Librarian: Johnson has complained about the state library's performance for years

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Johnson is forthright in her frustration with the state library. But she said the idea that she alone is behind the firing is "absurd."

"Do the math. Even if I voted 'no,' you still don't have the numbers," to defeat Dahlgreen's nomination, Johnson said.

She's right, which points to a curious decision Brown's office has refused to explain.

A new law meant Brown needed to nominate a state librarian for the first time this year. Brown initially submitted Dahlgreen's name for reappointment.

Democratic Caucus leader Sen. Ginny Burdick said last week that she informed Brown's office earlier this year that a few senators in her party had qualms with Dahlgreen's performance. Burdick declined to explain the qualms or name the lawmakers who didn't support Dahlgreen.

Brown quickly withdrew Dahlgreen's name and decided she had to go. Governor spokeswoman Kate Kondayen said Brown offered Dahlgreen the chance to stay in her position while she and her staff looked for a replacement. But Dahlgreen chose to be fired immediately.

In a chamber with 30 members, it takes 16 votes to confirm a nominee for a state director's job — a bar Dahlgreen would likely have passed even with a few senators objecting.

Some Democratic lawmakers who called for changes at the state library soon after Dahlgreen became the head said they would have voted for her.

A spokeswoman for the 12-member Senate Republican Caucus said that no Republican had serious objections to Dahlgreen.

It is highly unusual for one lawmaker to wield veto power over such appointments. Johnson carries outsized powers at the Legislature, in part because she is the Democrat most likely to part ways with fellow Democrats, thus having unusual power to make or break Senate deals.

Johnson said Friday there was "unequivocally no" trade with Brown's office to quash Dahlgreen's reappointment.

Kondayen said she had no comment when asked how many senators were opposed to Dahlgreen's reappointment or whether Johnson played a role.

She also refused to elaborate on what expectation Dahlgreen failed to meet, repeatedly pointing to this statement: "MaryKay Dahlgreen fell short of clear and

timely expectations from legislators, and as a result of these performance issues, did not have the Senate support necessary for confirmation."

Until this year, the Oregon State Library board of directors had the power to appoint the state librarian. However, that changed as part of a wide-ranging bill that revamped how the state library functions.

Library leaders in the state, including the board of directors and Dahlgreen, supported the change because they said it seemed to give the department equal gravitas as other state agencies.

Some started to regret that decision this week when Dahlgreen was dismissed with little explanation or prior notice.

Dahlgreen was widely respected by the library community in Oregon and had the support of the lead lobbying and industry group, Oregon Library Association.

The state library performs three main roles: conducts research for other state departments; provides money and expertise to libraries around the state to make sure they are up-to-date; and distributes audiobooks and Braille books for people with vision impairment or physical obstacles to holding a print book.

Johnson, D-Scappoose, has complained about the state library's performance for years, including under previous state librarians.

In the May hearing, she railed against what she said were long unresolved issues in how staff perform their jobs. One concern in particular: She was frustrated that managers couldn't define one of the key metrics by which the library agreed to have its performance judged.

"When I hear the professional staff talk about a need to define what a 'research transaction' is — we've been talking about this for six years!" Johnson said. "I don't know when that definition comes. I don't know why this is so difficult. I just — I don't

Dahlgreen assured her that the problem would be solved by the next budget request in 2019

"2019? that's almost a decade to get this done," Johnson said. "I think this is just shameful."

Rep. Mike Nearman, R-Independence, also voted against the library's budget and proposed key performance measures. But he said he had nothing against Dahlgreen. He voted on ideological grounds that he doesn't see a need for the state library to exist, he said.

Red Steagall (N) Horse Master 1/2 Horse of the West Craig Cameron

Warming center: 'We're growing'

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and the other board members say the church remains one of the few places they can afford. The church charges them only \$86 a month in rent and they pay a small portion of the utilities. The church basement is already set up for the center's work.

Parkison told Haefker that he has looked into several commercial spaces. One property owner would charge a rent of \$2,000 a month, a price well beyond the warming center's financial capacity. The center also only operates for a few months out of the year and would need to morph into a very different type of organization if it were to occupy a building for a solid 12 months, Parkison has noted.

Board members believe they would need support from the city and local businesses to locate somewhere else. Until then, they hope to make the church location work — for the center, the neighbors and the city.

"We're growing," Parkison said, though not referring to physical growth.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian Mattresses are stacked before being cleaned at the Astoria Warming Center.

For its first several years, the warming center was in survival mode, he said, trying to figure out how to keep opening night after night. Now, with a relatively new board as well as new processes in place, the center is looking outward, looking for common ground. A neighborhood agreement, outlining a series of promises to the neighbors, came out of the meetings last summer and has been the center's guiding doc-

ument this season, Parkison said.

