

Session

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Next Dunn updated the SSEA on some changes that had been made to the budget at a budget meeting last Tuesday.

He said nothing is set in stone on this budget, but it is the budget that will be proposed at the June budget hearing.

Dunn said he and District Clerk Becky Bates were reviewing the budget and found some areas of concern. He said if they left the budget as it was they would have to take money out of the contingency fund to survive.

Dunn said that to fix this problem they revised the budget so more money was put into the textbook fund, making it a total of \$100,000 and taking \$50,000 from the contingency fund.

He also said it was necessary to add money to the substitute teacher fund. Last year they were over the budget in that area, so they added another \$5,000 from the contingency fund to that area to make it \$15,000.

"We can't tell people they can't be sick," he said.

Other areas of the budget the board discussed changing are school board training, electricity, maintenance, technology, administrator/classified staff salary increases and the budget for each school in the district.

Enrollment is the single biggest factor in how much money the district has, Dunn said, and Sugar-Salem expects a 40-student drop in its enrollment next year.

After the changes, the contingency fund in the previous proposed budget, which was about \$253,000, went down to about \$167,000 in the new proposed budget. Dunn said that amount would mean they expect a carryover of approximately 1.8 percent. Auditors recommend 8 percent, he said.

Dunn said if they leave that money in the contingency fund and "short-change" the budget, the budget is less accurate because they would just have to take contingency money out and use it for the areas that are lacking.

Board member Dwight Little said they want to make the budget as accurate as possible, and Dunn said the budget is based on the board's proposal, which includes about \$35,000 for teachers over and above what the state allocates for their salaries.

The board's proposal, Dunn said, is that nobody take a cut in pay. Some would take substantial increases, but nobody would be cut. He said this coming year teachers with less experience may get a substantial increase, while more experienced teachers will not get cut but may not get an increase, and the following year they expect to give a salary increase to the teachers at the top.

Bates said the district does not have the money to give the teachers a 4 percent increase as the SSEA proposed in the last meeting.

According to Dunn, the district is also under pressure because of what the state has done with the career ladder, as are other districts in the state.

He said although the state has increased the total amount for teachers, they've provided much more for beginning teachers than for those who have taught for many years. He said that is not enough incentive to keep teachers in the system.

Tammy Gee, president of the SSEA, said the SSEA has come up with several scenarios for the board to give district teachers an increase — scenarios ranging from a district cost of \$55,000 to \$90,000.

Gee said after the career ladder legislation came out, the teachers felt like the state was listening to them and trying to retain teachers. But since the career ladder doesn't offer much to teachers on the higher end, the teachers still feel like they should see something in their paychecks.

She said many teachers don't feel appreciated.

"This is our time to receive something," she said.

Galbraith said she hopes the teachers know they are appreciated and that next year the career ladder will start to help salaries.

Gee said many teachers say they don't trust the legislature to give them an increase next year, and Galbraith said the board agrees, but they can't see a place in the budget to give a "magical increase" in teacher salaries. She said the board is not willing to budget money it doesn't have.

She also said the budget shows where every penny is going, and the board feels strongly they need to stick with the career ladder.

Dunn wanted to make it clear that the board likes the SSEA's proposal.

"If we had 4 percent, we would give them 4 percent," he said.

Dunn said the board is worried about how the teachers and patrons feel, "but we also have to deal with the facts of the matter," he said.

He brought up district debt, which, as discussed at the past meeting, some teachers blame for sucking away money that could go toward a teacher salary increase.

He said that debt, which is from a past Medicaid expense, is almost paid off, and money has been set aside in the budget to ideally pay it off in the next year.

The district overspent on the Medicaid budget because they "made some mistakes in that budget," according to Dunn.

But the mistakes have been corrected, and now they are paying off that debt using money from the maintenance and operations fund. Dunn said other districts often have to take money out of this fund because they are "chronically underfunded" in this area.

Gee said she hadn't realized before that \$150,000 was coming out of the maintenance and operations budget to pay off the Medicaid debt, and the SSEA went into a second caucus to discuss the matter further.

The SSEA came back and proposed that half of the maintenance and operations money budgeted to pay off the debt go toward salaries instead. Galbraith said the board wants to pay off the debt first, but they will look more closely at all of SSEA's proposals.

