

NEWSBERG



Rural Newberg’s Ewing Young Elementary, seen here on May 24, 2026, is potentially slated for closure following the failure of Measure 36-239. (Branden Andersen / Newsberg)

Newberg-Dundee School Levy Fails; District to Move Forward with Cuts

Superintendent says 35 positions will be cut and class sizes will grow in the near term, with school closures in the future.

By Branden Andersen
Founding Editor

NEWBERG, Ore. — Newberg-Dundee Public Schools’ five-year local option levy failed at the ballot May 19, leaving the district to move forward with significant staff reductions and the prospect of school closures as it heads into the 2026-27 school year.

Measure 36-239, which would have assessed \$1.20 per \$1,000 of assessed property value and raised an estimated \$6.1 million annually, failed 57.6% to 42.4% in unofficial results as of May 22. Superintendent Dave Parker said the outcome, while disappointing, was not entirely a surprise.

“We’ve set our budget with the notion that the levy would not pass,” Parker told Newsberg. “Where we’re moving forward is implementing that budget.”

What Happens Now

The district will advance the budget its Budget Committee approved May 5, a spending plan drafted with the levy’s failure as a contingency. It goes before the Newberg-Dundee School Board at a public hearing May 26, when the board is expected to vote on final adoption.

Enacting the budget means cutting approximately 35 positions — 25 teachers and 10 support staff — on top of the 76.75 full-time equivalent positions the district has already eliminated over the past two years. The reductions include 17.5 classroom teachers, 6 instructional coaches, 5 special education assistants, 1.5 music and physical education teachers, 2.5 English language development staff, and 2 administrators, according to the district’s pre-election budget presentation.

Parker said affected employees have already been notified.

“We are committed to treating each of them with respect and gratitude for their service to our students,” he said in a written statement.

The cuts reflect a \$5.7 million budget gap driven by flat state funding, declining enrollment, and rising costs. The district’s proposed 2026-27 budget shows the State School Fund allocation to Newberg-Dundee at approximately \$33.0 million for the coming year — essentially unchanged from the \$33.2 million the district received in 2024-25 — while contractual salary obligations, pension contributions, transportation, and utilities have all continued to climb. Personnel costs account for approximately 79% of the district’s general fund, leaving little room to cut without affecting staff.

Parker said the district has reached the limits of what administrative reductions can accomplish.

“Someone has to be at the building to run the building,” he said. “You need an HR director because of liability nowadays. You need a special education director, and you need someone running finances. We don’t have a communications person — you’ve got me. And there is no assistant superintendent. As I look out at the organization, I can’t imagine any more cuts. I’m out of moves here.”

What the Cuts Mean for Students

Class sizes will grow across grade levels in 2026-27, with the largest impact at the elementary level, Parker said. The district’s pre-election budget presentation projected that 25% of elementary classes would exceed 30 students, or that approximately 35% would be blended — combining students from multiple grade levels into a single classroom.

Four furlough days will remain in effect, meaning the full academic calendar will not be restored.



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Black Bear Spotted Roaming Newberg Neighborhoods

Authorities say the young male likely dispersed from his mother’s range; no sightings reported since Monday morning.

By Branden Andersen
Founding Editor

NEWBERG, Ore. — A young black bear was spotted moving through north Newberg neighborhoods Sunday and Monday, prompting a handful of calls to the Newberg-Dundee Police Department and drawing attention from local wildlife observers.

“We did receive a handful of calls on a young black bear running around town Sunday and Monday,” said Capt. Ryan Simmons of the Newberg-Dundee Police Department. “Our last report of the bear from a citizen was 7:20 a.m. yesterday. There have been no other sightings since then.”

According to KOIN6 News, the bear was shot and killed in Canby on May 23.

Simmons said residents who spot the bear should contact the Newberg-Dundee Police Department, which will relay information to Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife. A state trooper has already been notified of the bear’s presence in Newberg, he said.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife did not respond to a request for comment.

Bradley Joyce, a Newberg resident and president of the Oregon Bear Foundation, said he believes the bear is a young male recently pushed out of its mother’s territory — a common occurrence in late spring.



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OTHER HEADLINES

Pet of the Month: Sky

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Gas Tax Referral
Postponed at
Newberg City
Council Meeting

Funding for paving gravel roads sparks discussion of a voter referral; councilors brainstorm alternative methods.

By Audrey Grice
Contributor

NEWBERG, Ore. — During the May 18 City Council meeting, on council request City Manager Will Worthey presented a request for council action, debating whether to refer a \$0.03-per-gallon gas tax to voters, potentially placing it on a future ballot. The tax would fund the paving of several miles of gravel road at a total estimated cost of \$8 million to \$10 million.

After discussion, the council decided against pursuing a gas tax at this time, and will consider alternative funding options at future meetings.

“I think the timing is way off on this,” said Councilor Mike McBride. “I wouldn’t want to do something like this. Maybe a couple years from now if everything’s a little bit better, cheaper, with prices and oil and gas, then I don’t have a problem putting it out to the voter and letting the voter tell us what they want to do.”

