

Library named for late mayor

Larson remembered in building dedication

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

Former Mayor Don Larson was memorialized Thursday, June 29, with the naming of the Seaside Library as the Donald E. Larson building.

Building the library was one of the projects Larson was most interested in completing, Mayor Jay Barber said. "He was very proud to see this project started and participated in the grand opening in 2008," he said at a gathering of Larson's family, city officials, library staff and residents.

"I think it's really special, that we are remembering Don Larson in this way," Library Director Esther Moberg said. "He was so instrumental in helping with the library."

Personal mission

The library, originally housed on the west side of U.S. Highway 101, was deemed too small, lacked parking and critical facilities for patrons and staff.

But with daunting costs, plans for a new building stalled until Seaside resident Albert Groot offered a \$500,000 matching grant, former library Director Reita Fackerell said.

Mayor Larson, who took office in 2002, made the library his personal mission and in 2005, a new library became the City Council's No. 1 goal.

Larson envisioned a building that would blend in with the beach and be something the community would be proud of.



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Katie Bulletset and Dale McDowell unveil the sign for the Donald E. Larson Library in Seaside.

Under Larson's leadership, "The community completely came together," Fackerell said.

The city purchased the property at 1131 Broadway in 2007 for \$184,000.

With grants, urban renewal money and fundraising, the library opened its doors in 2008 without raising taxes or incurring debt, Fackerell said.

Ribbon cutting

The building was special for Larson. Project Manager Dale McDowell — now the city's public works director — even gave Larson an honorary hard hat.

With a giant pair of scissors, Larson performed the ribbon-cutting ceremony and started a new era.

"People would come and drive just to come to the library," Fackerell said. "It was kind of a tourist attraction — it was awesome. He was an awesome person and we were lucky to have him as a mayor."

Eight years later, in November 2016, Larson was honored with the renaming of the library building. City councilors made the decision based on the mayor's "numerous and extraordinary contributions to local government leading to positive changes for the future of Oregon."

The resolution, adopted unanimously, recognized Larson's major contributions to the library project, from the first discussions to construction and completion.

The renaming came just before Larson announced his intention to step down as mayor after the second year of his fourth term. Larson, who was 80, died less than a month later.

'Extraordinary passion'

At Thursday's ceremony, councilors extolled the may-

or's "extraordinary passion and visionary leadership to the city of Seaside."

McDowell, along with volunteer firefighter Katie Bulletset, stood on ladders to unveil the building's new name, prominently displayed above the front doors.

"If he were here, he would say that his favorite moment was watching this building being built," Lois Larson, Larson's wife, said. "The kids and I are delighted that his service to the city that he loved is being remembered by naming this beautiful building after him."

"I will still call it 'the library,' as you will, but I will stand a little taller, I will walk a little straighter, and I will smile a whole lot more broadly each time I enter the building under that name," she said. "We are awed, blessed, humbled, proud and extremely grateful that Don Larson is being honored in such a wonderful way."

Seaside approves \$140 million budget for schools

Bond money swells figures

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

Budgets of more than \$140 million are usually reserved for big city or suburban schools, not 1,000-student districts like Seaside's.

Combined with general fund, debt service, special revenue and capital projects, the Seaside School District will be working with a grand total of \$140.5 million.

"The budget amount is not a typo," Superintendent Sheila Roley said at Tuesday's meeting of the board of directors. "The bond proceeds are now in our budget."

"I had to check my glasses," board member Mark Truax said.

The outsized figures are the result of the passage of a \$99.7 million bond by voters last fall for a new campus. Because the school district's bonds sold at a high rate and with a matching grant from the state Department of Education, capital projects reached more than

\$112 million. At \$20.6 million, the district's operating expense is a fraction of that.

Debt service of \$4.4 million and special revenue of \$2.6 million make up the rest of the financial summary.

The budget addresses rising student technology costs, with districtwide licenses for math and science software. A new science curriculum will be implemented in the fall to meet new science and technology standards. Staff hires and facilities upgrades are included.

