



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The city of Pendleton is not dedicating any funding for the Vert Auditorium in the 2017 budget although it has \$1.6 million in needed maintenance.

BUDGET: Vert Auditorium has \$1.6M in maintenance needs

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Protection Association.

Although some departments requested additional materials and supplies, the city's deferred maintenance gap required a completely different tally.

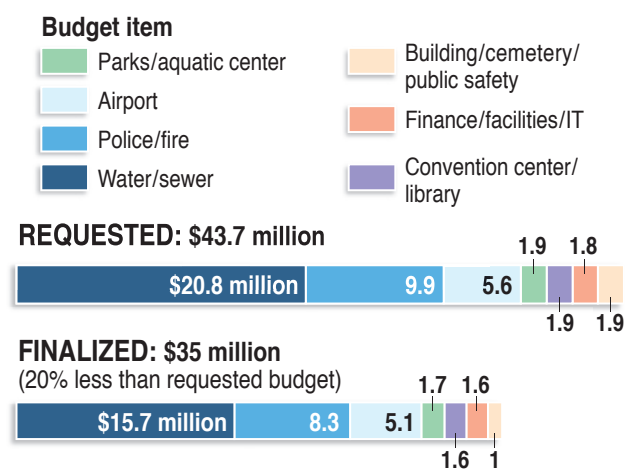
According to the city's calculations, Pendleton's facilities and technology have \$3.66 million in deferred maintenance.

Leading the pack in the maintenance gap is the Vert Auditorium, which has \$1.6 million in maintenance needs and \$0 in dedicated funding. The city still does direct some money to the Vert, but it and a dozen other city facilities must share a \$190,400 materials and services fund.

Ultimately, six city buildings are going without dedicated funding sources and plenty more are operating with maintenance budgets at a fraction of what they need.

Rather than continue to maintain the old police station on Court Avenue, one of the buildings that has no dedicated funding source, the city council elected to

What some departments asked for versus what they received



put it on the market rather than continuing to lease it.

"We're better off selling it rather than being landlords," Corbett said.

Corbett said the city has two primary options in trying to close the gap between what it needs and what it has.

Either the city could try to extend the life of its current assets until an unexpected

windfall helps them catch up, or it could start eliminating services so it can funnel money to other needs.

Corbett said the parks department has been hit especially hard by the latter tactic in recent years, eliminating three positions.

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GUNS: NRA called ruling 'out of touch'

Continued from 1A

Typically, people who are being stalked or threatened, celebrities who fear for their safety, and those who routinely carry large amounts of cash or other valuables are granted permits.

"We hold that the Second Amendment does not preserve or protect a right of a member of the general public to carry concealed firearms in public," Circuit Judge William A. Fletcher wrote for the majority.

The ruling overturned a 2014 decision by a three-judge panel of the same court that said applicants need only express a desire for personal safety.

In a dissent, Circuit Judge Consuelo M. Callahan said the ruling "obliterates the Second Amendment's right to bear a firearm in some manner in public for self-defense."

Three other federal appeals courts have ruled similarly in the past, upholding California-like restrictions in New York, Maryland and New Jersey. In addition, another federal appeals court struck down Illinois' complete ban on carrying concealed weapons.

The 9th Circuit covers nine Western states, but California and Hawaii are the only ones in which the ruling will have any practical effect. The others do not require permit applicants to cite a "good cause." Anyone in those states with a clean record and no history of mental illness can get a permit.

The National Rifle Association called the ruling "out of touch."

"This decision will leave good people defenseless, as it completely ignores the fact that law-abiding Californians who reside in counties with hostile sheriffs will now have no means to carry a firearm outside the home for personal protection," said NRA legislative chief Chris W. Cox.

The New York-based gun control organization Everytown hailed the decision as "a major victory for public safety."

The California case began

in 2009, when Edward Peruta filed a legal challenge over the San Diego County sheriff's refusal to issue him a permit. Peruta said he wanted a weapon to protect himself, but the sheriff said he needed a better reason, such as that his occupation exposes him to robbery.

Peruta, who is known as something of a legal gadfly, said he is neither a hunter, collector or target shooter but challenged the law because he believed it violated the Constitution. The NRA

joined him in fighting the law.

