

Houfmuse arraigned on murder charges in Hermiston shooting

By Hermiston Herald

Murder charges were filed Tuesday against Tyree Quaddray Houfmuse in connection to a fatal shooting in Hermiston last month.



Tyree Houfmuse

The Umatilla County District Attorney's Office filed charges of first-degree manslaughter and murder against Houfmuse, 35, of Tacoma, for the death of James Cragun. The district attorney also filed a charge of felon in possession of a firearm.

Houfmuse has been in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, since police caught him Monday in connection to Cragun's shooting death May 27 in Hermiston.

Houfmuse attended the arraignment via video, speaking from the jail. He was represented by defense attorney Kara Davis of Intermountain Public Defenders.

Davis asked to defer entering a plea until the defense had time to look at preliminary police reports and other relevant docu-

ments. Prosecutor Jaelyn Jenkins with the Umatilla County District Attorney's office said that it would

be possible to get some of those documents to the defense. She asked that Houfmuse be held on no bail, due to his charges and repeated offenses. She also asked for a couple of weeks so the case could be taken through grand jury.

Davis said that bail had to be set.

"There's no facts. We don't have an indictment yet," she said.

Jenkins repeated the request for no bail, but said if the court wanted to set bail, she asked that it be set at \$1 million, due to Houfmuse's prior violent crimes.

Davis said that Houfmuse qualified for indigent defense, and that a million dollars was extravagant.

Judge Dan Hill set the

bail at \$1 million, citing the nature of Houfmuse's charges.

Houfmuse will appear before a grand jury later this week. A preliminary hearing is set for June 20 at 8:15 a.m. at the Stafford Hansell Building in Hermiston.

Cragun's mother and sisters were in the courtroom for the arraignment.

"Hopefully, this time he stays in jail and doesn't get the chance to do this to anybody else," said Cragun's sister, Cynthia Bailey.

Bailey said from what she had heard, her brother and Houfmuse knew each other back in high school, but did not know much about their relationship at the time of the shooting. She also stated that Houfmuse was seeing her brother's ex-girlfriend.

Houfmuse was arrested Monday by Umatilla police after a traffic stop and turned over to Hermiston Police Department before he was lodged in the Umatilla County Jail in Pendleton.

City Council passes \$57.3 million budget

By **JADE McDOWELL**
Staff Writer

The Hermiston City Council passed a \$57.3 million budget for 2017-2018 on Monday.

The budget appropriates money for a number of large projects, including construction of the new senior center downtown, the West Highland Trail for bicycles and pedestrians, new money-saving solids-handling equipment for the recycled water treatment plant and various upgrades to city parks.

On the personnel side, all staff will receive a 2.5 percent cost of living increase, and the city is adding a building maintenance position and a human resources specialist.

The council also put on its Hermiston Urban Renewal Agency hat to pass the agency's budget, most of which will be dedicated to a \$900,000 festival street project on NE Second Street in front of City Hall.

After passing the budget, the council approved a bid from National Meter &

Automation Inc. to replace all city water meters with remote-read meters and insulate them. The project was paid for by \$1.2 million in bonds that will be repaid through the rate increase the council enacted in 2016.

Prior to the regular City Council meeting the council held a work session to hear a presentation from Umatilla County Fire District 1 Chief Scott Stanton about the fire district's first year as a combined district with Stanfield and Hermiston.

Stanton said the first year has gone well, and has given the community added benefits such as 24/7 staffing at Station 22 on Diagonal Road. He said there have been two house fires where response time was cut down from seven minutes to under two minutes due to that change. He also said that since January the district has had only one delay of service where an ambulance could not immediately respond to a call because everyone was al-

ready in service, which is a much lower number than in previous years.

Stanton said the district's call volume was up 6.5 percent in 2016 compared to 2015, with a 22 percent increase in fires and a continued upward trend of motor vehicle crashes.

"Distracted driving seems to be a common theme," he said.

Stanton said the district will be holding a groundbreaking sometime within the next month for the new four-story training tower that the department is building out at the Westland Road station in partnership with Blue Mountain Community College. The district is also working with Good Shepherd Medical Center on creating a community paramedic program that will potentially help cut down on ambulance runs and emergency room visits by working with community members on managing chronic diseases and following post-operation discharge instructions.

Two seriously injured in crash

Hermiston Herald

Two Boardman residents were seriously injured in a three-vehicle collision on Highway 207 on Monday near Interstate 84.

A teenager was seriously injured, and was taken by air to a hospital in Richland and later to Spokane.

Oregon State Police is investigating the crash, which took place at 10:31 a.m. Monday. The investigation thus far indicates that Markus Smith, 20, was driving a silver Pontiac Grand Am with a 13-year-old male passenger. The Pontiac was at the stop sign

at the top of the I-84 eastbound exit ramp of exit 182.

The Pontiac pulled onto Highway 207 and into the path of a commercial vehicle operated by Kevin Helzer of Hermiston.

The Pontiac sideswiped Helzer's vehicle and spun, striking another vehicle, which was facing south and waiting to turn onto I-84 eastbound.

Smith was seriously injured and transported by ground ambulance to Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston. The boy, whose name was not released by

OSP, suffered critical injuries and was transported by LifeFlight to Kadlec Medical Center in Richland, and then to a Spokane hospital. Helzer and Glen Sharp, the driver of the other commercial vehicle, were not injured.

As of Tuesday morning, the condition of both Smith and his passenger were unknown.

Good Shepherd said Smith was no longer a patient at the hospital, but did not say whether he had been released or transported to another facility for further care.

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Tuesday, June 20th 2017

5:30 pm

Good Shepherd Hospital
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