

Firehouse bond makes financial sense

GUEST COLUMN
MATT BROWN



When I was mayor of Gearhart, we sent out a survey about a new fire station. Among the voters surveyed an astounding 82.5% supported a new station with an impressive 79.4% supporting a bond to pay for it. Over the last several months I have gotten some great questions from friends, neighbors, and working families who are very supportive of a new station but want to know what the real impact will be on their monthly finances. With day-to-day costs of living

increasing, they want to have a budget plan that supports their families over the next several years. Many have inquired; what will be the estimated net tax increases over the course of the entire 20-year bond? The good news is it's easy to estimate, and I want to go through an example for you so you can make the right choice for you and your family.

First, it's important to realize that Gearhart has one of the lowest tax rates in Oregon and on the Oregon Coast. A bond for a new station will only increase the property tax rate by a maximum of 1.213 per \$1000 of home assessed value. It's also important to know that as our water bonds come off the books in 2025 and 2031, we will save a whopping .982 per \$1000. This makes the

yearly and monthly average net tax increase very low over the entire bond. It's also important to understand that because of our unique tax structure of full-time and part-time residents, we can finance a station for very little net tax increases to our voters.

So, what will your estimated net tax increase be to build a new station? Look at your latest property tax statement, on the left-hand side you will see your Total AV or home assessed value. It's much lower than your RMV or the real market value of your home. So, for example if your assessed value is \$300,000, you will have a net tax increase in the first year of \$375 over what you are paying now. As the water bonds come off, that number will go down to \$198 in 2025 and only \$93 starting in 2031. That

is a total net tax increase of \$3,631 over the life of the bond or only \$181.55 per year or an extra \$15.13 per month. That is less than the price of a Netflix subscription, a few extra lattes at Starbucks, or a couple martinis at your local watering hole.

I am using this simple method to budget my expenses over the life of the bond. I look at it as an investment in Gearhart's future that will help generations of residents and families. And for me, I have no problem cutting a streaming service or eliminating a few gin and tonics per month at the Great Wall to help pay for it. I believe a new fire station is the right choice for our community at a great value to our voters. I encourage you to use this method to determine if it's the right choice for you as well.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Firehouse delay will only increase our taxes

I am a full-time Gearhart resident living on a fixed income. I am a fiscal conservative, which is a nice way of saying I am cheap and suspicious of new taxes.

I am a retired law enforcement veteran of 30 years. Throughout my career I managed projects to remodel and build emergency response facilities. I was also a commander of a small fire camp. I share my background to illustrate my training and experience in order to qualify my opinion that a yes vote on measure 4-213, the Gearhart Police and Fire Bond, is the best way to limit my tax exposure.

Gearhart's fire and police stations do not meet modern industry standards in either profession, and it is obvious to even a layman, a new facility is required. The costs associated with the project have grown significantly since its conceptualization, and will continue to increase the longer we delay.

There are some who are justifying a no vote with the misguided belief that the proposed structure is too large. In my professional opinion it is not.

It is also my opinion that eliminating proposed space will not significantly reduce the overall cost of the project, and certainly not enough to negate the overall increase a delay will cause. Meeting current OSHA, EPA, ADA, and critical infrastructure building regulations, as well as studies and permits, will absorb much of the budget.

This project is unavoidable, and a delay will only increase our taxes. Please vote yes on Measure 4-213.

Dana Gould
Gearhart

Vote yes, support our first responders

The Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department Station Open House is a great opportunity to learn the facts about the necessity of voting yes for Measure 4-213.

On Saturday, April 16 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., please visit the fire department at 670 Pacific Way. See the station with your own eyes, listen to the firefighters with your own ears. I am repeatedly asked, "Who votes against supporting first responders?"

We've all read and heard the disingenuous battle cry of, "Voting no does not mean you don't support our firefighters." Well, what the heck does it mean then? You expect them to continue to work under current dangerous and substandard conditions? What happens when OSHA visits the station? How can they support our community without the tools to keep themselves safe? If not the new Highlands location, where? If not now, when? Our community has been jerked around enough! Supporting our first responders and supporting our community requires a clear "Yes, I support our first responders and I am voting yes on 4-213."

Disinformation is rampant. People are working hard on social media and telling lies to divide our community. You, the voter, part of our community, owe it to yourself to think critically about this important vote and educate yourself beyond the disinformation campaign that is being waged. I hope to see you at the open house — the hot dogs are delicious and we have a wonderful group of volunteers to visit with. Support our first responders — vote yes on 4-213.

Sheila Nolan
Gearhart

Time to give firefighters a modern building

The time has come for a new Gearhart fire and police station.

For generations, Gearhart's police and fire have taken your calls 24/7 whether for a fire or anything else when you needed their help.

