

HEPPNER

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Gazette
Times

VOL. 121 NO. 37 8 Pages Wednesday, September 11, 2002 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

School board approves change to solve Irrigon school water problems

The Morrow County School Board voted Monday night to approve a change order for the Irrigon elementary school construction to cope with water discovered at the proposed school site. The change will necessitate a sizeable expenditure out of the school bond construction contingency fund. Board member John Renfro said that the change, which will entail raising the school above ground, could cost over \$400,000. The district has \$1.4 million in contingency. According to Rick Hayes, project manager with Heery International who was at the Monday night meeting, geotechnical engineers have determined that the water at the site could be flowing at a rate of as much as 40,000 gallons a minute. Hayes was directed to negotiate a price for the change.

Hayes presented several options to the board—one was to raise the building, another was to install a drainage system under the concrete slab where the building is to be constructed and the third was to relocate the building. The board feared that a drainage system would not be sufficient to cope with the amount of water discovered, especially since the area is considered now to be in a drought period, and was concerned that that the flooring of the new building would be adversely affected. The option of relocating the building was rejected because of subsequent construction delays and costs involved. Board Chair Julie Weikel reminded the board that the district had originally planned on a different site for the Irrigon school construction, but the cost of road construction required by city and county officials at that site proved to be cost prohibitive.

The board also approved a change order of around \$10,000 for development of a gravel parking area and fencing changes at Sam Boardman Elementary School. The board decided against asphaltting the area at this time because of paving costs which were estimated at around \$30,000.

In other business, the board:

—learned that the Head Start relocation project is nearly completed and opening day is planned for Sept. 16. The district funded relocation of the Head Start building in Boardman to make room for school construction.

—learned that the roof at Riverside High School is missing tiles, but replacement tiles are available and the roof will be sufficient over the winter.

—agreed that windows should be replaced in the kitchen and library at the Lone School to coincide with remodeling jobs in those areas.

—accepted as a first reading a change in policy with regard to advisory committees. The proposal, which would bring the board's policy on advisory committees in compliance with state law, would also: establish an advisory committee at each school, rather than in each community; and change the number of committee members to three, among other changes.

—learned that the bids for the new Irrigon school sewer system are all over bid. The district had budgeted \$70,000 for the project, but bids came in at \$95,000, \$123,690 and \$140,000, with the low bid subsequently withdrawing. Nan Hall with Heery International said that the budget estimate was probably too low.

—learned that there are no structural problems with the showers in the Heppner High School, however there has been some cosmetic damage. Howard Sheets, district maintenance manager, said that the joints in the cast-iron pipes are leaking and added that the architect recommended fixing the plumbing.

—learned from Superintendent Dr. Jack Crippen that Mike Armato of Heppner pointed out an omission in the requirements for a high school to be established in Irrigon. The requirements were recently published, but a section was omitted. Following is the corrected version: At its regular meeting on October 9, 2000, the board approved establishment of a high school in Irrigon with the following stipulations: 1. That the

funding levels currently established are maintained by the state with a cost-of-living adjustment. 2. That instructional programs at Riverside High School would not be eliminated or reduced as a result of establishing a new high school. This does not preclude a minor adjustment in program to accommodate scheduling or shifting of resources within elective offerings. 3. That enrollment between the communities of Boardman and Irrigon continue to increase at the five percent average as in the past five years. 4. That the district establish a separate fund, during the transition period, using revenues from student growth. 5. That the new high school would be phased in over a period of three years beginning in no later than the year following the opening of the new elementary school in Irrigon, so space is available for sixth graders. (i.e., Bond passes in Spring 2001; New elementary school completed in December 2002; move sixth grade students to new elementary school in January 2003; eighth graders that are promoted in 2003 would stay as the first freshmen in Fall 2003. The next year, Fall 2004, would have freshmen and sophomores at Irrigon High School and the Fall of 2005 you would have your full blown high school. The freshman class of 2002 would graduate from Riverside High School.)

—received an enrollment report from Dr. Crippen as follows: total school enrollment (number of children enrolled in school) as of the first day of school on September 3 this year is 2333, down from 2366 on Sept. 4, 2001, the first day of school last year; total school attendance (number of children actually in attendance at school) on Sept. 9 this year is 2209, down from 2295, the attendance on June 3, 2002, the last day of school. On Sept. 3 this year: Heppner High School had an enrollment of 184, down 13 students from 197 on Sept. 4 last year; Heppner Elementary school had an enrollment of 209, down

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BMX track meets opposition from neighbors



BMX track at Hager park gets watered down Tuesday

A BMX bike riding track being built by the city at Hager Park in Heppner has been met with opposition from homeowners near the park.

A petition with 19 signatures opposing the track at its present location was presented to the city council at its Monday evening meeting.

