

IN BRIEF

Gearhart city administrator
pleads no contest to DUII

GEARHART — City Administrator Chad Sweet pleaded no contest in June to driving under the influence of intoxicants in Umatilla County.

According to the Oregon State Police, Sweet, 48, who lives in Surf Pines, was driving a 2014 Toyota Tundra on Interstate 84 on Feb. 29 when he was pulled over for failure to stay in his lane. Police found an open container of alcohol in his vehicle.

Sweet’s blood alcohol content was 0.15%.

Sweet appeared in Umatilla County Circuit Court in Pendleton on June 22. He entered a plea of no contest that was accepted by the court.

Sweet’s license was reinstated and he was granted eligibility for deferred sentencing provided he meets all the terms and conditions of probation, including drug and alcohol outpatient treatment.

Sweet must pay fees ordered by the court and comply with a court order prohibiting possession or use of alcoholic beverages. During his probation period, he must install an ignition interlock device for any vehicle he drives.

Sweet was appointed city administrator in 2011. He is a volunteer at the Gearhart Fire Department and former director of the Surfsand Resort in Cannon Beach.

“I appreciate everyone’s concern,” Sweet said. “I was charged with DUII in February, went to court, pled guilty and requested diversion. I hold myself accountable, and I’m participating in the state of Oregon diversion program. I want to thank my family and friends for the outpouring of support.”

Long-ago foreclosure could
complicate Seaside school sale

SEASIDE — One tax lot for sale at the former Seaside High School campus may not actually be the school district’s to sell.

Lot 4900, a parcel included in the marketing package for the sale of the high school, is owned by Clatsop County, Sirpa Duoos, the county’s property management specialist, said Monday.

“There’s a conflict with how the school district has been handling that piece through their marketing of the rest of the property,” Duoos said at a work session of the county Board of Commissioners.

Tax lot 4900 was originally deeded to the Seaside School District by its owners, Leonard and Eleanor Kiser, in 1956.

But when the school district failed to pay property taxes on the 0.82-acre property, the county foreclosed in 1961. The county retains ownership.

The disclosure comes after the school district’s board of directors authorized the superintendent to negotiate and execute a \$3.2 million contract for the sale with Harry Henke, a registered agent of HTA Properties LLC.

When the former high school property is sold, almost 8 acres used as ballfields at the north end of the high school campus will also revert to the city.

Referred to as “the north 40,” the property, zoned medium residential, is not included in the school district sale.

“Staff has been informed the city of Seaside is interested in these properties to use as recreational fields,” Duoos said.

While other school properties for sale have no reversionary clauses, there’s “no conflict there,” Duoos said. “But we do have to figure out how to resolve tax lot 4900.”

Warrenton man rescued
from burning home

WARRENTON — A Warrenton man was rescued Wednesday morning after getting trapped in a burning building.

The Warrenton Fire Department was dispatched to the fire at Kampers West Kampground off of N.W. Warrenton Drive at 2:49 a.m. to a report of a man trapped inside of a burning structure.

Officials say firefighters started a search and rescue and found the man in a bedroom. He was removed from the building and taken to Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria with injuries.

Firefighters had the fire under control shortly after.

The cause of the fire is undetermined, but officials say the fire started in the kitchen.

— The Astorian

DEATHS

Aug. 3, 2020 KUBO, Nancy Lee, 67, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.	Aug. 1, 2020 PALMBERG, David Earl, 76, of Warrenton, died in Warrenton. Caldwell’s Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.
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PUBLIC MEETINGS

THURSDAY
Astoria City Council, 6 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.
Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

the Astorian

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Edward Stratton/The Astorian

The Port of Astoria has suffered losses during the coronavirus pandemic.

Port: Received scant federal support

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The Port, which has projected \$1 million in operational losses in the coming fiscal year, has so far cut three workers from the maintenance department and one from marinas. The agency has eliminated most contracted security officers who would watch over piers when ships are at berth. Local long-shoremen, who man the docks for the Port, have also had to go elsewhere for work.

Will Isom, the Port’s executive director, said the agency has been looking at ways to better share performance metrics like ships, flights, fuel sales and new tenants

through an online dashboard.

“I think this will really take a step forward in conveying information to the public, so that they have a better understanding of what we’re doing and the impacts it has on the community,” he said.

The Port has so far received scant federal support, including around \$20,000 reimbursed for staff time spent responding to the virus. The agency is filing for another \$18,000 and could ultimately recoup \$270,000 for qualified staff time expenses through the end of the year.

Lobbyists for state ports, along with Oregon’s congressional delegation, have been

pushing for more port support in the next round of federal stimulus funding.

The Port recently finalized an agreement with Business Oregon, the state’s economic development agency and the Port’s biggest lender, to freeze all loan payments and interest for a year. The deal saves the Port and tenants an estimated \$1 million.

