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## **Costs of Stenson murder retrial to Clallam County about to top \$1 million; budget emergency considered today**

By Rob Ollikainen

Peninsula Daily News

PORT ANGELES — Clallam County has spent \$995,665 this year on double-murderer Darold Stenson's retrial, Superior Court Administrator Lindy Clevenger said Monday.

"I am expecting more costs to come in," Clevenger said.

That means the cost of retrying Stenson on a 1994 murder conviction will top \$1 million, which could make it Clallam County's most expensive trial in history.

Clevenger prepared a spreadsheet for County Administrator Jim Jones breaking down the year-to-date expense of the Stenson retrial as part of a petition for state reimbursement through the Extraordinary Criminal Justice Costs Act.

The state divides a fixed amount of money to counties that seek reimbursement under the act.

County Administrator Jim Jones told commissioners during their work session Monday that the Stenson trial likely would qualify the county for reimbursement of only \$30,000 to \$75,000 from the state.

The final figure depends on the number of petitions filed by other counties.

Stenson, 61, was found guilty Nov. 12 of two counts of aggravated murder for the 1993 shooting deaths of his wife and business partner at his Kane Lane bird farm west of Sequim.

The six-week trial took place in Kitsap County Superior Court in Port Orchard, with Clallam County Superior Court Judge S. Brooke Taylor presiding and Clallam County Prosecuting Attorney Deb Kelly representing the state.

Stenson was represented by defense attorneys Roger Hunko of Port Orchard, Sherilyn Peterson of Seattle and Blake Kremer of University Place.

Stenson's 1994 conviction was overturned by the state Supreme Court in May 2012 and remanded back to Clallam County for a new trial.

Taylor granted a defense motion for a change of venue because of extensive media publicity over the 20 years between trials.

Stenson is expected to be sentenced to a mandatory term of life in prison.

The sentencing hearing is scheduled for Dec. 10 in Clallam County Superior Court.

Clevenger's "work-in-progress" data table includes the following expenses for the Stenson trial in 2013.

- \$589,547 for defense attorney salaries and services.
- \$110,158 for defense investigation costs.
- \$46,596 for prosecuting attorney salaries and services.
- \$85,609 for prosecution expert witness costs.
- \$19,790 for jury costs.
- \$9,038 for defense expert witness costs.
- \$4,687 for law enforcement investigation costs.
- \$4,605 for jail costs.
- \$304 for prosecution discovery costs.
- \$125,331 for other adjudication costs.

The three commissioners today will consider approving a \$495,800 budget emergency for Superior Court — and a \$36,534 budget overage for sheriff's operations — for costs related to the Stenson trial after a public hearing today.

The quarterly budget emergency for Superior Court includes basic trial costs, expert services, witness fees and travel.

The sheriff's operations expense covers the salary and benefits of two temporary, part-time criminal analysts.

Stenson is being held in the Clallam County jail without bail.

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