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be looking to have those 84 students out on the field utilizing the south bleachers for families ... to watch their student on that special day," Gerot said.

In addition, the district is working with the City of

Florence to plan a Graduation Parade at noon that day.

Siuslaw School Board representatives often are involved in the graduation ceremony, with directors John Barnett and Suzanne Mann-Heintz expressing interest in helping to hand out diplomas.

Board President Bob Sneddon said, "It's an honored tradition by many who have been on the school board."

It will be Mann-Heintz' last formal event as a seated board member, as her term expires in June. Barnett is running unopposed for his seat in the May 18 Special Election.

The rest of the meeting dealt with a consent agenda, action items, public comment and further reports. Before the agenda was approved, however, Director Dennis King moved to revise the agenda to talk about policy GBG, "Staff Participation in Political Activities."

The board followed procedure to first agree to add the item and then voted to approve the agenda as amended, with the policy to be discussed as item 6.1.3.

When the meeting progressed to the agenda item, King gave his reasons for adding the policy as a discussion item.

"I'll make this pretty quick. It may or may not be relevant to a lot of you or part of the community, but it just seems like there's an elephant in the room right now. And I just wanted to throw this out there to show that at least we're thinking about this and talking about it," he said.

King referred to a Guest Viewpoint submitted to the *Siuslaw News* by Mann-Heintz, "New School Board Needs Equal Representation" (May 8).

Guest Viewpoints are generally submitted by community members with specific knowledge, experience or authority on a particular topic or area of discussion. *Siuslaw News* separates these longer-length Opinion page submissions from shorter Letters to the Editor.

King read from the policy, which stated, "On all controversial issues, employees must designate that the viewpoints they represent on the issues are

personal and are not to be interpreted as the district's official viewpoint."

King continued, "The things that were put out there in the paper, they're not illegal. I'm sure it's all okay. The references here are ORS Chapter 244 and ORS 260.432. I didn't look those up, not going to either. My point for bringing it up is just so that — let me go back to our board governing agreement."

At that point, Sneddon asked if King felt the policy applied to not only district staff, but the board of directors, to which King agreed.

"If you look at our board governing agreement, there are a lot of things in there that we do, because it's a good thing to do," King said. He continued, "I'm throwing this out there, just to show the public that we're aware of that kind of issue. Perhaps, in the future, the board governing agreement could add a paragraph about when it's political time, this is the kind of thing that we may or may not think is appropriate. So that's it. That was my reason for adding it."

Sneddon then opened discussion to the rest of the school board.

Mann-Heintz spoke next, acknowledging that the agenda item was included due to her submission to the *Siuslaw News*.

"I just want to make it real clear that this was submitted as a Letter to the Editor, I was very careful to speak in the first person, and the decision to make it a guest viewpoint and to put 'school board member' there were editorial decisions by the *Siuslaw News*," she stated. "Whenever I submitted articles in the past, I've remembered to say, 'Please do not list me as a school board member,' because I know that we're not supposed to do that. I also took into account the fact that I am a departing board member. I haven't re-upped in order to run again for this position and I won't be serving with the candidates that I endorsed."

Her Guest Viewpoint concerned the May 18 Special Election, where three positions for the Siuslaw School Board have a total of six candidates, two of which are women.

"I believe it's my legal

right to have an opinion on that and to make an endorsement. Also, there are precedents from other elected officials to do the same," Mann-Heintz said. "I just want to let everybody know that it was thoughtful, and that I did consider those things. My intent was merely to express my own thoughts and reflections on the election and to name the candidates that I would really like to see elected. That was it."

King followed this by saying, "Again, I wasn't saying that anything was illegal. I was just putting it out there so that perhaps the next board could consider that as part of the agreement."

Next, Sneddon said, "I'm glad to bring this up, Dennis, because we will have, probably in August, this very conversation on our board operating agreement."

He encouraged King to bring the topic up again with the new board that will be in place after the election.

Sneddon continued, "Suzanne, I would just like to say I saw absolutely nothing wrong with your letter. It was well thought out and it was very clear that it was your opinion. To me, it was very clear. I did receive some correspondence from somebody in the district or in the community who made the inference that it was possibly illegal, which I vehemently oppose that, because what that person was stating would have been an infringement on your constitutional rights to freedom of speech. And that person also demanded a retraction in the *Siuslaw News*."

King expressed willingness to continue the conversation at a later time, saying, "I don't have a dog in the fight."

He had, however, submitted his own opinion piece to the *Siuslaw News*, which ran May 12, the day of the Siuslaw School Board meeting. He countered Mann-Heintz' Guest Viewpoint with "New School Board Needs Wise Representation."

During the meeting, Sneddon asked for any further comment from the board, which prompted Director Diana Pimlott

to say: "I would just like to comment that I think as a board member, it is important that any comments we make may be considered as a reflection of the entire board as a whole. And we need to be very careful at any point of our tenure, to ensure that our viewpoint isn't misrepresented as the opinion of the entire board. I'm glad to see that we're having this discussion, and that we'll be looking at this later on this summer as we review our board principles or standings."

Later, when the meeting concluded, Sneddon asked that future agenda additions be submitted ahead of time to the board chair so they will have time to research the item and confirm the process with Robert's Rules of Order.

During the rest of the meeting, the board passed the consent agenda and heard a first reading of Policy EEAE, "Student Transportation in Private Vehicles." The board also reviewed Policy EBBB-AR, "Accident/Incident Report."

In addition, the board received a report on the 2021-22 proposed budget, which was approved by the Budget Committee on April 28.

Business Manager Kari Blake talked about two positions the district is looking to add. These would be for a Talented and Gifted (TAG) coordinator and an administrator to help with the transition between middle and high school.

According to Grzeskowiak, the TAG coordinator would be able to work with students from kindergarten to 12th grade.

"We have staff in place to do testing and identification, and we can put money into accounts for

supplies and services, but if there's nobody there to assist with designing and lesson implementation, that money can just sit there in the account and go unused," he said. "We need someone that can assist teachers in designing lessons as well as co-teach lessons and coordinate other opportunities across the grade levels to address those unique needs."

The second position would be a "utility person that can assist with eighth grade/ninth grade transition, attendance services, alternative services, and helping shepherd those kids into a more successful path from eighth- to ninth- to 10th grade," Grzeskowiak said. "In essence, being a second assistant principal between the middle school and the high school."

While the district has looked into adding this position in the past, supplemental funds may be coming from the state.

"These are the pieces that we have put in for board consideration as we go forward with the final draft of the budget for next year," Grzeskowiak said.

The board seemed amenable to these new positions.

Director Paul Burns said, "In my 16 years on the board, TAG has been underfunded and underpromoted in the schools. ... It's a good start, but it shouldn't be the end."

The 2021-22 budget will be approved at the Siuslaw School Board meeting on Wednesday, June 16.

In other Budget Committee news, there is now an open position on the committee. The partial term would expire on June 30, 2022.

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• Urologist Dr. Bryan Melhiff attends.
• Tuesday Lunch Group (3rd Tuesday) 12 noon - 1:00 p.m. - Ichiban Chinese/Japanese Restaurant
• Urologist Dr. Roger McKimmy attends.
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