



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

Boardman pedestrian and bike path approved

The Morrow County School Board, at their Monday night meeting in Irrigon and via teleconference, approved a 15 ft. wide permanent access easement to the city of Boardman for a pedestrian and bike path for the city. The path is located at Main Street and Columbia Avenue in Boardman.

Also at the meeting, Superintendent Dirk Dirksen reminded the board that the ballots for the Morrow County School District bond will be mailed out April 27. A town hall concerning the bond has been held in Heppner and is scheduled for Irrigon and Boardman.

In other business the board:

-learned the district "is continuing to receive property taxes and revenue in lieu of taxes more than originally budgeted." "ODE (Oregon Department of Education) revised the State School Fund Estimate for 21-22 based on an updated ADM (student average daily membership/attendance) and revenues which increased our anticipated total at year end," stated a district release. "As the end of year approaches, we will continue to revise the anticipated revenues and expenditures."

-received the following report of 2021-22 anticipated revenues: MCSD revenues-\$29,214,726; 2022 estimated expenditures-\$28,405,017; revenues over expenditures-\$809,709; beginning fund balance-\$4,508,248; projected ending fund balance-\$5,317,957; state school fund estimate as of June 24, 2021-\$17,472,311; as of November 2, 2021-\$17,992,079; as of March 24, 2022-\$18,256,669.

-heard a report from Dirksen on the fire at the district school building in Irrigon. He said five classrooms were deemed being "in good enough shape to be used." But he said four classrooms are still not in use, with one having "major work that needs to be done" before it can be occupied.

-heard a presentation on the district's swim classes at the Boardman Pool and Rec center.

-held an executive session "to consider the employment of a public officer, employee, staff member or individual agent." The board officially hired Matt Combe as district superintendent, replacing Dirksen who is retiring at the end of the current school year.

Combe is currently principal at Heppner Elementary and Heppner Jr./Sr. High School.

-received the following enrollment report for April: A.C. Houghton Elementary, Irrigon-215; Sam Boardman Elementary, Boardman-349; Heppner Elementary-180; Irrigon Elementary-188; Windy River Elementary, Boardman-252; Heppner Jr./Sr. High School-158; Irrigon Jr./Sr. High School-373; Riverside Jr./Sr. High School-488; Morrow Education Center, Irrigon-71; Total-2,274.

-received the following enrollment report by community: Boardman, plus 40, April 2021-1049, April 2022-1089; Heppner, plus 19, April 2021-319, April 2022-338; Irrigon, plus 11, April 2021-765, April 2022-776; Morrow Education Center, minus 80, April 2021-151, April 2022-71; District Totals, minus 10, April 2021-2284, April 2022-2274.

-approved a request from Beth Dickenson concerning a travel request for the Heppner FFA group.

-approved a resolution accepting and appropriating unanticipated revenues as follows: Sam Boardman Elementary-\$1,500 from the Sam Boardman Elementary Parent-Teacher Organization, \$25 to SBE from Peggy Wallis and \$100 from the Oregon Education Association Foundation; Riverside Jr./Sr. High School-\$3,100 from the Riverside Booster Club.

-adopted the following rescinded, new or revised policies: Loss coverage-adopted; Personnel Records-adopted; Disclosure of Information-rescinded; Talented and Gifted Program-rescinded; revised Talented and Gifted Program-adopted.

-received information concerning the Oregon School Board Association summer board conference to be held July 8-10.

-received the following announcements: STEAM Friday, April 29; Teacher Appreciation Week, May 2-6; special board meeting, Wednesday, April 13, at 6 p.m. at the North District Office/Zoom; budget committee meeting, Tuesday, May 10, at 6 p.m. at the North District Office/Morrow Education Center, Irrigon; next regular board meeting, Tuesday, May 10 at 7 p.m. at the North District Office/Zoom.

