



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian
Mike Metzner performs live with Joey Patenaude during the show, "Blues in The Daylight" on Coast Community Radio Monday in Astoria. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting receives about \$445 million annual.

Fallout: 'It's not yet a done deal'

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"It's not a done deal yet, but it's the most serious threat that I've seen in the time that I've been manager here, because there's not much political will to stop it," said Rideout, who has been with the station for about 15 years, seven as the general manager.

Congress allocates money to public-media platforms through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Oregon Public Broadcasting, a prominent outlet based in Portland, receives a larger chunk of money than Coast Community Radio, headquartered in Astoria's Tillicum House on 14th Street.

Trump is not the first president to propose nixing public broadcasting funding, Morgan Holm, chief content officer at OPB, pointed out.

"George W. Bush did that pretty much every year he was in office," he said, "but, ultimately, Congress did end up funding CPB at the same level."

OPB, Holm said, is going to watch the situation carefully, because "Congress is the one that makes the decision on how much to spend," he said.

Holm said he believes there is support on both sides of the aisle for continued funding of public broadcasting, "and we're anxious to have the opportunity to make that case."

On the coast

Coast Community Radio — which includes KMUN in

'I don't want to cry wolf, and yet this looks like it really might be the real deal.'

Joanne Rideout

general manager of Coast Community Radio

Astoria, KCPB in Warrenton and KTCB in Tillamook — broadcasts shows produced by community members, and features local news, music and other entertainment, as well as national programming.

The station is also an emergency service, providing one of the mediums for regional communication during power outages, disasters and emergencies large and small.

"We provide a service that just simply isn't available anywhere else, because we can have live people on the air anytime," Rideout said. "So, if the power's out, and you have a radio with batteries in it, or a crank radio, you don't have access to social media — even if your phone doesn't work — we can be on the air for you. And it's a free service that anybody who has a radio can access."

She called the organization a "community service organization that happens to be a radio station."

'The real deal'

Astoria City Councilor Cindy Price, who began volunteering at KMUN 10 days

after moving to town in 1996, said it is too soon for Coast Community Radio fans to panic.

Trump's budget, unveiled Thursday, must be reviewed by Congress before it reaches the president's desk. The final version may look very different from Trump's blueprint while still reflecting Republican priorities.

"Congress makes the budget, not the president," Price said, "so we really don't know what's going to happen." But, she added, it is time to "start paying attention, for sure."

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting receives about \$445 million annually — a minute fraction of the roughly \$4 trillion federal budget. Trump's drastic cuts to public broadcasting and other domestic programs is meant to offset a \$54 billion increase in defense spending.

Conservatives have long viewed the Corporation for Public Broadcasting — and its most famous grantee, National Public Radio — as sympathetic to left-wing views and an inappropriate use of government funding. Congressio-

nal Republicans have periodically threatened to defund the service.

"But never have they done so under a president who is so intolerant of dissent, and of the rights of individuals and the institutions of democracy," Price said in an email.

City Councilor Tom Brownson, a Coast Community Radio programmer since the late 1990s, said the proposed cuts would put a lot of stress on the organization.

"It's run on a shoestring, and any defunding will cause a lot of problems for them. There's just no way around it," Brownson said. "You pull anything of what they're getting now, and it's going to be really hard to continue to function."

Rideout said the station would have to do some serious fundraising to fill the budgetary crater and figure out where the radio team can downsize without sacrificing core services.

"I don't want to cry wolf, and yet this looks like it really might be the real deal," she said.

She hopes lawmakers will recognize that public broadcasting is an important resource. But she knows this attitude might be overly optimistic.

"When I look from a distance at Washington, D.C., I see an open field to just shut the whole thing down," she said.

Water rates: Bills would reflect the new costs in August

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In line with others

"The new rates will put us in line with what our neighbors to the north and south are already paying," City Councilor George Vetter said. "Even though it's quite a bit more, it's still in line with what people in the area are paying."

Vetter said rates have not gone up in 10 years.

The average Cannon Beach homeowner's water and wastewater bill is in the "low \$40s," Public Works Director Dan Grassick said.

Increases will be included in the base rate and in usage costs.

"The more water you use, the more you're going to pay," Grassick said.

An average home's water and wastewater bill of \$41.65 would be adjusted to \$57.68, he said.

An increase in storm drain charges would add to monthly fees. Homeowners are now billed \$4.77 per month for storm use, a number likely to increase.

Improving infrastructure

If recommendations from the Civil West Engineering Services study commissioned by the city are adopted, rate increases will finance up to \$6 million in water infrastructure costs, including replacement of two water tanks.

Driving the hike is the city's new water and wastewater master plans, which show a need to finance about \$5 million to \$6 million of "Priority 1" water projects — ones that should be done now — and about \$2 million in wastewater costs.

The biggest expense is replacement or rebuilding of the city's water-storage tanks. One tank holds 1.6 million gallons; the second holds 1 million gallons. "The two big storage tanks need work or replacement to withstand seismic events," Grassick said.

An additional \$2 million is needed to fund the city's wastewater management upgrades, he said.

