

PENDLETON: This year's proposed budget projects the city to bring in \$5.1 million

Continued from 1A

Not including part-time positions, the new job would push department personnel to 29 employees.

In other sections of the budget, the city allocated \$27,500 for a new patrol vehicle and \$15,000 for police laptop computers and hardware.

The fire department also will see a boost under the proposed budget. The budget calls for the hiring of three new paramedics, increasing the city's fire and emergency service employees to more than 25.

City Manager Robb Corbett said the request originated from the results of an analysis by Police Chief Stuart Roberts, who also acts as the city's public safety director.

"What's happening is that these other neighboring agencies are having to come in and take the calls that we can't take," Corbett said. "Additionally, the calls that we're passing on are those that are most lucrative for business."

The budget also allocates \$30,000 for heart monitors and \$132,500 for a fire rescue truck.

Corbett said he was optimistic about the city's future, citing recent and future expansions at Rocky Mountain Colby Pipe Co., Hill Meat Co., Newly Weds Food Inc. and Barhyte Specialty Foods Inc. as examples of Pendleton's economic allure.

But while a few industrial businesses have expanded, property tax revenues haven't expanded with it. The city brought in only \$4.9 million last year after projecting \$5.2 million in the budget.

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Councilman Al Plute pointed toward tax abatements under the city's enterprise zone program as being the main culprit behind the underperforming revenues.

"We have a disconnect of creating jobs and creating a revenue stream for the city," he said. "As an example, if we have a company come in here and create 300 jobs, that 300 jobs does absolutely nothing to generate income for the city in itself. What happens is that it actually puts more burden on the city's resources without revenue from those 300 jobs."

Although the sections of the budget beyond the general fund were left to future meetings, other highlights include:

- Included in the non-departmental budget are \$313,000 worth of capital improvements throughout the city.

Among the budgeted improvements are a new heating, ventilation and air conditioning system for city hall, telephone upgrades and improvements to the aquatic center, Community Park and basketball courts across four different parks.

In an interview after the meeting, Corbett said the amount spent on capital improvements was "less than ideal."

Since city facilities are decaying faster than staff members can make repairs or improvements, Corbett said a bond is still necessary to address deferred maintenance.

- The city's \$2.3 million street fund is only a modest increase from the year before.

Most of that increase comes from the \$1 million capital improvement section, a \$200,000 increase from the year before. The improvements will cover \$25,000 for pothole patching, \$50,000 for crack sealing, \$125,000 for a streets master plan and \$800,000 to preserve Pendleton's most widely traveled roads.

- An increase in funds from the Umatilla County Special Library District and state grants will help the

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— Al Plute, Pendleton city councilman

Pendleton Public Library pay for some new improvements. \$26,000 is set aside for a renovation to the teen room and purchase of a 3-D printer.

- The Eastern Oregon Regional Airport industrial area will draw funding from a variety of areas.

\$2.5 million will come from the water fund to provide upgrades to the airport's booster station and the extension of a waterline for future industrial development.

Last year, after a business inquired about a piece of property the city owns, council approved \$200,000 to plan the waterline extension.

The airport will draw \$500,000 from the sewer fund to cover the cost of a sewer lift station and sewer lines near the airport.

The airport fund itself will rise from \$3.8 million to \$5.1 million. Most of that increase comes from a Federal Aviation Administration mandated airport master plan and a financial package from the state to build hangars for the test range.

The committee will review the rest of the budget at upcoming meetings April 30, May 5 and May 7 at the Vert Little Theater at Pendleton City Hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

The council is scheduled to formally adopt the budget June 2.

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NURSERY: Program nurtures 27 children at a time

Continued from 1A

family child interventionists, make home visits to bolster parents, who also have the chance to take parenting classes. Ceniga said the program means better lives for children.

"Seventy-five percent of the brain develops in the first 1,000 days," Ceniga said. "That's why we run an early intervention program. Children are absorbing everything. Neurons are forming pathways."

The therapeutic program nurtures 27 children at a time, six years and younger. There are more than 20 children on the waiting list. The nursery also offers respite care for the children and their siblings up to three times a month. The relief nursery has helped roughly 600 families in its eight years of existence. As Ceniga talked, the sounds of several babies drifted in from another room. Each baby was tucked into the arms of a volunteer or staff member for a few hours of care.

The infants couldn't have known about the \$10,000 hole in the nursery's \$300,000 budget.

