

COUNCIL *from A1*

Property tax reform also made the councilors' list of priorities with councilor Mike Fleck noting he didn't select the issue as one of his top choices because of the way it was worded. The legislation calls for a reform of the property tax system.

"The property tax system is broken and in need of repair due to Measures 5 and 50, which are both now over 20 years old," information given to the council read. "All local governments and schools rely heavily on property tax revenues to pay for services and capital expenses."

The proposed changes, as detailed by the league, would transition to a market-based property tax valuation system instead of the current system that allows taxing districts to calculate their own levy based on budget needs. Measure 50 created permanent rates and capped growth in assessed value to three percent.

Councilor Jake Boone made a case Monday night to include a lobbying effort for

qualification based selection in regard to awarding city contracts. Currently, the state does not allow cities to take into account price when determining what company to award a contract to. Meyers agreed, noting that the city had, in the past, chosen the most qualified of the companies who threw their hats into the ring only to have to submit another request for proposal when the original company's price was out of the city's reach. The proposed legislation push from the league would allow cities to consider the price of services when selecting engineers, architects and other service providers.

Among their bottom choices, councilors included a push for a beer and cider tax increase, an effort to have a new state revenue stream be dedicated to paying down the unfunded liability in order to sustain the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and an increase in tobacco tax sharing. The council also opted not to request lobbying efforts go towards traffic speed cameras.

CGHS graduate enters political pool at OSU

By Caitlyn May
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The decision to attend Oregon State University was an easy one for Justin Bennett. He was interested in medicine and science and OSU and its beaver beat out the University of Oregon and its duck in those departments. He wanted to stay at home — born in Bend, he moved with his family to Cottage Grove. He says, it's the only place he remembers growing up and OSU provided him with a college experience two hours away from his home base.

Bennett attended Bohemia Elementary School, Lincoln as a middle-schooler and graduated from Cottage Grove High School. "Moving from Cottage Grove to Corvallis wasn't just a physical, geographic shift; rather, it suddenly encompassed different perspectives of people I had never had the opportunity to be exposed to in Cottage Grove," he said. "Thousands upon thousands of different people from different places and with different backgrounds and ideologies. Though Corvallis is relatively small, Cottage Grove always had a certain small-town feel that a college town ultimately lacks."

Now, Bennett and his twin brother Luke, spend the school year in Corvallis studying and more recently, governing.

It's not new for Bennett who was involved in student government at Cottage Grove High School. He served as student body vice president, a role that helped prepare him for his current, collegiate title:

President of the Associated Students at OSU.

"I've been involved in the Associated Students of Oregon State University (ASOSU) ever since I was a freshman at OSU," he said. "I sought out involvement independently at the University — my first volunteer position within ASOSU was phone banking, where I called currently enrolled students and urged them to vote in upcoming state elections."

Since his freshman year, Bennett has served as a senator, representative and the director of government relations at OSU while balancing a major shift from medicine and science to English and education.

As president, his role has grown.

"Serving as the ASOSU Student Body President, my primary role is to represent students in all aspects of the University," he said. "I meet regularly with important campus stakeholders, such as the University President, Ed Ray, the Government Relations team at OSU, the Vice-Provost of Student Affairs, the Dean of Student Life, various faculty and instructors, and, of course, lots of students. I give standing reports to OSU's Board of Trustees, which sets tuition and the University budget every fiscal year. I also serve on multiple committees and boards such as the Board of Directors of the Oregon Student Association, the Board of Directors for the OSU Beaver Store, and the Corvallis Community Relations Advisory Group."

His largest role, however, is monetary. As president, he acts as a steward of student fees which consist of \$400 per student, per

term. The money funds athletics, resource centers and the campus gym.

"As the president, it's my job to work with our Student Fees Committee to propose recommended budgets and then to approve or deny the final fee decision. The president must approve the fees in order for them to be enacted. This works out to about \$32 million every year in student fees," Bennett said.

And while Bennett has grown used to working with OSU's legislative teams and has lobbied in Salem and Washington, D.C., he has no current plans to go into politics when he graduates. His immediate plan is to become a teacher — teaching English overseas, utilizing his minor in French to relocate to a French-speaking country.

"I see myself working in the public sector for most of my life," he said. "There's a lot of areas that we are doing great in but there are lots of ways to constantly improve the ability and access of public services. I'd love to go on to teach in public schools, but I can also see myself being drawn back to educational policy and legislative curricula construction in the future."

With a few more terms left and plenty to lobby for as student body president, Bennett said his focus will remain there for now.

"For now, I'll focus on my time at OSU. Wherever I go, I don't think I'll ever stop believing in the power of public education, or the ability to enact change through politics," he said. "Many people steer clear of politics because of its divisiveness and hostility. I'd like to think that we can use the same form of politics to bring people together."

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Testing continues to show CG water safe to drink

By Caitlyn May
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The water feeding Cottage Grove's drinking supply continues to be toxin free. This, according to Cottage Grove City Manager Richard Meyers who issued an update on the city's water testing program last Friday.

"Under the temporary new rules adopted by the Oregon Health Authority staff will be continuing the tests every two weeks throughout the remainder of the summer," Meyers wrote.

The new rules come on the back of a ban on drinking water

in Salem after the city discovered cyanotoxins in its drinking water supply. The toxins originate in blue-green algae spores and can cause health issues for both people and animals of ingested. Salem officials have twice issued a warning to residents not to drink the city's water this summer.

Last month, Cottage Grove had its own drinking water scare when OHA issued a recreation advisory for Dorena Lake, which feeds the city's drinking supply. OHA warned residents who drew in-home water directly from the affected area to use an alternative water source but those on city

water were given the all clear to drink their tap water.

Row River Treatment Plant Superintendent Ray Pardee told *The Sentinel* at the time that the water was safe but that the plant was exploring options on how to treat the water if the toxin was found after Meyers informed the city council that the current method of treatment had the possibility of increasing toxin levels if the toxin were present in the water supply.

"I think what he's (Meyer) referring to is the harmful bloom cells," Pardee said at the time. "That if they contain toxins and it enters the intake and comes to

the treatment plant, we do use a process called oxidation and it could rupture the intact algae cells and if those cells contained toxins, it would release the toxins in the water and it would concentrate the toxin in the water. A lot of ifs."

The tests for the last four weeks have come back negative, meaning there was a less than detectable level within the limits of the lab's testing. According to Meyers, water samples will continue to be sent to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality lab in Hillsboro and will be paid for by the Oregon Health Authority.

JULY 23rd at Bohemia Park



EUGENE SYMPHONY

Francesco Lecce-Chong Music Director & Conductor



The Eugene Symphony brings its beloved summer concert series to Cottage Grove. Enjoy Classical, pop and historical favorites including works by Dvorak, Gershwin, Bennett, Strauss, Williams, & Tchaikovsky

Join us for a lovely evening of music

INSTRUMENT PETTING ZOO

5:30pm musicians with the Eugene Symphony will be at the Bohemia Park Pavilion. The Instrument Petting Zoo provides a hands-on experience with instruments from the symphony. It is open to all ages but youth and children are encouraged to try out instruments.

COMMUNITY BAND

6:30pm the Community Band are local musicians that join together during the summer.

EUGENE SYMPHONY

7:30pm the will take the stage and begin their performance.

Bring a picnic or visit a food vendor.



Sponsored by the Bohemia Park Foundation, Wildish Land Company, Local Government Law Group, Payne West Insurance, the City of Cottage Grove and many other generous sponsors.