

**DEADLINES**

**NEWS DEADLINES**  
For inclusion in the Wednesday edition of the Itemizer-Observer:

**Social news** (weddings, engagements, anniversaries, births, milestones) — 5 p.m. on Thursday.

**Community events** — Noon on Friday for both the Community Notebook and Community Calendar.

**Letters to the editor** — 10 a.m. on Monday.

**Obituaries** — 4 p.m. on Monday.

**ADVERTISING DEADLINES**

**Retail display ads** — 3 p.m. Friday.

**Classified display ads** — 11 a.m. on Monday.

**Classified line ads** — Noon on Monday. Classified ads are updated daily on www.polkio.com.

**Public notices** — Noon on Friday.

**CORRECTIONS**

The Polk County Itemizer-Observer is committed to publishing accurate news, feature and sports reports. If you see anything that requires a correction or clarification, call the newsroom at 503-623-2373 or send an e-mail to nadams@polkio.com.

**WEBSITE**

The Polk County Itemizer-Observer website, www.polkio.com, is updated each week by Wednesday afternoon. There, you will find nearly every story that appears in the print version of the newspaper, as well as some items, including additional photos, that do not appear in print due to space limitations.

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

**WEATHER**

RECORDED	HIGH	LOW	RAIN
May 19.....	65	54	.00
May 20.....	69	56	.T
May 21.....	74	56	.04
May 22.....	63	54	.03
May 23.....	64	53	.T
May 24.....	69	52	.00
May 25.....	72	50	.00

Rainfall during May — 0.68 in.  
Rain through May 25 — 14.64 in.

# Commissioners say no thanks to pay raises

After safety levy passes, committee agrees to increases for clerk, treasurer and assessor

By Jolene Guzman  
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — Three Polk County elected officials will receive raises in fiscal year 2015-16, while others, including all three Polk County Commissioners, will not see an increase in pay.

The county's budget committee made the decision on May 20, along with offering formal approval of the 2015-16 budget.

Those receiving raises are the Polk County clerk (6 percent), assessor (2.5 percent), and treasurer (6 percent). Pay raises were not approved for Polk County Sheriff Bob Wolfe and the Board of Commissioners, though Wolfe may see an increase based on a state law that requires him to be the highest paid employee in his office.

Also, Polk County District Attorney Aaron Felton, who is paid by the state, will not

receive a salary supplement from the county.

The salary increases were voted on after County Administrator Greg Hansen outlined how Polk's elected officials' pay compared to that of those in surrounding or similarly sized counties in the current fiscal year.

Polk's clerk and treasurer were inching close to being 19 percent behind their peers in other counties — which include Benton, Lincoln, Linn, Tillamook and Yamhill — while the assessor was behind about 11 percent.

The commissioners lag about 16 percent behind, and the sheriff about 4 percent.

Hansen offered a couple of options to close the gap for elected officials: a one-

time fix that would have increased the clerk, treasurer and commissioners by 8 percent, sheriff 4 percent, and assessor 5 percent; or a three-year transition increasing all by 3 percent annually. In neither scenario did the DA receive a supplement.

Hansen said the county's goal is to stay within 4 percent in either direction of the five-county average.

"I've stated many times in my memos that I believe our elected officials are second to none," Hansen said. "Our elected officials, even though they have a lot of autonomy, have always been team players, staying committed to what Polk County has tried to do in providing services to its public."

The compensation committee — which consists of the three citizen members of the budget committee — rejected both options. Instead, the committee put forward a

proposal to give the clerk and the treasurer a 6 percent boost and the rest 2.5 percent.

"We have to do something," said Vern Wells, a compensation committee member, offering that all elected officials receive a 4 percent increase. "I think it's something we can justify to voters."

Fellow compensation committee member Norbert Hartmann disagreed.

