

## DISCUSSION

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Coordinator Garrett Bridgens for about a half-hour, after which council candidates Kenneth Michael Roberts, Bob Ehler, Amy Slay, Henry Lancaster and Ivan DelSol had the floor. Roberts and DelSol are campaigning for the Council's open at-large seat; Slay is running unopposed in Ward IV, while Lancaster and Ehler hope to be elected in Ward II. Ward II candidates Merlyn Adams and Rodney Cimburke were not in attendance.

Bridgens began each discussion by addressing the partnership between the City and School District.

"I think that relationship is important," he said. "My question is, what do you think that relationship should look like?"

Boone responded that there is "no benefit to siloing ourselves away and saying we have to go our own way when there are so many projects we can work together on." Gowing said that both the City and School District are charged with "raising and developing our youth into good citizens whether they stay here or move away." Fleck pointed out existing projects such as the fiber optics backbone that have benefited both organizations.

When asked about Cottage Grove's biggest challenge, Gowing spoke of the need to create "an environment that can allow kids to stay here after they graduate," one that is safe and features solid infrastructure and job opportunities. Boone cited infrastructure as the City's biggest need by far.

Fleck cited housing as Cottage Grove's biggest challenge, adding that he would like to lower construction fees to en-

courage development.

The candidates were asked about the City's role in funding the Warren H. Daugherty Aquatic Center, which is owned by the School District. Fleck responded that he supports the pool "completely."

"As long as our budget is in good shape, I plan on continuing that relationship," he said.

Gowing responded that the \$50,000 or so the City spends to fund public use of the pool is a win-win for both organizations and the citizenry and that he's never seen an issue that drew such community support as the future of the pool. Boone, meanwhile, pointed out that he's been the lone City Councilor to oppose city funding for the pool.

"The reason is not that I'm against the pool," he said. "The portion that the city is funding is for public access. But it seems that the public use is dominated by a small group of citizens. The way we're funding the pool isn't sustainable, and I believe that money could be better used elsewhere."

After a short break, the Council candidates got their turn to answer the same questions.

Regarding the partnership between the City and South Lane, Councilor and candidate Roberts pointed out that he has worked with the Youth Advisory Council and is hoping to help get City Council meetings televised.

"It's great to be working together," he said.

Ehler responded that the partnership is a beneficial one, though he doesn't "see where can do much more than we're doing."

"The City is in a bind," he said. "Unless we pass another bond or raise taxes, we're kind

of stuck."

Slay disagreed that the partnership could not be expanded.

"There are at least 3000 families in this community, so how do you not have a partnership?" she asked. "I would love to see it grow through volunteer opportunities."

Lancaster stated that more productive ways of educating youth are necessary.

"We need to look at ways to help kids get out there and involved in the community," he said.

DelSol said that finding the overlap of the mission of both organizations is key.

For the next question, Ehler cited housing as Cottage Grove's biggest challenge.

"We're bringing in jobs, but there's no place to put the people who come here," he said.

"We have a drug problem, and that's not something people want to talk about," Slay said. DelSol said the core issue is the economy.

"Cottage Grove needs to find its industry, its niche," he said.

Roberts listed finding ways for youth to become involved in Cottage Grove is a key concern.

Each council candidate said they would continue funding and supporting the pool, and most mentioned the town's people as its greatest asset.

Superintendent Krista Parent said that the meeting proved there are issues the District and City can work on together, particularly housing.

"We're the largest employer in Cottage Grove," she said. "But we have a hard time attracting young teachers because they can't find a place to live."

## COALITION

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"We know well that this has to be a project specifically for Cottage Grove," said Community Sharing's Lise Colgan. "We're aware of some Grovers' opinions on this issue."

Coalition members said that "some Grovers" tend to believe that by providing services and opportunities for the homeless in Cottage Grove, the community might be enabling those who prefer that lifestyle or even welcoming those without homes from other communities.

"The image that community

members have of this issue isn't always correct," said Jean, who pointed out that many of the area's unhoused have lived here in various situations in this area for some time and are often victims of generational poverty.

The Coalition has been meeting monthly since February and is meeting more often of late. They say presentations to area groups have been met with positive feedback. The search is on for a place to locate the village, and Jean said the City of Cottage Grove has also reacted positively to their efforts, though there

are still many details to address.

Should the outreach be successful in Cottage Grove, Ginsberg said that Square One Villages will be looking toward this project as a model for other rural communities.

