

Thompson pushes back on questions about expenses

Commissioner claimed more than half the total pool

By Jack Heffernan
For EO Media Group

Clatsop County Commissioner Lianne Thompson is pushing back against accusations that her travel and education expenses have been excessive by questioning the Board of Commissioners' goals.

Thompson has claimed \$7,328 in expenses during the first three quarters of the fiscal year. The five commissioners combined are allotted a total of \$13,500 each year.

Commissioners have spent \$12,692 in the first three quarters, or 94 percent of the allotted amount.

The board voted unanimously Wednesday, April 26, to direct \$2,000 until the end of the fiscal year in June to account for the decreasing amount of money for expenses.

"We've got to wing this until June," Scott Lee, the

board's chairman, said. Lee addressed the issue in a March 30 letter to Thompson.

"I know that for the remainder of this fiscal year you will be mindful that this budget is for all five commissioners who also may have travel or training plans," he said in the letter.

Need for expenses

Thompson responded at the commission's meeting.

"Reimbursement for all actual and necessary expenses incurred on county business while outside the county is both required by the county charter and essential for commissioners doing that business," she said.

Thompson added she often seeks to limit expenses by avoiding hotels and eating cheaper food such as energy bars or takeout from a grocery deli.

While explaining her need for expenses, Thompson pointed to a lack of a concrete vision or goals from other commissioners. Three issues — housing, economic development and emergency preparedness — have



Lianne Thompson



Scott Lee

been the primary focus of her county-related travel, Thompson said.

Most of Thompson's expenses this year came in March, when she received more than \$5,968 in reimbursements. A large portion of those expenses stem from two conferences: the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute in Portland on March 9 and a Mass Timber conference March 27 to March 30.

"I called for the whole board to define its work and a work plan with goals,"

Thompson said. "I didn't see an appetite for that process or result from others, and I promised to pursue it on my own."

She added that the board should have more time to discuss goals at a retreat or additional work sessions.

Following Thompson's comments, Commissioner Sarah Nebeker said she was having a hard time connecting the points between board goals and expenses.

"So am I," Lee said with a smile to Nebeker.



Insufficient funds

Thompson also argued the line-item budget amount allocated to commissioners each year for expenses is insufficient. Since the 2013-2014 fiscal year, expenditures by the board have risen from \$5,527.12 to the figure it sits at this year. Meanwhile, the money allocated to commissioners has remained the same.

"With your statement here and information that will inform the county manager and budget, they should consider, possibly, an adjustment for future years to set that bar a little higher," Lee said to Thompson.

Questions about Thompson's expenses initially surfaced during her first year on the board.

Thompson was sworn in as a member of the board in January 2015. She has claimed \$16,292 in expenses in the two years and three months since. Her \$3,653 in expenses during her six months of service in the 2014-2015 fiscal year compared to the \$8,862 by commissioners. She expended \$5,311 of com-

missioners' \$10,116 in 2015-2016.

"Yes, we're tracking the financial expenditures," Thompson said. "What we're not doing in my mind is looking at community needs."

Base budget

Lee added, though, that it is important for commissioners to pursue their goals within the parameters of the county charter.

The county maintains the same base budget for all general fund departments, such as the Board of Commissioners, each year, Budget and Finance Director Monica Steele said. Departments then can request additional funds, prompting the county to make a decision based on the previous year's spending levels.

"We looked at the historical levels and since they were coming in under budget, we maintained that base budget amount," Steele said.

Steele said the best opportunity to weigh in on expenses would be at the county's budget committee meeting. The meeting will take place in early May.

'Our guardian angel'

Gooding remembered at fallen officers memorial

By Jack Heffernan
For EO Media Group

SALEM — A misty-eyed Seaside Police Chief Dave Ham was in the middle of thanking Sgt. Jason Gooding's family when he was abruptly interrupted.

"They're really helping me out," he said. "The strength and resiliency I see in your family is amazing, and all the open arms and hugs ..."

Suddenly, a puddle of water from the top of a large tent covering the audience before Ham splashed to the ground near the stage.

"Wow. Thanks, Jason," Ham said.

Memories of Gooding were heavily present at the Oregon Public Safety Academy's annual Fallen Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial ceremony. Hundreds of people attended the 80-minute ceremony Tuesday in Salem.

Gooding's name was the 183rd added to a memorial wall that served as a backdrop for the ceremony. The wall recognizes the law enforcement officers in Oregon who have died on the job since the 1880s.

Gooding, 39, was shot and killed in February 2016 on Broadway in downtown Seaside while taking a man into custody on a warrant.

Phillip Ferry, 55, shot Gooding once before Gooding's partner, David Davidson, returned fire and killed Ferry. Gooding died at Providence Seaside Hospital later that night.