Now we're calling on you to take one call for them by supporting a ballot measure that improves the safety of our first responders in the event of a Tsunami.

Your support ensures our responders get a strong and resilient facility located in an area that is out of the Tsunami inundation zone. Without such a facility evacuation, sheltering and transportation will be compromised.

Like other coastal cities, Gearhart has researched and developed alternative locations for over 10 years. Now is the time to realize this project before interest rates and inflation run out of control.

Our proposed new location for the fire station offers abundant space for a city park; something that residents have expressed a strong desire to have during past consultations.

The current building has outlived its purpose from what volunteers built back in 1958. Now is the time to give Gearhart police, firefighters, and residents a modern building at a safer location.

Now is the time for Gearhart residents to step up and help our 1st responders who are asking for our support on this important issue.

Vote yes on Measure 4-213!
Dave Hurley
Gearhart

Gearhart Fire is there when you need them, vote yes

I wholeheartedly support Measure 4-213 and to encourage others to join me with a "yes" vote on May 17, 2022.

In 2020 we hired a chimney cleaning and inspection at our home on N. Cottage Ave in Gearhart. We were shocked and horrified when chimney inspector revealed we had been living with a fire hazard and our chimney was in need of a full interior rebuild. Each time we lit a fire we were in danger.

Our chimney/fire box rebuild was scheduled for future date into 2022. Six months later we were awakened in the night by flashing emergency lights responding nearby. An accidental house fire was fully underway with flames moving dangerously along the shake roof ridge line.

Were it not for the rapid and skilled response of the Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department there surely would have been expanded damage, loss and tragedy. Their execution was nothing short of heroic and has been well reported in your news publication.

It is inexcusable that we relegate these public servants to the unsafe, unhealthy and inadequate facility that they currently operate in. I find it appalling that the worthiness of providing an adequate and well equipped facility for our firefighters and police is being questioned. As Gearhart citizens we should proudly support providing a high-quality facility for our Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department and local police department to work in to provide essential public safety to all our citizens. How can this type of provision be possible without the support and contribution of everyone they serve?

Maxine Johnson
Gearhart



Leo Dunlevy, 2 1/2, learns the ropes at the firehouse with Chief Josh Como. Leo and his family attended the March 26 department open house.

Michael Dunlevy

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Contact local agencies for latest meeting information and attendance guidelines.

MONDAY, APRIL 11
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., 989 Broadway.

THURSDAY, APRIL 14
Seaside Convention Center Commission, 5 p.m., 415 First Ave., Seaside.

TUESDAY, APRIL 19
Community Emergency Response Team, 5 p.m., 989 Broadway.

Seaside Planning Commission, work session, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

Seaside School District, 6 p.m., <https://www.seaside.k12.or.us/>.

Gearhart City Council, special meeting, 6 p.m., cityofgearhart.com.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20
Tourism Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., 989 Broadway.

THURSDAY, APRIL 21
Transportation Advisory Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.



Seaside Museum board members and volunteers Robin Montero, Leah Griffith, Teresa Taylor and Steve Wright.

R.J. Marx

Museum: A blast from the past

Continued from Page A1

Along with new exhibits, visitors will see familiar galleries featuring the Seaside Fire Department, the Seaside Signal's original printing press and a diorama depicting Seaside as it was in 1899. There's also a remembrance of the 1959 visit to Seaside by John F. Kennedy, a U.S. senator at the time, when he spoke to the national conference of the American Federation of Labor.

Visitors to the museum will see details on the 100th anniversary of the Prom, a look back at the Seaside Hotel and a revived and expanded Lewis and Clark exhibition, highlighting Seaside's role as the end of the Lewis and Clark Trail.

The library and research facilities are also well-used.

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In 1984, Butterfield Cottage, formerly located downtown, was moved next door to the museum. It has been restored to be used as a museum depicting a beach cottage and rooming house in 1912, inspired by consultants and women's magazines of the time. The cottage is famous for hosting annual gingerbread teas every holiday season for more than 30 years.

In a new exhibit, designer Robin Montero has recreated the House of Roberts, the custom design millinery and hat shop that opened in the building in 1958.

On the grounds, members of the Sou'wester Garden Club donate thousands of hours each year to create a heritage garden, featuring flowers and shrubbery that would

have been common more than a century ago.

"People come who have just bought a house and they want to know more about the house," volunteer and museum board member Leah Griffith said. "They come because their family was living here at the time, and they want to find out about their family or where they lived."

People stop and study almost every section of the museum, Griffith said. "They are intrigued by things over the Butterfield. I didn't think the logging area would be that popular, but I get a lot of people who stop and look at things there."

The museum is open Fridays and Saturdays. Check their website for more information and hours, <https://www.seasideoregonmuseum.com/>.



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