School Board hears development ideas

The Banks School Board of Directors continues to progress toward the next phase of development for the school district. During their public work session before the April 9 meeting, the board heard two presentations related to district growth.

The first presentation was by Javier Fernandez from Seattle Northwest Securities Corporation. He reviewed the district's current bonding situation, how a new levy would affect that, and what could be done now to plan for a future levy and minimize the impact on tax payers. Fernandez explained that the district has some bonds that could be restructured. This restructuring would save the district approximately $80,000 and would lessen taxes starting in 2010. This restructuring would mean that, if a new levy was passed to take effect in 2010, taxes wouldn't go up as much because the rate from the old bonds would be lower.

Dan Jamison, superintendent of Sherwood School District, also came to talk to the board about his district's experience with passing a levy. The Sherwood district passed an $89 million levy to build a new elementary school, a new middle school and to expand the high school. Jamison explained that sharing information with the community was vitally important. The community needed to know exactly what the district needed, and the district needed to know what and how much people were willing to pay for. He said that the survey they conducted turned up some surprising results, but that it was accurate and helpful. He also said that their research made it easier to disseminate correct and necessary information before the election.

FFA advisor Tim Eggleston introduced high school senior Blake Little and told the board that Little had earned a state degree from FFA. This degree requires participation in 30 activities, 900 hours of work over the course of high school, and a knowledge of parliamentary procedure, among other things. Little was one of approximately 200 seniors to receive this honor statewide.

Directors voted to approve four policies regarding the school board, following the second reading of the policies. They also approved the 2007-08 school year calendar, which aligns with scheduling in neighboring districts.

A policy revision regarding school bus safety was read for the first time. This policy was introduced previously, but didn't reflect what the school district does or what is required by law. The policy was revised to include the correct procedures and law.

The consent agenda included three resignations and one retirement. Elementary school aide Olivia Walsh, elementary school aide Julie Kemper, and head wrestling coach Jacob Pence are all resigning. Pence is resigning only his coaching position. Walsh's and Kemper's resignations will be effective at the end of the school year; Pence's will be effective at the end of the wrestling season. Karen Blitz will retire from the elementary school at the end of the school year.

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Community Auction starts Apr. 27

The 34th annual Banks Community Auction, "Let the Good Times Roll!" will start off on Friday, April 27, with a garage sale from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Banks Junior High School gymnasium.

Activities on Saturday, April 28, will start with the garage sale, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. A silent auction will be held from 4:00 to 7:15 p.m., followed by an oral auction from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m., in the Banks High School (BHS) gymnasium

The BHS FFA Alumni Association will present Dinner at the Auction from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the BHS cafeteria.

The Lady Braves Softball Team will provide child care during the auction for children 3-10 years of age at $1.00 per child per hour.

The Banks Community Auction is sponsored by the BHS Parents Association.

House Veterans Committee will take public testimony on April 26

The Oregon House Veterans Committee will take public testimony in Hillsboro on Thursday, April 26, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Hillsboro Civic Center Auditorium, 150 E. Main St., according to Doug MacEllven, Washington County's Veteran Service Officer.

"We're very excited that Rep. Jeff Barker (Washington County), who chairs the committee, has chosen to hold information gathering hearings here," MacEllven said. "Committee members will have a chance to hear from veterans themselves how state monies spent for veterans' services are being used," he added.

The last legislature appropriated funds to pay for additional county veteran service officers. These men and women help veterans from all eras – Iraq, Gulf War I, Vietnam, Korea and World War II conflicts – to receive the benefits and compensation that were promised them when they enrolled in military service. In Washington County, the dollar value of these benefits exceeds $42 million annually.

The Washington County office assists veterans aged 20 to 90 years of age. "We recently met a veteran who suffered severe hearing damage in World War II," MacEllven said, "[who] was not aware that he could receive hearing aids from the VA."

Staff members also visit veterans in their homes when they can't get out, or in assisted living facilities.

MacEllven has arranged for the Committee to hear from a veteran from each service era. Staff members of Washington County's Disability, Aging and Veteran Services will share what they have been able to accomplish on behalf of veterans. The Committee will also hear testimony from any veteran or interested member of the public who wishes to be heard.

A representative from the VA Medical Center Director's Office will be on hand to update veterans on the VA's plans to open a Health Clinic in Washington County.

For more information, contact the Washington County Disability, Aging and Veteran Services Veterans Unit at 503-846-3060.

Library program

Banks Public Library will host a storyteller program tonight, April 19, at 7:00 p.m. as part of a county-wide Hearing Voices Program. The Library Commission's regular meeting will be rescheduled.

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