

## Morrow County School District board meeting *continued from page one*

decided to interview up to six candidates for Radie's position on Aug. 4 at the district office and postponed a goal-setting workshop which had been set for July 30 until Aug. 6 at Boardman, the date which had been earlier set for a policies workshop. The board hoped to have the new board member on board by that time, since the goal-setting could include such important issues as whether to establish a high school in Irrigon. Since Dr. Crippen told the board that the schools' athletic contests have already been set for the 2003-04 school year, the immediacy of the policies workshop, which had been set for Aug. 6, was not deemed as crucial and the workshop was postponed until a later date.

The board is required to advertise the vacated board position for 20 days prior to selecting a new member.

In other business, the board:

-elected John Renfro, Lexington, chairman.

-became deadlocked over electing a vice-chair with Barney Lindsay, north Lexington, and Julie Weikel, Boardman, receiving three votes each.

-rejected a motion by Lindsay, five to one, to review the designation of board attorneys before reappointing the current attorneys, John Witty and Andrea Hungerford.

-received a report from Jeannie Collins, chair of the Heppner Adopt A Teacher committee, relating that the group had raised \$17,000 toward employing a half-time teacher at Heppner Elementary School. (The additional funds would increase a half-time teaching position to full-time.) The group recommended that the funds be used for a half-time third/fourth grade teacher, since the class in question is expected to have around 32 students in the afternoons. The group's second priority would be to use the funds to increase a half-time kindergarten teacher at HES to a full-time teacher. North end schools opted to use their English-as-a-Second-Language monies to fund their full-time kindergarten teachers. The state funds only half-time kindergarten. The group's third priority would be to hire an aide for HES, which has no educational aides, other than one-on-one ESD aides, for the coming year.

Adopt a Teacher requested that the board approve additional monies to

fund the third/fourth grade teacher until the group could raise the total monies required, estimated at around \$22,000. After some discussion, the board agreed to accept the funds, earmarking them for the specified position, but did not agree to commit district funds to make up the difference. Instead they voted to increase the third/fourth grade position to full time only for the semester, thereby allowing Adopt a Teacher additional time to raise the total amount required. The board commended the group for their hard work in raising the funds.

-put off a decision to employ microphones at board meetings, which had been requested by a member of the audience, until a "feasibility study" could be undertaken.

-voted to sell the Irrigon Learning Center to the Baker-Union ESD, which has established an alternative school at the site. Dr. Crippen said that the ESD provides a valuable service which is desirable to retain in the county and the building is not useable for MCSD purposes. Board member Pat McNamee commented that he would like to see the funds from sale of the building, appraised at \$146,000, be used to build new district offices.

-in related business, received an appraisal of the Lexington district office property of \$67,000 for the land and buildings. The board declined to put the property up for sale "at the present time", voting five to one, since they had previously decided to keep the office at the current building, because of the difficulty of moving complicated communications cabling and equipment and costs involved. The board had earlier determined that a move would not result in cost-savings for the district and in June rejected a motion to move the district office, despite a request by Dr. Crippen to move to the north end. "Why would we sell a building we're using?" asked Lindsay at the Monday night meeting.

-after some debate, chose Windy River Elementary as the name for the newly-constructed Boardman elementary school, but deadlocked at three and three for two proposed names for the new Irrigon elementary school. The board could not decide between Irrigon Elementary and Stokes Landing Elementary. The issue will be revisited at a later date.

-attended to 2003-04 annual organizational details, appointing superintendent/clerk, director of programs, deputy clerk/business manager, board secretary/personnel director, custodian of funds and making other designations.

-reviewed the 2002-03 board goals, which the district generally achieved, said Dr. Crippen.

-received a report from Nan Hall of Heery International which stated that the Boardman, Heppner and Lone bond construction buildings are essentially completed and nearly ready for occupation

-learned that the old Lone School is scheduled for demolition on July 21.

-heard concerns about pooling of water at the new Boardman school construction, which Hall attributed to overwatering of new grass.

-heard from Hall that no problems with flooding are anticipated at the Irrigon school construction after installation of the building's drainage system.

-heard that the renovation of the locker room at Heppner High School may not be completed this summer. The bid for the HHS locker room came in \$25,000 over budget and the bid deadline was extended.

-heard the following district project report from Howard Sheets: replacement of exterior doors at ACH, installation of a rain gutter at Lone and installation of magnetic door-hold opens at HES, HHS and SBE have been completed. Installation of carpet in five rooms at CMS, a tennis court drywell and wainscoting at Lone, asbestos floor tile removal at HES, installation of metal siding and windows at HHS and installation of carpet in two rooms at RHS are in progress. Asbestos floor tile removal at HHS is scheduled to begin July 18 and asbestos floor tile removal at ACH is scheduled for July 22. Bids for window replacement at Lone are due July 18.

-set a district-wide in-service day in Boardman for Monday, August 25, the first day of work for teachers and selected Barney Lindsay to represent the board in addressing the assembly.

-accepted the following resignations/retirements: Bob Davidson, retiring from his teaching position at Riverside High School; Chris Bonney, resigning from his Sam Boardman Elementary School teaching position; Wally Greer from his Columbia Middle School technology education teaching position; Lindsay Harle, resigning from her Heppner Elementary School special ed teaching position; Val Campbell resigning from her Heppner High School language arts/Spanish teaching position; and Randy Vosberg, resigning from his Lone/

Heppner Elementary assistant custodian position.

-approved the following employment: Mark Rouska, RHS basic skills teacher; Joyce Hesla, A.C. Houghton Elementary School, Title I reading teacher; Marianne Anthony, ACH second grade teacher; Angela Dixon, SBE fourth-grade teacher; and Brooke Spencer, SBE fourth grade teacher.

