

**EDITORIALS**

**Thanks for voting, but don't stop now**

Polk County Clerk Val Unger was surprised by the nearly 49 percent turnout for the May 17 primary.

Unger thought turnout would be around 35 percent, but many people turned in ballots in the last few days. It ended up at almost 50 percent.

Granted it was an attention-grabbing primary — to say the least — expected to draw more voters, but nice job Polk County.

You made Unger and her tireless crew of election night workers count ballots into the wee hours of the morning. That was after calling in extra workers the afternoon of Election Day.

Not that she minded all the last-minute ballots too much, saying “That’s their right.”

Yes, and we believe it’s a citizen’s responsibility.

Don’t think you are done for the year. November’s general election will be more than the decider for our nation’s next president and governor — although that should be enough reason to cast a ballot.

Locally, races for Polk County sheriff, State Senate and House of Representatives, city council and mayor seats are open and contested.

At least one bond measure will be on the ballot, as well.

There’s plenty to weigh in on, and we ask you to do so.

Want more involvement? Why not throw your hat in the ring.

You can file candidacy for city council races starting in June with a deadline in August if you need time to think it over.

Councilors typically serve four-year terms and mayors, two-year terms.

Our residents deserve public servants with fresh ideas. And citizens need to exercise their voice in deciding who should provide those new ideas.

So vote — or volunteer to serve.

As the saying goes, if you don’t, you can’t complain when it’s over.



**PUBLIC AGENDA**

**Public Agenda** is a listing of upcoming meetings for governmental and nongovernmental agencies in Polk County. To submit a meeting, send it at least two weeks before the actual meeting date to the *Itemizer-Observer* via fax (503-623-2395) or email (ionews@polkio.com).

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 25**  
• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

**THURSDAY, MAY 26**  
• **Monmouth-Independence Networks Board of Directors** — 8:45 a.m., Henry Hill Education Support Center, 750 S. Fifth St., Independence. 503-837-0700.

**TUESDAY, MAY 31**  
• **Polk County Board of Commission work session** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, BOC office, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.

• **Monmouth-Independence joint city council meeting** — 7 p.m., Polk County Fire District No 1 Central Station, 1800 Monmouth St., Independence.

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1**  
• **Monmouth Historic Commission** — 6 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Monmouth Planning Commission** — 7 p.m., Volunteer Hall, 144 S. Warren St., Monmouth. 503-838-0725.

• **Polk County Board of Commissioners** — 9 a.m., Polk County Courthouse, first floor conference room, 850 Main St., Dallas. 503-623-8173.



**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Community comes together for kids**

The organizers, leaders, parents, and students of this year’s LaCreole eighth-grade Washington, D.C., trip would like to extend a big thank you to the community of Dallas for its support in fundraising this year.

Thanks to the generosity of friends, family and local businesses, a group of 50 students, parents, and teachers will travel to Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., to visit landmarks of our nation’s history and culture. Over \$14,000 was raised through the selling of pepperoni sticks and holiday pies, the invasion of the flamingo flocks, Ugo’s Pizza night, and Dutch Bros gift certificate raffle. This degree of kindness and dedication to kids makes Dallas a great place to live.

From: Eighth-grade D.C. trip advisors, chaperones, parents, and students.

*Phil Osborn  
Dallas*

**Many questions left unanswered**

Response to the May 18 *I-O* editorial “Looks public, acts public: Is it public.”

Great article. Specifically, “While we respect the right of city managers to meet with individuals in a private capacity, it is difficult to see how public managers, in their public capacity, addressing the public in a public building about a public utility can call the act private.”

Independence City Manager David Clyne referred to a recent impromptu meeting with concerned citizens about water rates in Independence as a “private



meeting” although it was requested by a citizen on a public site, Facebook. This is a prime example of non-transparency. City leaders are often only transparent when backed into a corner or called out in a “public” format, even then they try to minimize public knowledge by holding a “private meeting.”

David Clyne says he prides himself in being transparent. Some non-transparent issues are Minet fees in our water bill, and the sewer fee in part goes to civic center debt service. What are the “City of Independence” fees in every Pacific Power and NW Gas bill? Another issue is the lack of transparency from our city leaders who have discreetly placed fees in other services without explanation. If the city is transparent — why so many questions?

