



R.J. Marx

Sign posted outside the high school.

## Masks: 'Some people will be really ready for that transition'

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transition, also an opportunity for families to get their students vaccinated.

The indoor mask mandates have been in place since August. From September through January, updates from the Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Education monitored changes in cases and hospitalizations.

The state recently announced changes to mask rules with school changes occurring after Friday.

February surveys of the community, staff and parents showed about 51% of staff members responded they wanted masks to be required beyond March 31; 49% responded "no." About 65% of family members responded "no" to masks beyond March 31; about 35% responded "yes." About 55% of students responded "no" and 45% responded "yes."

March surveys showed an increase in those seeking to remove the mandate, among parents, students and staff alike.

More than 70% of students, with 255 responses, said they would favor lifting of mask mandates after Friday.

Of staff members, 56% said they would like to see masks no longer required. Almost three-quarters of families responding favored lifting the mandate after Friday, with 428 responses.

"Our school leaders and local public health officials expressed a strong need to keep alignment between dates for lifting the statewide face covering expectations in the K-12 settings with the lifting of the general indoor public spaces masking requirement," Penrod said. "School and district leaders told us they can thoughtfully prepare and plan for this transition earlier than March 31."

In making her recommendation, Penrod said quarantining and contact tracing has been paused and is no longer a requirement.

"Even since we met (in February), the county went from high risk level to medium," Penrod said.

"The latest data shows we have moved to the lowest level."

Face coverings in K-12 schools and on district buses have now been aligned, she said, and testing kits are now offered both on-site and in take-home kits, to be used with our students and staff who are symptomatic or who are high-risk.

Parents said their children suffered from the mask policy, making it difficult to breathe, communicate, understand lessons or hear teachers and staff.

A parent commented the masks made her daughter feel uncomfortable, causing mood changes and headaches.

Kelsey Betts, a registered nurse, said continuing with masks in the schools was "absolutely pointless."

"We're seeing huge increases in the amount of speech therapy needed," Betts said. "For children because they can't see lips or faces to watch somebody speak to them. So as a mom and as a health care professional, I urge you to get rid of the masks. They're not working."

Other parents spoke at the meeting about the negative impacts masks have on social interaction and the ability to focus in the classroom.

The board of directors unanimously voted to approve the superintendent's recommendation to lift the mask mandate on Monday.

The isolation period for people who test positive will continue to be five days, and they must be fever-free for 24 hours with reduced symptoms to return to class.

"Some people will be really ready for that transition and some people will and they'll all need to come to it in their own time," Penrod said. "Our principals will be meeting with our staff to share information based on the decision we make today. And we as a leadership team are preparing resources that will be available for our staff and for our students to make sure that we as a community are accepting of everybody."

## Top Shelf: Cannabis dispensary opens in Gearhart

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Oregon, where he entered the cannabis industry as a grower. He attended Oakersterdam University in Oakland, California — the world's first cannabis college — where he broadened his contacts and teamed with Top Shelf founder Thomas Beckley and co-owner David Grove.

Top Shelf Cannabis's Gearhart location will offer deals on outdoor cannabis grown in Southern Oregon, with prices starting at \$3 a gram. Medical cannabis is available as well.

"We have a good connection with all the Southern Oregon farms, because that's where I originally started working," he said. "With this shop, the main thing I want to do is give anyone involved in cannabis what they'd want with a great price on stuff, espe-



R.J. Marx

Co-owner Stefan Mihaliak and budtender Jordan Fedance of Top Shelf Cannabis in Gearhart.

cially with the times getting hard."

Among an array of flower, oils, edibles and

## Planner: Flory to step into role as acting planner

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guest service and security.

In Seaside, Flory has ramped up vacation rental dwelling inspections and enabled an upgraded online complaint process. He presented details on rental density and statistics before city councilors in January as the council considered a potential moratorium on vacation rental dwellings in Seaside.

