

Forum: Board candidates take on hot-button issues

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students who don't fit the box we've created for them need multiple pathways to get to the end game," she said.

Dunzer, a former corporate executive who has been retired for 40 years, said education was pivotal in helping him overcome his background, as well.

"It allows people like me, who come from the wrong side of the tracks, to get to the right side of the tracks," he said, adding, "I might have a way I could support the school district by some of the skills and some of the adventures I've had in my life."

Swedenborg, who spent 10 years as a teacher and currently serves on the Seaside board, recalled her experience with a former student who struggled academically, but when tasked with researching Down syndrome — a topic he volunteered for — "did a fantastic job."

"It showed me that if you find things kids are interested in and passionate about, they're going to do well," she said, adding her goal would be assisting to district to investigate, "What is that the kids in this community — not the kids in other communities — the kids in our community, what is it that they need? What are they passionate about and how can we find these programs?"

Hot-button issues

The discussion then moved into a series of more complicated, socio-political topics, such as implementing security measures, arming teachers and religion in schools.

Dunzer, Swedenborg and Gomez agreed they would not mandate arming teachers, unconvinced it would lead to positive results. They would, however, consider other security measures and prevention practices, including increasing access to mental health care. On the con-



Katherine Lacaze

School board candidates discuss the issues at a forum on Tuesday, April 30. Shannon Swedenborg (left) is running unopposed for Cannon Beach's seat while Sondra Gomez, Jeremy Mills and John Dunzer vie for Zone 5 Position 1 in Seaside.

trary, Mills said, he sees the concept of a "gun-free zone" as making schools "an open target for those who wish to cause harm and mayhem." He believes the presence of armed teachers could act as a deterrent.

Another set of questions asked about school prayer, teaching creationism, and how the separation of church and state relates to schools.

The candidates agreed faith — of any kind — can play an important role in students' lives, and students should be comfortable exercising their faith at school.

"Our faith, in a lot of ways, regardless of denomination or what god you pray to, helps dictate the moral and ethical code we live our lives by," Mills said.

Candidates also agreed schools, as public institutions, shouldn't sponsor religious activities. When it comes to creationism, Swedenborg felt her responsibility as a former science teacher was sharing theories supported by the science community and backed by evidence, but she informed students they could make their own decisions about accepting the data.

Dunzer also emphasized the value of teaching various religions as part of humanities and history, adding it

can help students realize "there are differences among people and there are different ways to approach it."

Finally, the candidates were asked if the school district is obligated to report or cooperate with federal immigration enforcement agents regarding undocumented students, even if refusing leads to possible loss of funding. The candidates adamantly agreed schools are safe places where students don't need to fear being taken away.

"We should be protecting our students and educating them," Gomez said.

Campus transition on the horizon

During the forum, candidates also discussed the potential challenges confronting the district as they move students and teachers to the new campus.

The transition, while exciting, Swedenborg said, may also be bittersweet for students, staff, and administrators. They should be given adequate time and support, both leaving their old schools and setting up at the new campus.

Gomez hopes they can incorporate the various school bodies as a group while also preserving the old cultures and keeping the

focus on individual students.

In Mills' opinion, though, the focus should be fostering "a new culture" as the groups are integrated in one location. He also feels logistics — such as school bus routes, traffic control, and collaborating with partnering agencies — will present a challenge. The question also remains of what will happen to the old school properties and how much their sale can contribute as investment in the new school project.

Dunzer, however, believes the district already spent too much money on the project and could have found cheaper alternatives. He's worried how the project may strain the district's budget in the future, harming its ability to offer competitive salaries that bring in quality teachers.

Voting day

Mark Truax, who was not at the forum, is also running unopposed for Zone 4, Position 2. The county-wide Special District Election including the Seaside School Board race will take place Tuesday, May 21. Ballots must be received in the Clatsop County Elections Office or an official drop site by 8 p.m. on that day. For more information, contact the county at 503-352-8511.

