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Gearhart voters reject firehouse bond

The \$14.5M request was backed by city leaders

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

Voters rejected a \$14.5 million bond measure for a new firehouse on Tuesday, a stinging message to

city leaders who had argued that the project was critical to replace the aging fire station on Pacific Way.

Measure 4-213 was failing 66% to 34%.

The new firehouse, at 13,000

square feet, would have been off Highlands Lane along U.S. Highway 101.

Jack Zimmerman, a critic of the project whose unsuccessful legal challenge kept the bond measure off last November's ballot, said city leaders ignored questions and concerns from residents.

"Gearhart will build a new fire station when they know their money will be well spent, and not wasted on something that they do not want, need or understand," he said. "The taxpayers who will have to tighten their belts to fund this project in this shaky economy deserve consideration, transparency and respect."

The vote came after months of fierce campaigning, social media blazes and neighbor-versus-neighbor duels in the small, beach community. The cost and size of the new firehouse and the distance from the city center, among other concerns, rallied opponents.

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Arborist Pam Fleming, Connor Long, Daniel Schirman and teacher Jeff Corliss building a Japanese-style fence to go around the ginkgo peace tree.

R.J. Marx

High schoolers construct fence to protect ginkgo peace tree

Seaside Signal

Industrial arts students in Seaside took to Cartwright Park last Monday.

Connor Long and Daniel Schirmer were joined by woods class teacher Jeff Corliss and arborist Pam Fleming to add protection to a young ginkgo tree.

The tree, which marks the 75th anniversary of the close of World War II, was delivered in 2020 as Seaside joined other communities throughout

the state in planting the peace tree.

The seedling ginkgo and Asian persimmon trees were grown from seed collected from trees that survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and brought to Oregon by Medford resident Hideko Tamura Snider, who survived the bombing.

Tamura Snider is the founder of the One Sunny Day Initiative, which along with the Oregon Department of Forestry and Oregon Community Trees helped distribute the trees across the state.

In locating the tree in Cartwright

Park, Fleming and Dale McDowell, the city's Public Works director, selected the southern area of the park.

The Seaside Tree Board's Bill Barnes reached out to Corliss at the high school with the fence proposal.

They found plans online for the Japanese-style fence, which stands about 4 feet high.

While still small, the tree could grow from 30 to 45 feet, Fleming said.

Schirmer, a senior, has taken wood classes since freshman year. Long is a freshman. Both hope to make careers in the construction trades.

CLATSOP COUNTY COMMISSION

Thompson, Wev hold advantage in races

By ERICK BENGEL
The Astorian

Incumbents held the advantage Tuesday night in campaigns for the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, maintaining an ideological balance on a board that has grown more conservative after recent elections.

In South County's District 5, Commissioner Lianne Thompson led Steve Dillard, an innkeeper from Seaside who sits on the Port of Astoria's Airport Advisory Committee, 61% to 38%.

"Thank you, voters of District 5," Thompson said. "I'm so grateful for their vote of confidence. I just love



Lianne Thompson

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City struggles to find sites for homeless campers

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

The list of no-camping zones grew at a workshop last Monday as city councilors struggle to find places for the homeless to stay overnight within city limits.

When the City Council voted in late April to enact an ordinance prohibiting overnight camping in most parts of the city, including a makeshift camp off Necanicum Drive, they delayed the

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For Winstanley, a final budget in his retirement year

Committee approves proposed budget

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

The city budget committee recommended City Council approval of the proposed 2022-2023 budget on Monday night.

For City Manager Mark Winstanley, it will be his final Seaside budget. Winstanley will retire June 30 after having served with the city first as finance direc-

tor in 1994 and then as city manager from 2001.

Mayor Jay Barber described the proposed document as "a very strong budget."

"Budgeting is what makes his heart beat," Barber said of Winstanley. "He did a superb job of putting together his last budget. Basically, I would say Seaside is in the best financial condition of any North Coast community, mainly because of his philosophy and keeping good reserves and planning ahead for potential challenges."

Overall, the budget shows about a 25% jump in expenditures, from \$34 million in 2021-22 to

Convention center zeroes in on general manager finalists

By R.J. MARX
Seaside Signal

Three finalists will take part in a process to determine the Seaside Civic and Convention Center's next general manager.

Their names will be released at a public meeting and greet at the convention center on Friday from 5 to 6:30 p.m., Assistant City Manager Jon Rahl said.

Russ Vandenberg has held the position since 2005. He announced his retirement in February and will work through July.

The center opened in 1971 and after expansion in 2018-19 has nearly 24,600 square feet of meeting space. During the pandemic usage dropped from 37,000



R.J. Marx

Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

in 2019 to 8,000 in 2020.

The center operates on a proposed \$12.4 million budget for 2022-23, up from \$9.4 million in 2021, when limited in use as a result of the pandemic.

The proposed budget includes a fund balance of \$6.8 million and revenue of

\$4.5 million in room tax. The food and liquor franchise is budgeted to bring in \$1 million in 2022-23. Demand will continue to outpace supply, Vandenberg said, as the center looks ahead, with bookings through 2030.

The general manager oversees a staff of 10 full-

time employees and is charged with managing the 24,600 square-foot facility while also serving on the 10-member management team for the city. Vandenberg receives about \$115,000 per year; the position is budgeted at about \$98,600 for the new fiscal year.

Finalists were selected from a pool of 12 candidates. A fourth candidate was invited to participate but dropped out of consideration.

Candidates will take part in interviews with business and community leaders before the public session.

The city plans to make a selection in June, with the intention of having the new executive director in place in early July.



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