

**SIUSLAW from page 1A**

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be Wednesday, April 28, at 6:30 p.m. Public input is welcome, and people will be able to watch live via the district's "97-J" YouTube account.

The 2021-22 budget has to be adopted by the Siuslaw School Board before June 30. The current draft of the 2021-22 Budget Message, the budget calendar and other documents can be found at [www.siuslaw.k12.or.us/o/siuslaw-school-district/browse/204221](http://www.siuslaw.k12.or.us/o/siuslaw-school-district/browse/204221).

At the conclusion of the Budget Committee work session, the regular session of the Siuslaw School Board began with a roll call of directors. The beginning of the meeting also featured a sign language presentation of the Pledge of Allegiance by Siuslaw Elementary students in Chris Lewis' class.

This was followed by the board's approval of the con-

sent agenda and review of policies.

The board voted to approve policies JHC: Student Health Services and Requirements and EFAA: District Nutrition Services. The board also reviewed Policy IIA-AR(2): Procedures for the Reconsideration of Instructional Materials. This policy will be used if people want to ban a book from being accessed from the Siuslaw School District's library.

"This provides a simple document and format for library materials if there were to be a challenge and people wanted to address [concerns about] a book," said Grzeskowiak. "It actually has to be documented and not necessarily just an opinion piece. We have to know what is being addressed in the book, and make sure that we're

dealing with the book itself, and not what somebody has heard about the book. It follows the same format as all of our other basic complaint procedures."

Next, Hyak co-owners Robbie Wright and Neil Ecker presented about work the Florence-based internet pro-

gram. The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund is specifically designed to help subsidize delivering internet to very expensive places."

The project will reach 15 to 20 percent of Siuslaw School District's approximate 900 households with fiber inter-

net in the next couple years. Part of the presentation was to ask the Siuslaw School District to consider joining a private-public agreement so Hyak can secure a letter of credit for three to four years. The letter of credit is part of the grant approval process, and Hyak has also been in contact with other entities for additional funding support.

The Siuslaw School Board, cognizant of the project's timeline, began to discuss the issue and ask further questions. Directors decided to schedule a special work session to decide on the issue on Monday, April 26, at 6 p.m.

After this discussion, the board approved Item No. 041421-6.4, a supplemental budget for the current school year.

Directors followed this by passing Resolution No. 041421-6.5: 20th Street Pedway Vacation. The resolution allows the district to vacate an easement between 1499 and 1545 20th St. so an adjacent property owner can expand their yard.

The next resolution, No. 041421-6.6: Interagency Agreements — Bus Driver Testing — was also passed. It allows Siuslaw School District to join an interagen-

cy agreement with Blachly School District to test school bus drivers for their commercial driver license.

The last big item on the agenda was the approval of Resolution No. 041421-6.7, which had to do with the superintendent's contract.

Grzeskowiak's salary amount must be negotiated by April 30 of each school year. Following a salary freeze for the 2020-21 school year, the proposed changes for 2021-2022 include a 2 percent increase to \$121,330.

Director John Barnett made the motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded by Director Dennis King.

During the discussion, Director Suzanne Mann-Heintz said, "I just want to make a comment for the record that this is a very modest increase, and that this still keeps our superintendent very low in terms of same-size district salaries. ... I personally wish it were more."

She added that the past year required working long hours while being on call.

"Last year was a was a wild year," Director Guy Rosinbaum said in agreement. "I watched that gentleman [Grzeskowiak] do things that were beyond impressive — take charge and lead this school district in a way I really think very few people would have been capable of doing."

Rosinbaum served as board chair until June, so he worked closely with Grzeskowiak in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. He said he witnessed the superintendent work to increase food services, access

to internet and other support to area families.

"I watched him drive all over this county delivering groceries and working out the process of getting families the help they needed during an extremely stressful time," Rosinbaum said. "We are beyond lucky to have him working for us and I want to say thank you ever so much for making what probably was one of the worst years of my life a lot easier to deal with. So yes, thank you very much, Andy."

The board voted five to one to approve the superintendent contract and salary.

Director Dennis King voted against, saying, "To be clear, Mr. Grzeskowiak does a lot of things very well for this school district. However, I'm still going to vote 'no' this year. I think it's time that we throw the net out there, look around and head in a different direction. But I agree he's done some things very, very well."

The meeting ended with reports from the superintendent, business manager, administrators and board members. Among the reports was news that standardized testing will take place in Oregon this year, as the federal administration did not grant state waivers. The tests will be scaled back and be limited to one or two subjects per grade level. Families may choose to opt out of the testing under Oregon law.

School board members also acknowledged a Siuslaw High School student's death by suicide this spring.

"I wanted to express heartfelt appreciation for all the members of the crisis team and the other staff that jumped in and assisted living students work through the sad loss of one of their co-students in a suicide," Mann-Heintz said. "I just want to express appreciation to the team and have us all reflect on the costs of COVID that are beyond medical."

Burns also acknowledged the staff members who are leaving the school district.

"This last year has been tough on a lot of folks throughout the district. It's really tough seeing the resignations and retirements. ... We really appreciate our staff and wish them the best in their next ventures wherever they're going to," he said.

For more information about Siuslaw School District, visit [siuslaw.k12.or.us](http://siuslaw.k12.or.us).

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— Siuslaw School Board Director Guy Rosinbaum

vider is doing with the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Rural Digital Opportunity Fund.

"As a lot of us have seen with COVID, the need for high-speed internet — and quality high-speed internet — has dramatically increased in the last 12 months," Wright said. "And either luckily or with foresight, the FCC years ago started working on this

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