

Board set to OK 'special' Viking House sale

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Students, mentors persevered to complete home after two deaths



Photo Credit: COURTESY PHOTO - Members of the 2014 Viking House crew included (back, left to right) Cody Stevens and Tate de Sully; (third row) Donnie Trent, Jacob Alton, Auston Clemens, Tess Sivak and Charlotte Sidman; (second row) Duncan Stewart, Will Hartmann and Ricardo Montanez; and (front row) Shelby Cogswell, Joaquin Gomez-Guzman and Roaslio Torres-Rios.

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School board members are expected to approve the sale next week of a “special” Viking House built last year by Forest Grove High School advanced woodworking students.

Chris Higginbotham, longtime advisor to FGHS’ Viking House program, said that while “every Viking House is special to us,” last year’s stood out — as much for the trials that beset it as for the carpentry expertise that consistently goes into Viking Houses.

In early March, Viking House crew member Cody Fellows died suddenly of heart failure, and just a month later, Higginbotham’s oldest son, Sheyn, a former crew member and 2010 FGHS graduate, passed away as well.

It was a tough time for those closest to the program, whose goal is to “build the finest one-level home on the market” every year, according to Higginbotham. “We like to think we’re improving Forest Grove one outstanding home at a time.”

Sale price for the two-bedroom, 2,139-square-foot, single level house is \$375,000. The school district’s business manager, Ilean Clute, recommended the board give the transaction a green light.

A vote to approve the sale of the home, located at 424 Forest Place, to Llynda K. Hughes is expected during the board’s regular meeting Monday night.

Persevering to finish the 2014 Viking House — emotionally and otherwise — was no small feat.

“The students that built it, the tragedies that took place and the overwhelming support to see it completed make it exceptional,” Higginbotham said. “The soul of this home is golden. It is a testament to the outstanding character, dedication and skills of some of our community’s best young people and productive, caring adults.”

Counting Fellows’ hours, Higginbotham, said, crew members “worked almost 800 combined hours outside the school day to keep [the home’s construction] on schedule.”

In April, when Higginbotham lost Sheyn, “I staggered,” he said. “But the crew rallied under the leadership of Curtis Ludwick, Jane Knowlton, and Chuck Thurber. Subcontractors, many of them former Viking House crew members themselves, lent a hand.

“The Crumes, the Guys, Mueller, Cirlincione, Marble, Ranes — [those are] names from the past that returned to help through the course of construction.”