

Second try for FC gym bond

After narrow loss in May, Falls City Schools will try again to build a new gym

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — The Falls City School District Board officially will be seeking a \$2 million bond to build a multipurpose gym at Falls City Elementary School in November.

This is the second time the district has put the bond before voters. It failed by 11 votes in May's primary.

The bond would add approximately \$1.30 per \$1,000 of assessed value to property taxes over 20 years if passed.

The board expressed interest in asking for voter approval again if it could secure a state grant to supplement bond proceeds.

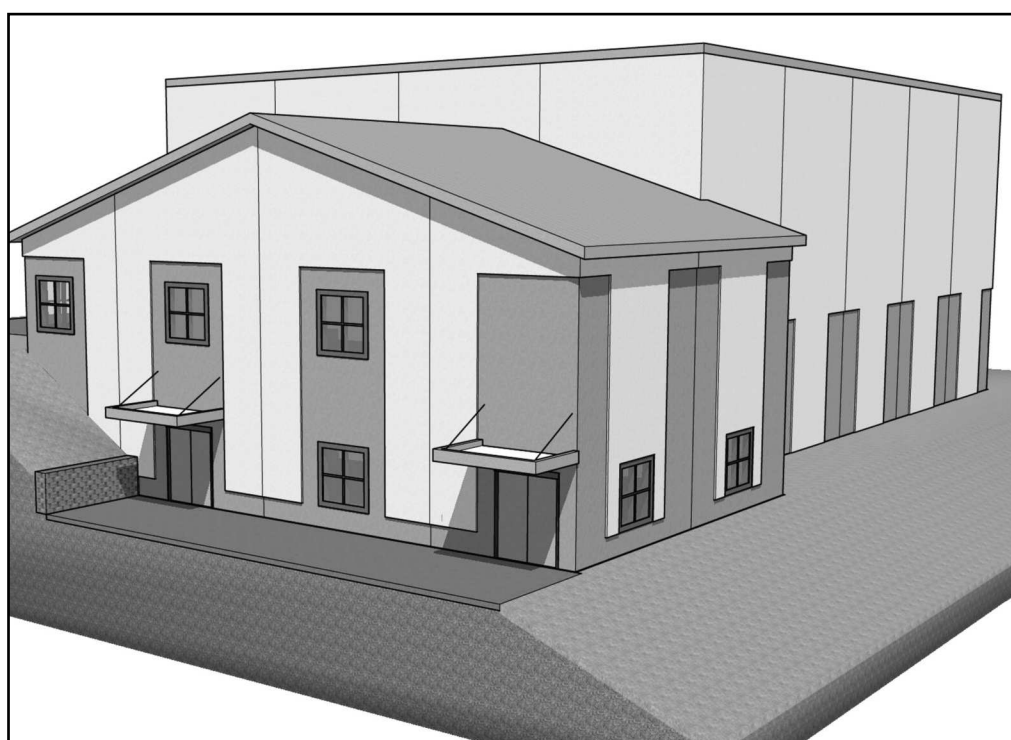
On July 14, the Oregon Department of Education sent a letter to the district confirming it had been approved for \$2 million, contingent upon the bond passing.

Falls City received a commitment for a grant in the same amount for May's election, but lost the money because voters didn't approve the bond.

Board member Bob Young said in the first election, some voters were convinced the district was asking for a \$4 million bond, not \$2 million.

He said the message that the state's grant — already paid for by state income tax revenue — is in addition to the \$2 million bond the district is seeking from voters should be emphasized during this campaign.

"We need to say that this is not a \$4 million tax," he



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This sketch provides the general idea of what a new multipurpose gym and cafeteria would look like if voters in Falls City were to approve funding to build it.

said. "That was the lie that was out there."

The grant funding comes from the Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching Program, which the Oregon Legislature approved during the 2015 session.

The legislature appropriated \$126.2 million for grants during the 2015-17 biennium for school districts that pass school facility construction bonds. For November's election, six school districts were guaranteed grants if they could pass bonds. Falls City School District was third on the priority list.

If any of the six district fail to pass their bonds, the

money goes to the next district on the waiting list.

"If we don't pass this, that \$2 million goes somewhere else," said board member Larry Sickles.

