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School Board approves budget; vows to gain back community trust

The Morrow County School Board approved the 2000-2001 budget document, including amendments, six to one, after a lengthy discussion at their regular meeting Monday night at Riverside High School in Boardman.

Amendments included transfers of \$250,000 from contingency funds for employment of additional teachers in north end schools to accommodate growth and reduce class sizes. When questioned about transfer of contingency funds, Superintendent Bruce Anderson commented, "When we know we're going to have 28 kids in the first grade at Sam Boardman Elementary, I didn't see any reason to wait until school starts. I'm trying to take care of some class size issues now."

The amended budget also increased cash carryover to over \$1 million.

The board also learned that additional monies were available to reinstate co-curricular programs to last year's status. Programs which had been cut, such as golf at Heppner and cheerleaders and middle school track at all schools, were

reinstated. Co-curricular programs are funded through the Morrow County Unified Recreation District.

Board member Barney Lindsay at first expressed a desire to abstain from voting to accept and adopt the budget, but then cast the lone dissenting vote. Board members, Dwayne Carroll, Gary Frederickson, Keith Lewis, Pat McNamee, John Rietmann and Julie Weikel approved the budget.

Voting followed a lengthy and sometimes contentious discussion concerning public disputes among board members. Board members and Anderson expressed the need to regain public trust and resolved to listen to the community and work toward a common goal before discussion degenerated into an argument among board members.

The disagreement was preceded by board President Gary Frederickson distributing guidelines on proper conduct of board members to Lindsay and Weikel.

Lindsay had vocally opposed cutting teachers, and the Heppner FFA program in particular, as a way to balance the district's

budget. After the board earlier approved over \$1 million in staffing reductions to meet a budget shortfall, Lindsay wrote a newspaper letter to the editor criticizing the board. Carroll then responded with his own letter to the editor rebuking Lindsay for publically criticizing the board.

"You might not like where the vote's going," said Carroll at the Monday night meeting. "But the vote is cast and there's no room for a minority position. We cannot agree on all issues, but when the vote's taken, then that's the board position and that's the end of it."

Lindsay also accused Anderson and the board of violating the open meetings law. Lindsay said that Anderson listed an ORS as a topic for an executive session, when the actual topic did not pertain to the statute. He also said the board had discussed in executive session items that were not allowed under the open meetings law and discussion had veered off the stated reason for an executive session.

Lindsay told the Gazette-Times that he plans to file an official complaint with the Oregon Standards and Practices Commission.

In other business, the board reviewed the Nelson Report which listed the results of a survey the district had commissioned. The survey, which primarily asked questions about the board's image in the community and the prospect of passage of a bond levy for construction of new school buildings, came on the heels of the resounding May 16 defeat of the local option serial levy in all precincts. The \$1 million local option levy was designed to fund salaries for some of the teaching positions cut.

The report indicated that 357 respondents were interviewed between May 16-24.

According to the survey report, "budget and program cuts/lack of funding" and "superintendent and school board not trustworthy" were perceived by respondents as the district's most serious problems with 49 percent citing the budget and 17 percent citing the trust aspect. Twelve percent cited allocation of funds; 10 percent overcrowding; 10 percent lack of quality teachers; seven percent, quality of education; seven percent, need for five-day school week; and six percent, school board not communicating with parents.

Less than half of the respondents, 43 percent, gave the school district a positive job

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Couple mourn dog's death; wonder why?

Beverly and Marvin Boyle are not only mourning the death of their dog, Lady, but are asking why anyone would kill their beloved 14-year-old companion.

The Boyles, who live in the lone area, believe that Lady, who had been crippled in a previous accident, was beaten to death.

The night before Lady died, they say they heard a prowler and then heard Lady bark. The next day they found her dead. The Boyles took Lady's body to a veterinarian, who performed an autopsy and came to the conclusion that she was beaten to death with a blunt instrument.

"There is no way she could have been run over, she never even got out of the yard anymore," said Beverly Boyle.

After Lady was accidentally run over by a sheriff's deputy, responding to a call at their home, the Boyles spent over \$2,000 in medical expenses to enable Lady to walk again. After veterinary care, faith healing, acupuncture, a special wheelchair made just for her and a rod placed in her leg, Lady eventually recovered enough to walk on her own.



Lady found dead

"I never saw a dog that would just look at you with love in her eyes," said Beverly. "She had love in her soul."

"I'm a vegetarian," said Beverly. "Our pets are our children and our animals get the best of care. Our veterinarian even comes out to give them their injections. Our Lady won't be getting them this year."

The Boyles, who have been married since 1973, say this is not the first time one of their pets has been hurt or killed over the past three years. Previously they believe that Lady, who was not able to walk at the time because of her accident, had been carried over to the other side of a creek and shot with a bb gun; one of their cats had been "cut end to end" and thrown under a desk in their shop; another cat was discovered bleeding from a wound to the neck before it ran off; a third cat was found dead in a neighbor's field; and a fourth cat was found "peppered with bullets."