Worthey said unpaved gravel roads within the city limits draw \$20,000 to \$30,000 annually in grading and maintenance costs with limited results. Gravel roads are also

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a consistent complaint from residents. However, the city’s existing budget cannot accommodate building new roads.

“While we have sufficient revenue to keep up with our road repair program... we do not have sufficient revenue to build entirely new streets in the gravel section of town,” Worthey said. “The revenue we get from other sources, such as state pass-through revenue, is utilized to pay for public works staff and other operating costs, but it does not rise to the level of fixing new streets in the gravel area.”

Worthey said the city has applied for federal transportation grants, but those grants are largely predicated on fatalities, which are not common on gravel roads.

The proposed tax would generate approximately \$547,500 annually and terminate upon project completion. Worthey said the revenue would enable paving of a few streets per year, including gravel sections of N. Harrison Street, W. Sheridan

Street, and W. Sherman Street.

Should the council decide against a gas tax, Worthey identified alternative funding methods, including a Local Improvement District, federal grants, and adding the project to an urban renewal district.

A Local Improvement District would allow residents directly affected by the paving to fund the project.

“The focus of LIDs is on local, public improvements that have more of a benefit to that immediate area rather than a broader community benefit,” said Community Development Director Scot Siegel. “It’s a financing tool — Bancroft bonds that fund the infrastructure.”

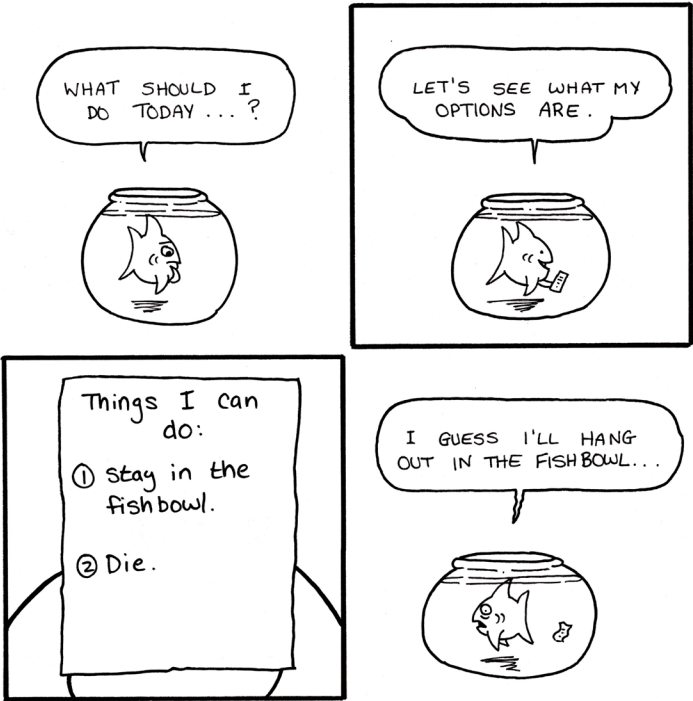
Bancroft bonds are municipal bonds issued by local governments to finance public infrastructure improvements incrementally rather than all at once.



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Melon Collie Ep. 89

Created by Joseph Hampton



The Logoff

A Phone Free Hangout
Wednesday, June 3 / 7 - 9 p.m.
Puzzles, Games, Music, Wine, Food

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UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR

MAY 27
4 p.m. — Newberg Wednesday Market
Downtown Newberg, 116 S College St
7 p.m. — Newberg Comedy Night: Geoff Tate
Stoller Wine Bar - Newberg, 106 S Center Street

MAY 28
8:30 a.m. — Last Thursday Trash Clean Up
210 N Blaine Street
5 p.m. — Sip, Sound & Serenity: The Allison Spa After Hours
The Allison Spa, 2525 Allison Lane

MAY 29
4 p.m. — Pinot & Pie Friday
Penner Ash Wine Cellars, 15771 NE Ribbon Ridge Rd

MAY 30
11 a.m. — NHS Grad Car Show
Newberg Chevrolet, 2700 Portland Rd
12 p.m. — Pink & White Party
Mozeico Estate Vineyard, 18484 SW Parrett Mountain Rd, Sherwood

1 p.m. — Magic in the Mountains
The Allison Inn & Spa, 2525 NE Allison Ln
7 p.m. — Gala Fundraiser with Tapestry Theater Collective
Chehalem Cultural Center 415 E Sheridan St

MAY 31
7 a.m. — Oregon Wine Country Half Marathon
Stoller Family Estate, 16161 NE McDougall Rd, Dayton
3 p.m. — Refuel at the Pit Stop Car Show
Platt Precision, 2771 E 9th Street
7 p.m. — Open Mic Night
Barley & Vine Tavern, 408 East 1st Street

JUNE 1
10 a.m. — Nonprofit Community Blood Drive
PCC - Newberg Center, 135 N Werth Blvd

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