The Coalition will make a presentation regarding its efforts to the Cottage Grove City Council on Monday, Nov. 14. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the Council chambers at City Hall and is open to the public. The Coalition's full vision statement can be found at [www.squareonevillages.org/cvc](http://www.squareonevillages.org/cvc).

## MAYOR

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paid his dues and amassed an in-depth knowledge of the City's systems and services, knowledge that he can immediately put to use if elected mayor, and at the Council's Oct. 10 meeting, he announced that he's pursuing a degree in public policy at the University of Oregon that can only add to his resume.

These qualities have served Boone well and are desirable

in a City Councilor, though of course, this is the Mayor's seat we're talking about. Being Mayor of Cottage Grove often means being the first point of contact with community members and business owners, with visitors, representatives of outside agencies and other elected officials — in short, it's about being Cottage Grove's most outspoken (yet professional) fan, and I can say without hesitation that there's no one in this

community I'd rather have as the face of Cottage Grove than Jake Boone. With no intention of disrespect to anyone who has held public office in this community, he's probably the most impressive public servant I've observed in my decade in Cottage Grove.

I would support him for just about any public office, but in November, I'll start by casting my vote for Jake Boone as our next Mayor.

## SCHOOL BOND

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The new elementary school is designed to last for 75 years, therefore it is mainly concrete based and has a rigid seismic structural design.

Construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2017 in order to be ready in September

of 2018. There are currently 31 different name ideas for the school. There is a form on the South Lane School District's website where people can submit their ideas until Nov. 22.

The bond that the South Lane School District received also included several other things,

such as the construction of an early learning center and improvements for the pool facilities at the Warren H. Daugherty Aquatic Center. BLRB architects won't be starting on that until late 2017, though McCracken says everything is on their radar.

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During National Food Bank week, October 16<sup>th</sup> through October 22<sup>nd</sup>, it's important to remember our neighbors struggling to provide their families with enough food to eat. In Cottage Grove, and the surrounding areas, lower income families can find help at Community Sharing Program. Community Sharing is a local non-profit that provides community members basic needs, life-skill tools, and resources towards self-sufficiency. Each month an average of 750 emergency food boxes are distributed by Community Sharing's pantry. Emergency food boxes are meant to supplement SNAP assistance (previously called food stamps) with a 3-5 day supply of food. As a partner agency, Community Sharing gets over half of its food from the county's food bank, Food for Lane County. The rest is donated by local individuals, organizations, and businesses.

Historically the need for emergency food in the fall and winter is significantly higher than in the spring and summer. Our current record month served 896 food boxes. Following this pattern, the fall and winter months might see even more record-breaking numbers of families in need. In addition to the increased number of our neighbors facing food insecurity. That means local food donations are critical, now more than ever, to meet the basic needs of an ever increasing number of eligible families.



In addition to food, Community Sharing accepts donations of essential non-food items, such as hygiene items, clothes, and cleaning supplies, to provide to its client families. These items aren't covered by SNAP assistance, but clothes, toilet paper, diapers, and soaps are almost as vital for day-to-day living as food.

Community Sharing also relies on local volunteers to operate effectively. Our board of directors is composed of dedicated community leaders who volunteer many hours supporting this organization. In the pantry, volunteers help sort the donations, stock the shelves, and assist clients through the pantry process. Office volunteers are needed to give out critical information, help clients fill out necessary forms, and provide a kind ear to clients on the edge of crisis. In addition to our current support from local volunteers, we are always looking for volunteers who would be willing to help stop local hunger by organizing a food drive, or fundraising event in Community Sharing's honor.

During the coming holiday season, Community Sharing will be offering food box clients a special food box for December holiday celebrations. Clients will begin signing up for the special food box in November. The box contains seasonal foods and a

frozen turkey or chicken for each family. Community sharing will be selling buttons to support our holiday food boxes over the next two months to help put on this special event. We will be selling these buttons for \$10 each, please call one of our board members or come by our office to purchase a turkey button and provide a holiday meal to one of your neighbors. In December volunteers from all over the community will help distribute the holiday food boxes at OLPH Catholic Church. The event is an amazing, non-denominational display with concerned community members coming together to give back.

There are also a number of annual donations drives this time of year, such as the local U.S. Postal Service's food drive, Boy Scouts' door-to-door donation collection and the South Lane School district's food drive. Please consider supporting these organizations in their efforts.

The directors, staff and volunteers at Community Sharing would like to thank the Cottage Grove community for their continued support. Together we are able to provide desperately needed basic needs services to our community as a result of your generosity.

To find out how you can help, call Community Sharing at 541-942-2176 Monday through Friday from 11am- 3:30pm.

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