A budget hearing will be held in June, and the next negotiations meeting was scheduled for June 15 at 1 p.m. at the district office. To see the budget that will be proposed at the June hearing, see page 8B of the Tuesday, June 9, Standard Journal (Vol.127, No. 69).

To see the current teachers' salaries, visit <http://sugarsalem.org>, select "School board" under the district tab, go to "District policy," and scroll down and click "Handbooks." The 2014-15 professional agreement contains current policy and salary information.

Fire burns home near St. Anthony

Standard Journal staff

ST. ANTHONY — A doublewide trailer located on 531 Railroad Way north of St. Anthony was reportedly burned down on Tuesday.

According to officials, a smoke detector may have been what saved the lives of two children who were in the house.

The fire occurred at approximately 2 p.m. on Tuesday afternoon.

South Fremont Fire Department responded to the call and reported that the trailer did burn down entirely, but there were no injuries. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

Officials said three fire trucks and 12 firefighters were dispatched to the scene. Another two tankers and four firefighters from the North Fremont Fire District were also called in to assist.

Patrick Leavitt is the renter of the property, and firemen reported the upstairs of the property was "destroyed," and the basement suffered significant water damage.

The home was covered both under rental insurance and by the property owner, officials said.

Officials from the fire department said the matter is now being investigated by state fire marshals, and a report likely won't be back for a week or two.

No other details were available about the fire.

Study

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irrigated.

Cavallaro said he was expecting to see birds commonly utilizing the wetlands to forage, but not necessarily exclusively.

"I was surprised by how strong the correlation was between the birds' foraging habits and the flood-irrigated lands," he said.

When examining methods for conservation, Cavallaro said it is essential to understand how the birds "connect to the landscape."

In other words, learning how the birds interact with their landscape is one of the fundamental pieces to successful conservation efforts, according to Cavallaro.

Jeff Klausmann, principal of Intermountain Aquatics Inc. in Driggs, said there are "real benefits" to flood irrigation over central pivots for wildlife.

"The birds' natural wetland habitats are shrinking," Klausmann said. "Flood irrigation seems to offer increased foraging opportunities for birds like ibis."

Pivots are very efficient, using less water overall, but water used by crops is lost to evapotranspiration.

Flood irrigation waters plants but also recharges the shallow aquifer, which can be critical to wetland and floodplain function in the arid western United States.

Flood irrigation was the primary method of irrigation for the last 100 years. Twenty to 30 years ago, sprinklers started to catch on,



COURTESY PHOTO

The study says that flood irrigation has been the primary method of irrigation for the past 100 years in this area. Center pivots are now popular, but officials say there are benefits to flood irrigation.

and most recently there has been a trend of transitioning to center pivots, which are extremely convenient because they can be controlled and monitored with a cell phone.

Cavallaro said he is not looking to criticize any farmers' existing practices, but based on knowledge acquired during the study, Idaho Fish and Game is looking to educate interested parties on some potential benefits of flood irrigation, and if a party is interested, assist them in learning about the most upgraded and efficient options available in flood irrigation equipment.

Findings from the study indicated birds were predominantly observed foraging in areas of shallow standing water that flushed out plenty of bugs for the birds to eat.

"The ibis are fussy about their bugs. They like to wash them before they eat them," Cavallaro said.

The flood irrigated lands also serve to drown the bugs, creating a "bug soup" for the ibis and other birds to enjoy.

When the water is drawn down and then irrigated again, the bugs will return, which draws the birds to feed.

Conclusions from the study included an observation of a loss of approximately 60 fields of flood-irrigated cropland for wetland birds between 2011 and 2012.

Idaho Fish and Game will continue to monitor how the rise in pivot irrigation impacts the ibis and other wetland bird populations. For more information, contact your local Fish and Game office.

Waste

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24, before he visits Senior U.S. District Judge Wiley Daniel, of Colorado, who presided over the trial.

"Illegally storing hazardous materials puts society at risk," said Olson. "We are deeply concerned about the threat to public safety and to our environment. Investigation and prosecution of these cases will continue to be a priority for our state and federal partners and for this office."

"For years, the defendant knowingly stored hazardous waste without regard to the dangers it posed

to the public and to the environment," said Lance Ehrig, acting special agent in charge of EPA's criminal enforcement program for Idaho. "When EPA's emergency response team first arrived on the defendant's property, they found thousands of containers filled with corrosive and ignitable hazardous waste. The situation put human health at serious risk and cleanup cost the government hundreds of thousands of dollars. Today's guilty verdict by a jury demonstrates that the American people demand that if business owners treat our nation's environmental laws with contempt they be held accountable."

