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

www.polkio.com. **Public notices** — Noon

ads are updated daily on

CORRECTIONS

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

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.

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Itemizer-Observer

Winters Sewing

ment. Also, repairs, RV cushions,

Also, Polk County District Attorney Aaron Felton, who is paid by the state, will not for elected officials: a one-

By the end of the fiscal

year, about \$160,000 will be

spent on overtime in the jail

as staffing levels have de-

Polk County Board of

Commissioners Chairman

Mike Ainsworth said more

staff in the jail, 24-hour pa-

trol, and the county's drug

team, POINT, are among the

critical services the levy will

Ainsworth is thankful for

the work of the political ac-

tion committee supporting

the levy — and for the voters

who marked yes on their

"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

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



Hansen

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

the sheriff about 4 percent. Hansen offered a couple of options to close the gap

about 16 percent behind, and

creased the clerk, treasurer and commissioners by 8 percent, sheriff 4 percent, cent. and assessor 5 percent; or a three-year transition in- thing," said Vern Wells, a creasing 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.

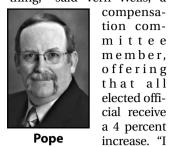
"I've stated many times in my memos that I believe our elected officials are second to none," Hansen said. "Our elected officials, even though they have a lot of autonomy, have always been team players, staying committed to what Polk County has tried to do in providing services to its public."

The compensation committee — which consists of the three citizen members of the budget committee — reiected both options. Instead. the committee put forward a hours after the county

Levy: 37 percent say yes to public safety tax

and the treasurer a 6 percent boost and the rest 2.5 per-

"We have to do some-



mittee member, offering that all elected official receive a 4 percent

increase. "I think it's something we can justify to voters."

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, not-

Fellow compensation

ing a "perception problem" with giving elected officials sizeable raises less than 24

time fix that would have in- proposal to give the clerk 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.

publishing accurate news,

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.

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Measure 27-117

Countywide vote tally: Yes: 9,059 (56 percent) No: 7,013 (44 per-

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 ing 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

that the county is anticipat- means further adjustments would need to be made.

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

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.

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SEE YOU AT RELAY!

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