"This (Hager) is too small a park for one of these," resident Bill Ewing told the city council before handing over the petition. He said residents weren't against a BMX track. "Kids need good activities. We just feel it is not appropriate to put in a small neighborhood park. We need to find an appropriate place for this"

The BMX track is for bicycles and is basically small hills or mounds of dirt that kids can ride their bikes up and down.

Residents of Hager Street, that runs parallel to the park, were discouraged by what they feel was a lack of public input before the city located the track. "We were surprised to see dirt piles at the park. All of a sudden we had these dirt piles." He added that the problems are dirt blowing around the neighborhood and the noise. "The acoustics are such in the canyon that we hear all the loud noises."

Ewing also pointed out that Hager Park is not currently being maintained and passed out pictures showing parts of the park that have fallen on disrepair. He urged the city to maintain what it already has before adding new facilities to keep up.

Others from the neighborhood voiced concerns about locating the BMX track in Hager Park; however some said that having more activities for kids was a good idea. Barbara Gilbert said she no longer lives on Hager but does still own property next to the track. "I think what the city is doing for kids is good. Maybe water on it (the dirt piles) would settle the dust," she said. "I think the city doesn't have enough for kids to do." She said there is nothing better to her than the sound of kids playing. "It's better than them going downtown and getting into trouble with other things," she added.

Randy Rayburn, city sheriff who helped build the track, said he approves of the track because it gives kids a place to ride their bikes off the streets. "I can deal with them in a positive manner or I can deal with them in the juvenile system. I don't want them in the street. We need a place to send them." He added that the park would be closed at 9 p.m. and they would urge kids to use helmets.

Council member Tim Van Cleave said blowing dirt and dust was unacceptable but that the track was a "work in progress". "We weren't trying to sneak around (in making the decision on the track)," he said. "It's just that the dirt became available for

free." He said the track should be improved to have grass and an entrance area.

City public works director Craig Canham said his crew would start dust abatement Tuesday, and then work out "a temporary fix for dust control".

In other business at Monday's meeting the council heard from city Administrator Jerry Breazeale about his work on the city's flood maps.

Breazeale said he has been meeting with Representative Ron Wyden, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Emergency Management about redoing Heppner's flood maps. The flood maps determine who has to pay for flood insurance in the city and how buildings must be constructed (or if they can be constructed at all) in various parts of the city.

Breazeale said he is working to get a new study done on water activity in the event of a flood

from Hinton or Shobe creeks in Heppner. He said current estimates "aren't reasonable" and he feels if the data is redone the flood area in the city could be reduced.

"The rules are causing a lot of our older valued properties to not be upgraded because it is not economically feasible (to meet flood standards)," he said. "The state and federal agencies are now showing some interest in us," Breazeale said.

In another motion the council agreed to chip in \$500 toward a Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group project for a feasibility study to determine the market potential for additional overnight lodging facilities in Heppner.

A national chain is expanding into the western part of the United States and has been to Heppner to investigate the possibility of a new motel in the area.

Business purchase discussed for Heppner

The possible purchase of a business that could be moved to Heppner from California was discussed last Wednesday by the Willow Creek Economic Development Group (WCVEDG).

Economic Development director Martin Davis recently returned from California where he examined a business that makes pressure-reducing valves for the recreational vehicle industry.

The economic development group, in addition to trying recruiting new businesses for the South Morrow Industrial Park, has also been investigating purchasing a business to move here.

The Indio, California, business is the result of those efforts. Business brokers throughout six Western states

were contacted by WCVEDG and the valve producing company has been the best bet.

WCVEDG is also discussing mailing out more recruiting material to potential businesses that may want to locate here. The last two mailings generated 35 responses, but no businesses were actually recruited.

In addition the group also talked about a \$100,000 grant it has received from the Baker-Morrow partnership for construction of a "spec" building that could be used to house a potential new business.

Concerning tourism WCVEDG discussed a national motel chain that has looked at Heppner as a possible location for a new AmericInn franchise. The group voted to provide \$500 for a feasibility study to determine the market potential for additional overnight lodging facilities in Heppner.

Heppner Elementary to hold book fair

The Heppner Elementary School will begin its book fair, Thursday, Sept. 12, at 8 a.m.

The book fair hours will be:

Thursday, Sept. 12- 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. (during the open house)

Monday, Sept. 16- 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Sept. 17- 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 18- 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Everyone is invited to take advantage of the "family times" during the evenings of Thursday and Monday to check out the books with your whole family.

Book fair proceeds are used to help fund the Heppner Elementary reading programs.

HHS still a 2A school

Heppner High School is still a 2A school as of Sept. 3 enrollment figures. According to figures released by the Morrow County School District, HHS had 122 students in grades nine-12. HHS/Heppner Junior High had 184 students in grades seven-12.

According to Dick Allen, HHS/HES vice-principal, 2A schools range from 115-325 students, with 1A schools 115 students and below. Allen said that a decision to drop down a level is made by individual school boards. A school may have fewer students and still choose to compete at the higher classification. However, when a school's population increases above a certain classification, it must go up to the higher classification.

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