

IN BRIEF

Inmate at county jail died of natural causes

An investigation into an inmate who died at the Clatsop County Jail in February found it was a natural death.

Jay Christopher Jamieson, 38, was booked at the jail on the night of Feb. 25 and died on Feb. 26 at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria. An autopsy conducted by the state medical examiner found Jamieson's death was caused by a ruptured bowel.

District Attorney Ron Brown said in a report that prior to being booked at the jail, Jamieson told deputies he was feeling sick from his heroin use. He reportedly declined numerous offers to go to the hospital before and after he was booked.

Brown said he continued to complain of symptoms consistent with heroin withdrawal at the jail. The jail nurse went to see Jamieson at his request that he needed something for his heroin withdrawal. The jail nurse conferred with a nurse practitioner at Columbia Memorial, who recommended a drug combination for his withdrawal symptoms.

Jamieson's condition worsened over the next several hours, and he was later found unconscious.

Brown said the jail did a reasonable job of monitoring Jamieson before his death. Jail staff called an ambulance when they realized Jamieson was not simply suffering from heroin withdrawal.

Jamieson was booked on charges of unlawful delivery of heroin, unlawful delivery of a controlled substance to a minor, child neglect in the first degree and endangering the welfare of a minor after a search warrant was served on his residence in Warrenton.

Two people injured in crash on Highway 30

Two people were injured Friday in a two-vehicle crash on U.S. Highway 30 in Astoria.

The driver of one of the vehicles was cited for reckless driving and taken to a hospital with injuries, along with his passenger.

House fire displaces two in Seaside

SEASIDE — A fire on 11th Avenue early Sunday displaced two people, Seaside Fire and Rescue reported.

When firefighters arrived at about 3:30 a.m., the north side of the structure was involved, Lt. Genesee Dennis said. "Right as we arrived also we had a downed power line," he said. "That hindered access."

Firefighters gained access through neighboring yards and "knocked down the fire pretty quickly," Dennis said.

— *The Astorian*

DEATHS

April 9, 2021

TAMEZ, Katelynn Renee, of Warrenton, died in Portland. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

April 7, 2021

WEBER, Wal-

ter "Walt," 81, of Longview, Washington, formerly of Seaside and Chinook, Washington, died at home. Green Hills Memorial Gardens in Kelso, Washington, is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

DUII

• Zoe Marie Bryan, 19, was arrested Sunday near the Astoria Police Department for driving under the influence of intoxicants.

• David Lee Mills, 70, of Seaside, was arrested

Saturday on U.S. Highway 101 for DUII following a crash.

• Mark Clayton Gilbertson, 31, of Hammond, was arrested Friday on Ninth Street and Marine Drive in Astoria for DUII.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Clatsop County Planning Commission, 10 a.m., (electronic meeting).

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board, 5:15 p.m., workshop, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.

Cannon Beach City Council, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Lewis & Clark Fire Department Board, 6 p.m., main fire station, 34571 U.S. Highway 101 Business.

Warrenton City Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

Clatsop Community College Board, 6:30 p.m., (electronic meeting).

WEDNESDAY

Clatsop Soil and Water Conservation District Board, 10 a.m., (electronic meeting).

Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, 6 p.m., (electronic meeting).

Warrenton-Hammond School District Board, 6 p.m., Warrenton High School Library, 1700 S. Main Ave.

Clatsop Community College Board, 6:30 p.m., work session, (electronic meeting).

Astoria School District Board, 7 p.m., (electronic meeting).

THURSDAY

Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

Westport man sentenced to prison for road rage death

Stone receives more than six years

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

A Westport man who killed another man following a road rage incident in October 2018 was sentenced Friday to more than six years in prison.

Jeffrey Craig Stone, 68, killed Curtis Michael Russell, 22, of Longview, Washington, after running him over with his Dodge truck and dragging his body for about a quarter-mile.

Stone was charged with murder, manslaughter in the first degree, two counts of attempted assault in the first degree, failure to perform duties of a driver, driving under the influence of intoxicants, reckless driving and two counts of recklessly endangering another person.

After numerous settlement conferences, Stone on Friday pleaded guilty to criminally negligent homicide, a downgrade from the murder charge. He also pleaded guilty to two counts of recklessly endangering another person and DUII.

Stone, once the chief of the Westport Volunteer Fire Department, was convicted of first-degree arson and first-degree theft and sentenced to 17 months in prison after he set fire to business records in 2004 after he was accused of embezzlement.

On Halloween 2018, Russell was driving west on U.S. Highway 30 near Westport when he came up behind Stone's vehicle and noticed signs of drunken driving, District Attorney Ron Brown

'TODAY, I GET PEACE. TODAY, I GET TO KNOW THAT FOR A MOMENT I GAVE IT ALL TO FIND JUSTICE FOR MY BEST FRIEND, TO SAVE MY BROTHERS FROM RELIVING A NIGHTMARE, AND FOR KNOWING THAT MY MOTHER-IN-LAW CAN HAVE JUST A MOMENT OF RELIEF.'

Natasha Russell | widow of Curtis Michael Russell

said in court.

Russell, who had passengers in the vehicle, passed Stone, and, as he did, Brown said it seemed to them that Stone brushed Russell's vehicle.

