

City considering room tax grant guidelines

By **AMBER NOBE**
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TILLAMOOK - Because the number of applicants for Tillamook's transient room tax dollars continues to rise, the city is considering implementing a set of guidelines for distributing the money to the various groups that use it to promote tourism.

City staff presented an example of such guidelines to the council at its meeting Aug. 18. Currently, the application for TRT dollars is basic, and there are no guidelines for appropriating the money.

The example guidelines included such points as requiring a budget in the application and an annual report of how the money was spent; instituting a maximum of \$5,000 per request; limiting requests to three years with a two year waiting period before funds

can be sought again; and giving priority to first-time requesters.

City manager Mark Gervasi said the examples were based on ideas that have been floating around and are not necessarily what the council will chose to implement. The city also has the option not to institute any guidelines, keeping the process the way it is now.

Councilors Susie Coughlan and Scott Heckerroth will work with staff to create a draft set of guidelines to be approved by the whole council. The group first meets today, Wednesday, Aug. 27. The meeting is open to the public.

At the Aug. 18 meeting, Coughlan said she understood the need to be fair in distributing dollars but didn't want to limit the council's ability to give money.

Don Hurd, who attended the meeting, voiced concern over the

idea of giving new requests priority. "It seems some great requests will take several years to get going," he said.

Heidi Luquette, executive director of the Tillamook Chamber of Commerce, said it would be prudent of the city to establish some guidelines for giving but that the Chamber was also greatly concerned over the ideas of caps on the amounts given and time limits.

The Chamber requests TRT dollars every year to help fund many tourism-related ventures, including a visitor information center. "That's an important service to provide for the area," she said.

Gervasi said any guidelines that are adopted will most likely be used in the 2009-10 fiscal year. Applications for this year's TRT grants are available on the city's Web site with a Sept. 5 deadline.

Also at the Aug. 18 meeting, the city council voted 5-1 to hire additional legal council in the matter of disputed claims by Big River Construction, the general contractor on the city's new wastewater treatment plant.

During the Aug. 4 executive session, the council learned of claims made by Big River regarding the delays on plant construction, which the city and its engineering firm, Kennedy Jenks, do not agree with. City staff recommended Jordan Schrader Ramis, PC, to represent the city, saying the firm has extensive experience with construction law.

Councilor Suzanne Weber voted against the recommendation. The legal work will be paid for out of the city's sewer fund. A contract with the firm is in the works.

Tillamook, Garibaldi's lead staff contracts extended 1 year

TILLAMOOK - The lead staff for the cities of Garibaldi and Tillamook had their contracts renewed for one year following city council meetings last week.

In Garibaldi, city administrator Kevin Greenwood, and in Tillamook, city manager Mark Gervasi, were each given an annual performance review in confidential executive sessions and then awarded a one-year contract extension.

Greenwood's contract includes a cost of living adjustment, bringing his salary to \$52,449. The contract also reiterates the previously approved \$100 per month driving allowance and cell phone use.

The city will also pay for half (\$5,202) of Greenwood's continuing education with the stipulation that he will stay employed with the city for at least one year after receiving tuition assistance. Greenwood would be responsible for reimbursing the city if he were to leave prior to the one-year commitment.

Gervasi's contract will require the city to give a 60-day notice of termination before June 30, 2009; without such, the contract will rollover for another year. He was also given a pay raise according to the city's new pay plan, which was adopted last month and reflects a 3 percent merit and a 2 percent cost of living increase, bringing his salary to \$78,048.