Center staff and volunteers patrolled the streets near the shelter, led litter cleanup parties, improved lighting and landscaping at the church and enforced stricter exclusion policies. People who came to sleep at the center who acted up could be excluded for the night or the entire season depending on the incident.

Fire Chief Ted Ames reported that his department

did not have to respond to the center once — a major improvement over last year. Police responded 18 times, but for minor incidents that ranged from medical calls to small disturbances and a report of a missing person, Chief Geoff Spalding said.

"Our policies this year centered around respect and were strictly enforced," Parkison said in the days before the center closed for the season.

Help for the lost

Though he knows there are still concerns among some neighbors and an upcoming conditional use permit application process, he feels good about what the center accomplished in trying to work with the neighborhood and serve the homeless population. He and his board remain committed to their work.

"The anchoring we do helps people who are lost on the streets," Parkison said. Some of the people they served this season have gone on to find jobs and permanent housing, he said. To have a meal and a warm place to sleep gives people "a little tiny foothold."

Regulators: 'Compliance is critically important'

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The commission says it is working to improve upon problems identified in a recent Oregon Secretary of State audit of the system. In a response to the audit, commission officials said the CTS "has identified thousands of discrepancies, small and large, that have led to investigations, administrative charges, and warnings or sanctions."

Commission Executive Director Steve Marks in November notified licensees of several other upcoming changes in enforcement. Among them: the state will do spot checks on businesses to make sure their video security systems were up to snuff and check that businesses weren't selling amounts over the legal limit to individual customers.

"With each passing day OLCC licensees are seeing and hearing about increased OLCC enforcement activity," Marks wrote in a bulletin posted on the state's website. "... Compliance is critically important in building this industry so you need to take action to prepare for the increasing likelihood you may be inspected in the field and that your (Cannabis Tracking System) data will be scrutinized."

Additional positions were approved in 2017, so that there are now 23 inspector positions and 21 investigator positions, compared to 11 of each in 2016. Inspectors typically

work in the field, whereas investigators typically work on licensing from an office setting

State budget analysts have said it can be difficult to ascertain just how much money is needed to regulate the state's legal marijuana market — in part because the growth of the industry has been rapid.

"The budget environment related to regulation of marijuana continues to be in near constant motion," budget analysts wrote in the annotated two-year budget for the Oregon Liquor Control Commission's marijuana program. "Budgeted resources are predicated on an estimated number of licensees, which have so far exceeded expectations at every turn."

Layer of uncertainty

The changes on the state level as the marijuana industry matures come amid an additional layer of uncertainty — as to what extent the federal government will scrutinize states where recreational marijuana is legal.

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions said at an event at Georgetown University earlier this month that federal prosecutors wouldn't pursue "small" marijuana cases.

But Sessions has rescinded more liberal Obama-era guidelines and has given federal prosecutors wide latitude on the issue.

It's not yet clear how the U.S. Attorney for Oregon,

Billy Williams, will proceed. However. Williams has

claimed that a significant amount of marijuana leaks out of Oregon across state lines. He convened a group of law enforcement, lawmakers, public health and cannabis business groups to discuss the issue last month.

David Bordelon, a manager of Ancient Remedies, a cannabis dispensary in Salem, says the store hasn't been subject to a random inspection by the state, other than a "minor decoy" operation.

State records show that Ancient Remedies didn't sell marijuana to minors as part of a sting in December. It was one of 18 stores that passed a 25-store inspection in the Salem-Keizer area.

Ancient Remedies converted from a medical marijuana dispensary to a recreational outlet in November 2016, which at the time was "really scary" because they were one of the first cannabis businesses in the area to make the transition, Bordelon says.

But Bordelon says their experience with the state has been positive.

While to his knowledge, there haven't been any complaints filed about his business, he says the agency identified a problem with the way Ancient Remedies was reporting store-to-store transfers in the Cannabis Tracking System and contacted the business right away.

ess right away.
"That's the only time

American Rancher Red Steagall

we've been contacted for an issue," Bordelon said. "They called us immediately to let us know there was an issue."

Periodically, the business files requests with the agency to make changes, such as when they sought to rearrange the layout of the store, Bordelon said.

Ancient Remedies will typically get a full response approving the changes or asking for more documentation within two weeks to a month, Bordelon said.

Inspectors needed

Bordelon believes the agency could benefit from more inspectors.

"In general, the people they have are doing a great job," Bordelon said, noting that more inspectors could mean a quicker response time for businesses seeking guidance as well as increased enforcement.

Alicia Smith, owner of Homegrown Oregon, a cannabis business with three locations in Salem, also says her experience with the regulatory agency has been positive.

"We have a great relationship with the OLCC," Smith said, "And I think a lot of the reason why that is true is because we've always been really transparent with them, and we've kept in constant communication with our inspectors."

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

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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38 ROOT				Snowboarding U.S. Open Women's Halfpi				UFC UFC 201 Lawler takes on Woodley in mixed martial arts action. Rob						
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