

LCSO to put levy on November ballot

ALBANY — The Linn County Sheriff's Office will ask voters in November to support a four-year law enforcement levy of \$2.98 per \$1,000 of property value, the Board of Commissioners agreed Tuesday morning.

If approved, the levy would run from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2026.

The current levy of \$2.83 will expire on June 30, 2022.

The Sheriff's Office receives about 76% of the levy funds, the Juvenile Department receives about 14% and the District Attorney's Office receives about 10%.

Voters turned down a levy request of \$3.08 per \$1,000 on the November 2020 ballot.

Linn County was concerned as cities in Oregon and across the country were being asked to defund law enforcement programs. The county hoped to extend the current levy and provide employees with some job security.

But some voters thought the levy was actually doubling up for a year, officials said.

The Linn County Sheriff's Office has relied on levy funding since the 1980s. It makes up about 54% of the office's total budget.

The proposed levy would run through

2026, so the increased rate takes inflation and cost of living adjustments into account.

LCSO continues to provide 24/7 coverage and answers every call throughout the county.

Linn County residents have traditionally strongly supported the levy. The current levy passed in May 2018, 70% to 30%, with 16,702 yes votes to 7,180 no votes.

Commissioner Will Tucker said he "hopes the public knows how important this is," and volunteered to post signs or speak to community groups about the levy.

In other business, the commissioners:

- Learned that the county Planning & Building Department has waived \$67,000 in fees for families rebuilding in the Santiam Canyon after last September's wildfires. Planning Manager Alyssa Boles said that so far, permits have been issued for 12 single-family dwellings; 10 manufactured homes; 30 electrical permits; and 18 temporary RV permits. Contract city revenue is up in July compared to July 2020. The
- Approved a contract with Sean Tate Public Affairs to continue outreach work with small businesses affected by wildfires and COVID-19. Tate

has been working with the Albany and Lebanon chambers of commerce with the same focus. The contract is for six months not to exceed \$50,000.

- Approved First-Time Youth Wage Grant agreements with Malpass Farms LLC and the David C. Malpass Warehouse.
- Reappointed Commissioner Roger Nyquist and Mel Conrad to the Local Public Safety Coordinating Council.
- Reappointed Ray Hiltz, David Pautsch, Amy Price, Rex Watkins and Skeet Arasmith to the Board of Property Tax Appeals.
- Was asked by Breanna Jarmer, a physical education instructor at Albany Christian School, to support an effort that would allow schools and parents to determine whether their children should have to wear face masks at school. Jarmer said about 17 schools are fighting the state mandate.

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