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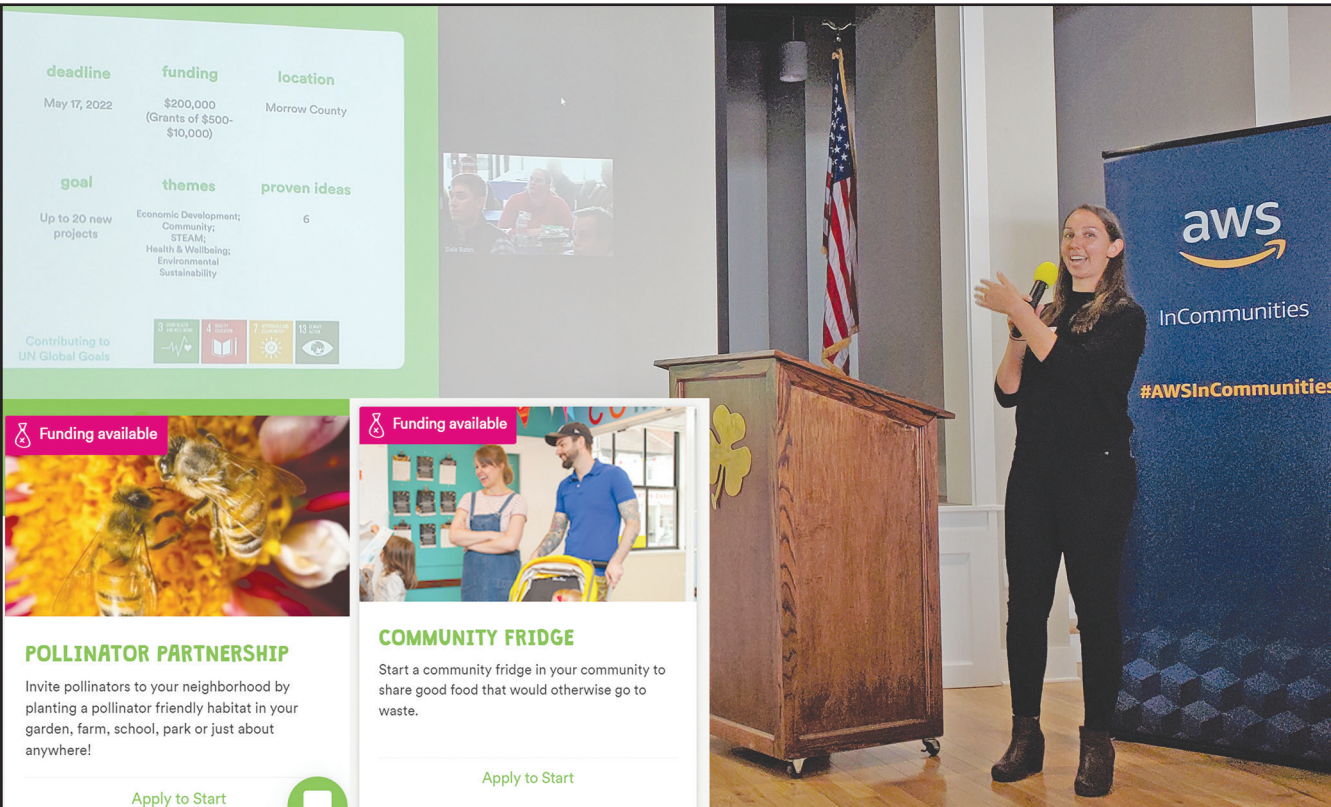
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VOL. 141 NO. 15 8 Pages Wednesday, April 13, 2022 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Amazon launches new \$200,000 Morrow County grant program

Will help locals with community projects



Leah Caudell-Feagan, senior community and partnerships manager for Amazon's new Morrow County grant fund, gives a presentation on the new program last week in Heppner. A "Pollinator Partnership" where people plant bee-friendly habitat in their yard, or a "Community Fridge" to share food, were two of the six suggested projects the new program might fund.

A new grant program to help Morrow County people set up and fund worthwhile community projects has been launched by Amazon Web Services, the division of Amazon that operates the data centers located at Boardman. The company announced the program at a launch meeting last week in Heppner.

