

# Cronin hired for Warrenton planning post

He held a similar job in Astoria

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**  
*The Daily Astorian*



**Kevin Cronin**

WARRENTON — Astoria's former community development director is now the planning director for Warrenton.

Monday was Kevin Cronin's first official day as a Warrenton department head overseeing the growing city's development review. He has served as the city's interim city planner since former planner Skip Urling retired in March.

Cronin said he is excited to work with Warrenton; City Manager Linda Engbretson said the city is glad to have him. With all the growth happening in Warrenton, Cronin's experience working for cities and the months he has already spent becoming familiar with Warrenton will allow him to "hit the ground running," Engbretson said. "He's been very proactive."

Cronin was not interested in taking the job permanently at first. After leaving Astoria last fall, he worked as a consultant for a variety of clients, including the Port of Astoria.

Engbretson hoped to have someone in the city planner position by May. She had a pool of candidates, but considered reposting the job and seeing who else was interested. She joked with Cronin, asking him if he was sure he didn't want to apply for the job.

The role Cronin is taking on will look somewhat different from what it was in the past. Cronin said he wasn't interested in the original planning director position as advertised, but after discussions with Engbretson, they agreed on some modifications. The position will now incorporate elements of economic and community development in addition to development review. The job was advertised with a monthly salary range of \$5,864 to \$7,127 and Cronin agreed to a salary within that range, Engbretson said.

Cronin worked for Astoria as community development director from 2015 to 2017. He left that job amid concerns about how he managed the department, but his work has garnered positive reviews from other clients, including Warrenton city officials.

Cronin's hiring coincides with the recent hiring of a new building official, Bob Johnston, who worked most recently as a building official in cities in Columbia County. Warrenton had contracted with Clatsop County for these services, but back-and-forth rulings at the state level about whether or not cities and counties could use third-party building and electrical inspectors compelled Engbretson to look at creating a permanent position within the city's building and planning department.

# Warrenton passes budget and water and sewer hikes

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**  
*The Daily Astorian*

WARRENTON — City commissioners adopted a new budget Tuesday that, despite including a number of fee and rate increases across city operations, remains similar to this year's spending plan.

The \$34 million budget takes effect in July. The city's spending authority is \$26.7 million. The budget includes the addition of a half-time police and court clerk and increases a half-time public works office assistant to full time. A small increase to the hours for the city's library manager and library assistant will be paid from an operating levy voters opted to increase last year.

"We continue to be conservative with personnel growth while striving to provide excellent public service," City Manager Linda Engbret-

son wrote in her budget message. On Tuesday she noted that many changes coming to the library as a result of the increase to the levy won't get fully underway until property tax money begins rolling in later this year.

With the adoption of the budget, city commissioners also conducted second readings of a number of resolutions for fee and rate increases. These included a 7 percent increase in water rates and a 5 percent increase in sewer rates, as well as increases to rental rates and fees at the Warrenton Community Center, recycling rates, and moorage rental rates and fees at the city's marinas.

Across the board, the increases are intended to bring the city up to date and help fund future improvements. The utilities increases, including recycling, are expected to add about \$6 a month on the average customer's bill. Many

of the marina's rates and fees have not been addressed for nearly a dozen years, city officials noted.

No one from the public protested the increases during comment periods for the first and second readings and all the readings passed unanimously on Tuesday except for the water rate increase. Mayor Henry Balensifer was the sole "no" vote on this increase. At a previous meeting, he said he wanted to stick to a plan to hold off on any water rate increases until it was clear what it meant to have major seafood processor Pacific Coast Seafood back on line. The seafood processor has been rebuilding a plant in Warrenton with plans to open this summer.

In other business:

- City commissioners declared two more properties as nuisances.

The city has begun to more aggressively pursue property owners who allow their prop-

erty and buildings to fall into disrepair and neglect. The city declared several other properties nuisances earlier this year. Commissioners have pushed for stronger ordinances similar to the derelict building ordinance Astoria instituted to address neglected buildings with absentee owners.

"We're doing a historic level of code enforcement," Balensifer said, but added that, between the city doing almost nothing around nuisance properties to enforcing city codes full throttle, "there's got to be a little grace in that period"

The nuisance declarations are working, Commissioner Mark Baldwin said. He pointed to an example of one property owner who has started cleaning up his property because he worried about landing on the nuisance list.

