

# Swinging Bridge fundraising coming to water bills

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When the Swinging Bridge was ordered closed late last year, a community mourned. Now, that same community is rallying.

Not long after it was announced that the cost to repair the bridge would soar into the hundreds of thousands, a group of community members organized under a simple creed: What can we do? Since then, the group, which dubbed themselves, "Friends of the Cottage Grove Swinging Bridge" has grown to more than 130 members on social media and has worked with city administrators to raise funds for the bridge repairs.

Residents will see the results of that partnership in this month's water utility bill from the city.

"There will be a line on the bill where people can choose to round-up their water bill," Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers said. "Or, they can donate more than that but they'll be able to do that on the bill."

Meyers went on to note that

the funds would be kept in a trust fund strictly for the Swinging Bridge.

"We cannot use the funds for anything else. We can only use them for the bridge," he said.

So far, community donations have totaled a little over \$200. The funds are in addition to the \$28 the group collected during the Earth Day celebration on April 22 after erecting a bridge for children to cross and residents to donate to the cause.

In March, city engineer Ron Bradsby presented three options to the council for repair of the Swinging Bridge with estimated costs from OBEC Consulting Engineers.

"The first option is an ugly, off the truck bridge," Meyers told council. The cost of the per-fabricated replacement bridge clocked in at around \$370,000.

Option two would cost roughly \$261,000 but would maintain some movement in the bridge. However, according to Bradsby, the recommendation for the second option would create a bridge that did not meet current codes.

"Basically, the option is using the existing bridge and re-

placing the aspects that have failed like the upper cables and the decking," Bradsby told The Sentinel. While the replacements would enable the bridge to swing, OBEC reported that it would exceed the 50 pounds per lineal foot safety standard.

At the time, Meyers was asking the council to submit a letter of intent for an Oregon Parks and Recreational Trails grant totaling \$150,000. Since then, the city was invited to apply for the grant and according to Meyers, has asked for roughly \$140,000.

Several other fundraising campaigns are being floated throughout the city including utilizing a local resident who makes custom bricks and selling the creations to donors. According to Meyers, a replica of the Swinging Bridge exists and may be moved to different locations throughout the city to aid in the fundraising efforts as well.

"I think we have a good chance at the grant," Meyers said, noting that the Swinging Bridge is part of the scenic bike way which has roots in the Oregon Parks Department.

The city can expect to hear whether it was chosen to receive the funds by early summer.



City workers secure the Swinging Bridge at the end of last year after it was deemed to be dangerous to remain open to the public. Residents will now be able to contribute to its repair by rounding up their water bills with the funds going into a trust fund for the bridge's repair.



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