

Alternative proposed for Willow Creek Dam

A proposal for building a series of three small dams on Hinton, Willow and Shobe creeks and constructing a concrete flood channel through Heppner, rather than building the proposed \$25.8 million Willow Creek Dam, will be discussed during a Tuesday night meeting of Heppner City Council.

The alternative plan to building the massive earth-filled dam is being considered by the value engineering team of the Army Corps of Engineers' Walla Walla office. Members of the team will make a presentation of their findings during Tuesday's council meeting.

Ferd Swensen, chief of the value engineering team, said Wednesday that when members of his group began examining the proposed dam project, "the first thing we noticed was that the dam doesn't do the job" in terms of eliminating Heppner's flood plain. A check of flood plain maps resulted in "very little difference for the lower end of town, even with the dam," Swensen said. "As we see these maps, the question

becomes obvious: Why build a project that doesn't solve the problem?"

A system of small dams, coupled with a concrete lined, high velocity flood channel has demonstrated its effectiveness in other western cities, such as Walla Walla and Pocatello, Swensen noted.

Since Swensen's team is charged with challenging Corps construction project proposals with an eye for "doing the same job for less money," the three dams-flood channel concept came under examination.

"We can't replace a Cadillac with a Volkswagen," Swensen noted, but the proposed Willow Creek Dam, he said, "is a two-wheeled Cadillac."

The proposed Willow Creek Dam, he said, would be built to control 10 times more flood-water than was experienced during the devastating 1903 flood, while at the same time, the dam would not eliminate Heppner's flood plain.

"I question the hydrology of the project," that led to Heppner's flood plain designations, Swensen added, in-

dicating that his office plans to check Corps dates on the local flood situation against information collected by the National Weather Service.

A check the Seattle office of the Flood Insurance Administration revealed that the alternative plan of three small dams and a concrete flood channel would completely eliminate Heppner's flood

plain, Swensen said.

The concrete flood channel proposed to follow the course of Willow Creek through town would require right-of-way purchases from adjacent property owners, the value engineering chief noted. "The people would have to give up some land," Swensen noted, "but most of it is unusable. If

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PMH board claims report biased; seek health planning consultant

Pioneer Memorial Hospital's board of trustees is asking the Morrow County Court for permission to hire a health care planning consultant in order to develop specific programs aimed at curing the ailing medical facility's ills.

In a workshop and business meeting in Boardman Thursday, the hospital board unanimously passed a resolution seeking the health planning consultant. The resolution also guardedly criticized recommendations recently unveiled in Northwest Medical Foundation's report on Pioneer Memorial. According to the working of the resolution, "a conflict of interests" may have tainted Northwest's recommendations, since Northwest was actively seeking to obtain a hospital management contract from the county while making recommendations in the hospital study regarding Pioneer's management.

The resolution also stated that many of the hospital's shortcomings outlined in the Northwest report had already been identified by the hospital board and reported to the County Court. In the resolution, the hospital board noted that although the Northwest report made recommendations, no plan of action was made for implementing them.

During discussions preceding the unanimous vote on the resolution, Pioneer trustee John Maas said that he was "skeptical of an organization doing a study on the management of a hospital, when they're in the business of managing that hospital."

"How do you respond to a document that is so slanted in its recommendations," commented Administrator Bob Byrnes... "They're saying 'we're the savior of your hospital if you buy our program.' I don't think the people will buy it."

Board Chairman Fred Martin stated that he wished the study had been performed by an "independent" consulting firm that had no special interest in bidding for a management contract.

"I'd hate to see the County Court pressured into acting on this thing right away," commented board member Ed Dick.

While criticizing many aspects of the study's recommendations, the board members indicated that they concurred with many of Northwest's findings regarding the hospital's problems.

The report was "factually correct in terms of our facilities," said Martin. "They came to many of the conclusions that we had already reached."

"But basically, we just got a

re-statement of the problems," Byrnes said.

