



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

A state law signed into effect by Gov. Kate Brown will require grand jury proceedings to be recorded.

Recording: 'It's done in a lot of places'

Continued from Page 1A

In more than 30 years as a prosecutor, Marquis recalls just a handful of times he's pursued a preliminary hearing rather than a grand jury in felony cases. Now, both the district attorney and Brown, who will succeed Marquis in January, expect that preliminary hearings will be requested more regularly.

"It's a bad idea, but it's the law now," Marquis said.

Other states do it

The requirements seek to address a perceived lack of transparency in the judicial system, especially with grand juries. Every other state in the country, with the exception of Louisiana, requires grand juries to be recorded. Civil rights groups have expressed support for the law.

"This is doable. It's done in a lot of places," said Kirk Wintermute, an Astoria criminal defense attorney. "There are a lot of issues with the jus-

tice system, and this is one of them."

The recordings will also give defense attorneys more ammunition when cross-examining the same witnesses later in cases.

"People often make very different statements in grand jury than they do in trial," Wintermute said. "Getting that extra statement under oath is really important."

Prosecutors, however, have raised alarms. Law enforcement groups have joined them, as well as state Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, and state Rep. Deborah Boone, D-Cannon Beach.

Victims may be less willing to make recorded allegations without a guarantee of charges being filed, especially in sex abuse cases where victims are more reluctant to come forward against people they typically know well.

Adding to the complexity is the cost of implementing the system. Three counties — Multnomah, Deschutes and

Jackson — have had the law in place since March as part of a pilot program.

The counties recently requested \$924,837 from the state to help offset the costs of reviewing transcripts, drafting protective orders to limit who can access the recordings and managing equipment, among other things.

"What we're really doing is, literally, creating another courtroom. I think it's kind of absurd to say you have to operate this as if you were making \$30,000, \$40,000 a year," Marquis said of having to train volunteer jurors to use the equipment.

New costs

Instead, the district attorney's office will likely opt for preliminary hearings in about half of felony cases, Brown said. The incoming district attorney will likely still pursue grand jury indictments in sensitive cases such as sex abuse.

Due to the inclusion of

defense attorneys in the process, the hearings could lengthen the proceedings and create scheduling conflicts in an already heavy caseload for the county.

"Any kind of workload that is going to affect the caseload is a concern," said Phillip Lemman, spokesman for the state Judicial Department. "If the district attorneys are going to create preliminary hearings, we need to be prepared to respond to those things."

The three counties that have been part of the pilot program have used preliminary hearings to varying degrees so far, and will offer reports about their progress over the next few months. Counties not currently subject to the law, like Clatsop, will be watching.

"It really hasn't been used widely enough to know if to know if there are any efficiencies or qualitative differences," Lemman said. "We're kind of in a state of flux."

Hospital: New clinic should reduce wait times

Continued from Page 1A

inland to Columbia County, with an especially large demand among Medicare and Medicaid patients, Baxter said.

There's "not a lot of primary care clinics, and I think we've built a good medical group here," he said. "People are gaining faith in it, and they want to come here."

Every three years, the hospital releases a community health needs assessment in partnership with Providence Seaside Hos-

pital and the Clatsop County Public Health Department. The 2016 assessment found the county was in the bottom fifth of the state in primary care providers per capita.

A recent third-party assessment found that five more internal medicine and family practitioners will be needed by 2020, said Nicole Williams, the hospital's chief operating officer.

"We're almost there with



Elizabeth Erikson

the addition of these providers for this clinic and the ones working over in Warrenton," she said.

Another driving force behind the new clinic is to shorten the 2 1/2 to three-week wait times faced by new patients waiting to see a provider at the Warrenton clinic, Williams said.

Eventually, the clinics in Astoria and Warrenton will each have four doctors, one

nurse practitioner and a physician's assistant seeing patients. One of the new arrivals at the Warrenton clinic, Dr. Elizabeth Erikson from Montana, said she was drawn to the North Coast by family ties and by an interest in being part of the front line in promoting wellness.

"With Columbia Memorial, in particular, they sort of started as more of a hospital with some specialty clinics," she said. "They realized, 'Oh gosh; we kind of need more of this foundation of primary care.'"

Funding: Councilors disagreed over how the city should account for inflation

Continued from Page 1A

The change comes amid debate within the community about how tourism-restricted dollars should be used, and whether the city should invest more in promotion.

Adjusting the contract was initially motivated by the chamber's request to have a multiyear contract earlier this year — a measure Jim Paino, the chamber's executive director, said makes planning ad campaigns easier and more economical.

But the idea to reduce the actual amount that goes toward marketing came during budget season, when the city was looking for ways to be more stringent with transfers out of a shrinking general fund.

In the past, the city has fully funded the information center out of the general fund at about \$160,000, City Manager Bruce St. Denis said. Using lodging tax dollars to pay for half of the Visitor Information Center frees up money in the general fund for other city needs, he said.

Capping how much is distributed to the chamber also allows the city to start building a reserve for the promotional fund in the event of an economic downturn.

"It's important to have a rainy day fund, because that's when we'll need more promotion than ever," St. Denis said.

The contract also addresses other areas of concern the City Council had with the arrangement, including a lack of communication between the two entities about certain projects — most notably the branding guide, which included a city logo that drew criticism from some residents and council members.

"I got the message from the council that we needed to have more control over this money," St. Denis said. "But we need to be careful to not put them in a position where they can't succeed."

The contract now requires quarterly status reports from the organization.

"There was not that kind of interaction in the past," Paino said. "I think it's important to do this so we're all on the same page about where we're going."