At that meeting, City

Councilor Tita Montero said Flory had gone "above and beyond" in his work as code compliance officer.

"Jeff reaches out and he educates both the homeowners who live in the neighborhoods as well as educating the VRD owners," Montero said at that meeting, at which councilors rejected the moratorium.

The planning department, part of the community development team, includes building and

planning administrative assistant Jordan Sprague, emergency preparedness coordinator Anne McBride and building official Bob Mitchell.

"We have confidence in this team to handle the things that are there," Rahl said.

As the department reviews pending and new applications, they will work with external contractors where necessary. "We don't have the institutional

knowledge on so we'll be able to hopefully utilize those external contractors, along with the team, for the time being."

Planning commissioner Jon Wickersham announced his resignation, leaving a vacancy to be filled. The lineup of the commission is chairperson Robin Montero, vice chairperson Kathy Kleczek, Lou Neubecker, Chris Rose, Seth Morrissey and Brandon Kraft.

With Sweet Relief down the street and dispensaries in Seaside and Astoria, he is aware of the potential competition.

"I've got people from the other shops coming in here, whether they're secret shoppers or not," Mihailak said. "I don't hold it against them. It's good. Because I don't buy all my stuff at Walmart and I don't get all my gas at Chevron. It's medicine. They've got stuff I don't have, and I have stuff that they don't have."

## Salary: Competitive market complicates city's search

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council's ability to collaborate, set goals and navigate challenges.

"We heard this time and again: You need a manager with the skills to effectively engage multiple city audiences practicing accessibility, transparency and timeliness when doing so," Wallace said. "You're looking for a style that encourages two-way dialogue, able to communicate complex civic issues, respond to community concerns and move toward building consensus."

A bachelor's degree, experience and history of communication engagement are key candidate traits. Knowledge of emergency preparedness, public infrastructure, a tourism economy and housing issues are also considered essential.

The search, which began internally at the end of 2021, has expanded to the Pacific Northwest and

### Comparison Cities

- |                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Astoria (10,181)     | \$ 151,000   |
| 2. Bandon (3,162)       | \$ 118,000   |
| 3. Cannon Beach (1,491) | \$ 149,250   |
| 4. Florence (9,936)     | \$ 113,110*  |
| 5. Hood River (8,313)   | \$ 145,000*  |
| 6. Lincoln City (9,815) | \$ 125,000   |
| 7. Newport (10,256)     | \$ 125,500*  |
| 8. Tillamook (5,204)    | \$ 87,400    |
| 9. Waldport (2,230)     | \$ 105,000   |
| 10. Warrenton (6,352)   | \$ 125,000** |

Jensen Strategies

### Salaries of city administrators in cities comparable to Seaside.

nationally. The charter does not require a candidate to live within the city limits.

"We usually offer a \$30,000 range and below we would recommend for you as \$124,000 the high would be \$154,000," Jensen said.

On the low end, a candidate may not have a lot of experience but is trainable,

Jensen said, with the right skills to step up to the place.

"If you find somebody who is a seasoned city manager, who has worked in communities like yours, who understands what it is like to be a destination city and to have 60,000 people coming in — that's going to be on the other end of the spectrum," Jensen said.

Winstanley receives an annual salary of \$130,620, according to the 2021-22 budget.

They compared salaries in comparable communities, including Cannon Beach, Warrenton, Tillamook which was at the low end at \$87,000. "That was an outlier," Jensen said.

Astoria ranked highest in comparable cities, with a city manager's salary of \$151,000. Cannon Beach pays \$149,250 and Warrenton \$125,000. Newport and Lincoln City each pay their city manager's \$125,000; Hood River pays \$145,000.

If the city adopts the policy document at Monday's City Council meeting, councilors would consider candidates based on the results of the consultant's search in May. "At the end of that, we also are prepared to give you our salary recommendations in terms of range of salary, and we'll talk about that at the very end," Jensen said.

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