

**WLFEA from page 1A**

Contract negotiators have been unable to reach a middle ground on a number of issues, said Schick, and Financial Officer Dina McClure suggested a change in the individuals negotiating could improve the situation.

"With the breakdown in constructive negotiations, the district requested that both sides go to mediation," said Schick, who explained that the first mediation session was held Oct. 8, with a second meeting set to take place Nov. 4.

"During the first session, we did see some positive movement to move us towards a possible agreement," Schick said. "Unfortunately, we still have not received any cooperation from

the union in the form of any counterproposals despite what we were initially promised. As with SVFR, we are hopeful the new union lead negotiator will enable us to reach a contract agreement sooner rather than later."

McClure presented an overview of the monthly expenditures and an office equipment update.

She also reported the expected reimbursement for the WLFEA participation in the August Sweet Creek fire has been received in the amount of \$19,000.

Reports from Division Chief of Operations Matt House showed a slight increase in call response volume for EMS for September from this year to last, but a much more dramat-

ic increase in SVFR responses, from 78 last September, to 168 this year. The upswing reflects in an annual increase from 252 at this time last year, to 508 at this point in 2020 — a 49 percent increase — with three months remaining.

"Increases in fire and general service calls was due in part to the storm that came through on Labor Day weekend, which caused a huge influx of calls through that period," House said.

Another program with a significant impact, not only for Florence but surrounding communities, is the Mobile Crisis Response (MCR) team.

Lori Severance, LCSW, coordinates the program which supports the community in areas that are not necessarily criminal

or violent in nature and which do not require first responders.

These include issues which may be suited to discussion, empathy and advice.

"Several meetings were held this past month with Kathy Smith, Lane County contract facilitator, and Jason Hawkins, CEO of Peace Harbor Hospital, to transition the MCR Case Manager position from being a PeaceHealth employee to being an MCR worker who will work part-time as the MCR Case Manager," said Severance. "This will not only be more efficient but will also result in a cost savings for the MCR program."

Negotiations have also begun to allow PeaceHealth emergency department staff to request an MCR response for patients with mental health, trauma-re-

lated or homeless issues. This would increase MCR's ability to address the mental health needs in the Florence area in a much more comprehensive and immediate manner than simply by police referral.

Another issue discussed in the meeting, brought to directors by Schick, was the retention of Liz Loomis in public affairs to coordinate efforts related to the roll out of the information campaign for the district's upcoming levy request.

Loomis has a strong record of accomplishment, according to Schick, who has worked with her firm in the past. He assured directors that hiring Loomis would be a significant advantage in placing the request for financial support before voters.

Loomis' presentation covered

the services she was willing to provide to inform and educate the public about the levy and the need for the public support of that levy.

Loomis was asked a few questions regarding her \$60,000 service fee, and for clarification on what additional expenses might be expected. The board then agreed to revisit the proposal at a later time, with additional information in hand.

Directors also discussed PERS issues and how best to present that impending organizational expense to the public in an attempt to educate residents on this major financial obligation.

There were no director comments and the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 19.

**COMMITTEE from page 1A**

that we want to work with them — not govern them or judge them."

This comment was well received and was emblematic of a new approach to the purchase and display of art in Florence — one that takes the personalities out of the equation and focuses on the end result of providing an economically beneficial and visually appealing component to Florence.

City council ex-officio member Councilor Woody Woodbury was supportive of this

expansion of communication between PAC and the public. He also applauded another idea discussed by Vice Chair Jo Beaudreau, encouraging PAC to focus not only on the visual arts, but also drama, poetry, culinary and performance arts.

One of the main issues that has surfaced in the past two years has been funding for PAC. The original relationship between PAC and the Florence Urban Development Agency (FURA) was supportive, with funds from FURA used to purchase the Quince Street Mural.

The reaction to the mural's

content — and what some voiced was a seemingly closed circle of input — was the main catalyst for FURA funding being redirected away from the PAC. When this shift occurred, part of a growing public conflict between Mayor Joe Henry and Councilor Joshua Greene, future FURA funding for art was eliminated.

PAC was left with few city-supported options for the purchase of art pieces. This dynamic has forced PAC to reconsider its mission and how to implement that mission with essentially no incoming

funding.

Springer addressed the changed nature of the PAC process by reminding members that there was a way for PAC to move forward.

"We have a very detailed grant management plan that was done for us about a year ago. It essentially lays out month by month and by organization where grant money is available to the committee, how much it is and what you have to do to get it. And we have that plan, it is ours," Springer said.

He said he would reintroduce the formation of a sub-commit-

tee or other forum to address these possible grant opportunities more directly in the future.


The final PAC workplan will be consolidated by Moehrke, adding suggestions from members to the previously uncompleted goals of PAC, then have them ready for presentation to the full council in November.

Moehrke then presented one topic for members to consider in an attempt to expand what PAC can do to keep the public involved safely with public art. One of the projects is a "Coastal Quest" scavenger hunt, which would be created and presented

to coastal communities by Oregon State University.

The idea would be to identify unique art-related locales or outdoor art installations which people could travel to and find on their own. The advantages of this type of a program include avoidance of large groups, as well as promoting outside activities related to the scavenger hunt that would be safer than traditional activities and at a lower cost for participation.

The next PAC meeting is scheduled for Nov. 30. For more information, visit [www.ci.florence.or.us/bc-pac](http://www.ci.florence.or.us/bc-pac).




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