## Weigum

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## Why a recall?

Charlene Morris alleges that Weigum, in her role as a member of the John Day/Canyon City Parks and Recreation District board, violated Oregon Revised Statutes 192.620-670 by communicating via email with fellow board members in drafting the language for the pool bond measure that appeared on the May ballot. The statutes cover Oregon meetings law pertaining to regular meetings, executive sessions, public notices, minutes, the form of the agenda and meetings conducted via telephone or other electronic means.

While Oregon law allows for public bodies such as the parks and rec board to meet and deliberate electronically, it also requires that the public be able to monitor that electronic communication as it's happening.

Jack Orchard, a Portland attorney who specializes in

public records and public meetings law, told the Blue Mountain Eagle for an earlier story that any discussion of the language for the pool bond should have been held in a public meeting that followed all the standard procedures the law requires.

"The discussion of the bond measure in any form was a public meeting matter," he said. "It needed to be agendaed, discussed at an open session with minutes kept. Notice of the meeting was required in the normal course and means."

Orchard added that this is especially true if a quorum of board members was involved in the email communications that occurred in drafting the ballot measure's language.

Also alleged are violations of ORS 192.314-335, which cover access to public records and the timely dissemination of public records.

Morris also claims that Weigum prepared an additional notice of ballot title that was published in the Blue Moun-

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tain Eagle in violation of ORS 260.532 and 260.537. Morris said Weigum called herself the "elections authority" and that these actions were taken to mislead voters and cause confusion.

In addition, Morris accused Weigum of violating ORS 294.414, which covers the appointment of a budget committee, pointing to Weigum's role as the JDCC Parks and Recreation District's budget officer.

Morris said Weigum could have taken steps to avoid a recall.

"Lisa had two choices," Morris said. "She could resign or make a statement, which I have not seen."

Morris said she understands Weigum isn't the chair of the parks and recreation board but said Weigum is the board member she had the most communication with when the effort to put the pool bond on the ballot started. "I knew trying to recall all five of (the board members) would not be successful," Morris added.

Morris also alleges that Weigum told her that "we have to do better," referring to the parks and recreation board's efforts to provide transparency to the public, but failed to fol-

Loans

lowa County).

Continued from Page A1

\$57,450 for a family of four

(limits slightly higher in Wal-

• Home equity must be

low through with any meaningful actions.

Weigum, in her statement of justification in response to Morris' petition, characterized the recall effort as a personal vendetta.

"It is unfortunate that the petitioner is insulting the democratic process by wasting your tax dollars on purposely misinforming the public, spreading blatant lies, and worst of all, continuing to create polarization in our community all because (she) just doesn't like me," Weigum wrote.

## Board chair backs Weigum

Zach Williams, who chairs the parks and recreation district board, said Weigum was being unfairly singled out by the recall effort.

"It's not like any of the things Lisa is being accused of, for one, are Lisa's fault alone. They're all of our responsibility," he said.

"And two, I think everyone would find if they get on a board that you make these mistakes at times," he said.

Williams added that the board's actions had been subjected to heightened scrutiny because of the controversy sur-

**HOW TO APPLY** 

To find out more about Community Connection's Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program or to fill out a loan application, visit https:// ccno.org/housing-rehabilitation-loan-program/. To speak with program manager Kale Elmer, call 541-963-3186.

million in loans outstanding. The fund balance for available loans had dropped to less than \$250,000, but the account has been recharged by the awarding of a \$400,000 grant applied for by Grant County. The counties

> Connection's turns applyh the money ialified appli-Dregon.

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rounding the proposal to build a new community swimming pool.

"In 15 years, until the pool bond, not one person from the public had ever shown up to a parks and rec board meeting, not one," he said. "Nobody cared because we were doing good things, and that's all we've ever done."

Williams pushed back against the claim that Weigum had tried to deceive voters.

"The additional notice of ballot title to the Blue Mountain Eagle was a mistake. It was clearly not done to unfairly mislead voters — it was what she thought she was supposed to do," Williams added.

He also pushed back against the budget complaint.

"(Morris) claims (Weigum) broke finance law by not appointing budget committee members correctly, which is not true," he said.

"When I first started, you begged and pleaded for people to show up so you can have a budget committee meeting. This isn't a sought-after position that people are lining up to come get. ... That's the extent to which (Morris) is claiming Lisa broke budget law," Williams said.

kind of cycle through," Elmer

said. "Last time it was Union

Loan Program has been run-

ning for decades and was orig-

inally operated by individ-

ual cities and counties around

Community Connection took

the reins some years back. The

program has 137 active loans

in its portfolio, and another

loan we had was from 1980,"

Elmer said. "That loan was

paid back last year.'

Grant.

"When I started, the oldest

While the program has

proven popular elsewhere, it

has been slow to catch on in

Grant County. According to

Elmer, of the nearly 140 home

rehabilitation loans currently

outstanding, only 11 are from

"It's been an uphill bat-

168 loans have been repaid.

before

Northeast Oregon

The Home Rehabilitation

County."

Williams said the recall effort against Weigum fits within the political dynamic that has been apparent both locally and nationally in recent years.

"Attack, attack, attack. The feeling is that you're trying to stack these boards to their favor somehow, but I don't know what that outcome is supposed to be," he said.

Weigum's supporters, including Williams, are adamant that recalling her from the Parks and Rec board would be a loss for the community as a whole. "Lisa is a great parks and rec board member," Williams said. "She's very community-minded. She cares about kids and programs and Seventh Street."

If people aren't happy with Weigum's actions on the board, Williams suggested, there is a better way to handle the situation.

"There is a time and a place to change board members, and they're called elections," he said. "Somebody should run against her. Someone should run against us if they don't like what we're doing."

Williams added, "That's the way the process is supposed to work. Recalls — there is a time and a place, but this isn't it."

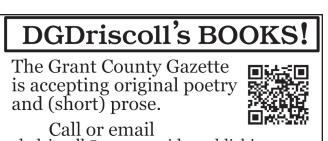
tle to get applicants," he said. "We get a lot of seniors, and we find they'll be reluctant to take a loan even though there's no payments and no interest."

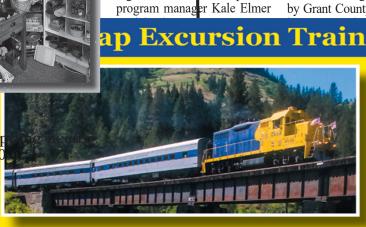
Many seniors worry about leaving behind a loan that their children will have to pay off after they're gone, but Elmer noted that making repairs can substantially increase the value of an older home, making it possible to repay the loan after the home is sold or refinanced.

"You need to take care of it or you're not really leaving them anything," he said.

Both Elmer and Myers are hoping to broaden the program's acceptance in Grant County.

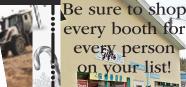
"I don't think we've done a very good job of advertising the benefits of it," Myers said. "It's a pretty good program for elderly, low-income and no-income people."





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What makes the program go is a revolving loan fund built on federal grants awarded by the Department of Housing and Urbary Development,

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