The San Diego Sheriff's Department said Thursday that since the 9th Circuit tossed out the law two years ago, it has received 2,463 applications from people seeking a concealed-weapon permit without having to show good cause.

Sheriff's lawyer Robert Faigan said the department hasn't processed those applications and will continue to hold on to them while it waits to see what the Supreme Court does.

EVIDENCE: Some cases in which Larson handled evidence have still gone ahead

Continued from 1A

in March 2014, when the house in question — located just outside Umatilla — belonged to Bernard's mother, who at the time was living in an assisted living facility while the Linds looked after her property and kept some of their belongings there.

One day Bernard and Julianne arrived to find the house trashed and most of its contents gone.

"They stole the dining room table," Julianne said. "They stole the china from Denmark. They stole the antique chair, the coins, guns, all the quilts (Bernard's mother) had made."

The list continued to grow. Everything had been rifled through and cigarette butts and old pop cans littered the house. The toilet — which was broken at the time — was filled with feces, suggesting several people had been living there for somewhere between three and seven days.

"It was sick," Bernard said.

The Linds claim they made a report and a deputy from Umatilla County Sheriff's Office came to collect evidence. Then they waited and waited for the evidence to be processed in the Oregon State Police crime lab in Pendleton.

Meanwhile they offered a reward for information. Someone called and offered to meet them at McDonald's to give them information about where their belongings had gone, then never showed or called back. Another person gave them the name of a man with several property crimes on his record who was in jail in John Day at the time. A deputy in Grant County questioned him, but he denied involvement. In September 2015, more than a year and a half after the burglary occurred, the DNA came back with a match to the jailed person the Linds' source had named.

Then in November, Bernard's mother died and

he inherited the house. The heirlooms they would have inherited to remember her by, however, remain missing.

In March, they heard back from the District Attorney's office. They were expecting to hear that the suspect was headed to trial. Instead, the Linds say, they were told that a forensic analyst named Nika Larsen was under criminal investigation for stealing pills from labs where she had worked. Since she had handled the evidence from their case (along with more than 1,300 other cases in Umatilla County alone), a defense attorney could call it into question. As a result, the Linds say they were told the office had decided not to move forward with prosecuting the case.

Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus said his office has been evaluating cases in which Larsen handled evidence. In cases where there is little additional evidence to what Larsen handled — such as a confession or eyewitness statements — Primus' office has decided not to move forward with prosecution.

He said he does not have an official count of how many cases have been dropped as a result of the investigation into Larsen. Primus did say some cases in which she handled physical evidence have still gone ahead.

"We look at the evidence we have," he said. "If we feel we have enough evidence we move forward."

The Linds' case, however, is not one of those.

Meanwhile, they say they continue to experience break-ins and thefts on the property whenever they leave to attend to their own home or go on the road with their corn dog concessions business. Bernard said he feels like there is no point in continuing to report them.

"When you've been broken into six, seven, eight, nine times you lose

respect for the police," he said, noting that sometimes there was no deputy in that part of the county, resulting in a long wait to have someone come out and take a report.

Sheriff Terry Rowan said response times have improved in the last two years, however, as more staff have been hired for patrols. And he said even if it takes longer than someone would like for a deputy to come out, he still encourages everyone to report crimes.

Sometimes it helps deputies spot a pattern, he said, or work backward when they have someone in custody. If that person is found with stolen goods from one case, for example, police can cross-reference other items in their possession with reports of recent thefts and in some cases return those items to the victim.

"It's important to report any crime that may have been committed against you, and the other thing is if you see something, say something," Rowan said.

One thing Bernard said he does not plan on stopping is his quest for justice.

He said his next step is to go to his state representatives and the governor to ask them to put pressure on the Oregon State Police to put more safeguards into their labs, and to see what type of restitution might be possible for people negatively affected by the criminal investigation into Larsen.

"I'm ready to march a whole bunch of people down to Salem," he said.

He said if there are other victims who would like to join with him to lobby for change and restitution, he would encourage them to contact him at 509-561-9309.

The OSP crime lab in Pendleton remains open but has not yet regained accreditation to process narcotics.

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