Transparency is: able to see through; easy to notice or understand; honest, open; not secretive. Transparency is all fees separated in monthly bills with expla-

nation. An article in the *I-O* or a “private impromptu” meeting with a handful of residents is not transparency. Like the editorial said, a much larger meeting place is needed if everyone in the community were notified properly.

Attend City Council — second Tuesday every month, 7:30 p.m. at Civic Center — join other citizens making changes.

P.S. This is a private letter to the public.

*Victoria Kruljac  
Independence*

**Keep aquatic center open for all**

I was very concerned to learn (a) Dallas City Council(or) is considering closing the aquatic center. The aquatic center is the outstanding attraction in Polk County, with the exception of Western Oregon University.

It serves the elderly, the handicapped, the active adults and the youth of this city.

People come from all of Polk, Marion and Yamhill counties to use this excellent facility. Where would the Dallas High School swim team practice? Or the Blue Dolphins swim team? Where would parents take their children for swim lessons? The facility has a good-sized room available for rental for meetings or parties. It is one of the few places a parent can drop a child off and feel safe about it.

I actually know people who have moved to Dallas because of the aquatic center.

I urge all Dallas residents to contact the city council and mayor to protest any considerations of closing the aquatic center.

*Jay Lee Roberts  
Dallas*

**Thank you, mayor**

Thank you Mayor Brian Dalton for reminding us how lucky we are to live in the USA on May 16.

*Mary Jane Mathews  
Dallas*

**SUPERINTENDENT’S CORNER**

**District wants what’s best for students**

Let’s start with celebrations. Julie Janssen, support specialist at LaCreole Middle School, received the Distinguished Educator Award for April. Julie is someone who advocates for students, uses creativity as she finds ways to offer solutions and supports, and goes above and beyond in all that she does.

We are fortunate she is on our team. Additionally, we received \$1,492,900 in a seismic grant for Whitworth Elementary School. We will continue to apply for additional grant dollars to complete seismic upgrades throughout our district.

Recently, many read in the newspaper that our district is experiencing a de-

crease in funding from the state.

I just want to be sure you know the reasons. I’ll use the analogy of a household budget where you can predict the amount of money you have available each month.

If you experience an unfortunate chain of events such as a roof leak, a medical need, and a car repair that need attention all at once, you would have to make adjustments to your budget.

The same holds true for our district budget. We are currently experiencing a decline in enrollment, a decline in the way we receive funding for students with

economic challenges, and a change in our program for fifth-year students.

Any one of these would not be so challenging to our district budget; however, experiencing all three in the same year is challenging.

In our district, we have a culture of collaboration and transparency. When we hit obstacles, teams of people come together to provide input into decisions and support the work of our school board.

We have a collaboration team that includes representation from every area of the district. We have a finance committee that includes members of our community who work with staff to re-

view trends and district practices and set the course with zero-based budgeting, which aligns district resources with district priorities. We have an administrative team that is accustomed to creatively solving problems.

The recommendations from these teams come forward to our five board members who maintain their focus on “what’s best for kids.”

We are proposing a balanced budget for 2016-17 that aligns resources based on the needs of our students.

If you have questions, please call.

*Michelle Johnstone  
Dallas Superintendent*

**WANT TO WRITE A LETTER?**

Letters to the editor are limited to 300 words. Longer letters will be edited.

Each writer is restricted to one letter per 30-day period.

Letters that are libelous, obscene or in bad taste will not be printed. Attacks by name on businesses or individuals will not be printed.

Letters to the editor that are obvious promotions for a business, products or services will not be printed.

The *Itemizer-Observer* does not guarantee the accuracy of facts presented by letter writers; dissenters are welcome to respond. Letter writers who disagree with other published letter writers should maintain a civil discourse and address the subject, not the author.

Letters, like all editorial material submitted to the newspaper, are edited for length, grammar and content.

Letters must include the au-

thor’s name, address and telephone number. This includes letters submitted via the *I-O*’s website. Names and cities of residence are published; street addresses and telephone numbers are used for verification purposes only.

Letters must be submitted from individuals, not organizations, and must be original submissions to the *I-O*, not copies of letters sent to other media.

Letters of thanks to busi-

nesses, individuals and organizations are limited to 10 names.

The deadline for letters to the editor is 10 a.m. Monday. Letters submitted may not be retractable after this deadline.

Reach us at:  
**Mail:** Editor, *Polk County Itemizer-Observer*, P.O. Box 108, Dallas, OR 97338.  
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