One of the largest beneficiaries would be Bornstein Seafoods, which the Port helped get a loan to build a new plant in the 2000s at the foot of Pier 1. The company has had to manage through slumping seafood sales and a virus outbreak that closed operations for two weeks

in May.

Isom ended the Port Commission meeting Tuesday by giving some kudos to Bornstein’s neighbor, Da Yang Seafood, where four workers tested positive for the virus in July. Da Yang temporarily closed Pier 2 processing operations for deep cleaning after a worker tested positive and let the county test the entire staff.

“I think the fact that they were able to control it to the degree they were is really remarkable,” he said. “... They are really strict with their protocols, which probably prevented a larger spread with the number of employees they have.”

Clatsop Care: ‘It’s something to look forward to’

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Last week, her family and friends met her in the garden with gifts to celebrate her 71st birthday. On Fridays, she visits with friends.

“It’s something to look forward to,” Steiner said.

“I think it’s really nice that they have figured out how to do that, because it would probably be a lot easier for them if they didn’t,” she said. “I think that Clatsop Care has done a great job of that, making sure that people do get to see their loved ones.”

A new normal

For residents who have not been able to hug a family member since March, the outdoor visits have been powerful, said Clarissa Johnson, the community outreach director for Clatsop Care Health District.

“The virtual interactions are, from my vantage point, really more joyful for the family member on the other line of the video call being able to see their family member in a nursing home,” she said. “But it is a little more difficult, especially for people who might have visual or hearing impairments, to really get a lot through a video screen.”

However, Johnson said

there are still a lot of restrictions and that people are easing into a new normal.

“The thing that is challenging is we had a really robust activities calendar that was heavily supported by volunteers. And right now, we can’t have volunteers in the building,” she said. “So that’s kind of a bummer, because I think what was so special about the activities wasn’t so much the activity themselves, but the interaction with new people all the time.”

Johnson said residents have been enjoying socially-distanced bus rides through Lewis and Clark and Wireless Road to look at nature and wildlife.

Allowing a hairdresser to come back has also given residents something to look forward to, she said, and gives them personal attention during a time when they are not getting physical contact from family and friends.

“I think what’s been kind of difficult right now too is that as restrictions in the

world change, I think people assume that maybe ours are changing as well in different ways,” Johnson said. “And what’s difficult to navigate is that we are almost in a whole other world from everywhere else.”

The health district is working with Kashi Clinical Laboratories in Portland to test employees and residents for the virus by September to comply with state requirements.

The district opted to work with a private lab because they were able to get a time assurance for test results. Johnson said the district also doesn’t want to overburden Clatsop County with testing all their asymptomatic employees and residents.

Safe activities

Launa DeGiusti, the administrator at Clatsop Retirement Village, said that for families and residents who are choosing not to participate in the outdoor visits, the retirement village

is offering free tablets and training on how to use them.

She is continuing to look for safe activities, like finding local musicians who can play the ukulele or guitar to practice on their outdoor patio.

DeGiusti said that although the restrictions will be in place for a while, the outdoor visits, crafts and walks outside along the water have been helpful in lifting residents’ spirits.

“What I noticed is there was kind of a buzz going along,” she said.

“I would hear a resident say as they were going to lunch, ‘I’m so excited I get to see my daughter this weekend. She’s coming for a visit.’ And then they would talk about it.

“And so there was that anticipation of something to look forward to. Which, in my opinion, is what’s hardest about the virus is that every day is the same. If you’re working, you go to work, you come home, you stay safe, you’re not socializing. Those aren’t the things that give life meaning, like something to look forward to, like a vacation or a visit or a reunion.

“It was encouraging to hear that excitement in their voice that they were going to get to see someone.”

West: Her appointment
represented an injection
of youth into the council

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“This decision has everything to do with me needing to work (two) jobs, which leaves less time than I feel like serving on the council requires in order to do it well,” she said in a statement. “I love serving on the council and would do it indefinitely if I could ... It is an honor that I never imagined I would have and I will continue to do my best until the end of my term this year.”

West, 43, was one of four applicants last year to represent Ward 4, which includes Uppertown, Alderbrook, Emerald Heights and Tongue Point. Bruce Jones

vacated the seat after being elected mayor. The appointment was to serve out the remainder of Jones’ term.

West’s appointment represented an injection of youth into a mostly older, retired City Council. Her appointment came shortly after Zetty Nemlowill, another woman in her 40s, left the City Council after choosing not to run for reelection.

City Councilor Tom Brownson, who represents Ward 2 covering the South Slope and the Port of Astoria, recently filed for reelection in November.

The filing deadline for four-year terms in Ward 2 and Ward 4 is Aug. 25.



Katie Frankowicz/The Astorian

Jessamyn Grace West, left, was appointed as a city councilor in January 2019 to replace Bruce Jones, right, who vacated his seat after being elected mayor.