District officials say the multipurpose facility is needed to meet instructional requirements for physical education for students in kindergarten through eighth grades.

In 2017-18, mandatory P.E. instructional time will increase to 40 minutes per day for grades kindergarten through fifth and 57 minutes for sixth through eighth graders.

Currently, elementary students, grades K-8 in Falls City, have to use outdoor fa-

cilities or ride a bus down to Falls City High School to use the gym.

The district will struggle with mandatory increases under that system — which adds 10 to 15 minutes for transportation — taking time from other classes, said board chairwoman Jami Kidd.

"That's the reality," she said. "It's going to take time out of instruction."

If approved, the new facility also would provide a bigger and modern kitchen, allowing for more fresh food offerings.

The board unanimously approved the resolution to place the bond on the general election ballot on July 19.

Lead testing to wait until school begins

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Lead test requirements are about "as clear as mud" at this point.

That's the assessment of Dallas School District's facilities manager Kevin Montague after a meeting with Oregon Department of Education, the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and representatives of school districts from across the state.

He said schools performing tests this summer may have to test again because consistent guidelines for when, how and where to test have not been established.

"Lots and lots of confusion," Montague said in a report to the Dallas School Board Monday evening.

He said OHA has recommended districts follow the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) guidelines, which has two "action" thresholds for tests, one for "public water sources" and another for schools.

Montague said the public water threshold requires action if lead is found in levels 15 parts per billion or higher. For schools, the threshold is 20 parts per billion. But when testing began, that wasn't known by schools or labs performing the tests, he said.

Montague said testing during the summer is an issue because EPA standards require testing "under normal use conditions," after water is allowed to sit in the pipes for between

eight and 18 hours.

"My question was always, how do you replicate normal conditions during the summer?" Montague said. "You cannot do it."

Montague said the practice of flushing the pipes for 20 minutes, as some districts have done, and then letting water sit for eight to 18 hours before testing may be problematic, too. EPA guidelines say not to flush the pipes before testing.

"There is no perfect answer on when to test, but what I do know is that you need to be testing under normal-use circumstances," Montague said.

For that reason, Dallas schools won't perform its testing until school is back in session. Montague said all water sources will be tested in the fall using the EPA-recommended methods.

"I want to make sure we do it right, so we are going to wait until school starts again," Montague said.

The 117 initial tests taken in the spring revealed that in one school building, Oakdale Heights, nearly every test contained lead.

"None of them was close to the action level," Montague said, noting with the age of buildings in the district, low levels of lead may always be present.

Montague said even more questions remain for state officials to answer, such as how often taps should be tested and how much lead is acceptable.

"There's no consensus at this point," Montague said.

Dallas Library now checking out ukuleles

Itemizer-Observer staff report

DALLAS — Summerfest's Hawaiian Luau theme has everyone thinking of the Islands, and the Dallas Library is no exception.

Just in time for the Hawaiian inspired event, the library is offering ukuleles for checkout, complete with a tuner and "how to play" instruction pamphlet. These kits are available for check-

out to Dallas patrons only.

They will be checked out for three weeks with no renewals allowed on the kit. Library managers hope this is just the first instrument check-out program.

Dallas is working on adding other instruments in the near future.

Can't get enough ukulele?

The library will also be hosting ukulele strum and

sing-along events every first Wednesday of the month from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the library, located at 950 Main St., Dallas.

The musical get-together is on Aug. 3, and people with

other instruments are welcome to attend.

It will be an informal group open to all ages and a good time to play and learn.

For more information: 503-623-2633.

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Every Wednesday through August 31 ~ 6:30pm
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Tickets \$2 PER DUCK

Saturday July 30 • 2:30 pm
9 prizes valued at \$100+
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• Dallas Auto Center
• Center Market #2
• Dallas Glass
• Dallas Animal Clinic
All proceeds for service projects.

Tickets sold at Courtyard Coffee, Postal Connections and from any Lions Club member. Also sold at Wal-Mart on Saturdays in July.

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This week: Hawaiian **Koral Jam**

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AVENGERS: Age of Ultron

AUG. 5 Concert: Beth Willis - 7:30 PM
AUG 4 Movie: STAR WARS The Force - 9:45 PM

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