

# Community

## 5J board to review bond failure

The Baker School Board will meet for a work session Thursday at the District Office to consider how to move forward with school improvement plans.

The meeting, which will begin at 4 p.m., will include a review of feedback on the Baker School District's \$48 million bond measure rejected by voters in November.

Connie Potter, a consultant with the Oregon School

Boards Association, will meet via telephone with directors to talk about feedback from District patrons regarding the bond measure, a voter analysis and survey results.

Amber VanOcker of the Boise firm LKV Architects will review bond rates and various scenarios for the board to consider in funding future District improvement projects.

Scott Rogers and Cassie

Hibbert of the Wenaha Group, which has its headquarters in Tacoma, Washington, and an office in Pendleton, will speak about potential project cost estimates.

Superintendent Mark Witty also will present his thoughts on where the District should turn its efforts to provide improvements.

No action will be taken on any of these issues discussed

during the work session, Witty said.

Other items on the agenda are:

- District report card development process
- The Oregon School Boards Association's summer conference, which is set for July 20-21, with pre-conference sessions scheduled July 19.
- A rewrite of District policy.

## HAINES

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Fry contends that Brown ordered him to drive vehicles for which he is not licensed, and to send falsified sewer records to the state.

The executive session Monday evening was to discuss the status of Fry's employment.

Whited confirmed she had submitted a letter of resignation and that it is in the possession of the city. Whited said her resignation was related to the details of the letter Fry submitted and that she doesn't want to be held responsible

for anything described in Fry's letter.

Jones-Bedolla couldn't be reached for comment. Neither she nor Whited attended Monday's executive session.

Before Monday's meeting was called to order, Brown announced that Whited and Jones-Bedolla had both resigned.

Fry didn't attend the executive session.

Jones-Bedolla had won re-election to her council position in November 2018.

The Herald has requested copies of both resignation letters under Oregon's Public Records Law, but City Recorder Valerie Russell, at the advice of the city's attorney, Dan Van Thiel, contends the

letters are not public records because they haven't been presented to the City Council.

A public record is defined by Oregon law as any information prepared, owned or retained by a public body that relates to an activity, transaction or function of a public body. The letters were prepared by two members of the city council and are now retained by a city employee.

The Council has not officially accepted either resignation but could do so at its next meeting on April 9. After that the city will seek volunteers and choose two members of the public to appoint to the Council.

## COACH

Continued from Page 1A

District officials investigated that complaint, which had to do with Wilson's interactions with members of his BHS girls junior varsity basketball team during the 2014-15 season.

The District turned over its findings to the Oregon Teachers Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC).

The District also immediately gave Wilson directives about his future conduct with students, Witty said.

"After we finish any general investigation ... we don't wait," Witty said. "We complete our investigation and we apply whatever measure we deem appropriate."

Witty declined to release written details of the directives given to Wilson in 2015.

He pointed out, however, that it is up to the TSPC to take action regarding a teacher's state licensure. The District's role is to manage the employee's behavior on the job, or, as in this case, his or her role as a coach.

In 2017 the TSPC suspended Wilson's teaching license for 60 days.

"We didn't delay our responsibility for two years," Witty said, referring to the two-year period between the time the TSPC received the District's report and the time the state teacher licensing commission disciplined Wilson.

The Baker School District forwarded its own investigatory materials to the TSPC on Aug. 31, 2015. But by Aug. 25, 2015, Wilson already had signed an agreement stating that he had been given District directives and had completed Safe Schools training and gone through the coaching handbook with former BHS principal Ben

Merrill overseeing those actions.

The training and the handbook provide instruction, among many other topics, about maintaining appropriate boundaries between coaches and students.

"Whenever we have something that raises concerns as regards to ORSs (Oregon Revised Statutes) we always do our investigation and then turn it over to TSPC," Witty said. "Every time we have an investigation of someone who has a license or the potential to get a licence, we turn over the investigation to the TSPC."

The Commission issued its final order regarding the 2015 complaint and investigation on Nov. 9, 2017. The TSPC ruled that Wilson's conduct constituted "gross neglect of duty" under Oregon law. Wilson agreed "that there is sufficient evidence in the Commission's files and records" to support the stipulated facts as outlined in the TSPC report, which is available online at [www.tspc.state.or.us/temp\\_images/T00077729PR01906784.pdf](http://www.tspc.state.or.us/temp_images/T00077729PR01906784.pdf)

In the school district's investigation, officials "recognized that Wilson's conduct also resembles grooming behaviors and could be considered harassment in violation of district policies," the public TSPC report states.

Wilson signed the TSPC order agreeing to the allegations and the resolution of the matter on Sept. 23, 2017. The commission suspended Wilson's teaching license for 60 days and placed him on two years' probation with the agreement that he would:

- Comply with the Standards for Competent and Ethical Performance of Oregon Educators under Oregon administrative rules
- Submit proof that he

successfully completed Commission-approved training related to student/teacher boundaries within the first year of probation.

The TSPC report further states that any violation of the probation terms would constitute an "independent basis for the Commission to revoke Wilson's Oregon educator license or otherwise impose discipline" after first providing him notice and the opportunity for a hearing.