-approved the following extra duty contracts: Mark Rouska, RHS assistant soccer coach; Dieter Waite, HHS assistant boys' basketball coach; Molly Rhea, Heppner Junior High head girls' basketball coach.

-approved a resolution authorizing the Morrow County Treasurer to invest school district funds.

-received a request to bring names for nominations to the budget committee to the next board meeting. Four budget committee positions are open; budget committee positions are for three-year terms and members may serve multiple terms.

-put off deciding about flood and earthquake coverage until more information is received on rates, deductibles and the amount of coverage needed, or if coverage is needed at all.

-heard the next board meeting is Monday, August 11, at ACH at 7:30 p.m.

## Local farmers help each other with fire

Thursday, July 10, a small fire started near Lexington on the road side of Lee Wagenblast's property. The fire, started by an unknown source, was quickly put out and only burned about a 20-foot area.

Then on Friday, due to the hot weather conditions, a boy who had come to mow the Wagenblast's yard, saw smoke coming from the area that had been burning the day before. No one was home and so he went up to Morrow County Grain Growers to tell them the fire had restarted.

Tom Pointer, local farmers and the Rural Fire Department, came to help put the fire out. Pointer took his tractor and plowed around the fire, to help keep it from spreading. However, this time the fire managed to burn up along the hillside and cover a 40-acre area. According to Steve Wagenblast, 40 acres was nothing compared to what it could have been had no one spotted it and took immediate action.

Afterwards, the farmers took the chance to visit and catch up with each other and turn a bad situation into something good.

## City puts water project on hold *continued from page one*

free up the \$70,000 per year set-aside. He said inflation and increased costs to maintain the water system could necessitate the need for rate increases in the future.

Wolff was adamant about the need to rethink the water system and how it is paid for. "I have just become very gunshy of the project," he told the council. "Talking with a cross-section of the community I have heard that they do not want this size of project and they don't want to pay for it. We erred when we approved the project, he said of the council's action.

Wolff proposed that instead of the \$6 million project requiring \$4,750,000 in 30-year debt, that the city should instead look at paring back the cost and adopting a "pay-as-you-go" philosophy.

Wolff also proposed the two new wells and the new 750,000-gallon water storage tank be eliminated from the project. He proposed the \$143,000 in new revenue raised each year from the recently approved water fee increases be used every year to pay for the project over a 10-13 year time period. He said the city crew could do the work by hiring seasonal help, leasing equipment and completing the job over a 10-13 year time period. At that point he said, "The city would not be in debt. I cannot do this to the city. I cannot incur this debt on the city," Wolff reiterated.

Council member Judy Bushke agreed saying she thought people would cut back on water usage and revenue would probably go down in the future, leaving the city unable to pay its debt without once again raising water rates.

Council member Kay Robinson said she thought people would move out of Heppner when the water rates got so high people couldn't make the payments. She suggested maybe the city hold an election to see if the voters wanted the new debt.

Mayor Bob Jepsen said he has been hearing the opposite from people. "I would be tickled to death to double my payments to get a new water system in two years," Jepsen said. "Tom's proposal is not in the best interests of the city. The public says they want a water system in a couple of years," he added.

Council member Tim Van Cleave said he was still unsure and "not ready to jump into this (refusing the loans and cutting back the scope of the project).

City Manger Jerry Breazeale said the city should understand that it would not save any debt money unless it is able to cut the project by more than \$1,250,000. That is the amount of grant money in the \$6 million project that must be cut before any savings would show up on the project. The rest of the \$4,750,000 is a one percent interest loan to be paid back over 30 years.

on the past history of water usage in the city. The amount of water used may not remain the same, and that with increased rates people might cut back on water usage, which would result in lower revenue coming in to the city.

Breazeale said if the city does away with the storage tank and makes other changes to the new water system plan it could impact the availability of grant and loan funds. He pointed out that there are also health issues involved. "If we eliminate the reservoir that is a critical part of the system. Funding came to us in part because of health issues." He said the city water system is very complicated and if correct water pressure is not maintained and there is leakage in the pipes it could cause health problems for residents of the city. He said if the city crews were to do the project over Wolff's proposed 10-13 year time span, the grant money for the project might "go away".

The current \$6 million water up-grade plan calls for outside contractors to do the work and be done in two years. Wolff said contractors usually put in about 30 percent profit on projects, and that if the city crews were to do the project local contractors might get some of the work. "We might be able to keep some of that money at home," Wolff said.

City attorney Bill Kuhn said if the city does the work itself there would probably be increased administrative costs tacked on to the project.

Wolff's motion asked the council to:

1. Rescind our prior approval for the city to receive and spend RUS and Oregon loans, grants and monies for the implementation of our water system master plan,
2. That the city manager be instructed to return any borrowed funds, or grant monies contingent on borrowed funds that the city has received or will receive, for the water project.
3. That we delete the proposed water reservoir and the proposed water wells, from our water system project.
4. That we proceed with the water system master plan program (as amended), using budgeted revenue raised annually, using new, leased equipment and city employees to complete the work.
5. That no debt be taken-on for the water project. We will pay-as-we-go.

The council did not pass the motion, however, it did decide to put the project on hold while city staff study the feasibility of adopting Wolff's plan.

## Death Notice

**Charles A. "Bud" Lundell**


Charles A. "Bud" Lundell, 88, of Heppner, died Sunday, July 13, at his residence at St. Patrick's Senior Center, in Heppner.

A graveside service will be held Saturday, July 19, at the Valby Cemetery, in Lone.

A complete obituary will appear in next week's Gazette-Times.

Sweeney Mortuary, Heppner, is in charge of arrangements.

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