

HEALTH DISTRICT

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Mahoney also said she recently spoke with Morrow County Assessor Greg Sweek, who told her that the valuation of Morrow County is currently around \$1.5 billion and is not expected to increase in the near future, with valuations of some current wind projects declining slightly or remaining flat. Much of the new construction is still in the enterprise zone, which means that the businesses are not taxed while they are starting up. Mahoney said that Sweek said that doesn't mean something couldn't come along, but it is not expected. While several upcoming wind and other projects within the county have been discussed, board chair Larry Mills reminded the board that they have not yet been formalized, and anticipated revenue from the projects is very uncertain and not to be counted upon. He reminded the board of the racetrack project in Boardman several years ago, which promised an economic windfall for the county, but ultimately fizzled.

Other mitigating factors in going ahead with a supplemental levy include the prospect of needing to hire another physician and the costs entailed in that, the purchase of a new ambulance for the Irrigon area and future purchases to replace aging ambulances for other areas in a scheduled rotation, future equipment purchases and costs involved in the current changeover to electronic medical records, and the upcoming changeover for the district's financial and clinic systems over to electronic.

"We have a good bottom line now," said Mahoney, "but I don't know how the year's going to end or next year."

If the district is to put a supplemental levy before the voters, it would have to be by next spring. Mills suggested a proposed levy of around 30-39 cents per thousand valuation, which would be similar to the current five-year levy, which is set to expire, and would keep the district's total tax under \$1 per thousand valuation.

"You're behind the curve already on the levy," warned interim CEO Victor Vander Does, who was present for the meeting.

This meeting was the final one for outgoing CEO Michael Blauer, who has taken a position in Seaside. Vander Does, who, as previous MCHD administrator, is credited for helping pull the district out of its financial straits, said he could be on board in a week if necessary. Vander Does will fill in until the district can hire a permanent CEO.

The district initially received 43 applications for the position, although several have since dropped out, leaving a field of 39. The board is in the process of evaluating the candidates and will eventually narrow the pool for interviews, tentatively scheduled for the first week in April. The CEO selection committee includes MCHD Board Chair Larry Mills, Mahoney, Director of Nursing Services Molly Rhea, Dr. Betsy Anderson, MCHD Board member John Murray and Cliff Green, Willow Creek Valley Assisted Living Board member.

In other business, the board:

-tabled approval of a 10-year, \$95,000 GEODC (Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation) loan to fund the Irrigon Clinic remodel, with a four-percent interest rate at the request of board member Joe Perry. Perry advised that Mahoney ask GEODC to get on the Morrow County Court docket in order to request a lower interest rate from GEODC. The Morrow County Court members are the ones who approve the loan.

-discussed the progress of the renovation of the Irrigon Medical Clinic and estimated completion around the first week of April, with an open house to be scheduled sometime following that.

-heard a report from Andrea Fletcher concerning the CHIP program, which was created, through programs and events, to promote health awareness county-wide. She said that she is now looking at long-term sustainability of the program through partnerships with businesses and organizations.

-discussed distributing patient satisfaction surveys.

-learned from Blauer that the district is sponsoring a mobile mammography program, whereby women may schedule a mammogram at Pioneer Memorial Clinic in Heppner on Wednesday, March 27. Women interested may call 541-676-2948 to schedule an appointment. No referrals are necessary and

"all major insurances are accepted," according to a clinic flyer.

-reviewed the district's mission and goals in preparation for the upcoming CEO interview process.

-approved recredentialing for Dr. Ed Berretta, Dr. Roger Blair and Sheridan Tarnasky, physician's assistant; and credentialing for Telestroke and TeleCritical providers.

-received the following report: Pioneer Memorial Clinic had 465 patient visits in January, 26 new patients; 52 seen by a nurse and 13 no shows; Irrigon Medical Clinic had 205 patient visits, 22 new patients, 64 seen by a nurse and 11 no-shows; Heppner Ambulance had 22 total page-outs with 19 transports for \$31,933 in revenue; Boardman Ambulance had 38 total page-outs with 19 transports for \$25,642 in revenue; Irrigon Ambulance had 39 total page-outs with 29 transports for \$35,688 in revenue; Pioneer Memorial Hospital had five admissions, five swing bed admissions, nine admitted for observation, swing nursing facility had one admission, 473 total outpatients, 55 total emergency room encounters, 1665 lab tests, 116 x-ray procedures, 13 CT scans, 29 EKG tests, one treadmill procedure, four colonoscopy procedures, three endoscopy procedures, 57 respiratory therapy procedures; Home Health had 122 patient visits; Hospice had five admissions; pharmacy had 808 drug doses for \$96,578 in drug revenue.

-received the following financial report: Morrow County Health District had \$733,536 in gross patient revenue, less \$13,691 in bad debts and less \$158,183.56 in contractual and other adjustments; plus \$116,118 in tax revenue and \$33,229 in other operating revenue for \$711,009 in total operating revenue, \$731,339 in total operating expenses and a non operating gain of \$89,820 for a \$69,489 gain for the month of January and a \$43,484 average monthly year-to-date gain.

