

Former Albany councilman promotes RV camping at fairgrounds

ALBANY — Rich Kellum has been traveling by RV this summer, which prompted the former Albany City Councilman to suggest that Linn County allow RV camping at the fairgrounds year-round, not just during the county fair or during special events.

Kellum presented the idea to Commissioners Sherrie Sprenger and Will Tucker Tuesday morning during the board of commissioners' weekly meeting. Chairman Roger Nyquist was not present.

Kellum said local RV parks have many spaces tied up by long-term renters while "Linn County has an empty lot."

The camping spots should not be set up for long-term residents, Kellum said, only overnight or possibly weekly.

He said the county already has the infrastructure, management and reservation system in place.

Tucker said that when the Linn County Fair & Expo Center was developed, there was a concern that camping would cut into local business income.

He added that the site is also used as an emergency evacuation center in case the mid-valley is again plagued by wildfires like last September. Tucker said reservations could be made with a proviso that in the event of a disaster, the spaces might not be available for general camping use.

The commissioners agreed with Kellum's proposal to "check it out."

After the meeting, Fair & Expo manager Randy Porter said there are about 60 camping spaces, but setting up a full-time program would require additional staffing and possibly the addition of a camp host. Waste disposal could also be an issue.

In other business, the commissioners:

Were informed by Juvenile Director Torri Lynn there were

26 referrals in May and 184 youth in probation, of which 57 are considered high-risk.

Approved a personal services contract between Renew Consulting and Linn County not to exceed \$268,640. This is a pass-through grant from the Oregon Health Authority to provide mental health services.

Approved an amendment to an intergovernmental agreement not to exceed \$400,000 between Linn County and Community Services Consortium to provide temporary housing for homeless persons affected by COVID-19.

Approved increasing the Fair Fund by \$70,000 to be used toward the Linn County Fair July 15-17.

Accepted temporary easements for the construction of the Richardson Gap Road Shimanek Covered Bridge project. MFE Covered Bridge LLC, \$300; Rex Lowther and Amy Lowther co-trustees, \$800. Also a permanent easement with Rex Lowther and Amy Lowther, co-trustees, \$1,050.

Approved a resolution to provide a conditional use permit to Marble Solar to develop a photovoltaic power generation facility on 12 acres on Eicher Road. The Board approved the application on June 8.

Were informed by Planning Director Robert Wheeldon that the city of Harrisburg will no longer use the county's building inspection services on a contract basis. Harrisburg is joining with Junction City to provide inspection services.

Approved a permitting fee refund of \$2,249 to Jimco Electric.

Approved a 2.25% Cost of Living adjustment for members of the Teamsters Union.

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