

# SLSD waits for budget, could face \$1.8 million hole

As the district waits to hear from the state, it prepares to start cutting services, jobs, days from budget

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The South Lane School district is holding its breath along with the rest of Oregon's education system as it awaits the final decision by state legislators concerning the budget. While the final number has yet to be revealed, early projections from both the governor's office and the ways and means committee had schools scrambling to maintain current services. The best estimate places South Lane schools trying to bridge a \$1 to \$1.8 million gap. To do that, something has to go.

South Lane Superintendent Krista Parent has been holding budget meetings with various educators around the district to illustrate the dire situation.

According to information distributed during those meetings, the school district has several options in making up the budgetary shortfall. To close the \$1.8 million gap, it could eliminate 25 teachers for a value of \$70,000 each. It could also cut 20.5 days from school at \$88,000 a piece. However, Parent has noted that a portion of South Lane's students have had just a fraction of their education consist of a full calendar due to cut days to comply with budget restrictions. Further, inclement weather has left students at home more than usual this year which could potential cause a larger problem.

Students are required to attend school for a certain number of instructional hours per year. When school days fall away to snow days and budget cuts, schools can be left responsible to the state to explain the short-coming. According to Parent, SLSD has yet to be in the "penalty box" concerning instructional hours but if the school

is forced to cut days due to the budget and the area experiences another harsh winter, that could change.

Also on the list of possible money-saving options is sports at the high school level. Eliminating the program would save the school \$200,000. However, it is noted that such a move could cost the district up to 100 students. In a state where students can choose where they go to school, athletic programs draw in potential players and losing 100 students would amount to a \$750,000 loss for the district.

Other suggestions on the list include closing Latham School which would displace 120 students, stalling already delayed math adoption at the elementary level, terminating 31 custodians, 39 secretaries, 21 administrators or cutting all middle school athletics.

Of all the items on the list, Parent asks administrators to cut up to 12, ranking them one through 12. She reported back to the school board that the exercise is helpful in explaining the budget to teachers and administrators who feel the pinch when services decrease and they're asked to do more with less.

It's not the first time South Lane School District has been asked to tighten their budget by the legislature. The district has cut days in the past and according to Parent, may have to do so in the future. Because the legislature lays out a two-year budget, further cuts could be waiting for the 2017-2018 school year. Parent noted that the district is unaware of exactly how the legislative budget would affect next year but any budget shortfall would place services, teachers and school days back on the chopping block.

An answer on the final budget is due from the legislature in the coming weeks.

Item	Value	\$1.8m # Needed	\$1m # Needed	Note
Teachers	\$70,000	25.7	14.3	160 licensed staff full time
Cut Days	\$88,000	20.5	11.4	
Educational Assistants (5 hours)	\$25,000	72	40	46 between 2.5 and 5 hours
Administrators	\$85,000	21.2	11.8	12 School level, 10 district
Secretaries	\$46,600	39	21.5	15 School, 8 District
Custodian	\$57,300	31.4	17.5	15 Custodian
Close Latham School	\$325,000	1	1	Too late and what we put 120 students in
Elementary Math Adoption	\$200,000	1	1	K-5, two years before adoption
Elementary PE Teachers	\$300,000	5	5	1.0 @ Boh & Latham, 5 @ other
All Middle School Athletics	\$125,000	1	1	
All High School Athletics	\$200,000	1	1	Likely to lose 100 students @ \$7,500 each
All School Supplies	\$210,174	NA	NA	Majority spent on machines and supplies
Other				
Other				

## Water treatment center featured

The Row River Water Treatment Plant in Cottage Grove has hit the big time.

The facility was profiled in the latest edition of Water Quality Products magazine, educating readers on the center's water filtration system and providing publicity for the city of Cottage Grove as it continues to ready for the day it hits the 10,000 population mark.

The Row River plant boasts 4,000 connections, 49 miles of water main and serves nearly 10,000 people. The original plant was opened in 1993 and used an upflow clarifier with a sand filter to bring drinkable water to residents.