Accounting for growth

While the contract was approved 4-1, city councilors disagreed over how the city should account for the costs of inflation in the coming years.

One option, which was ultimately adopted, was to increase payments allocated to the chamber based on the consumer price index — a percentage that shows the average change over time in the prices paid by urban con-

sumers for consumer goods and services — plus an extra 2 percent each year.

This is an effort to try and account for rising costs within the program with a universally recognized method to account for inflation, St. Denis said.

"We didn't want to have it stuck at \$300,000," St. Denis said.

Though the chamber agreed to the council's decision, Paino said the CPI is not a good marker for inflation for the tourism industry. The index is based on what the average consumer would spend on food and beverages, housing, clothing, transportation and more for West Coast states in general, and therefore does not reflect higher cost-of-living prices found in tourist destinations like Cannon Beach.

"The products (Bureau Labor and Statistics) use to calculate it... they don't include tourism promotion in their calculation," Paino said.

City Councilor George Vetter, the one dissenting vote, agreed with Paino, and voted against the contract because of it. He argued the council should increase payments to the chamber to mirror lodging tax revenue projections from the city. If the city projects a 6 percent increase in lodging tax revenue for the next fiscal year, then the chamber should get a 6 percent of \$300,000 more, as well.

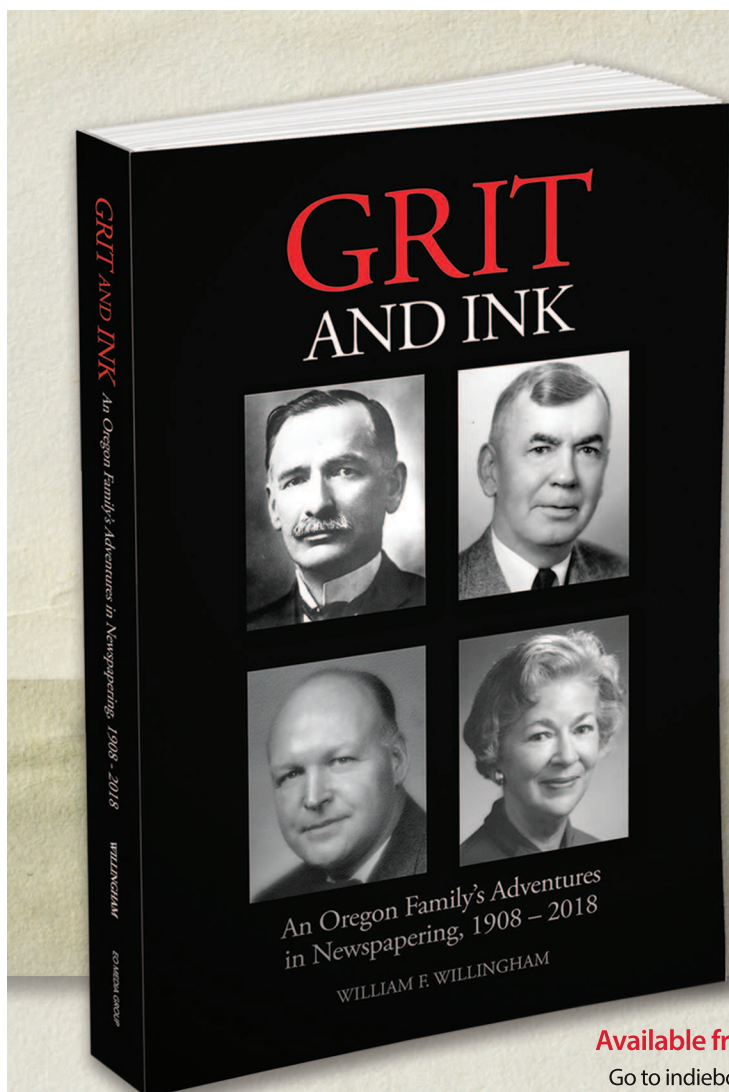
"We are not spending money here. We are investing money," Vetter said. "There's no more important investment than making sure the lodging tax will stay the same or go up. That's our lifeline ... If you want to get the results you want in a contract you need to build in rewards for success. And their success is our success."

City Councilor Mike Benefield argued the opposite, advocating that the chamber should present a proposed budget like other city departments and have its allocation based on fixed costs from the previous year.

Paino said that approach would be difficult, as the destination marketing organization is designed to facilitate its program based on the set figure they can expect from the city.

Although the chamber still has reservations about the consequences of a tighter marketing budget, Paino said he is ready to move forward and work with the city.

"The chamber felt and still believes that we are good partners with the city and came to these negotiations with an attitude of partnership for the betterment of Cannon Beach," Paino wrote in a statement.



Meet the Author

7 p.m. October 18 at Fort George Brewery

William F. Willingham

A native of Pendleton, Oregon and a consulting historian working in the fields of American history, historic preservation, architectural history, and water resources development. He is the author of numerous scholarly articles, consultant reports, and books

- The history of the company and family that owns The Daily Astorian
- Grit and Ink helps you understand what makes Oregon Oregon
- 220 pages with 60 B/W and Full Color photos

Grit and Ink

An Oregon Family's Adventures in Newspapering, 1908-2018

By William F. Willingham

Foreword by R. Gregory Nokes. Preface by Stephen A. Forrester

Published by the EO Media Group 2018. Paperback, \$19.95

Available from local booksellers or call 800-621-2736

Go to indiebound.org to find an independent bookstore near you
books.eomediagroup.com/grit-ink

