

Local water rates poised to soar

Water from Page 1A

An additional \$2 million is needed to fund the city's wastewater management upgrades, he said.

General fund transfers

The rate study was outlined in January at the City Council goals session and reviewed at last week's work session.

"For the city, the issue has been the council has known for several years the rate structure that the city has in place for water, wastewater and storm, the enterprise funds, has not fully funded those programs," Grassick said. "The rates don't support basic operation expenses. Every year, we've had to go back with supplemental budgets for expenses we incurred for maintenance or emergency expenses. That's not the way to run a train on time."

Grassick said a public process — including a citizens' advisory group, council members and members of the public works committee and staff — have been meeting for 15 months. "It all really came together in the last ses-



R.J. MARX/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Cannon Beach water, wastewater and stormwater rates could increase up to 40 percent.

sion," he said.

Along with expenses for water-tank repair or replacement, the city faces costs to replace brittle underground pipes, some of which have been in the ground for more than 50 years.

More use, more cost

The base rate for home or commercial property owners is determined by the cost "to get water to your front door," Grassick said.

In a city where 75 percent of property owners are second homeowners, owners are

charged the base rate whether they use the residence or not, Grassick said. "You incur costs even if you don't use water," he said. "That's the base rate."

The base rate for homeowners provides about 100 cubic feet of water or 748 gallons per month.

The unit rate, based on water usage, would increase from \$4.35 to \$7.15 per 100 cubic feet of water used per month.

Commercial water rates correspond to meter size, from a base allowance of 400 cubic feet to 20,000 cubic

feet. Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District is exempt from charges.

Storm drain costs are an additional fee for homeowners and commercial properties, Grassick said, and "will be close to double what it is right now."

Vetter said the hikes are still "conjecture" and must be approved by council.

"We've got the study from Civil West, they are making recommendations, and now we, as a council, have to do decide which recommendations we are going to follow," Vetter said. "The reality is we could decide not to raise the rates, but that's not likely to happen. But we have not made the decisions yet. Moving forward, we have to make decisions about what aspects of that master plan we're going to execute and when."

The council plans to adopt the master plans April 4 and posted on the city website the next day, Grassick said. The new rate structure could be reflected in the budget 2017-18 and go into effect July 1.

Bills would reflect the new costs in August.

Six candidates for school board step forward

Candidates from Page 1A

Two races are contested. In Seaside's Zone 6, Custer challenges Stelson, who joined the board in 2013.

In Gearhart's Zone 3, Wahl and Lum compete.

After district consolidation in 1967, seats were divided with two each to Cannon Beach, Seaside and Gearhart. The seventh member of the board serves at-large and may live anywhere within the district. Both Gearhart incumbent Lynn Ulbricht and at-large incumbent Tom Maltman are stepping down from the board.

Maltman said he was retiring after 16 years on the board to pursue new directions. "The big goal was getting the relocation situated and the bond passed," Maltman said. "That's done, so I think it's time to pass it on to fresher individuals with a little more energy than I might have."

Stelson, the incumbent in Seaside's Zone 6, is a retired family physician. He brings experience on the school board and as a member of the city's improvement commission.

"I enjoy it," Hugh Stelson said of serving on the school board. "I have learned a lot about schools in general, and our schools and staff in particular. We do a lot with what we have. I'd like to see the district through the construction, the charter school transition and continuing evolution of improving teaching and outcomes using data and individual connections to students and families. I worry about funding, PERS (Public Employees Retirement System), and the current federal approach to public education, but expect that those issues are out of my hands."

Taylor, a Cannon Beach resident, runs unopposed in Zone 1. Taylor is a Seaside High School graduate and the production manager of Bruce's Candy Kitchen. He was elected to the board of directors in 2013 and is now

Q&A with Cannon Beach's Brian Taylor

Along with Patrick Nofield, Brian Taylor is one of two Seaside School District directors to represent Cannon Beach on the seven-person board. Taylor is running unopposed for re-election.

Q: What have you learned during your time on the board?

It's been eye-opening, how the public administrative side works with the school district. We've got a really good board that works well together, complements each other. Everybody has a different point of view, but the one thing we all have in common is we're all here for the kids.

Q: As owner and production manager of Bruce's Candy Kitchen, how has your business experience impacted your board experience?

I would say being able to work together with people and management. There are certain steps you have to take to make the pieces fit, all come together. One person can't do everything. I couldn't make that candy myself. Delegate, work with others and realize every person is important, everything is a piece of the puzzle.

Q: Tell me your thoughts on the Cannon Beach Academy.

seeking his second term. Wunderlich, who describes herself as "coffee slinger" at Seaside Coffee, is a Seaside High School graduate with an undergraduate degree from Portland State University.

"I feel I am a product of Seaside," Wunderlich said. "I feel like the district has done a great job, and what it comes down to is the kids. It's a great time to be the community, just coming off the heels of basketball, we're all superexcited, with the new school — I guess it's time."

"I have an open mind and have kind of made a career

When Cannon Beach Elementary School had to be closed due to financial issues, it was sad because I had been able to walk my kids to school every day. But we had to do what was best for the district.

The charter school group has worked really hard. We had our struggles in the first couple of years, but I think it will be a good addition to the school district. They're still going to have their challenges, but they've got a really good group of people.

Q: What made the difference for the academy?

Right now I have a fifth- and a seventh-grader. I had a second- and a fourth-grader when the school closed. When the academy tried to go for all six grades, the chance for error was higher, but when they decided to start with a young group and build it from there, that was a really good idea. Start small and build it, like anything else in life.

I know our kids have to travel a little further. But it's no further than Cullaby Lake to Gearhart Elementary School. It's 8 miles. There are a few more kids out our direction than Cullaby Lake. That's our biggest concern — how far it is to travel. My kids ride the bus and they actually enjoy the ride. It's a chance for kids to interact with each other.

— R.J. Marx

out of listening to people here," Wunderlich added. "I feel like I have a lot of unique perspectives brought to me. Then of course I have my own

perspective. And I'm a good listener, I can listen to what people have to say, but at the end of the day, do what I think is right."

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