Amazon has allocated \$200,000 to give out and, as an example, could go to such projects as setting up a play day in the community, establishing a fruit orchard or starting a "community fridge" to share food that otherwise

might go to waste, says Leah Caudell-Feagan, Senior Community Partnerships Manager, who was in Heppner to put on the announcement luncheon at the Gilliam Bisbee building last week.

The criteria for applying for grants is as follows: The fund is open to existing groups and individuals (once they form a team) to start new projects, or expand an existing project, in their community. The project must address at least one of the following themes: STEM/STEAM education, Environmental Sustainability, Economic

Development, Community Prosperity and Well-being.

Examples of eligible groups include schools, daycares, churches or other faith-based organizations, hospitals and hospital rehabilitation centers, mental health facilities, community gardens, neighborhood groups, senior citizen centers, community centers, and recognized government entities. The project must take place in Morrow County, Oregon.

In order to apply for the funds a prospective group must complete a 30-day challenge which includes

a 15-minute call with a ChangeX team member (ChangeX is the non-profit company handling the funding project for Amazon). Then they need to recruit four people to join the team, host a kick-off virtual meeting and share a team photo and action plan. ChangeX will provide various support tools to help people with their projects.

To apply for the funding or to learn more about the project go to their website <https://www.changex.org/us/funds/awsincommunities-morrow-county-fund>.

County contracts for finance assistance

Oregon City firm to work remotely

Following the resignation of County Finance Director Kate Knop, commissioners last week voted unanimously to a contract with the Oregon City firm Wolfe Consulting, to provide finance assistance during the upcoming busy budget period and beyond.

The county approved a contract for Christa Wolfe, CPA to provide budgeting, new budget software, accounting and reporting and other finance services as required, at a fee of \$200 per hour. The contract will run until October 21, 2022, unless extended or it can be terminated with a 30 day notice. Wolfe would be working remotely on the job. The commission had earlier discussed the diffi-

culty in finding qualified applicants to replace Knop for the specialized county finance job.

County Administrator Darrell Green said he contacted four companies about providing contract assistance. He said two responded, one said they were too busy, and one did not respond. "I chose Christa Wolfe as she brings the most value to this interim position," Green said in his report to the commissioners. "She has past experience as a deputy finance director for Clackamas County and experience with OpenGov." OpenGov is a government technology company that offers cloud software for public sector accounting, planning, budgeting, citizen services, and procurement.

In other business at last week's meeting commissioners heard from Boardman business owner Jonathan Tallman, who said it appeared contractors doing work for Umatilla Electric Cooperative had created an access off Laurel Lane which he did not think had been legally permitted.

Tallman owns Farmer's Cup coffee shop on Laurel and said he recently tried

for legal access. "I'm the little guy and I don't get a fair shake when it comes to communicating, and the big corporations do what they want. It's a little bit troubling," Tallman told the commissioners. He said there was excavator equipment crossing a county road which was "ruining the road and creating an access point that is not a legal access."

Commissioner Jim Doherty said he had received a call before the meeting from Tallman and went and looked at what was going on. "I swung down there this morning and see where UEC (Umatilla Electric Coop) has built a road and approach off Laurel Lane," Doherty said, adding he would have the county public works director "look into it." Doherty said UEC contractors apparently also went off of Rippee Road, Root Lane and Olson Lane in addition to Laurel. "To my knowledge they would need a permit to do all of those things, so I can guarantee Eric (Imes, Public Works Director) has told me he will look into it post haste," Doherty told Tallman.

The possible non-permitted action by the contractor promoted Doherty to suggest punitive action may be taken against them.

"Frankly if they did all of that, a company that size understands the rules and they've got more attorneys than I have cows. If they did that knowingly I would suggest they remove all the poles they put in and be fined accordingly, because if we don't stop these folks that are abusing the permit system in the county, they are going to continue to do so. But I will wait on that onerous action until I hear back from my public works director on whether they need to do those things that the other citizens in the county need to do," Doherty said.

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