Ceniga said she feels sure the drop won't mean layoffs. State and private grants will support the nonprofit, though 25 percent of the funding must come from the community as a matching requirement.

Board member Pat Sullivan, who helped found the center, said the Pioneer Relief Nursery is one of 16 such nurseries in the state and the first rural one. She praised local benefactors such as St. Anthony Hospital, which owns the building and charges \$1 a year rent, and Mid-Columbia Bus Company, which buses children to and from outlying communities at a discounted rate. Sullivan refuses to fret about the future.

"We've gotten consistent community support when we've reached out," Sullivan said.

The nursery also helps parents find the strength and skills to make positive life changes.

Board Chair Annette Skinner recalled a father of three who walked in off the street shortly after his wife had been taken to jail.

"He was desperate," Skinner said. "He walked in and said, 'I need help.'"

Eventually, the father earned his GED and enrolled in college before Skinner lost track of him.

"He just needed some coping skills," she said. "He needed some support."

Ceniga said she doesn't begrudge United Way for not funding the nursery. The iconic United Way thermometer just isn't shooting up as far these days.

"In the past, that little red thermometer would go up, up, up," she said. "The world has changed. The idea of community giving from your workplace has changed. Hopefully, it'll turn around. I believe that it will."

In the meantime, the Pioneer Relief Nursery will stoke its budget with fundraisers, such as a Christmas dinner at Virgil's at Cimmiotti's and a benefit concert this week featuring Dakota Brown and Luke Basile at the Pendleton Center for the Arts. The concert is from 6:30-9 p.m. Thursday and for \$40, guests get music, a light dinner and one pour of wine or beer.

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VIOLENCE: Opponents argue measure goes too far by including siblings, parents, children, intimate partners

Continued from 1A

40 deaths related to domestic violence in Oregon last year, 74 percent of those people were killed by a firearm, according to the Oregon Alliance to End Violence Against Women.

"Research shows that domestic abusers who possess guns tend to use them as part of their pattern of abuse, as a ready threat to further violence and as a tool for psychological control and mistreatment," state Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum told the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

But opponents argue the measure goes too far beyond federal mandates because it would apply to more types of relationships. The federal law applies only to current or

former spouses, boyfriends or girlfriends. The Oregon proposal would also include siblings, parents, children and intimate partners who may not have lived together.

Dozens of people submitted testimony saying the proposal "grossly broadens the definition of domestic violence well beyond what any reasonable person would determine it to be."

"So if a person gets into a shoving match with an obnoxious brother-in-law, under this bill they'll be treated like a wife-beater. We believe this demeans real acts of domestic violence," said Kevin Starrett, executive director of the Oregon Firearms Federation.

Sen. Jeff Kruse, a Roseburg Republican who voted

against the bill in committee, said he would support the measure if it were dialed back to the federal definition. An amendment matching the state definition to the federal one has been introduced, and both Kruse and Monnes Anderson said the bill could be revised to that version before it hits the Senate floor.

The measure has passed the Senate Committee on Judiciary on a 3-2 vote, with Republicans voting against it.

GUN CLUB: Approved spending on repairs to justice department vehicle

Continued from 1A

gun club fought its expansion in 2014. The case ended up in the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals, which in February affirmed the gun club could operate, but also found the county needed to add rules to allow firearm training sites to expand.

A letter from the gun club's attorney asked the board to make the amendments effective immediately. Commissioner Bill Elfering asked why that was so important.

Mabbott replied spring is a busy time for the club, which has been waiting a year already.

No one else spoke for or against the amendments, and the commissioners voted 3-0 for the amendments.

Gun club president Verl Pressnall and other club members were present. While they did not speak at the hearing they smiled when they left. Pressnall said it may have been a long trip for a short meeting, but it was worth it.

In other county business:

- The board approved spending \$6,919 to repair the community justice department's 2015 Ford Fusion that an uninsured driver rear-ended on Feb. 20. Zimmermans Autobody & Glass of Athena won the bid. County counsel Doug Olsen said the county would pursue legal action against the driver, Tyler Kobasa.

- The board approved amending the memorandum of understanding with Idaho Power, the Bureau of Land Management and other agencies for the environmental impact statement of the Boardman-Hemingway transmission line project. Mabbott said this ensures the county stays in the loop on the project.

- And the board determined the county was in drought and voted to send a request to Gov. Kate Brown to declare a state of emergency for the county. See Tuesday's story for more on the conditions and request.

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Living with Alzheimer's: For Caregivers – Middle Stage
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