuslaw News was allowed to view the ballots and procedures used in the vote to authenticate the final tally was accurate and that the process was fair.

TRANSPORTATION from page 1A

"At our last meeting, we were in the process of issuing two RFPs (requests for proposal) — one for the vehicle and one for the contractor," Ahlen said. "These processes are essentially done at this point. We issued an RFP for the vehicle and got multiple bids back."

LTD selected a contractor to build the vehicle, an Eldorado Aero Tech 25-foot mid-size bus.

"This model is very similar to your current Rhody Express vehicle, in both appearance and function," Ahlen said.

When this new vehicle will be built and available for use is still

uncertain, according to Ahlen, as there are numerous buses being ordered by LTD and an exact delivery date is not yet known.

"I've requested an ETA on when the build will be finished, and I haven't gotten a response yet," he said. "This vehicle is part of a nine-vehicle purchase that LTD is currently doing, so we are getting lots of vehicles. We have asked for this one to be the very first one that rolls off the line."

The second element of the Florence to Yachats route that Ahlen wanted to announce was the selection of the company chosen to run the route.

"We had four different bid-

ders which we presented to our bid proposal committee. Based on their recommendations, we selected one and issued a notice to proceed. That notice has gone to the LTD Finance Committee and the notice to authorize was given to River City Taxi," Ahlen said.

River City Taxi is a transportation service in Florence that currently runs five taxis within the City of Florence, as well as the Rhody Express bus service.

"We do transportation in and out of town, wherever you need to go," stated the River Cities Taxi / Rhody Express Facebook page.

For more information, call 541-997-8520, email rctaxi@yahoo.com or visit ltd.org/rhody.

The selection of River City Taxi as the operator for the new bus route was well received by those in attendance, including TAC committee member Don Patton and ex-officio members Ron Preisler and Josh Haring. In addition, Glen Southerland and Eric Rines from the city's Planning Department also attended.

Ahlen answered a few more questions about specific design elements of the bus before concluding his presentation.

Another oversight responsibility that TAC has relates to the use of the Rhody Express as a means of providing bus service to the city during holidays and special events. The committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Florence City Council and the need for bus service during this summer's high-profile events was discussed in detail.



PHOTOS BY CHANTELE MEYER/SIUSLAW NEWS

Lane Transit District and the City of Florence Transit Advisory Committee announced that River Cities Taxi was awarded the bid to provide service in the upcoming Florence-Yachats Bus Line. River Cities unveiled this news during May's Rhododendron Festival Grand Floral Parade. The start date has yet to be announced.



Siuslaw News Garage Sale GUIDE

6/30 Saturday only 8am-4pm
1210 Willow Court
Furnitures, clothes, antiques, etc.
Everything must go!

Moving Sale Sat.-Sun. 6/30-7/1 9am-5pm
2175 23rd Street
Household items, LOTS of fishing, hunting, tools, yard tools, men & women's clothing, books, toys & games!

Rummage Sale Sat. June 30 9-5
Mapleton Grange, East Mapleton Rd.
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Friday and Saturday June 29th and 30th 10 am - 5 pm
All proceeds go towards the School lunch program
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the Rhody Express and will manage the new bus route.

He said the large number of vehicles trying to park in the Port of Siuslaw parking lots and the hundreds of people walking around Historic Old Town Florence on Independence Day makes driving a bus through the area very dangerous and difficult.

"It is really a challenge to try to maintain any kind of schedule during the day. There are so many cars and so many people that there are times when it is impossible to navigate the bus safely," Haring said.

The committee decided to accept Haring's advice and will recommend that the Rhody Express not provide service on the Fourth of July.

Another area that the TAC wanted to clarify for the public was the current schedule and pick-up and drop-off locations for the Pacific Crest bus routes that take travelers from Coos Bay to Eugene and back again.

The Pacific Crest route now picks up and drops off passengers at the Shell gas station, 951 Highway 101, seven days a week. In Florence, Pacific Crest picks up riders going to Eugene at 8:15 a.m. and drops off riders coming from Eugene to Florence at 5:20 p.m.

For more information on route schedules for the Rhody Express, the Pacific Crest schedule and the other travel support options available to Florence residents, visit ci.florence.or.us/community/transportation-florence.

from the elementary and middle schools to Miller Park is short and the route is well lit.

TAC said that another major factor was the limited space available for buses to safely navigate in the parking area at Miller Park.

The issue of safe navigation was again cited as a major problem when considering whether to provide bus service to the Old Town area next week on the Fourth of July.

Josh Haring is the owner of