"If they have an argument with us, why do they have to take it out on our animals?" asked Beverly. "They're terrorized. They're scared."

The Boyles say that not only have their animals been harmed, but claim they have had groceries, canned goods, money, credit cards, house plants and "you name it" stolen, garden tractors damaged, the water drained out of the radiator on their four-wheel drive and their door kicked in more than once.

"We're not going to sit by and let anyone get away with this. They've pushed it far enough," said Beverly. "We're hurt and angry."

The Boyles reported Lady's death to the police, but say incidents are too numerous to report. "We haven't reported everything to the police," she said. "Because we'd be calling all the time. I feel like they would think I would be a nuisance."

The Boyles say they have bought electronic surveillance equipment and burglar alarms which they plan to install. In the meantime, in fear over the next attack and to prevent copycat incidents, the Boyles declined to make their address public and won't even give the names of their other pets.



Lady

Mayor, three councilmembers out Four out of five quit Lexington council

Almost the entire town council of Lexington resigned Monday night, including the mayor, who said he could no longer work with the lone remaining councilmember.

Pat Baker, Duane Disque, Marsha Kemp and Mayor John Renfro all submitted their resignations at the council meeting Monday, and when everyone left there was only councilmember Glenn Anderson and about 15 stunned members of the audience.

Neither Disque nor Baker were at the meeting, and their letters of resignation had been delivered earlier to the council. Disque said he no longer had the time necessary to devote to the job, and Baker said he had other obligations that made it necessary to resign.

Kemp's explanation was much more lengthy. In a half page letter she said she was resigning because among other things when she found last year that the town "had not been obeying the law, following rules and was negligent in record keeping and accounting and nearly financially broke," and she tried to fix the situation, "I have met with resistance by my fellow council members when I sought to seek legal advice, financial advice and state assistance. Furthermore, when I tried to make the town employees accountable and responsible I had no support from council members. I am constantly being ridiculed, criticized and not respected by these council members. These council member do not share my council ethics," said Kemp. She did not name any particular councilmembers in her letter.

Contacted Tuesday, Renfro said he resigned because he could no longer get along with councilman Glenn Anderson. Renfro would not go into detail, only to say that he was not able to work with him. "This is not something that happened overnight. It has been building up," Renfro said.

Renfro had once before tried to resign when faced with a threatened recall, however, citizens in the community had gathered over 100 signatures on a petition saying they approved of the job he was doing, so he withdrew his resignation.

"I should have done it (resigned) a long time ago," he said Tuesday. "There was the petition, with 100 odd signatures in support, and I appreciate that. But there is a limit."

Renfro said he had tried to be fair with the public during his time as mayor. "I have been fair particularly when following the law. There have not been favorites and exceptions and that got me in a lot of trouble," he said. "There are people who are mad at me that I didn't even know a year ago (before he became mayor). But legally, morally and ethically I have been

committed to the good of the town, not an individual, and a lot of people don't agree with that," he said.

Renfro has been at odds with the fire department over expenditures and other procedures for quite some time.

Following his turbulent term as mayor of Lexington Renfro said he doubted he would get involved with politics again. "Why should people get involved," he said. When people get involved they have to feel they are doing something good for their community, Renfro said. "The payoff is you are the subject of discussion at the coffee shop. You get tired off all these people attacking you personally. I'm not making my living at this. If people think they accomplished a lot by getting rid of me they are wrong. I'm not making a big salary. I don't need it," he said.

Renfro added that he had in fact done a lot of things for the town that he paid for himself, including phone calls and mileage.

Following the meeting Monday night, town attorney Bill Kuhn was asked what the procedure was when almost an entire council resigns. Kuhn said he was not sure, but would research what the next step would be for the town.

An immediate problem was getting a budget passed in time so the town could have money to operate next year. Since none of the council resignations was accepted all members were technically still part of the council. Kuhn said he would ask Disque and Baker to serve long enough to get a budget approved for the coming fiscal year. With Anderson, Disque and Baker there would be enough votes to pass a budget.

Anderson was to be out of town starting Tuesday, as he started a two week ministering sabbatical in another city, and thus would be unavailable for business. Kuhn thought, however, that he could arrange a phone hookup for Anderson to vote.

Provider day set at clinic

The community is invited to meet the health care providers at Pioneer Memorial Clinic on Tuesday, June 20.

People are invited to stop by and get acquainted, enjoy cake and punch and take advantage of the clinic's "free appointment with the provider day."

Call 676-5504 for a free appointment. Appointments are limited to the first 75 callers and lab and x-ray fees are not included.

NEWS DEADLINE
5 p.m. Monday



Heppner Chamber of Commerce members (left to right) Cliff Green, Darrell Raver and Tom Wolff show off the new gun safe that is to be raffled off. Tickets for the raffle are \$5 each or 6 for \$25 and are available from most chamber members. The high quality fireproof safe, which is on display at Heppner Hardware (formerly Coast to Coast), will be given away Aug. 20. Only 500 tickets will be sold. Proceeds will be used to fund community projects.

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