

Foggin: Planned to send letter to city council

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He said the firm conducting the search for McMinnville made a request of asking for names of three current supervisors instead of a list of references. He gave the firm contact information for Mayor Brian Dalton, Council President Jim Fairchild and now-former councilor LaVonne Wilson.

Foggin told them an email requesting a review of his performance would be coming.

Dalton said he received that email on Dec. 28, 2016, and that was the first he had heard Foggin was seeking another job. He noted that was well after the council voted on extending Foggin's contract and granted him a

raise on Dec. 5.

Councilor Ken Woods Jr. said, based on interactions he's had with other city managers, it's not unusual for city managers to look for other jobs every three to seven years, he said. Woods added the practice is for city managers to notify their current employers only when there's a good possibility of them getting another job.

"Typically, a city manager would inform his or her council once he knows he's a finalist," Woods said.

Feeling as though critical information was withheld from them, councilors Jackie Lawson, Micky Garus and Paul Trahan requested Monday's special meeting to discuss the situation and how

similar circumstances can be dealt with in the future.

"We are disappointed to find out how we found out," Lawson said. "I want to make perfectly clear that we have no issues with Ron applying for a position somewhere else."

She said that knowing Ron had applied for a job somewhere else may have had some bearing on decisions the council made. She added that she is concerned about what else may be withheld from the council and suggested the council act to prevent that.

Garus read a statement directed at Dalton, saying he wasn't sure how long he knew of Foggin's candidacy for another job, but should

have told the council when he found out.

"Information of that nature, at the very least out of professional courtesy, should be disclosed," he said.

Lawson proposed in a motion a new council rule that read, "When extremely important, concrete information comes to a council member, it is discussed — anything that could have an impact on what we decide as a council."

Councilor Kelly Gabliks said she was satisfied with Foggin's explanation, and that Dalton and two other councilors were asked for references didn't bother her. She said that the council didn't need further rules to

address similar situations in the future.

"I don't think we need a rule that if a city manager or any agency head applies for a job they need to immediately notify the council," Gabliks said. "I don't want to see us adopt a rule like that."

Trahan said many of his questions were answered by Foggin's explanation, and said he wasn't sure how such a rule could be enforced as worded.

"I'd like to think about this for a little while because I think it's ambiguous right now," he said.

Trahan suggested the council hold off on voting to refine a new rule proposal.

Foggin suggested that the

city's Administration Committee evaluate current council rules and determine if other cities have similar rules Dallas could incorporate.

Lawson agreed to withdraw her motion on the condition that "we aren't just burying this in committee."

The McMinnville City Council is slated to interview its finalists this week and narrow down the field to one. That candidate will go through background checks, psychological evaluations and a current job-site visit.

Candace Haines, the interim McMinnville city manager, said a final decision wouldn't be made for a few weeks.

Snow: Schools must meet state law

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"Yes, it does give our students another contact day, so we might consider that down the road, but it does not change our number of instructional days," Martinelli said.

Calling a snow day isn't an exact science, but the goal is clear for all districts: Getting students to school and back home safely, including those who walk, drive themselves or are delivered by their parents.

Brazeau said he's up at 3 a.m. the day before a possible snow day checking three different weather reports, talking to transportation managers and other school superintendents in the area.

Martinelli's alarm goes off at the same time. He said he and Dallas' bus company's manager spend the wee hours of the morning driving the roads. When he makes a recommendation for a delayed start or canceled day, Martinelli said it's only safety on his mind.

"A couple things that I don't ever consider are instructional hours, and I also don't consider Facebook



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Snow fell all day on Saturday, occasionally mixed with sleet and freezing rain.

comments," he said. "It doesn't matter what I do I'm wrong — we're wrong."

Brazeau can relate. He said one day he called a snow day and the snow didn't materialize until about 9:30 a.m., well after the

school day would have started.

"People were chuckling at me until the snow hit," he said.

School officials say nothing is certain dealing with fickle weather, so they have

to give it their best guess.

"We are trying to make the best decision we can with the information we have, but weather changes," Brazeau said. "We make mistakes, but not because we are trying to."

County: Bond up to \$10 million

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If the bond amount is \$10 million over 10 years, the cost would average about 20 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value on properties. Taxpayers finished paying off the county's road bond this year, which amounted to 51 cents per \$1,000 assessed value.

Hansen noted the commissioners should keep in mind that property owners are also paying for the public safety operating levy at about 30 cents per \$1,000. His said recommendation of a \$10 million bond was an effort to keep property taxes below current taxes.

Commissioner Craig Pope said he would be more comfortable with asking for \$9 million, based on the facilities study conducted last year.

"Somewhere between your estimate and the architectural report is the number we are going to fall on," Pope said. "We end up at a \$9-million bond range, following the report and still having some buffer room."

Hansen said costs on the

project estimates could have gone up in the last year and would continue to rise between now and when work could start.

"I concur completely that we should not even look at anything above \$10 million, and I would hesitate to go anywhere below \$8.5 million," Hansen said. "Anywhere in that range, you are going to get a lot done and you are going to make a lot of needed improvements."

In other business, the county will:

- Hold its annual Compensation Committee meeting on Jan. 18 at 10 a.m. The committee, consisting of the three non-elected members of the budget committee, makes a recommendation on elected official salaries.

Elected officials are paid (per month): County commissioner — \$6,179; assessor — \$6,804; clerk — \$6,526; sheriff — \$8,436; treasurer — \$6,850; district attorney — paid by the state and receives no supplemental income from the county.

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