

## Fire: Negotiations fail between districts

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"There may be some operational gaps, and we might not have identified them all yet," he said. "But the customer is not going to notice a difference."

Neither side has given up on coming to an agreement

at some point.

"If we can keep our fire department out here, we will do whatever," Young said. "We will train with them. We can all be trained the same. That's no problem."

Hertel said joint training is where the two entities will

begin rebuilding their relationship.

"I think that we found a way forward that we both can agree on," Hertel said. "We are going to give that a try and if that doesn't work, we will try something else."

Southwest will send Falls

City \$14,050 to honor the service agreement.

"The Board did express hope that this impasse will be short-lived and the parties will continue to discuss options of a new agreement in the near future," Hertel wrote in the Dec. 15 letter.

## Falls City considers fire levy

By **Jolene Guzman**  
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — The Falls City City Council gave city staff the nod Dec. 14 to pursue putting a five-year levy on the May 2018 primary election ballot to support its fire department.

It's estimated to cost \$1.04 per \$1,000 of assessed value on property and would raise about \$40,000 per year, with a total of \$200,000 over the life of the levy.

Money would be used to buy firefighting equipment — including breathing units required when working inside burning buildings — extrication tools and gear to use during rescues at the falls on the Little Luckiamute River.

Funding may also go toward operating expenses, saving a for new fire engine and other vehicles and station building repairs.

Acting City Manager Terry Ungricht said because contract negotiations with Southwest Polk Rural Protection District failed, some of the money from the levy may be needed for fire department operations.

"We've talked about wanting to have an equipment fund and stuff like that, so we can start looking to update our engines. Our one pump truck is 1965. It would be nice to update that," Ungricht said during the council's meeting on Dec. 14. "We're going to need a duty rig, but those are all longer term wants, if we don't need

to use part of this levy as operating."

The council needs to approve a resolution to place the levy on the ballot by the deadline of Feb. 24.

"This motion would instruct us to do the resolution, do the language, work with our attorney and we would have a resolution for you guys to adopt and put it onto the ballot in January," Ungricht said.

In other business:

• Councilor Dennis Sickles thanked the community for supporting him and his family after his house burned down in November.

"It was very heartwarming. This community is a wonderful place to live," Sickles said. "The amount of people who reached out to

help and just give their well wishes, was very humbling and it made me feel really good. I appreciate this community for that. It's a good community and when a catastrophe happens, people step up."

• Councilor Tony Meier offered kudos to the Falls City Fire Department for its quick response to a medical emergency involving his grandson.

"In 73 years, we've never used the fire department. We used it a couple weeks ago when my grandson went into seizures," Meier said.

Meier added that his grandson is OK after the incident.

"I just want to say how impressed I was with this fire department," he said.

## Dallas

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He identified those projects as Grocery Outlet on the commercial side and the industrial project as "Indigo," estimated to be completed in 2020.

The council voted unanimously to make the changes.

Once the vote was taken, Councilor Kelly Gabliks suggested the council turn its attention to beginning the process of hiring a permanent city manager.

"I'm very happy that we have Greg, but I think that we need to immediately start looking for a new city manager," she said. "It's going to take us six to nine months, if we're lucky."

Councilors Jim Fairchild and Bill Hahn said the search process should start soon, but not until after the new year.

Councilors Micky Garus and Jackie Lawson said they didn't want to rush into the process — and might be happy to have Ellis lead the city for up to two years.

"I think before we start the process we need to have several meetings, most likely, to talk amongst each other to decide exactly who it is, what it is we are looking for. And be willing to look at several different options, options that are outside of the box, that aren't really the cookie-cutter mold of a city manager that we've previously always gone to," Garus said.

He said the city should take advantage of Ellis' willingness to stick around.

"Rushing into something is irresponsible," Garus said.

Lawson said she would be willing to wait up to year to start looking for a replacement.

"I want to give him (Ellis) every opportunity for whatever ideas that he might have to free up all of our staff with new ideas and potential movement for our city that we need desperately," she said.

Gabliks asked if the search process could be put on the agenda for the city's next meeting.

"I really think we need to start this process, because I think it's going to take a long time to get the right person to take this job," she said.

Ellis recommended the council schedule a work session with a representative from Mid-Valley Council of Governments, which conducts city manager searches. He said he would try to have a COG representative at the Jan. 16 meeting.

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