Russell pulled over to exchange information, but, according to Brown, Stone kept driving toward Westport until turning right onto Old Mill Town Road.

Russell followed Stone and then passed and blocked Stone's pickup truck. Brown said Russell and his passengers got out of the vehicle and Russell circled the pickup with a bat and struck it several times, causing dents.

"So I believe the defendant could have backed up and left the scene," Brown said. "But instead, backed his vehicle and then drove, according to one witness, towards Curtis, who had returned to being in front of the defendant's vehicle."

He said Stone stopped quickly and backed up again. Stone hit Russell, knocking him under the truck and drag-

ging him by his feet for about a quarter-mile with his body wedged under the pickup. Russell died at the scene from blunt force trauma.

Stone drove home and later returned to the scene and cooperated with police.

"This has been a very difficult case," Brown said. "We appreciate Judge (Henry) Kantor's time and his willingness to be a settlement judge, and we think that's probably why we ended up agreeing to this."

Russell's widow, Natasha Russell, filed a wrongful death claim last October against

Alston Pub and Grub in Rainier, where Stone was drinking prior to the incident. The lawsuit, filed in Columbia County Circuit Court, seeks \$2.6 million.

Natasha Russell and others in Russell's family described how that day forever changed their lives.

"The day my husband was dragged to his death, you took my entire future from me," Russell said. "But

more than that, you took my son and stepdaughter's chance to ever make a memory with their dad.

"Every single day, I wake up and I look at the gift that Curtis gave me as he tells me, 'Good morning, mama.' It reminds me every second he'll never get with the best man this world could have ever given me.

"The mental damage you have caused everyone I love is unforgivable," she said. "There's so much wrong in this life we live now, but for Curtis, I'm fighting every day for the good.

"Today, I get peace. Today, I get to know that for a moment I gave it all to find justice for my best friend, to save my brothers from reliving a nightmare, and for knowing that my mother-in-law can have just a moment of relief."

Judge Cindee Matyas, who presided over the sentencing, said that although the criminal justice system can resolve the criminal charges, the process cannot adequately respond to the loss.

"You all appear to be extremely strong and determined," Matyas said. "And I just hope that the love you keep in your heart for Mr. Russell will be a source of strength to you.

"I want to thank the parties for their effort in working to resolve this case. The challenge with any trial is just the uncertainty of the outcome. And Mr. Stone, you're taking responsibility for these charges today does something to give some relief to the family members who have been waiting for years now."

Taxes: Council told to make a decision by July

Continued from Page A1

By the end of the fiscal year in June, the urban renewal district will have collected its maximum indebtedness — what it can spend on projects — of around \$9.1 million. It will have around \$5.3 million on hand for future projects.

City councilors could unilaterally increase the maximum indebtedness by up to \$3 million. They could also terminate tax collections, giving back an estimated \$803,000 next fiscal year to local jurisdictions that contribute. Astoria would get an additional \$407,000, for example, while Clatsop County would receive \$76,455.

Around \$246,000 would go back to the State School Fund. Craig Hoppes, the superintendent of the Astoria School District, said he is unsure of how that would ultimately impact the school district's funding. Clatsop Community College would be in line for nearly \$40,000.

Elaine Howard, an urban renewal consultant, told city councilors at a recent work session they needed to decide by the beginning of the next fiscal year in July. The timeline could be even tighter, with local jurisdictions coming up with budgets for next year.

A big question is whether the \$5.3 million in the urban renewal district will be enough to finish several identified but somewhat undefined projects. The city is working with the state Department of Transportation to fund a lane reconfiguration and other streetscape improvements along Marine Drive as part of the Uniontown Reborn master plan.

The City Council recently agreed to use urban renewal money on a master plan of



Edward Stratton/The Astorian

The Astoria City Council is deciding whether to keep urban renewal funds for projects like the revitalization of the Chinook Building and area around the West Mooring Basin.

the area around the Port's West Mooring Basin, a prime location for a revitalized commercial district. Improving the Port for the benefit of the county could be a reason to increase indebtedness, City Councilor Roger Rocka said at the work session.

"This is kind of hard to specify, because we don't have the plan yet from the Port," Rocka said. "But for me, I think the assumption is that we're adequately funded to basically complete Uniontown Reborn."

City Councilor Tom Brownson wondered whether the urban renewal district could go dormant, giving the tax money back until a specific project is identified. Howard said she would have to check with legal counsel. But she cautioned against creating uncertainty by providing a local government with a new funding stream only to cut it off in the future.

"Maybe they use it for

something that will need to be (funded) every year," she said. "And then all of a sudden, you come back in later and say, 'Hey, guess what? We're going to start taking money again.' So it leaves them in a position of not knowing for sure what is happening with that money."

Howard brought up the idea of increasing maximum indebtedness but only collecting 30% or so of possible revenue, sharing the rest with local jurisdictions while still slowly building up urban renewal funds. City Councilor Joan Herman, Brown-

son and Rocka supported the idea.

Mayor Bruce Jones recommended a special meeting to hear back from legal counsel about whether the urban renewal district can go dormant until a new project crystallizes. But without that answer, Jones said, he supports terminating further tax collections to help local jurisdictions with pressing needs. City Councilor Tom Hilton also supported termination.

"I just don't like the idea of increasing maximum indebtedness for undefined future needs," Jones said.

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