

BOND:

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the district's and community's needs over the next 10 years.

Three members of the committee — Phil Hamm, Benny Medelez and Blaine Hendrickson — presented the recommendations to the school board on Monday.

"We feel confident with what we're recommending, that it will meet our needs and save the taxpayers money," Hendrickson said.

The committee was tasked with taking a previous recommendation of more than \$130 million and deciding what needs were immediate and what needs the community could handle.

"There's no doubt that there's a number of tough decisions to be made," Hamm said. "Through this process, we have truly wrestled with these."

Both bonds would replace Rocky Heights Elementary — built in 1962 with additions in 1968 and 1977 — and build a new elementary school on district-owned property on Theater Lane. Each bond would also add a new wing onto Hermiston High School to extend the school's capacity to 2,000 students and provide access and safety upgrades to Sandstone Middle School.

There are currently 1,471 students enrolled in the high school and forecasts for next year are estimating an enrollment at or over the school's 1,600 student capacity.

GROWTH:

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the next year's budget.

The board opted to plan the budget based on:

- A weighted student enrollment growth of 50
- The district's portion of the State of Oregon setting aside \$7.37 billion for schools

- Maintaining the PERS Reserve fund for 2017-8 school year
- Keeping a 9 percent ending fund balance

The district is projecting

a \$42.3 million payroll and \$7.9 million in accounts payable, which includes items such as utilities, transportation costs and maintenance. The forecast for expenditures is \$50.2 million, and the forecast revenue with these financial planning parameters is \$50.9 million.

"If the board allocates a +50ADMw and budgets what we think we will get from the state, then we will end the year with a 9.5 percent ending fund balance, barring any unforeseen events," Deputy Superintendent Wade Smith said. "We're in a pretty good place."

During the meeting, the board also:

- Recognized the district's Classified Employees of the Year.
- Heard recommendations from the Citizens' Review Committee for a \$104 million capital improvement project.
- Recognized the members of the Citizens' Review Committee.
- Unanimously accepted the evaluation for district Superintendent Fred Maiocco.

The "minimum" bond would provide \$1 million in access and safety upgrades to Highland Hills Elementary. The "recommended" bond would replace the school entirely.

The bulk of the work in the committee's recommendation was also recommended in the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations in 2007. That recommendation was scaled back, and the \$69.9 million bond replaced Armand Larive Middle School, Sunset Elementary and West Park Elementary, leaving Rocky Heights Elementary and Highland Hills Elementary out of the project.

Highland Hills was built in 1980 for an enrollment of 300 students. The school has more than 500 students currently and five modular buildings.

Wade Smith, deputy superintendent, said replacing

Rocky Heights and building a new elementary school would help alleviate current overcrowding but would not allow for student growth.

"Replacing Rocky Heights and building a new elementary school, you will still have students in modulars at the elementary level," Smith said. "We will never be able to check the box and say we have caught up with our bonds for the next 10-15 years. That's just not the reality of a high-growth com-



HERALD FILE PHOTO

Recommendations for a new Hermiston School District bond, if approved by voters, would replace Rocky Heights Elementary School and build new elementary school. Voters could see the issue on the ballot in 2017, and will get a change to provide feedback on the bond proposals before the issue goes to the ballot.

community. What the Citizens' Review Committee is recommending is shifting those modulars away from the elementary level."

The "recommended" proposal gives the district extra space at the elementary level and allows for modular buildings at district secondary schools. The district currently has 24 modular buildings in use district-wide, and Smith said the number of students in those modular buildings represent enough enrollment for a new elementary school.

The district is budgeting for continued enrollment growth in the 2016-17 school year.

The district has not yet commissioned tax estimates for either bond proposal, but Smith said the increase would be "very low" because of retiring debt.

"I think there's an opportunity for a very low or potentially no tax increase, depending on how the board would want to repackage this," Smith said.

The school board took no action on the proposal, but the committee presentation moves the bond into the third of five stages, according to Smith. The next stage is to meet with the community for feedback; the fourth stage is community refinements to the proposal, and the fifth stage is putting the proposal on the May 2017 ballot.

More information is available at <http://hermiston.k12.or.us/facilities-master-planning/current-capital-planning/2015-16-citizens-review-committee/>.

Hermiston School District Classified Employees of the Year 2015-6

Hermiston High School

KARLA JOHNSON

Special Education Assistant

18 years

DEZI MATHEWS

Lead Custodian

12 years

Armand Larive Middle School

KRISTI SOMBARD

Lead Custodian

19 years

Sandstone Middle School

MORGAN WILSON

Special Education Assistant

4 years

Desert View Elementary School

PAULA THOMPSON

Special Education Assistant

13 years

Highland Hills Elementary School

MISTY WEDDLE

Special Education Assistant

5 years

Rocky Heights Elementary School

JOANNE CHAPMAN

Office Assistant

10 years

Sunset Elementary School

ERIKA ESPARZA

Lead Secretary

4 years

West Park Elementary School

RENEE RANSOM

Lead Secretary

21 years

STEVE BROWN

Custodian

10 years

District Level

JOSH THEROS

Courier/District Support

5 years

MORE POINTS. MORE PLAY.

MARCH 2016

\$100,000 ROLLOUT

A NEW Club Wild Exclusive!
Three Winners. Three days a week. Every 30 minutes.



Daily Winners qualify for the
MIDNIGHT POWER HOUR
for even **MORE CASH!**

\$21,000 in weekly CASH DRAWINGS!
Thursday, Friday & Saturday! 6pm to midnight.

Three separate drawing barrels are used to identify card membership level and prize awards. Management reserves all rights. Club tier levels determine points for entry and prize amounts.

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