The conviction for storing and dis-

posing of hazardous waste without a permit carries a penalty up to five years in prison, a maximum fine of \$250,000 and up to three years of supervised release. Because of multiple violations of court orders prior to trial and offenses committed while on pretrial release, Spatig has been held in custody since Sept. 11, 2014.

The case was the result of a joint investigation of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and the Madison County Sheriff's office.

It was prosecuted jointly by the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Environmental Crimes Section of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Brown

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15-year unified sentence with 12-1/2 fixed and 2-1/2 indeterminate.

Norlen had custody of Brown's two young children at the time of the incident.

Rammell explained that his client does not claim to be a victim but he said the court should consider the circumstances of her life when deciding what should happen to her in the future.

"The court knows from [Brown's] presentence report that she had a troubled childhood and that she did not have a good working relationship with her mother," Rammell said. "That relationship was best defined as some type of domestic violence relationship."

He said that at 25 years old, his client had not been provided with the necessary life skills she needs to function in society.

Brown's two young children are currently being cared for by a relative of Brown.

Rammell argued that if something is not done to assist Brown now, when she comes out of prison she will remain unable to be a functional member of society or a parent.

"I fear that she will be in for a life of continued hurt and probably a life of hurting others, simply because she does not have the tools to be the type of person that we expect her to be," Rammell said.

He asked the court to reduce the fixed sentence to five years or, as an alternative, he requested the judge retain jurisdiction over Brown for 365 days.

After her attorney completed his comments, Brown addressed the court.

She recounted and admitted to her poor choices and attitude during

the sentencing hearing and before.

"In this situation, I lied for so long I almost believed myself," Brown said.

She testified that the comments that Norlen made during her sentencing hearing were correct.

"What [Norlen] said on the day of my sentencing was really accurate. ... He's right that I have been lying and that I alone had the power to stop him from being shot," she said.

She thanked Norlen for being there for her children, and that even though they've "had their differences over the years" she wishes she had done something to stop the events that happened in July of 2014.

Brown said she understands she has a debt to pay society, but she requested the court consider reducing the fixed portion of her sentence so that she could "progress" and get into programs that would help rehabilitate her and help her become a better parent. She thanked the judge for listening to her statement.

The judge asked Brown how she has been spending her time and what kind of treatment options are currently available to her. Due to overcrowding in the woman's prison, Brown is being held in an undisclosed county facility.

The defendant said she has been attending Bible study and other productive activities since her sentencing. She also told the judge she has not been processed through the Reception Diagnostic Unit (RDU) which the judge was somewhat surprised by, but understood it is a process that can be delayed in the event of overcrowding.

Fremont County Prosecutor Karl Lewies recommended the court stand by its original sentence. Lewies said he felt it was appropriate.

He reinforced that it was Brown who indicated to the shooter spe-

cifically who Norlen was and was a driving force behind allowing the shooting to take place at all.

Rammell made a few final comments to reinforce his message that he understood the sentence Brown had been given but that he hoped the court would consider Brown's circumstances and be given the opportunity for rehabilitation.

Moeller said he was "mindful" and appreciated the advocacy Rammell had provided to Brown.

"I want the defendant to get the best treatment possible so that when she comes out of prison she can be a whole and healthy person, ready to be an effective mother," Moeller said.

He also indicated that he was concerned that Brown had requested treatment and not received it, but now that Brown is in prison, she is under the jurisdiction of the Idaho Department of Corrections.

"I can certainly make recommendations, and I'll again recommend that the defendant receive the best possible care and treatment. Realistically, I understand that they just don't have the resources to provide that to every defendant," Moeller said.

The judge noted that the defendant's attitude had improved dramatically since her sentencing and that her time in prison appeared to have done her some good. In light of her improved level of accountability and introspection, the judge said he felt that she should receive a slight adjustment to her sentence.

He modified the fixed portion of the sentence from 12-1/2 years to 10 years, but left the unified sentence at 15 years.

He also made very clear that if the defendant's actions while in custody were not satisfactory, this modification would mean nothing, and she would serve her full term of 15 years.