Trustee John Maas, a Lutheran minister, criticized Northwest's ties to a regional Seventh Day Adventist "evangelical outreach" program—"we shouldn't find ourselves supporting with tax dollars an organization that is evangelical in nature. I know the clergy in Heppner would object to it—not to mention the agnostics," he said.

In other developments at Thursday's meeting, the hospital board voted to ask the County Court for permission to enter into a contract with Don Scott, or another suitable labor negotiator, to handle negotiations with hospital employees represented by the municipal and county employees union. Earlier this month, the union announced that it was seeking a contract for the 25 Pioneer Memorial non-professional workers

covered by the union. The employees voted in favor of union representation last fall.

Don Scott serves as Morrow County's intermediary in labor negotiations with personnel in the county's sheriff and road departments.

Martin noted that in talks with County Court officials, the county appeared to be favorable to hiring a negotiator for the hospital's labor dealings.

With budget proceedings expected to add an additional burden to the hospital board's work load, board members indicated that they felt hiring a negotiator was crucial.

Pioneer Memorial appears likely to succeed in receiving a \$201,175 grant from the Department of Health Education and Welfare's Health Resources Administration.

Byrnes presented copies of a letter from the acting chief of HEW's Health Facilities Im-

provement Branch stating that "we are pleased at this time to announce that funds promised have been released by the Office of Management and Budget and are available for our use. After architectural plans have been reviewed and approved, you will be authorized to bid the project on the competitive market..."

The grant would provide the hospital with \$105,800 for new X-ray equipment, pay for remodeling and an addition to create a 1,008-square foot new emergency room and waiting room separate from the exist-

Martin re-elected to PMH board presidency

Fred Martin of Ione was unanimously re-elected president of Pioneer Memorial Hospital's board of trustees during a business meeting last

Thursday in Boardman. Ed Dick of Heppner was elected vice president, and Alice Bartlett of Boardman was elected secretary.

Also funded would be such items as a fire detection system, a new incinerator, exit ramps, and new doors, and installation costs.

Pioneer appears to be only one of two hospitals in Oregon to receive funding under the grant. The bid was applied for by the County Court in January of 1977.

Ironically, Byrnes noted, it appears in retrospect that had the county applied for funds to build an entirely new facility, such a grant would have been approved.

Additional staff, less revenue increase school district budget

A proposed county school budget expected to raise the tax rate for Morrow County public schools from the current level of \$9.59 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation to about \$10 has been approved by the school district's budget committee.

The new budget—expected to come to a vote on April 3—will be the central topic of a Morrow County School District public meeting set for 7:30 p.m. at Heppner Elementary on Feb. 19.

The budget would require going \$2.64 million outside the six per cent limitation, compared with \$2.07 million that was required to balance the budget during the current fiscal year.

At the center of the cause for the budget increase is the need for additional money to hire staffs for the new Irrigon junior high and Boardman elementary schools, expected to open midway during the coming year. School officials are also expecting a whopping 40 per cent increase in the district's electrical bill during the coming year, as well as increases in supply costs from vendors, expected to climb about 10 per cent.

The document approved by the budget committee on Monday shows a significant increase over the draft budget submitted by Superintendent Matt Doherty earlier this month.

Among reasons for the

increase is the fact that the committee lowered the estimated amount of revenues expected to be received in state basic school support funds, choosing a figure "we know we won't get less than," according to Doherty. Just how much the county will receive in basic school support funds remains a question to be answered by the Oregon Legislature. If the amount ends up being higher than expected, the school district would adjust the budget accordingly, thus lowering the tax rate.

Also preventing the proposed school tax rate from

being hard and fast at this point is the fact that the county's taxable property value for the 1979-80 fiscal year has yet to be computed.

The new budget does reflect the terms of a tentative agreement recently reached by the school district with its teachers and other classified

Surprise awaited budget committee members

Morrow County School District officials attending Monday's budget committee meet-

ing at the District Office in Lexington were given a rude surprise when they returned to their cars at the end of the session.