Rec candidates: Hopefuls share views

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erty as part of a communitywide development and then manage rentals of the space, which could become a valuable resource. However, he added, "If you want to attract visitors from outside to use those facilities, you need to give them something to want to come to."

Roberts and Duhachek agreed the district will want to maximize value on the properties, which are in prime locations, but it is worth studying how they could fit into the district's future.

tional programs or in other capacities.

In Duhachek's opinion, the district should stick to its mission and "do what it does best, and that's run recreation programs."

"Other entities are better capable of coming up with a tsunami evacuation plan," he said.

Morrison and Roberts agreed, adding the district's main involvement should be making information and resources available for visitors at the pool or other spaces used by the public.

Candidate Shirley Yates

Shirley Yates an attendance assistant at Seaside High School and local minister, was unable to attend the forum, but coworker Jenny Rapp read a letter on her behalf.

In the letter, Yates described her various volunteer activities in the community, which include establishing the Laundry Love initiative, serving as a Chamber of Commerce ambassador, and singing at the hospital and assisted living facilities. If elected, she wants to support the staff in creating "a fun, clean and attractive environment and activities."

"Looking ahead, I desire this season for SEPRD be one of continued growth," she added.

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Nonprofit: Helping Hands wins \$25,000 donation

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"I do not recommend we put our taxpayers' money there," committee member Tita Montero said.

In joining other committee members in a recommendation to withhold funding, George Stacey added he wasn't interested in using city money for a kitchen remodel.

Restoration House will receive no city funds, but like other nonprofits, has the option to return for a review in 2020.

Seaside Hall, also known as the Little Yellow Schoolhouse, a meeting place for recovery groups on Third Avenue, received \$3,000 of the \$4,500 requested. Committee members asked representatives to do more fundraising — particularly during recovery events in Seaside — rather than rely on city funds. "We have given them that message repeatedly," Montero said. "They just don't do it."

Montero also objected to the use of the funds to create a "smoking barrier" outside the building, which, she said, would encourage smoking.

The Harbor, an organization designed to help victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence or stalking, received the full request of \$12,000, although some councilors objected to the organization's salary costs and changes in the organization's top spot. A majority said they supported the organization's purpose and goals in approving the full amount.

Committee approves budget

Monday night's work session offered a \$35.2 million budget, substantially less than last year's total of \$45 million, largely because of the pay-off of large costs on the convention center



John Carter sought funds for Seaside Hall's Little Yellow House on Third Avenue. The home received \$3,000 after a \$4,500 request.

NONPROFITS TO RECEIVE CITY FUNDS IN 2019-20 BUDGET

Total request:	\$94,700.
Total to be delivered:	\$81,900.
The Harbor: asked,	\$12,000, received, \$12,000.
Restoration House: asked,	\$10,000; received, \$0.
Clatsop Community Action: asked,	\$7,000; received, \$7,000.
Seaside Museum and Historical Society: asked	\$10,000; received, \$10,000.
Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Foundation, asked,	\$3,000; received, \$3,000.
South County Food Bank: asked	\$12,000; received, \$12,000.
Helping Hands Re-entry Outreach Centers: asked	\$25,000; received, \$25,000.
Court Appointed Special Advocates: asked,	\$1,500; received \$1,500.
Seaside Hall (Little Yellow Schoolhouse): asked,	\$4,500; received, \$3,000.
Emergency Aid Fund, Sunday Supper: asked,	\$5,000; received \$5,000.
Reading Outreach Clatsop County: asked	\$1,400; received \$1,400.
North Coast Food Web: asked	\$3,300; received \$2,000.

project. The 2019-20 document features infrastructure projects in the Southeast Hills; renovation of the Seaside Civic Convention Center and Avenue S upgrades. Holladay Drive will see construction work from First

Avenue to Avenue C.

Planned roadway, budgeted at \$3.3 million, consists of reconstruction on Holladay Drive between First Avenue and Avenue C and upgrades on Avenue S leading to the new school.

The approved budget will be presented at a future council meeting, date to be determined, City Manager Mark Winstanley said after the meeting.

The budget must be adopted by the city by July 1.