General fund transfers

The rate study was outlined in January at the City Council goals session and reviewed at last week's work session.

"For the city, the issue has been the council has known for several years the rate structure that the city has in place for water, wastewater and storm, the enterprise funds, has not fully funded those programs," Grassick said. "The rates don't support basic operation expenses. Every

year, we've had to go back with supplemental budgets for expenses we incurred for maintenance or emergency expenses. That's not the way to run a train on time."

Grassick said a public process — including a citizens' advisory group, council members and members of the public works committee and staff — have been meeting for 15 months. "It all really came together in the last session," he said.

Along with expenses for water-tank repair or replacement, the city faces costs to replace brittle underground pipes, some of which have been in the ground for more than 50 years.

More use, more cost

The base rate for commercial property owners is determined by the cost "to get water to your front door," Grassick said.

In a city where 75 percent of property owners are second homeowners, owners are charged the base rate whether they use the residence or not, Grassick said. "You incur costs even if you don't use water," he said. "That's the base rate."

The base rate for homeowners provides about 100 cubic feet of water or 748 gallons per month.

The unit rate, based on water usage, would increase from \$4.35 to \$7.15 per 100 cubic feet of water used per month.

Commercial water rates correspond to meter size, from a base allowance of 400 cubic feet to 20,000 cubic feet. Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District is exempt from charges.

Storm drain costs are an additional fee for homeowners and commercial properties, Grassick said, and "will be close to double what it is right now."

Vetter said the hikes are still "conjecture" and must be approved by council.

"We've got the study from Civil West, they are making recommendations, and now we, as a council, have to do decide which recommendations we are going to follow," Vetter said. "The reality is we could decide not to raise the rates, but that's not likely to happen. But we have not made the decisions yet. Moving forward, we have to make decisions about what aspects of that master plan we're going to execute and when."

The council plans to adopt the master plans April 4 and posted on the city website the next day, Grassick said. The new rate structure could be reflected in the budget 2017-18 and go into effect July 1.

Bills would reflect the new costs in August.



Dan Grassick



George Vetter

Housing: 'Astoria has a housing crisis right now'

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Mayor Arline LaMear also favored the ideas, except she argued property owners currently using ADUs for homestay lodging should be allowed to continue.

Councilors Bruce Jones and Zetty Nemlowill said they were satisfied with the code amendments as written. Nemlowill, like Price, believes tiny homes should not yet be included in the code but said she was eager to move forward, even without the preservation society's revisions.

"I think the time is now to take action to add housing units for Astorians," she said, "and this proposal, as it's written, will ensure that these units will be for Astorians."

The point of the code amendments, she said, is to make it easier to build ADUs and add to the city's limited housing stock. And although she believes the preservation society's suggestions are well-intentioned, "I think it would just be too darn tough to build anything with all of those measures in place."

Cronin said he needed to review the revisions before he could properly respond to them. City staff will draft revised amendment language for the council to discuss at a future meeting.

'Housing crisis'

Though the code amendments forbid using new ADUs



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

The Astoria City Council is looking for ways to ease the town's housing crunch.

for temporary lodging, the council wondered whether enforcing a ban was even possible. The city already has trouble cracking down on vacation rentals in residential zones, where such operations are illegal, but not uncommon.

Micha Cameron-Lattek, an Astoria resident who supports ADUs, acknowledged the limitations of enforcement. "But just because there's going to be a problem enforcing the intended and legitimate use of it doesn't mean we shouldn't consider ADUs as a real possibility to make sure that the people who want to live here

can continue to live here and contribute to our community," he said.

Cameron-Lattek, who owns Street 14 Coffee with his wife, Jennifer, said, "Astoria has a housing crisis right now." The Cameron-Latteks have spoken about the challenges their employees face searching for housing.

"People who work here can't afford to live here. People who work here that are, in large part, responsible for Astoria being attractive to visitors have a particularly hard time," he said.

In other business:

• The council approved a solicitation for bids for the ridgeline timber harvest this summer.

In response to adamant public comments, the council decided to schedule a meeting to provide the public with more information about the project — involving commercial timber thinning and variable retention treatment — which will take place on 52 acres of the Bear Creek watershed this summer and is estimated to bring in \$200,000 in net proceeds to the capital improvement fund.

Lawsuit: Friends have hosted fundraisers to help

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Paul Mitchell, the community outreach manager at Columbia Memorial, said the hospital is unable to comment on active or pending litigation.

Armington declined to comment.

Armington, who co-founded Pacific Coast Imaging in 2007 after moving to the North Coast, has special certification in neuroradiology. He is also a philanthropist who has donated to Columbia Memorial's new cancer center and the Astoria Music Festival.

Christie is well-known in

Astoria music circles for his shop and as a mentor to other musicians. Mallalternative, on Marine Drive, is a trading post with musical instruments, electronics, video games and records. Friends have hosted fundraisers to help Christie and his daughter, Heather, with medical expenses.

James Huegli, a Portland attorney representing Christie, said Christie had "every sign and symptom of a stroke" but his scan was misread. He said patients should be advocates for their care at hospitals. "So if something feels wrong and looks wrong and acts wrong, you need to advocate," he said.