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The Olympian

School district tweaks high school cell phone rules

BY ROLF BOONE
rboone@theolympian.com

The North Thurston Public Schools board voted 4-1 on Tuesday to tweak its cell phone rules, which will now allow high school students to use the de-

vices during lunch and between classes. The policy for preschool students through 8th grade remains unchanged. North Thurston Education Association President Ray Nelson took issue with the high school change, saying the district had chosen “the easy way

out.” “I think that altering the draft policy to take out the prohibition around using smart devices, cell phones, whatever, for high school students during lunch and passing times is a problem,” he said. For the past two years, the

district has had an “off and away all day” cell phone rule for all students as agreed to by the union and district. It allowed students to bring the devices to school, but they could not be used at all during the day, including at lunch and between classes.

As that two-year agreement wound down, the next step was to make the cell phone rules district policy. Although the past two years have largely been viewed as successful, Nelson had called on the district for better enforcement of the rules at the high school level. At the same time, some high school principals were having trouble enforcing the “off and away all day” rule during lunch, and some high school student representatives to the board had called for more cell phone freedom during those times.

SEE SCHOOL, 3A



TY VINSON tvinson@theolympian.com

The Olympia Police Department arrested a 46-year-old man on July 12 after he allegedly damaged the spout on the Artesian Well in downtown Olympia and committed other crimes.

Man damaged Olympia’s artesian well, multiple cars, records say

BY TY VINSON
tvinson@theolympian.com

The Olympia Police Department arrested a 46-year-old man on Sunday morning after he allegedly damaged the artesian well that many in the city rely on for clean water and crashed into vehicles nearby.

City spokesperson Brandon Chapman told The Olympian on July 15 that OPD responded to a series of incidents in the downtown area during the early morning hours of July 12. The man allegedly damaged the artesian well’s outfall spout, rendering it impossible to collect from. The well is located between

Fourth Avenue East and Jefferson Street Southeast, at 415 Fourth Ave. E. Chapman said city staff responded promptly to the well damage, and the spout has since been replaced. He said the artesian well is fully operational. Chapman said the man allegedly damaged multiple vehicles, attempted a motor vehicle

theft, and committed a hit-and-run, on top of other related crimes. The man was arrested later Sunday morning about a block north of the well, according to jail logs. He was booked into Thurston County Jail on suspicion of first-degree malicious

SEE ARTESIAN WELL, 3A

County to buy \$2.5M property for Sheriff’s Office

BY MARTÍN BILBAO
mbilbao@theolympian.com

Thurston County intends to buy another Tumwater property for the Sheriff’s Office, this time for \$2.5 million. The property is located at 7721 New Market St. SW, which is just west of the Olympia Regional Airport and less than a mile southeast of the Sheriff’s new headquarters at 1111 Israel Road. The Sheriff’s Office had already been leasing the property for many years, Sheriff Derek Sanders told The Olympian Tuesday. Before moving into the new headquarters, patrol deputies worked out of this facility and the Sheriff’s Office still stores its own vehicles, impounded vehicles and large evidence there, Sanders said. By buying the property, the Sheriff’s Office can save on long-term lease costs and avoid paying more for new property or construction, he said. “I do think there’s value in the public owning assets,” Sanders said. “I’m not a real big fan of government renting things, unless it’s a very short-term solution, just because no equity builds. So, I think the board’s making a good decision here. We have to have the space somehow.” The Board of County Commissioners publicly reviewed the proposed acquisition during a Tuesday morning work session. The review came after months of closed-door executive sessions, Commissioner and Board Chair Tye Menser said at the meeting. A formal vote is expected

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