"It is having the desired effect," agreed Commissioner Tom Dyer.



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

A small fire, which appears to have been caused by a forgotten cigarette, singed the door frame of a unit at Pine Cove Motel in Seaside Tuesday.

## Small fire displaces family at Seaside motel

By **BRENNA VISSER**  
*The Daily Astorian*

SEASIDE — A small fire started by what appears to be a forgotten cigarette displaced a family of two staying at the Pine Cove Motel in Seaside Tuesday evening.

At about 6:30 p.m., the Seaside Fire Department responded to a call reporting small flames and smoke smoldering at the bottom of the door frame outside a unit at 2481 U.S. Highway 101. Division Chief Chris Dugan said the cause appeared to be a "disregarded cigarette," which was left in a nook near the base of the door outside by the resident a few hours prior.

With flames only reaching an inch tall, Dugan said damage was minimal and no injuries were reported. The family is temporarily displaced, however, because the flames damaged the door frame enough to where the room could no longer be properly secured.

"They were lucky this didn't happen at 2 a.m. while they were asleep, where it could have been left smoldering a lot longer," Dugan said.

Motel manager Ken Hartmann said the event was unfortunate, but was thankful it didn't turn out to be worse.

"I suppose it's a part of the business," Hartmann sighed, looking at the singed door frame.

## Springfield ends jail contract with ICE

Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD — Springfield has terminated a deal with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement that allows the agency to house immigrants who are living in or entering the country illegally in the Springfield Municipal Jail.

The Register-Guard reported the Springfield City Council voted unanimously Monday to end the ICE contract with the Springfield

Police Department.

ICE had been allowed to rent up to five of the jail's 100 beds at a time for inmates transferred there from other ICE detention centers.

Community members and activists have spoken out in protest against the ICE contract for months.

A City Council memo says the jail housed 92 ICE detainees last year. The jail held 40 to 50 ICE detainees a year in previous fiscal years.

## New transit tax hits Oregonians starting in July

By **PARIS ACHEN**  
*Capital Bureau*

PORTLAND — Oregonians may notice a new .001 percent deduction on their pay stubs beginning July 1 that will largely go toward funding public transportation around the state.

The new transit tax takes \$1 from every \$1,000 of earnings. The tax is projected to generate nearly \$194.6 million in the first two years. About 90 percent of the revenue will go toward mass transit districts, transportation districts or counties without either mass transit or a transportation district and to feder-

ally-recognized tribes based on an allocation formula. Five percent goes to public transportation providers based on a competitive grant process.

The money can be used for transit services, with the exception of light rail capital improvements. However, revenue can be used to fund a low-income light rail fare program.

The tax is part of a \$5.3 billion transportation package the state Legislature approved in 2017. Lawmakers excluded light rail construction from permissible uses for the revenue to avoid political opposition to the

legislation.

Four percent is dedicated to grants to public transportation providers to improve transit between two or more communities, and the other 1 percent funds a statewide public transportation technical resource center to assist public transportation providers in rural areas.

The Oregon Transportation Commission will decide on project funding based on priorities such as improving transit to low-in-

come households, procurement of low- or no-emission buses, reducing gaps in services, providing student transit services for grades 9-12 and other basic factors such as responsible use of public funds, said Karyn Criswell, project manager of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Implementation.

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

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PAPER DELIVERY WILL PROCEED AS USUAL  
*Have a safe holiday!*  
**CLASSIFIED DEADLINES:**  
Tuesday, July 3rd, 11am for Wednesday, July 4th  
Tuesday, July 3rd, 1pm for Thursday, July 5th  
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The defragmentation tool built-in to Windows. Click My Computer or This PC; then Right Click your hard drive; click on "Properties"; the "Tools" tab; "Optimize" then "Optimize" again. There you can schedule how often to optimize. **DON'T DEFRAG A SOLIDSTATE DRIVE.**

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**Q: I am with FamilyCare and my coverage ends as of July 1, 2018. How long do I have to pick my own plan?**

**A:** If you do nothing by July 1, you will return to original Medicare and be enrolled in a Part D prescription plan. Your Special Enrollment Period ends July 31, 2018 to make your own choices. June 30, 2018 is the last day to submit applications for a July 1, 2018 effective date.

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