

Corrections moves forward on second women's prison

Lawmakers had hoped to avoid such a scenario

By **PARIS ACHEN**
Capital Bureau

SALEM — State corrections officials are requesting \$3.8 million to continue laying the groundwork for opening a second women's prison in Oregon as soon as June.

The Oregon Emergency Board will consider the request Wednesday. The board already approved \$1 million in May to make building repairs at Oregon State Penitentiary Minimum, where the second women's prison would be housed.

Opening the prison would cost about \$20 million and comes as officials project a \$1.7 billion shortfall in the state budget to maintain existing services.

Lawmakers approved \$55 million in grants to counties over the past three years with the hope of avoiding such a scenario. The grant proceeds are intended to pay for programs that help keep offenders out of prison. Despite those concerted efforts, the population at the state's sole women's prison — Coffee Creek Correctional Facility in Wilsonville, has hovered over the 1,280 limit since May. The population reached an all-time high of 1,315 in November, said Liz Craig, an administrator in the Department of Corrections Office of Communications.

State officials have used the 1,280-population threshold as a trigger for opening a second women's prison.

Gov. Kate Brown allocated \$17.5 million in her proposed budget to open the second women's prison. The women's prison population changes daily but was roughly 20 over capacity at the time Brown unveiled her budget.



Pamplin Media Group

Gov. Kate Brown's administration is pressing the opening of a second women's prison despite a \$1.7 billion budget shortfall. The Oregon Emergency Board will vote Wednesday on a \$3.8 million funding request to advance a project that will cost a total of \$20 million.

The proposal provoked outcry from criminal justice reform advocates and others.

"With a budget shortfall of nearly 1.7 billion (dollars), are we really doing this?" responded Andrea Lundell, communications director for the Oregon Justice Resource Center, in a Dec. 1 tweet.

"A second women's prison at a cost of \$20 million over (the) next couple of years is fiscally and socially irresponsible," Lundell tweeted Monday. "The E Board should say no to a second prison. Focus should be on maximizing impact of (alternatives) to incarceration wherever practical."

Marion and Lane counties both have started work release programs that are projected to keep 21 to 26 women out of prison. Those programs alone would address overcrowding at Coffee Creek.

Several legislators also plan to sponsor bills that would help reduce the women's prison population.

State Rep. Carla Piluso,

D-Gresham, for example, wants to expand an early-release program that already has saved 182,642 state prison bed days. Known as short-term transitional leave, the program has been "the most successful sentencing change" in recent years in terms of saving money and increasing public safety, said Michael Schmidt, executive director of the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission.

Inmates eligible for the program are released 90 days short of their sentence. Piluso's bill could increase that to 120 to 180 days.

Despite those efforts, Brown included the prison in her proposed two-year budget.

"Gov. Brown found it would be irresponsible for the state not to set into motion plans to address future capacity concerns," said Bryan Hockaday, a spokesman for the governor. "However, Gov. Brown remains hopeful that through thoughtful and well-coordinated collaboration with Oregon counties

and community corrections, more women will have access to workforce and transitional training programs."

If officials can avoid opening the second prison, Brown plans to ask lawmakers to invest those savings in "proven initiatives that help people to be successful and avoid the criminal justice system all together," Hockaday said.

"Not only is the opening of OSPM costly to taxpayers at a time when state resources are already so limited, it is contrary to Oregon's approach of justice reinvestment to reduce recidivism and supporting the self-sufficiency of prior offenders," he said.

Oregon State Penitentiary Minimum — an annex of the Oregon State Penitentiary — was mothballed in 2010 to save money during the recession.

The Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.



James Herbert Cunningham

Casey Dwayne Hampton

Albert William Utzinger



Carie Sue Wagner



Timothy Dean Yaakola

Five arrested in Astoria drug bust

The Daily Astorian

for further evaluation.

Five people are in jail after the Clatsop County Drug Task Force, search warrants in hand, swept through a house at Lyngstad Heights in Astoria on Saturday.

There had already been numerous neighborhood complaints about 35303 Lyngstad Heights. After obtaining search warrants for the delivery of controlled substances, law enforcement entered the residence and arrested Timothy Dean Yaakola, 45, in the garage. He was arrested for frequenting a place where drugs are used or sold and for failure to appear.

They also arrested Albert William Utzinger, 47, for frequenting a place where drugs are used or sold. Along with Yaakola in the garage was James Herbert Cunningham, 45. He had methamphetamine, heroin and digital scales in his possession as well as what the Sheriff's Office described as "a small destructive device."

The Oregon State Police bomb squad took the device

Cunningham was arrested for unlawful delivery of methamphetamine, possession of heroin, possession of methamphetamine, possession of a destructive device and frequenting a place where drugs are used or sold.

Downstairs, officers found Carie Sue Wagner, 38, Casey Dwayne Hampton, 43, and a 14-year-old girl. They arrested Hampton on an outstanding warrant, endangering the welfare of a minor, unlawful delivery of methamphetamine, felon in possession of a restricted weapon and frequenting a place where drugs are used or sold.

Wagner was arrested on similar charges: for endangering the welfare of a minor, unlawful delivery of methamphetamine, unlawful delivery of heroin, possession of heroin, possession of methamphetamine, felon in possession of a restricted weapon and frequenting a place where drugs are used or sold.

The teenage girl was taken to a relative's house.

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