This is the largest budget the school district is likely to see, as the number will soon be reduced as construction bills come in.

Business Manager Justine Hill anticipates paying out \$22.5 million next year in building costs and fees.

The budget was unanimously endorsed by directors.

"The budget committee had met twice previously, and we worked through the details then, so this was really formalizing the recommendation," Roley said after the meeting.

City manager Winstanley says new budget is highest he has seen in 32 years

Budget from Page 1A

will see a rise of 13 percent, with retirement costs escalating about 8 percent. Similar numbers are seen in other departments.

While Seaside does not participate in the state's Public Employees Retirement System, the city's two employee retirement plans are also facing rising costs, Winstanley added.

Holding the line

Councilors Dana Phillips, Steve Wright, Seth Morrissey and Randy Frank, along with Mayor Jay Barber, voted to ap-

prove the budget. Councilors Tom Horning and Tita Montero were absent.

"It really holds the line in terms of our expenditures," Barber said after the meeting. "I know the budget committee was trying to hold steady rather than to make any big jumps. Overall, it's a very moderate budget and I think it speaks well of the council and particularly our city manager."

Following the budget vote, councilors also approved a bid process for a construction manager-general contractor for the convention center construction project.

Budget highlights

- **SEASIDE LIBRARY:** An 11 percent increase in the book-acquisition budget
- **FIRE:** Addition of a fourth paid fireman and implementation of a water rescue program.
- **BUILDING DEPARTMENT:** Possibility of two large projects — convention center renovation; new motel/hotel.
- **PUBLIC WORKS:** Acquisition of a new garbage truck and the repair of the public works building roof.
- **LIBRARY TRUST:** Acquisition of a generator for the library.
- **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE:** community center renovation.
- **CONVENTION CENTER:** \$15 million renovation starting 2018.

About 8 more acres of property left to be logged

Logging from Page 1A

the schools. On a tour through a maze of logging roads Thursday to check progress, school board members saw an undefined field of stumps, interrupted only by loggers and equipment loading the last of the timber.

The property is part of an 80-acre site given to the school district by Weyerhaeuser, which will sell the timber to local distributors.

"It's simply breathtaking," school board member Lori Lum said.

In the zone

In 1999, the state published earthquake hazard maps showing Cannon Beach and Gearhart elementary schools, Broadway Middle School and Seaside High School would all be severely damaged in a major earthquake and tsunami. These schools were also identified

as having a high potential for collapse.

In November, Seaside voters passed a \$99.7 million bond to solve the problem.

The bond came three years after a failed \$128.8 million plan. The scaled-back proposal eliminated an auditorium, covered bleachers, long-term emergency shelters and a variety playing field.

Advocates of the new proposal, including the Vote Yes For Our Local Schools group, presented a sustained campaign to promote the bond, which they said was necessary, not only for the safety of the students, but also because of the condition of the schools. Gearhart Elementary School, Broadway Middle School and Seaside High School were built with expected lifespans of 45 to 50 years. Each has been used beyond that span.

With Weyerhaeuser's land gift of 80 acres in the East Hills, along with favorable

interest rates and a likelihood of limited matching funds from the state, proponents said "this was the best time" to pass the bond.

Making it stable

Only about 8 more acres of school district-owned property are left to be logged, which will eliminate the wooded barrier between Seaside Heights Elementary and the rest of the campus property. The rest of the unlogged property will serve as buffers for surrounding streams, Seaside School District Superintendent-emeritus Doug Dougherty said.

Now that the trees have been cleared, the district has a clearer picture of what the land actually looks like and

can proceed with more detailed architectural designs. Over the summer, soil surveys will be conducted to illuminate smaller slopes and contours of the hillside, which will help guide building stabilization techniques, Dougherty said.

While building into a hillside will be a challenge, Dougherty said the inclinometer — an 80-foot underground sensor that monitors slide activity — showed no evidence of landslides in this section of the hillside in four years.

"I'm excited for each stage of this process. I've been working on this for 25 years, and it is exciting to see this finally happening," Dougherty said.

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