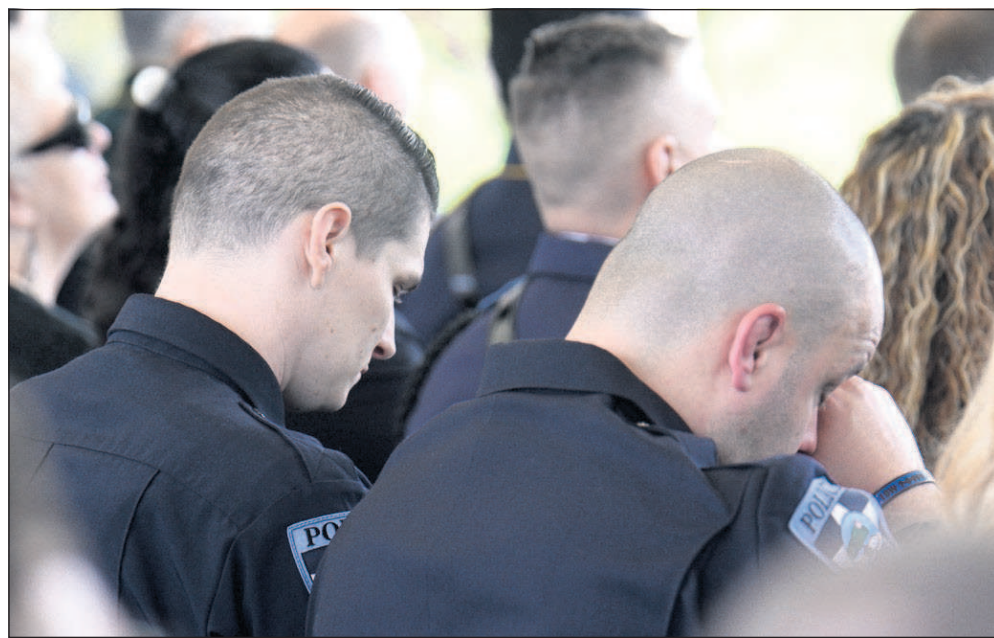
Gooding is survived by his wife, Amy, and daughters, Joslyn and Jayden.

"It's been difficult driving by the driveway every day for a year, but I know I don't have it half as bad as those two little girls and the wife and mom, Amy," said Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin, the Goodings' next-door neighbor. "It strikes you at the core, it really does. Jason was a smart man, a young, just a steadfast individual that was not only a good neighbor, a good friend, but a great cop."

Honoring the service

Bagpipes, drums, flag presentations with the American and Canadian national anthems, a roll call of all 183 slain officers and a 21-gun salute complemented other remarks made by officers, family and public officials.

Guided by law enforcement officers from throughout the state, families of slain officers filed into their seats to begin the ceremony. Jerry Gaidos, a former chaplain for Clatsop County law enforcement who consoled local officers after Gooding's death, said a prayer.



COLIN MURPHEY/EO MEDIA GROUP

Seaside Police Sgt. Jason Gooding was honored at the Oregon Fallen Law Enforcement Officers Memorial ceremony.

Officer Kenneth J. Henson II of the Lakewood Police Department in Washington state gave a speech that highlighted how he and his department rallied to help the families of lost peers.

'Daily struggle'

Then, it was Ham's turn. "It's been a long 14 months since Jason's been gone," he said. "It's a daily struggle to keep from crying and missing my friend."

Ham delved in to the department's struggles with personnel changes in the past 14 months, Gooding's death being the most dramatic.

"Out of the struggle came the hiring of new faces," Ham said. "All of these personnel changes have brought a new and fresh face to the department and a level of excitement that I know Jason would be proud of. His excitement for the job is reflected in the leadership of our department now and in the faces of our current staff."

Amy's letter

During the speech, Ham read a letter Amy Gooding wrote to the Seaside Police Department shortly after her husband's death.

It described how an emotionally exhausted Gooding would often fall into bed fully clothed after a long day at work, only to take a call in the middle of the night to answer an officer's question. He would often confide in Amy when he felt helpless at a call on a particular day and wasn't sure if he made the right decision in a given situation.

"He believed that his body was his weapon and his mind his tool to protect and serve his family in service and hope," the letter read. "There is nothing he wouldn't give for you, and he worked himself into the ground trying to take care of everyone but himself."



COLIN MURPHEY/EO MEDIA GROUP

Amy Gooding, widow of slain Seaside Police Sgt. Jason Gooding, spoke through letters about her husband at the ceremony.

Family letters

The police chief also read letters the family wrote specifically for the memorial.

"His loss has created an emptiness in our lives that can never be filled," one of Amy's letters read. "The hopes and dreams of our family have been shattered, and we are still trying to put the pieces back together. Jason will always be my husband, and he will never

stop being Jayden and Joslyn's daddy. But now he will be our guardian angel. We will make the best of this life that we are now going to have to face without him."

Joslyn and Jayden wrote about how much they love and miss their father. Joslyn added she wished she listened to more of his basketball coaching advice. Amy Gooding later helped lay wreaths on stands in front of the wall.

One moment in Ham's speech perhaps illustrated the struggle and perseverance of Gooding's family and community, both last year and now.

"Thank you to everyone who continues to support the Gooding family and the Seaside Police Department as we navigate through this hard time and we continue to grow to what has become our future," Ham said in a progressively soft voice.

"Excuse me," he then said, collecting himself.



CANNON BEACH GAZETTE/FILE PHOTO

The Arch Cape Design Review Committee received a reprieve from the state's Land Use Board of Appeals last week after a decision on the committee's future was sent back to the county.

Appeal back to county

Arch Cape from Page 1A

and there is too much judicial power given to too few people."

Thompson also said she thinks the town is more divided on the issue than the Oregon Coast Alliance asserts. She said she's had residents tell her they are scared to express their opinions if they differ with the committee's view.

"It's gone from being used as a tool to becoming a weapon," Thompson said. "It's focused on how much power the committee has

rather than other's well-being. It's become members banging on someone's door telling them to trim their tree."

La Follette said issues can be resolved through a cooperative process rather than complete dissolution, and said the committee needs to be heard.

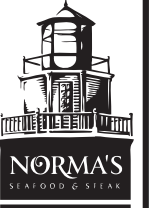
"There is a difference between having a hearing and being listened to," she said. "Land use politics is messy. Everyone wants to do different things with their land. The county needs to allow for that complexity."

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