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Cottage Grove Sentinel

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Worksession details Harrison school bond process

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A sizeable crowd joined the South Lane School District Board of Directors Monday night to discuss efforts to secure a bond levy to replace the aging Harrison Elementary School building in Cottage Grove.

Moved to the Cottage Grove High School library to accommodate the crowd, the meeting functioned as a school board worksession but was also billed as a "community conversation" about the bond process, a conversation that included presentations about the need for a new Harrison building, the work that's already been done to try

to secure the bond and brainstorming about what the proper school might look like.

Board President Tammy Hodgkinson welcomed the group and spoke of how much "forward momentum there is to get this ball rolling." Superintendent Krista Parent then addressed the need for a new Harrison.

The building on 10th Street was built in 1948 to house just 125 students, though Parent said it's now tasked with housing about 450. With regard to other items that may be covered by the bond, there are about \$5 million worth of deferred maintenance projects throughout the District, Parent said, and security and fire protection are ei-

ther inadequate or non-existent district-wide. Technology is also inadequate at every school, and maintenance of the Warren H. Daugherty Aquatic Center — an aging district facility that's also been the subject of scrutiny during the bond process — has almost become unmanageable, according to Parent, who added that the District feels it has the "perfect opportunity" to secure a bond from voters to pay for these and other upgrades.

She explained that the bond used to build the current Cottage Grove High School drops significantly in cost in 2017 and that a new bond could continue where the old one left off. A similar plan in other school districts has led to

the passage of bonds, she said.

In addition, the Oregon Legislature recently passed Senate Bill 447, which could provide \$4-8 million in matching grant funds for the South Lane bond process — the criteria include the percentage of students at the poverty level and a first come, first served approach beginning in May of 2016 (the District also hopes to put the bond before voters in the May, 2016 election).

Parent pointed to a community survey with 55 percent of respondents saying they'd support the bond even if it raised their property tax rate and 89 percent that said they would support the bond if it didn't raise taxes. An advisory committee has recommended

a 25-year bond that could raise about \$29.5 million to build a new school and make other upgrades.

Still, there are questions as yet unanswered, such as where the current Kennedy High School building would be relocated from the Taylor Street property where a new Harrison would be built. Four athletic fields would also be lost at the property with the construction of a new school.

The District has formed planning and campaign committees to spearhead the bond efforts, and if the bond passes, it hopes to open the new Harrison school in the fall of 2018.

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Health Fair focuses on quality of life

Close to two-dozen vendors and guest speakers showcased offerings that aim to bolster health and well-being at the first Cottage Grove Health and Wellness Fair. Representatives from local in-home and senior care facilities, rehabilitation centers, product manufacturers, spiritual health advocates and health-care workers presented their wares at the Cottage Grove Bible Church Monday. Speakers touched on topics including foot care, nutrition and Medicare.

Grove Medical Equipment and the Cottage Grove Caregiver's Association organized the first event, which Grove Medical's Michele Savage said is expected to become an annual occurrence.

"It's all about fostering a healthy lifestyle, about promoting quality of life and community awareness," Savage said.



photo by Jon Stinnett

Representing Oregon Telecommunications and Relay Service, Linda Diaz (left) talks with Ellie Golding about telephone options available for those with a variety of disabilities, including trouble hearing, memory loss and loss of vision.

Trick-or-treating set for Friday, Oct. 30

Group makes decision to hold event Friday instead of Saturday evening

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

A group of local leaders recently gathered to plan Cottage Grove's Halloween festivities, acknowledging a difficult decision that has been met with approval by some and dismay by others.

Cottage Grove has hosted Halloween trick-or-treating downtown for some time now, and for the past few years, Main Street has been closed for trick-or-treating during the event. It's an arrangement that has drawn massive crowds downtown, but having Oct. 31 itself fall on a Saturday this year prompted a look at whether Friday or Saturday evening would be best for trick-or-treating.

Representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, the Cottage Grove Main Street Pro-

gram and the Sentinel met with downtown merchants — who typically supply the "treats" for the annual trick-or-treating — to try to determine which would be the best night for the event. They say the response was split pretty much down the middle between those who prefer Friday and those who feel it should happen on Saturday, though the group eventually decided that trick-or-treating will take place Friday from 3-5 p.m. with the Downtown Art Walk following at 6 p.m.

It's a decision that irked at least one local resident, who voiced her disapproval at the Monday, Oct. 12 meeting of the Cottage Grove City Council. During a public comment period, Tinika Ossman-Steier stated that having downtown trick-or-

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Donations bolster Library's children's book collection

Youth Services Librarian Valarie Johns shows the inscription in a new book that identifies it as a donation at a ribbon-cutting for new children's books held after Friday's storytime.



photo by Jon Stinnett

Foundation, library friends and individuals donate new books

BY JON STINNETT
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

An added bit of pageantry accompanied the Cottage Grove Library's weekly Storytime for Tots Friday morning.

Following the stories and songs for kids, the Library held a ribbon-cutting to dedicate new books provided by a grant from the locally based Pilcrow Foundation, the Friends of the Cottage Grove Library and two individuals.

Founded in 2013, the Pilcrow Foundation works to provide new hardcover children's books to small public libraries throughout the United States; its director, Karren Timmermans, hails from Cottage Grove, and the Foundation is based here.

"Libraries are often the center of the community, where people come together to learn and share ideas," said the Foundation's website. "Providing quality children's books to

rural public libraries ensures an opportunity for active engagement within the community and lifelong learning."

The foundation provides a two-to-one match of community donations toward the purchase of new books, and the Foundation matched the \$400 gift from the Friends of the Library to put \$800 toward the purchase of 93 new children's books. These included board books, picture books, juvenile fiction and books for the Spanish-language juvenile section. In addition, Hal Berenson and Laura Ackerman donated 23 math and science books valued at over \$400.

"We got a great list of books to choose from, though we had a hard time choosing them," said Valarie Johns, Youth Services Librarian. "This is pretty much equal to our entire children's book budget, and it's going to allow us to provide a much-needed update to our collection."

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