



33.5-acres owned by The Cottages of Gearhart, the large area framed by the yellow borders, alongside U.S. Highway 101 and Highlands Avenue north of Gearhart.

Firehouse: New site is ‘nothing but good news’

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growth boundary. As long as the land remains in Clatsop County, developers are limited to two lots per acre. If they come into the Gearhart urban growth boundary, developers could build on four lots per acre.

The elevation at the Highlands site is between 70 feet to 72 feet, 10 feet higher than the High Point site on North Marion Avenue.

Residents and city officials have sought to replace the Gearhart’s firehouse, which was constructed in 1958 and is considered vulnerable in a Cascadia subduction zone event.

A subsequent survey indicated the High Point site best of available alternatives. Officials had considered a bond issue to fund the resiliency station this November.

The Highlands proposal comes at a time when the High Point resiliency station site faces legal challenges from the Palisades Homeowners Association and a reluctant seller.

When the firehouse committee considered potential firehouse sites, the Cottages property was excluded since it was outside the city’s urban growth boundary.

Since then developers have told the city they are

willing to donate a portion of the property as well as land for a public park, saving an estimated \$3 million to \$3 1/2 million that would have been required for the purchase of land at High Point.

Before the transaction can be made, the state’s Department of Land Conservation and Development must approve a swap of city-owned land in the “no-build” area in the urban growth boundary along Gearhart’s western edge.

The city will need to establish that the urban growth boundary proposal “meets the criteria that makes the most sense.”

Watts said preliminary site studies could cost \$15,000 to \$20,000. The city’s consulting firm will likely be “someone who has not previously looked at this but someone who has a lot of experience in the area and who I think can officially deal with the issues. For this process, it’s really important that it be an independent, neutral look.”

Watts said the city hopes to move forward with the state and a planning consultant at the Highlands site within the next month.

“There’s really nothing but good news about that particular location,” Watts said.

Budget: Gearhart to deliver \$35,300 to nonprofits

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That number will probably increase next year, he said.

Building permits are also on the rise, budgeted at \$200,000 for 2020 to 2021. “And we received already \$235,000 with May and June still to come,” he said.

He projected a slowing down in future building permit fees as available buildable lands in Gearhart are reduced.

Of expenditures, the administrative department comprises the largest portion of the proposed budget, at \$458,000, including personnel, materials and services, capital and outlay.

The city administrator’s salary sees a “placeholder” increase of 3%, or \$2,400, or about \$94,500 annually, to be reviewed by the City Council at a later date.

Expenses for the building inspector rose significantly, from \$128,000 to \$211,000.

Personnel expenses in the police department, including salary and benefits, total just over \$413,000.

The fire department’s total outlay for personnel of

\$322,000, includes financing for a fire chief, firefighter and part-time labor.

A new item, called “Community Care,” budgeted at \$5,000, could be used by the police department to assist transients or help house people for a “momentary, short period of time, usually one night,” Mayor Paulina Cockrum said. “It’s a way for us start to wrap our arms around the safety and health and well-being of people who happen to be in Gearhart and are needing assistance.”

The city has budgeted \$8,000 for a potential November firehouse election, “but that amount is actually a bit high,” Sweet said. He said the number would likely be closer to \$5,000, but could also cover some of the work that has to be done within for election materials and services.

The city’s portion of state revenue sharing, \$35,300, was awarded after a public hearing. Combined, organizations sought a total of \$47,600.

Nonprofits seeking a share of city dollars included the South County Food Bank, The Harbor and the

GEARHART NONPROFIT CONTRIBUTIONS	
The proposed state revenue sharing fund expenditures of \$35,300 are distributed to local nonprofits:	
Necanicum Watershed Council	\$1,000
St. Vincent de Paul	\$3,000
Clatsop County Court Advocate Program	\$3,000
Seaside Hall	\$1,500
South County Food Bank	\$3,000
Seaside Scholarships	\$500
The Harbor	\$3,000
North Coast Food Web	\$3,000
Helping Hands	\$3,000
Seaside Park & Rec Scholarships	\$500
Trails End Arts Center	\$5,000
CCA Regional Food Bank	\$3,000
Seaside Gearhart Airport Committee	\$500
Mayors Emergency Grant	\$5,300
Total:	\$35,300

Seaside Hall, a recovery center on North Holladay by the First United Methodist Church. Other requests came from Helping Hands, the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Foundation, which gives out scholarships to local students for park district programs. The Seaside Airport sought \$500 for bicycles for out-of-town

pilots after they land.

Community Emergency Response Team funds, previously part of revenue sharing funds, are now budgeted at \$3,000 for the hazard mitigation fund.

Committee members unanimously approved the amended budget. The budget moves to the City Council in June for approval.

Parking: Decentralized parking a possibility

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Two contractors responded to inquiries for the cost of parking lots, around \$25 million to \$30 million for four floors of parking, Frank said.

In one estimate, the plan puts 160 spaces on each floor, with an average of \$39,000 per parking space. The second estimate, from Skanska, puts 749 stalls in the lot at the same price per space.

Business owners were resistant to paid parking.

“I think the business model for the downtown community is built in large part around having free public parking,” business owner Wayne Poole said. “It’s scary to me that we might really change our image, or Seaside, and the cost to employees and business owners.”

Lodging owner Ruth Swenson said paid parking could drive visitors away.

“Once you start throwing, you’re gonna pay to park



Seaside businesses met at a workshop on parking at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

here,’ you’re gonna pay for this, you’re gonna pay for that,’ yeah, you’re gonna lose people,” Swenson said. “People want to stay where they’re comfortable, where they can afford to take their kids to the arcade, or buy a hot dog or ride the carousel once. We need to look at it as a whole.”

Ter Har said he did not want Seaside to be a leader in bringing paid parking to the North Coast. Paid park-

ing could also have the unintended consequence of pushing drivers into surrounding areas where there is no fee. “As a city and business community, we need to think about our neighbors or our local residents that have their homes in the surrounding areas, to try not to put a strain on them to lose the parking in front of them,” Ter Har said.

“We’re opposed to the paid parking and the parking lot,” Poole said. “You know,

we’ve worked so hard to get people here, we built our downtown business community around having free public parking.”

The parking group’s next step is to consider options and consequences, Posalski said. “We’re talking about decentralized parking as being the solution. It would be worth talking to some people coming to town and see if that would be a solution.”

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