

Budget keeps Banks school board busy

Steven Kiss was elected chairman of the Banks school district budget committee at their first meeting May 28. According to the budget message by Superintendent Marv Ott, the budget is based on a statewide appropriation of \$5.6 billion for the 2009-2011 biennium and stable enrollment. A nearly 80% decrease in timber revenue was also part of the equation. Together, they translate to a reduction spending of approximately \$1.5 million, or almost 15% less than the district spent in the 2007-08 general fund. The committee approved the budget presented June 11 without dissent.

Many teachers and parents spoke at the May 28 budget meeting in support of cutting days and saving specific programs such as high school choir and elementary counseling. Discussion continued at the board and budget meetings of June 8 and 11.

Business manager Simon Levear told the committee that the administrative team devel-

oped a three part priority list of budget reductions that corresponded closely with the tabulation of community and staff input. Levear explained, repeatedly, that the budget, as presented to the committee, could not include the effects of staff concessions in negotiation until an agreement had been reached. The board remained in active negotiation with employees' associations until June 11.

The agreement between the district and staff delays both the step increase and a cost of living adjustment until March of 2010. Staff will receive six months of these salary increases, however, classified staff will work seven less days, and teachers pay will be reduced by nine contract days.

The agreement also includes a schedule for adding back days (up to 5) if the state school fund exceeds the budget base of \$5.6 billion. Levear explained that adding days back to the schedule will also provide support for other dis-

trict needs if it should become available. At this time, the calendar will not be changed. Any adjustments will be made in March 2010.

The first and second tier of reductions have been included in the budget and total almost \$950,000. The third tier of reduction options that will be at least partially restored includes elementary school counseling; junior high secretarial and library staff; science and social studies classes; high school technology, yearbook and science classes; district and building secretarial and technology staff. Nearly \$400,000 was made available by staff concessions, and almost \$150,000 by administrative pay freezes and eliminating one administrative position.

Superintendent Marv Ott presented Doug Nordholm with a plaque of appreciation for his years of service to the district. Following the presentation, the board accepted the resignation of Duane Lundsten, declaring the position open as of July 1.

The board will meet June 22 to review the final budget document, make any necessary changes and approve the 2009-2010 budget.

Banks Council considers charter

Banks City Council continued discussions, at the June 9 Council meeting, of potential changes to the City's charter that may be placed before electors in the November election.

Council agreed unanimously on two changes, one, that the term of a councilor in office will not change when the charter changes are adopted; the other that the words "a recorder" will be stricken from the section regarding Other Officers.

Whether or not to change how annexations are handled generated different opinions.

A proposed change that annexations be approved by the city council, in compliance with city requirements and procedures provided in city ordinances, was declined by council with a 4-2 vote.

"I don't think we should attempt to change it right now," Councilor Ryan Birr said, crediting local residents with a good understanding of the difference between the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and annexa-

tions. Mayor John Kinsky agreed with Birr.

Councilor Pete Edison disagreed, saying he thinks that three acres in a calendar year should be allowed for council to decide on; also that council is not giving the electors enough credit.

City Attorney Jim Lucas asked for clarification on how the city decides who comes in, the limits, and the prioritization for a fair process.

Councilors Craig Stewart and Mark Gregg felt the city should not waste the time or the money putting this on the ballot, with Gregg saying that he is "against size limits, and that it is silly to annex anything until the school has adequate funding."

Councilor Brian Biehl agreed with Edison, and would like to "test the waters." Councilor Christy Greagor added that she is "torn...can see the benefits of both sides" but would like to leave things unchanged until Council has more information.

Free first-time homebuyer class

A free orientation for First-Time Homebuyers will be offered by HUD certified Open Door Counseling Center, a non-profit housing counseling agency. The orientation

'FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER SUCCESS', will touch on the \$8,000. tax credit, down payment assistance, and education opportunities. In addition to Open Door staff, industry professionals who volunteer their time to teach Open Door's first-time homebuyer education program will be on hand to answer questions. They include Mary Taylor and Ricci Sohn of National City Mortgage; Mark Wilson of Key Bank; and Barbara Carlson, Real Estate Broker.


The orientation will be held on Wednesday, July 1, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., at the Hillsboro Main Public Library, 2850 NE Brookwood Parkway, Hillsboro. No registration is required. For more information, contact Joan Perry, 503-748-0412, jperry@opendoorcc.net, or visit our website at www.opendoorcc.net.

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