However, in 2006, the Cottage Grove City Council voted to stop using the Layng Creek Water Treatment Center after its 25 miles of pipes could no longer keep up with the demand. It was determined that the price to upgrade the system at Layng would not yield an even return.

To stay on pace with a growing city, Cottage Grove chose the Aria FLEX membrane system that utilizes pressurized membranes to filter the water to drinking standards.

According to Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers, said the facility can grow and can house an additional filtration system as the city continues to grow and serve more residents.

## CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY FOR HAYDEN HOMES



Hayden Homes has begun construction on the affordable housing development on Hwy. 99 beside the fire department. Construction had been delayed over the winter and due to a shortage of available equipment. Foundations are being installed for the cottages expected to be rented as a solution to Cottage Grove's affordable housing crisis.

## Williams Continued from A1

commission.

Williams will finish out the remainder of Stewart's term and has noted he may run for re-election in 2018. He served as mayor of Cottage Grove for 12 years.

Commissioners said attributes such as an individual who could diversify" the board and provide a new perspective were important deciding factors. Williams will join four men on the five-member board.

Prior to narrowing the field to three candidates, commission chairman Pat Farr noted that the board was choosing someone, not to run in 2018, but to fill Stewart's seat for the remainder of the term. He noted the task was a difficult one because, "You can't clone Faye Stewart."

At the final stage of selection, Williams came out on top with Heather Buch following. A three-way tie put Tim Laue, Betsy Schultz and Cedric Hayden in third place. Laue nabbed the third spot after a second vote of the commission.

Each finalist was asked what issues they would advocate for

on the state and national level with answers ranging from veteran care to affordable housing.

Williams was appointed with a 3-1 vote of the commission.

Fleck, Nordin and Weeldreyer were eliminated from the final rounds but commissioners encouraged all the applicants to continue in their pursuit of public service noting that the field in 2018 may be a crowded one.

The board noted the original 29 applicants, with two failing to meet the basic requirements, was a sign of interest in the position and it may mean a fight for the seat during the 2018 election. Applicant Kevin Matthews noted that, despite not being appointed, he planned to run for the seat he lost to Stewart in the 2016 election.

In an emailed statement from the county, Williams said of his appointment, "This is a tremendous opportunity and responsibility," he continued, "I look forward to continuing to serve Cottage Grove and the other outstanding communities in East Lane County - I am ready to hit the ground running."

The release distributed by the county also included a statement from the commission, noting, "We had a remarkable field of candidates, each of who would have been an asset to East Lane County," said Farr "Mr. Williams will serve the constituents of East Lane County well and we look forward to working closely with him on behalf of our community."

Williams was sworn in on Thursday and has been on the run ever since.

"It's been a bit of a whirlwind," he told The Sentinel.

On Monday, April 17, Williams was scheduled to complete his orientation and meet with staff.

As for Williams, his hectic schedule will continue but he says there isn't much more to report.

"The only new news is I'm back in government and here to serve the people as faithfully as I did as mayor. It's just casting a bigger net."



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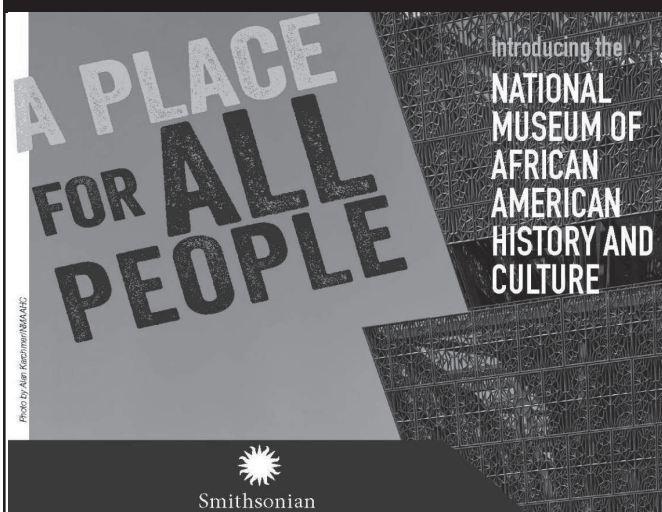
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