

Astoria man pleads no contest to attempted murder

By **BRENNA VISSER**
The Daily Astorian

A Fern Hill man accused of walking into a Westport woman's house and chasing her with a chainsaw pleaded no contest Thursday to attempted murder.

Loren Shaun Knapp, 57, was charged with attempted murder, attempted first-degree assault, first-degree burglary and other charges related to the incident last May.

Knapp apparently drove to the Westport home in search of a man who he believed stole his rifle, Deputy District Attorney Beau Peterson said. He entered the home and began chasing the woman inside with the chainsaw. He said he was going to kill her and sawed through a bedroom door.

He left the house and began confronting

the man outside before deciding to leave the scene, Peterson said during a court hearing. Sheriff's deputies arrested Knapp near the home shortly after.

Knapp is scheduled to be sentenced next week. Attempted murder is a Measure 11 crime that carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 7½ years in prison.

As part of a plea deal, the rest of Knapp's charges have been dismissed by the prosecution.

Knapp has been arrested in Clatsop County more than 25 times — including for charges of burglary, criminal mischief, menacing, assault, animal abuse and stalking.



Loren Shaun Knapp

State lawmakers release two-year budget draft

Johnson a key player in process

By **MARK MILLER**
Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon's K-12 schools won't feel pinched under a proposal unveiled by legislative budget-writers Thursday, but other government services throughout the state are likely to see cuts.

The co-chairs of the Joint Ways and Means Committee presented a \$23.2 billion budget plan. That represents a 10 percent increase from the approved 2017-19 state budget, but not enough to maintain current service levels.

Spending in nearly every area of the budget comes in below what state economists say will be needed to keep service levels steady over the next two years. That would likely mean public employee layoffs, less grant money available to organizations and municipalities that rely on state support, and other reductions as Oregon's state government tightens its belt.

In her \$23.6 billion budget proposal released late last year, Gov. Kate Brown called for spending \$8.8 billion in general and lottery revenues for the K-12 state school fund, the main source of money for school districts throughout Oregon. The legislators did likewise in their proposal.

"We're putting \$668 million more into the current service level than the previous biennium, which is a nontrivial sum of money," state Sen. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, D-Beaverton, said. "We're doing the best we can with the available resources. We recognize that it's not ideal."

State Rep. Dan Rayfield, D-Corvallis vowed that

lawmakers will be "working this entire session to try and find more money" for public education.

Unlike Brown's budget, the lawmakers' proposal does not assume any tax increases will give budget-writers more money to spread around. Brown recommended changing Oregon's business tax code and ending payments to counties under the Gain Share program, lessening the need for state budget cuts.

The cost of providing public services tends to increase every year due to inflation, cost-of-living adjustments for employees, rising pension obligations and other economic factors.

said.

Steiner Hayward was one of two senators named to co-chair Ways and Means for this session.

State Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, said the three co-chairs have worked well together, and she suggested that their geographic diversity helped guide their budget proposal. All are from western Oregon, but Johnson represents a mostly rural district northwest of Portland, Steiner Hayward represents an urban district on Portland's west side, and



Betsy Johnson

vices with the available resources.

"This is not a perfect budget," he said. "There will be folks who are not happy with this budget."

The Senate Republican leader isn't one of those folks.

"For the first time in my career in the Senate, it is refreshing to get a glimpse at a budget framework that is fiscally responsible and will leave a healthy ending balance," said Sen. Herman Baertschiger Jr., R-Grants Pass, in a statement released shortly after the budget was unveiled Thursday.

Johnson, Rayfield and Steiner Hayward said keeping Oregon financially stable is one of their main objectives. They want to avoid deeper cuts in the coming decade, especially if the state's economy slows down.

"This takes a significant step toward creating sustainable budgets in the future," Rayfield said.

The Legislature is required to approve a balanced budget for the next biennium by the end of June. With both the governor's budget proposal and the Ways and Means co-chairs' plan now on the table, the state's leaders have until the end of the legislative session to hammer out an agreement.

The Oregon Capital Bureau is a collaboration between EO Media Group, Pamplin Media Group and Salem Reporter.

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State Sen. Herman Baertschiger Jr., R-Grants Pass

Rayfield represents part of the mid-Willamette Valley.

"We all brought our own ability to project the concerns of all of Oregon into this budget," Johnson said.

Rayfield said the committee's job is to balance the cost of government ser-

The Oregon Health Plan isn't entirely spared from cuts the way that the state schools fund is, but Steiner Hayward, who is a practicing physician, said the co-chairs are proposing no cuts to patient services.

"There may be some areas of savings for administration, but we will not be cutting eligibility or benefits for any Oregonian who receives services or is eligible for services through OHP," Steiner Hayward

Ethics commission rejects settlement with ex-first lady

By **GORDON R. FRIEDMAN**
The Oregonian

State ethics commissioners on Thursday unanimously rejected a proposed settlement with ex-first lady Cylvia Hayes, Commissioner Dan Mason said.

Hayes had agreed in January to a \$44,000 fine for breaking ethics laws 22 times. But the settlement needed final approval from the Oregon Government Ethics Commission.

Hayes did not attend the commission meeting, and her absence was a factor in the vote against the settlement.

"All of us felt offended that she would not appear in person," Mason said.

Ethics investigators concluded Hayes abused her access to Gov. John Kitzhaber, her longtime fiancé, to land consulting work that paid more than \$200,000.

Federal and state prosecutors declined to seek criminal charges against Hayes and Kitzhaber. But the couple's actions sparked an influence peddling scandal that led to Kitzhaber's resignation and Hayes' bankruptcy.

Thursday's vote sends Hayes and the state back to the drawing board, leaving her ethics case pending as officials and Hayes' lawyers renegotiate a potential settlement.

If and when one is reached, said Michael Fuller, Hayes' bankruptcy attorney, the former first lady's fines would likely be forgiven because she has filed for bankruptcy.

Hayes has to make a good-faith effort to pay her debts, Fuller said. Even so, what she pays of an eventual ethics fine would be "pennies on the dollar," he said.

"The vast majority of the fine would be forgiven, if not all of it," Fuller said.

That fact didn't set well with the ethics commissioners.

"The discussion among all of us led to wondering if she would even pay anything," Mason said, "which tipped the scale on rejecting the agreement, in my opinion."

Kitzhaber settled his own ethics case last year, agreeing to a \$20,000 fine for 10 violations.

An element of Hayes' bankruptcy proceedings involves a debt of about \$125,000 owed to The Oregonian for attorney

fees stemming from a court case in which the newspaper prevailed in its attempt to access Hayes' emails.

Fuller said he and the newspaper's attorneys have been negotiating for months and have reached a tentative settlement which will soon be presented to the court. The newspaper's attorney in the matter, Brad Daniels, was not immediately available for comment. Willamette Week first reported the negotiations.

"We have a deal hammered out," Fuller said, "and it's a fair deal."

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