



Water discussion reaches a boiling point

Hike seeks to finance infrastructure

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

After four hours of heated debate, the public works committee decided Tuesday to table a plan that would increase water rates in Cannon Beach by 40 percent.

Instead of recommending the plan at the May 2 City

Council meeting as originally planned, members of the committee decided to schedule a special meeting May 9 to discuss issues each had with the proposal.

"I think it's a little rushed. We need a more robust conversation about priorities and where all the money goes," public works committee ice chairman Richard Bertelotti said. "The reality is we have to raise some rates to do some maintenance, but we need to understand why it is needed."

Dan Grassick, the city's public works director, said the average combined sewer and water rate in Cannon Beach would increase from about \$52 a month to \$70 beginning in July.

Infrastructure needs

The water and wastewater master plan seeks to finance about \$3.4 million in water infrastructure, as well as about \$1.3 million in wastewater projects, according to the Civil West Engineering Services study commissioned by the

city. These projects would focus on rehabbing or replacing a variety of systems, including brittle water lines and water storage tanks.

"We are retaining the same rate structure, just increasing the base price and unit price to fund operations, maintenance and capital projects," Grassick said.

But members of the public works committee took issue with how projects were prioritized, how high the rate would jump, and, most notably, the lack of involvement

the committee had in forming the plan.

"We were frozen out of this process," Bertelotti said. "That's got to change or there is no reason to have a public works committee."

Grassick said he apologizes for not including them in the two preliminary planning meetings last year. He also said committee members were given the master plans in December, but due to travel and weather complications couldn't meet until now to discuss it.

Why now?

There has not been a significant rate increase in Cannon Beach for 10 years, Grassick said.

Because of this, the Public Works Department has not been able to fully cover operational costs without dipping into the general fund, Grassick said. While this has been the status quo in Cannon Beach, Grassick said there are long-term issues with depending

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BRENNA VISSER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Seaside Heights Elementary School students play with thermometers in the touch tank at Puffin Welcome.

Bring on the puffins

Event welcomes tufted puffins to Cannon Beach

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

Kindergartners came to explore, learn and welcome tufted puffins back to Haystack Rock at the Puffin Welcome on Friday, April 14.

Haystack Rock Awareness Program volunteers were scattered about, imparting the lessons of local marine life with touch tanks and tide pool tours. Some were supervising games like "Puffin Predator," the main objective of which was to pick up as many pieces of driftwood — which represented

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BRENNA VISSER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

HRAP Education and Volunteer Coordinator Lisa Habecker and volunteer Tracy Abel explain the rules to a game at Puffin Welcome.

City council considers inclusivity resolution

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette

Following the trend of many cities along the North Coast, the Cannon Beach city council is considering adopting an immigrant inclusivity resolution.

The resolution, which "embraces, celebrates, and welcomes its immigrant and refugee residents and their contributions," is not the same as becoming a sanctuary city.

The resolution was drafted after several citizens approached Cannon Beach Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn about wanting Cannon Beach to become an inclusivity city like their northern neighbor Astoria did in March. Seaside City Council also is considering an inclusivity resolution.

Schermerhorn said he then went to the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council, a major player in passing the resolution in Astoria, to discuss next steps and in the hopes of building a closer relationship with the Latino community.

"I know there is a lot of fear growing," Schermerhorn said. "We want people to know we're not actively seeking to deport undocumented folk."

This string of proposals come in light of an executive order signed by President Donald Trump in January that would withhold federal grant money from sanctuary cities—a general term describing cities that seek to protect undocumented immigrants from federal immigration policies. The City of Seattle has filed a lawsuit challenging the order.

Inclusivity resolutions allow cities to support immigrants and refugees without running the risk of possibly losing that money by not cooperating with federal immigration agents.

There was never a discussion suggesting becoming a sanctuary city rather than an inclusivity city with the citizens who approached him, Schermerhorn said.

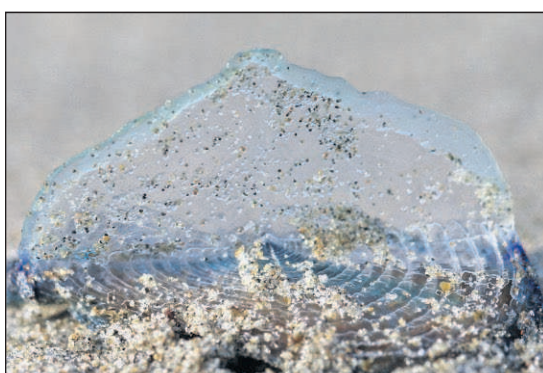
In the draft of the resolution, it states the policy is aimed to keep the roles of local and federal government clear and enforceable, rather than framing it as a resistance to federal deportation practices. No changes to current Cannon Beach police policy are necessary to adhere to these goals, Schermerhorn said.

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THE RETURN OF THE 'BLUE TIDE'

By-the-wind sailors make landfall again



OREGON COAST AQUARIUM

Velella velella, the so-called "blue tide," are less of a threat to animals and people than the red variety.

EO Media Group

NEWPORT— The Oregon coastline is again experiencing a "blue tide," when beaches are strewn with an aquamarine layer of jelly-like organisms. Each spring, there are innumerable bodies of by-the-wind sailors or Velella velella, and their strandings are a regular, but still fascinating phenomenon on the coast.

The common name of these gelatinous creatures — by-the-wind sailor — refers to the clear, triangular sail at the top of the animal's body which catches the wind and propels it across

the surface. Short tentacles hang from the underside of the sail. Found in all the world's oceans, these animals have no independent form of movement and will drift at the whim of the breeze.

Despite Velella's simple yet effective sail, heavier winds during the spring and summer months may cause mass strandings. During such conditions, it isn't uncommon to see miles and miles of Oregon beach carpeted with stinking heaps of Velella, which quickly die and decay on shore, turning from a metallic blue to a lifeless white.