-held an executive session following the regular meeting.

ever, execution of 85 days jail time was suspended for each count and the defendant sentenced to 18 months bench probation with five days jail time on each count with credit for time served. Total fines, fees and assessments were \$1,430.

DA's Report

Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson has released the following report:

-Olguin Ricardo Afanador, 47, was convicted of two counts of harassment, a Class B misdemeanor, and sentenced to 90 days jail time on each count; how-

Fair board to meet

The March meeting of the Morrow County Fair Board will be on March 6 at 6 p.m. in the dormitory building at the fairgrounds.

HES announces students of the month



The Heppner Elementary School January and February students of the month were announced on Feb. 19. The students received this award following the Golden Rule, "Treating others as you would want to be treated." Top (L-R): Amanda Haselbusch, Cheyenne Shaw, Tresslynn McCurry, Gibson McCurry, Cason Mitchell, Harley Ann Anderson and Kaden Combe. Bottom (L-R): Amelia Manning, Jesse Bowles, Katie Wilson, Daemon Worden, Keegin Chitty and Arianna Worden. Not pictured: Jackson Lehman -Contributed photo

No criminal charges filed against Boardman teacher

School district to continue investigation

Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson announced this week that no criminal charges will be filed against a Boardman kindergarten teacher alleged to have put diapers on three students.

"I have had an opportunity to review the police report submitted by the Boardman Police Department. I have also spoken to the family of the three students alleged to have had diapers put on them in class. Based upon the statements of the 15 kindergarten students interviewed in this case, there is insufficient evidence to go forward on criminal charges against the teacher. I want to be clear that this decision should not be taken as a determination that nothing occurred, but merely as a statement that there is insufficient evidence to go forward with any criminal charges. Any determination of discipline or employment will be left to the Morrow County School District."

The investigation started on Jan. 22, when the Boardman Police Department received a report that a Boardman kindergarten

teacher had removed the pants and underwear of a student and put a diaper on the student. It was reported that this conduct occurred in front of the other students in the class.

The DA's office reported that the investigation done in the case was extensive. A total of 14 students were interviewed. Some interviews were done by law enforcement, and others done by the Mt. Emily Safe Center in La Grande, OR. Lead investigators were Lt. Loren Dieter of the Boardman Police Department and Det. Karen Dike of the Morrow County Sheriff's Office.

"The citizens of Morrow County should be proud of the work done by the Boardman Police Department and Morrow County Sheriff's Office in this case," said Nelson. "The agencies took this complaint seriously and worked together to investigate this case."

On a related note, the Morrow County School District reaffirmed its commitment to student safety and wellbeing this week, assuring parents and the

community that the district rigorously follows its safety procedures.

"Our first priority is the safety and wellbeing of our students," said Morrow County Superintendent Dirk Dirksen, adding that the district is aware of allegations against a staff member. A separate external investigation will be completed now that the police investigation has concluded. Once the external investigation has concluded, the district will determine what, if any, actions will be appropriate going forward.

"At all times, the district will proceed with student safety as a foremost concern," Dirksen reiterated.

A district release stated that it is not permitted to comment any further on this matter at this time, as it is considered a confidential internal personnel issue, and could concern confidential student information under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which is a federal law guaranteeing the privacy of student information.

County cultural coalition awards more grants

The Morrow County Cultural Coalition awarded more grants in February to finish out the 2012-2013 year.

Windy River was awarded a grant for a county-wide writing festival for fifth and sixth graders. North Morrow Community Foundation received a grant to help bring the IMAGO theater group to perform for local junior and senior high school students.

The coalition is accepting grant proposals for next period starting now and go-

ing until Aug. 1, 2013.

To be considered for a grant, applicants must address one or more of the following goals:

- Build economic development by fully integrating arts, culture, and heritage into county and community development and redevelopment efforts;
- Provide financial support for cultural activities for families and youth;
- Increase awareness and respect of our history;
- Improve building pres-

ervation;

-Build cultural bridges through partnerships with other cultural commissions to enhance heritage programs, expand outreach and accessibility and to develop and showcase opportunities that encourage cultural expressions;

Preference will be given to projects that have a one-to-one match in funds.

To get an application form, contact Susan Russell at smsel@hotmail.com or call 541-481-4277.

Insurance company celebrates 30 years

Wheatland Insurance Center is celebrating its 30th anniversary.

The company invites local community members to join the celebration by stopping by the Heppner or Ione branches this Friday, March 1, for cake, coffee, and "a walk down memory lane."

2013 Little League Tryouts

Majors Baseball

Wednesday, March 6 from 4:00-5:30
Thursday, March 7 from 4:00-5:30
George Waterland Field

It is MANDATORY that you attend at least one tryout session for the entire length of time.
Attending both sessions is preferred.

*Minors Baseball, Softball and T-ball will not have tryouts.

Call Corey Sweeney at 541-256-0355 for more information

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