Vandals had slashed tires on a school district-owned van, and on Heppner High School Principal Jim Bier's personal vehicle, while the meeting was in progress.

The Morrow County Sheriff's department is investigating the incident.

Meeting set on hospital survey

The Pioneer Memorial Hospital Board and County Court have scheduled a public meeting to review the Northwest Medical Foundation study. The meeting will be held Tuesday, Feb. 13 at 7:30 p.m. in the Courthouse.

District-teachers reach tentative agreement

The Morrow County School District and its teachers and other classified employees have reached tentative agreement on a new contract.

The proposed three-year pact would reportedly adhere to the Carter Administration's seven per cent, anti-inflationary, wage increase guideline, but add two additional "longevity" pay steps to teachers currently at the top end of the county's wage scale.

The contract would also contain "opener" clauses, which would allow the pact to be re-opened for negotiation in the event of significant changes in the trend of the economy.

Action is expected to be taken on the proposal by the Morrow County School Board during its Feb. 19 meeting. Teachers are expected to vote on whether or not to approve the pact prior to that time.



Blast off!

Stan Sporseen and Wedy Toombs examine model of space shuttle Enterprise during a special space-oriented assembly this week at Heppner Elementary School. At right, Clarice Lolich, aerospace education specialist for NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Ms. Lolich brought students up to date on space exploration plans by the federal agency, and brought along several items of astronaut's gear, such as a space suit modeled by Principal Don Cole.

Elementary discipline policy outlined for Concerned Parents

More than 100 parents and high school students attended a Concerned Parents meeting at the Heppner Elementary School last Thursday, to hear Principal Don Cole outline features of a new elementary school discipline code.

The new discipline code "does not vary from existing district policy, but it does condense rules and spell out penalties in a more readable and specific form."

Parents would be notified in the event of the need for any major discipline. "Our overall philosophy is that we have put the responsibility for dealing with major offenses where it belongs—with the assistance of the home," said Cole.

Basically, the new discipline policy, in effect since the start of the second semester, breaks infractions down into three groups—major, minor and petty. Major offenses include theft, vandalism, profanity and skipping school.

The use, sale or possession of alcohol or drugs would result in a three to five day suspension for a first-time offender, and juvenile authorities would be called in to investigate. For a second offense, expulsion would result.

Suspensions ranging from

one to five days would result for a student found guilty of theft. Juvenile police would also be called in, and the offender or his parents would be required to make restitution. Expulsion would result from a second offense.

Deliberate vandalism would be dealt with by a three-day suspension, with juvenile officers called in to investigate possible court action. Expulsion is called for on a second offense.

For students who are publicly vulgar or who use profanity while addressing a staff member, a one day suspension and public apology is called for upon the first offense.

Spanking by the principal or a designated teacher would result for a student guilty of fighting with willful intent to do bodily harm for the first time.

Offenses listed in the "minor" category would generally be handled by a conference with the student, his parents, and upon a third offense—with a brief suspension. Minor infractions include disruptive conduct and cheating.

Pretending or "acting like" being under the influence of alcohol or drugs is also a "major" punishable offense,

"It looks good on paper, but unless you people put some teeth in it and enforce it, it isn't worth the paper it's written on," commented Bob Mahoney on the new policy.

Assistant Superintendent of Schools John Edmundson noted that teachers cannot be expected to see every infraction of rules, and urged that "parents should report any wrongful behavior" by students that they might notice.

Following the presentation on the elementary discipline code, a discussion was held on discipline procedures at Heppner High School. The central topic of the discussion centered around the use of illegal drugs.

Drug offenses at the high school are handled in a similar way as outlined in the new elementary code.

A number of parents—as well as several high school students—complained that drug and alcohol rules were not severe enough.

"Eighty per cent of the kids are walking down the halls stoned," commented senior Lionel Wood. "It's sickening." Robb Rush said that a survey by unnamed high school students showed that of the 164

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