Wilson's teaching license expired in 2017 and has not been renewed, according to TSPC records. However, Trent Danowski, the Commission's deputy director, said in a telephone interview on March 27 that the TSPC maintains jurisdiction not only over those who are currently licensed, but over anyone who has been licensed within the past five years.

Danowski declined further comment about Wilson, citing an ongoing TSPC investigation of allegations against him.

### North Powder Charter School

In addition to his history of coaching in the Baker School District, Wilson has been the head boys basketball coach at North Powder Charter School for the past two years.

Lance Dixon, who's in his 14th year as North Powder's superintendent, said Tuesday that coaches are employed on a year-to-year contract.

"The decision about whether to rehire him or not won't occur until fall," Dixon said of Wilson's future at North Powder.

"Obviously there is information we need to gather to make an informed decision," he said. "We'll see what time brings and see what information we can gather."

Because of the wide range

of people who coach at North Powder, including teachers, classified employees and community members, the coaching pay scale was removing from the bargaining unit five years ago, Dixon said, and coaches are not protected by a union.

In conferring with the Oregon School Boards Association, Dixon said he learned that coaches can be dismissed at any time.

"They don't have a property right to coaching," he said, but he added that if a coach is fired midyear, the District might be required to pay the salary agreed to for the term of the contract.

Regardless, coaches are not among a protected class of employees that cannot be dismissed at the will of the District, Dixon said.

"You can dismiss or nonrenew for multiple reasons," he said. "The idea that we want to go in a different direction is not protected."

Dixon speaks highly of Wilson on a personal level.

"I have known the man for 20-plus years and obviously he's coached my two youngest sons (both on the North Powder basketball team and the BHS baseball team, which North Powder students join in a co-op arrangement).

"I've never had any complaints personally and there's never been a complaint (against Wilson) at North Powder," Dixon said.

## LOCAL BRIEFING

### Transportation commissions meeting here

The North East Area and South East Area Commissions on Transportation will meet Thursday, April 4, from 9 a.m. to noon at the Sunridge Inn. The meeting is open to the public. Topics include updating a list for statewide road improvement projects for 2021-24, a presentation on the state's Corridor Safety Project, and the Safe Routes to School Program.

### Mothers of preschoolers plan yard sale

The annual yard sale for MOPS — Mothers of Pre Schoolers — is set for April 13 from 8 a.m. to noon at the Nazarene Family Life Center, 1250 Hughes Lane. Spots are available for tables, at \$10 per space, and MOPS asks that people who have a table donate 10 percent of their proceeds to the organization.

More information is available by calling Kimberley Godes at 541-403-3174.

### Correctional Facility raises money

The staff at Powder River Correctional Facility in Baker City raised more than \$1,200 for Community Connection's programs designed to help senior citizens and low-income families.

The Powder River Food Drive Committee was led by Lori Fuzi, Valerie Duncan and Rhonda Gore. Other members are Debi Geddes and David Johnson.

### Dinner theater event scheduled April 6

Actors Studio Inc. is presenting a dinner theater event "Eclipsed" to benefit Cancer for College, a non-profit that awards scholarships to cancer survivors.

Isabella Evans of Baker City has received one of these scholarships, and organized this fundraiser to give back to the foundation.

The event is Saturday, April 6, at the Baker Elks Lodge, 1896 Second St. (An Elks membership is not required to attend.) Tickets are \$35 for individuals or \$60 per couple. These must be purchased in advance by 4 p.m. April 4.

Tickets are available at Random Resales and Betty's Books in Baker City, and online at [www.actorsstudio.com](http://www.actorsstudio.com)

Doors open at 6 p.m., and the show starts at 6:30 p.m.

Dinner includes steak, potato, vegetables, salad and dessert. The evening also includes a silent auction.

The play's plot is about a fundraiser for a charity. Those attending will become the guests for Lord and Lady Moon at the annual Moonlight Masquerade Charity Gala.

But then a diamond Tiffany necklace disappears, and someone turns up dead. Who could be responsible? Can the audience help solve the crime?

### Clay class to be offered at Crossroads

Mo Quinn will offer a clay class on April 8 and April 15 at Crossroads Carnegie Art Center, 2020 Auburn Ave.

Each session is from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. All ages are welcome (students age 8 to 12 need to bring an adult helper). Cost is \$40 for members or \$60 for nonmembers. Clay is provided and included in the class cost.

This workshop will focus on closed forms such as piggy banks, rattles or a frog. It is designed to be an introductory class. To register, call 541-523-5369 or go online at [www.crossroads-arts.org](http://www.crossroads-arts.org)

### Wildland fire refresher course set

Eastern Oregon Training Group will have the RT-130 Wildland Fire Refresher course on April 13 in Baker City. The course will start at 8 a.m. at the 5J School District Building, 2090 Fourth St. Cost is \$100. All participants should bring gloves for the practice fire shelter deployment.

Registration can be done at [oregonfiretraining.com](http://oregonfiretraining.com). Pre-registration is requested; the cost will be \$120 at the door. This is a required class for all federal and state contractors. More information is available by calling Laurel Goodrich at 541-403-0907 or Jeff Sherman at 541-519-6213.

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FRI: (4:10) 7:00, 9:35 SAT: (1:10) (4:10) 7:00, 9:35  
SUN: (1:10) (4:10) 7:00 M-TH: 7:00

**CAPTAIN MARVEL** PG-13  
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