"I would agree that we need to do something for the clerk and the treasurer because of how far down they are relative to their counterparts," he said, noting a "perception problem" with giving elected officials sizeable raises less than 24 hours after the county

passed a public safety levy. "I'm just saying look at the ones that are really out of line, get them closer in line and let's not go overboard on something we are going to regret down the line," Hartmann said.

The full budget committee — which includes the three commissioners — altered that proposal, deciding to help those who had fallen behind the most, with the exception of the commissioners.

"I'm not interested in a raise," Commissioner Craig Pope said. "Thank you, but I would prefer that doesn't happen. I'm not interested in giving raises to the decision makers and, really, to the beneficiaries of these levy dollars (public safety departments). We first have to solve this problem of reinvesting in public safety."

The committee voted 5-1 for the final proposal, with Wells voting no.



Hansen



Pope

# Levy: 37 percent say yes to public safety tax

Continued from 1A  
By the end of the fiscal year, about \$160,000 will be spent on overtime in the jail as staffing levels have declined.

Polk County Board of Commissioners Chairman Mike Ainsworth said more staff in the jail, 24-hour patrol, and the county's drug team, POINT, are among the critical services the levy will restore.

Ainsworth is thankful for the work of the political action committee supporting the levy — and for the voters who marked yes on their ballots.

"Nobody likes to pay more taxes, but sometimes you have to pay for those services," he said. "I have sympathy for those who voted no, but I think the county is going to be much safer."

**Measure 27-117**

**Countywide vote tally:** Yes: 9,059 (56 percent) No: 7,013 (44 percent).  
**Voter turnout:** 37 percent.

Thanks to an extension of the Secure Rural Schools program payments (aka federal timber payments) the cost to taxpayers will be temporarily reduced.

County Administrator Greg Hansen said during May 20's budget committee

that the county is anticipating a payment in June of about \$750,000. The county also should receive a second payment, which would lower the tax rate in 2016-17.

"That would require us to modify our levy from 45 cents per \$1,000 (of assessed value) down to (between 30 and 31 cents per \$1,000)," Hansen said.

The budget committee approved that tax rate for the levy in approving the county's 2015-16 budget.

Hansen noted it's possible to receive both of the payments this June, which

means further adjustments would need to be made.

The commissioners could make those changes when it adopts the budget next month.

The rates set by the budget committee are caps, meaning the board couldn't

legally raise them, but it could lower the levy rate if necessary.

Like Ainsworth, Felton acknowledged that even the lower tax could be a sacrifice for some taxpayers.

"I will work twice as hard to honor that," he said.

*Music from the Redgate Winery & Fieldhouse*

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**TO BENEFIT ROTARY YOUTH PROGRAMS**

**2015 Relay for Life of Polk County**

**Not A Runner? Neither Are We!**

I recently asked a local business owner, who donated a gift to our survivor dinner, if she'd ever been to Relay. She didn't think she could come since she's not a runner, not on a team, and had not raised money. She had no idea Relay is a community event, free and open to the public - and NOT a run! You're all invited to come join us as we Celebrate our survivors, Remember loved ones we've lost, and Fight Back in a big way against this enemy we call cancer. **SEE YOU AT RELAY FOR LIFE!**

**SEE YOU AT RELAY!**

Please join us in thanking our three most recent sponsors, along with the following businesses, health care professionals, families, and organizations for their commitment to Relay For Life and its mission to find a cure:  
**Team Perrydale • Dallas Fire Dept. • Huggins Ins.**

- West Valley Hospital
- West Valley Physicians & Surgeons Clinic/Dr. John Hadley
- West Valley Surgical Specialty Clinic/Dr. Alison Smith
- Monmouth Medical Center/Dr. Charles Essex
- Polk County Itemizer-Observer
- The Majestic
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- R & J Mobility Services
- Republic Services
- Van Well Building Supply
- Washington Street Steakhouse & Pub
- White's Collision Service
- Woolsey Family Dental

Relay For Life 2015 will take place  
May 30-31,  
10am to 10am  
at LaCreole  
Middle School  
in Dallas

**FINISH THE FIGHT**