

With grant funds, districts partner for summer child care

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

With a grant from the state, the Seaside School District agreed to provide summer learning and enrichment opportunities for K-12 students in partnership with the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District.

The memorandum of understanding, brought to the park district board at its July meeting, includes funds to partner with local agencies for child care services for elementary age students before and after classes.

House Bill 5042 authorized the Oregon Department of Education to make available \$195.6 million general fund and \$10 million federal funds in grant funding to participating school districts for academic summer school to support high school students facing academic credit loss, summer enrichment pro-



Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District

Grant funds help support Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District summer camp, child care programs.

grams and wrap-around child care, school district Superintendent Susan Penrod said. "We have partnered with

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation to provide child care before and after summer school for our families," Pen-

rod said. The child care portion of the grant is for about \$171,000. The total sum-

mer learning grant allocation is just under \$611,000, which must be used by Sept. 30. Summer school runs from Aug. 2 to Aug. 27.

According to the agreement, the school district provides transportation to and from the park district during summer programs at Pacific Ridge Elementary School.

The school district will transfer funds to the park district for registration fees for the children that are enrolled as well the staff time, program costs and the other expenses incurred, Skyler Archibald, executive director of the park district, said.

The wraparound child care is intended to remove barriers for working families who would otherwise not be able to participate in summer programs due to transportation and child care challenges.

The school district provides child care funding free of charge for up to 50 stu-

dents this summer, sack lunches and child care before and after summer programs. Those qualified can participate in programs with the school district or the park district.

The park district received an additional grant from the Oregon Community Foundation for \$50,000 for summer camp programming.

"Overall we've experienced a significant increase in funds for summer camps," Archibald said. "There were a lot of funds made available and we were sort of trying to apply for some of those funds. We are serving more children than we ever have on their summer camp program and part of that is because of our facility, part of it, because we're offering a really wonderful program with diverse opportunities, enhancing the minds for the kids but also enhancing physical wellness and providing a safe space."



R.J. Marx

The land of Broadway Field is owned by the city, maintained by the park district and mostly used by the school district.

Field: Agreement runs until 2051

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and Office for Civil Rights requires improvements to the softball field, bringing it to an equivalent level as the baseball field. School district Superintendent Susan Penrod said the cost of the renovations will be paid by the school district.

Any proposed change to usage or policies governing usage requires approval of the three parties.

The park district, school district and city meet typically every other month and talk about a wide array of topics that are of interest, Archibald said. "We've actually had multiple conversations over the past year or so about the field."

Park district board member Celeste Bodner said clarity is important.

"We need to be clear who is responsible for what so that we can inform the public that uses the field as to who to go to when they have something that needs to be done," she said.

According to the agreement, the city owns the land and is responsible for litter control and custodial services for permanent restrooms.

As part of its role, the park district contributed \$200,000 for field costs and provides ongoing field maintenance. This year, the park district budgeted \$12,000 for maintenance from the Broadway Field Fund, about a third of the fund's total balance.

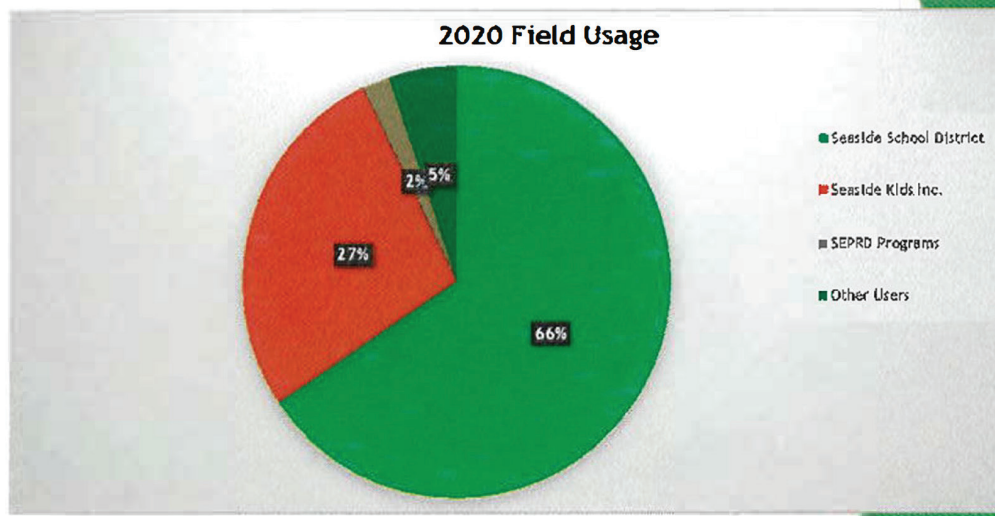
The school district also paid \$200,000 for field cost. It is responsible for supervising time usage of the field.

According to a chart from the park district, the school district and their sports teams are the primary users of the fields, using the field almost two-thirds of the time in 2020 and more than 70% in 2019.

Seaside Kids, the park district and other recreation programs make up the remaining portion of the field usage. "Almost every year, around 60% to 70% of the available time on the field are used by the school district," Archibald said.

While the field needs

Usage Report



Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District
Seaside School District usage in 2020.

repairs, he said, the park district has delayed those to ensure that an appropriate timeline is followed. Out of that fund, the park district is to pay "all the expenses for equipment repair and maintenance."

With a field life expectancy of eight to 10 years, the field has already exceeded that and is expected to do so for three-to-five more years.

The agreement calls for the park district to establish a field replacement fund to receive money from user fees to help replace the fields. While the park district has a capital fund with some funds that could be allocated for replacement costs, it does not have a separate field replacement fund.

Revision of the agreement arose more than a year ago, when park district board members sought to limit what they saw as disproportionate field expenditures.

"This has been an item that has been left our mind but has recently gained some momentum as we are working to return programming and access to our pre-pandemic levels," Archibald said.

The agreement runs until 2051. It calls for the city, park district and school district to jointly review the agreement after three years and at least once every five years after.

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of the Unsheltered.

"When Steve approached us to be on this group it was like, 'Yeah, we'll want to be there,'" Moffett said. "We're really interested in seeing well how much leverage can we have and how much power do we have to make some different decisions that maybe will make it a little easier to attract and build or repurpose affordable workforce housing."

Brian Owen, the CEO of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce, is also a member of the task force, as are Columbia Pacific Economic Development

District business manager Sara Lu Heath and local businessman Bill Montero. Wright and Community Development Director Kevin Cupples will also serve on the task force.

Councilors unanimously approved the creation of the task force.

"I truly believe what I said at the end of the session last time," Montero said, referring to the last forum on homelessness. "We have to try something. We can't say, 'Oh that's good, but' — and find a reason not to try any of the ideas. We may try an idea and fall flat on our faces. But we have to move forward."

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