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Budget squeeze intensifies

Library services, schools deal with fiscal dilemma as standoff reaches 9th week

By Ford Turner
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

HARRISBURG — Money for some library services in Allegheny County is being pinched, counties may soon have to pick which organizations get funding and which do not, and some school districts must mull borrowing because more than \$2 billion in state

payments have been held up. Those were just some of the offshoots seen Tuesday, the 57th day without a fiscal 2025-26 state budget in place. Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro and leaders of the divided Legislature — the House run by Democrats, the Senate by Republicans — continued to negotiate but no deal appeared close.

While funding-reliant organizations were becoming alarmed, frustration was building close to the negotiations. Mr. Shapiro said Monday that he was frustrated but planned to keep working at it. On Tuesday, Sen. Jay Costa of Allegheny County — Democratic minority leader in the chamber — said Republicans “keep moving the goal posts” in negotiations. Senate Republican Majority Leader Joe Pittman of Indiana County said the reverse was true. “I think perhaps the Democrat frustration is that our goal posts

have been remarkably consistent and they don't like the answers that we consistently provide,” Mr. Pittman said. A crucial and still-unresolved question is the overall “spend” number for the budget. The signed 2024-25 budget was \$47.6 billion. A Democratic-supported 2025-26 spending plan had spending of about \$50.6 billion, while a Republican-driven bill used last year's funding levels for a \$47.6 billion spend.

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FIRED FED GOVERNOR SAYS SHE WILL SUE

Cook challenges Trump's authority to make move

By Christopher Rugaber
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Federal Reserve Gov. Lisa Cook will sue President Donald Trump's administration to try to prevent him from firing her, her lawyer said Tuesday.

The announcement makes it more likely that a high-stakes legal battle will ensue that will probably end up at the Supreme Court, and could redefine the limits of the president's legal authority over the central bank. Increasingly at issue is the Fed's independence from day-to-day politics, which most economists consider a key factor in keeping long-term inflation and interest rates low.

“President Trump has no authority to remove Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook,” said Abbe Lowell, Ms. Cook's lawyer and a longtime Washington figure who has represented prominent people from both major political parties. “His attempt to fire her, based solely on a referral letter, lacks any factual or legal basis. We will be filing a lawsuit challenging this illegal action.”

Trump, meanwhile, underscored in remarks at the White House that his goal is



Cook

INSIDE

Trump's threat to deploy troops to Chicago sparks fear and defiance. **A-6**

HERALDING A VICTORY



Justin Guido/Post-Gazette

UPMC Magee-Womens nurses celebrate Tuesday during a rally across the street from the hospital in Oakland. The nurses voted to unionize over the weekend. About 1,000 nurses will be represented by the bargaining unit. **Story in Business, Page A-12**

Antisemitic flyers lead to \$50,000 fine

By Megan Guza
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A district judge on Tuesday found an Ohio man guilty of the more than 150 litter-related charges filed against him in the aftermath of an antisemitic flyer campaign in Squirrel Hill earlier this year, although his attorney has pledged to appeal the verdict that he said runs afoul of the First Amendment.

Jeremy Brokaw, 45, declined to comment after a traffic court judge rejected his attorney's proposal that a “fair resolution” would be to find him guilty of just some of the

charges against him.

But Judge Craig Stephens said the decision before him was “all or nothing,” noting he had no basis on which to decide how many charges to find Mr. Brokaw guilty of and how many to dismiss.

The flyers — which police and witnesses who saw them described as racist and antisemitic — were tucked into Ziploc-type bags filled with corn kernels and thrown from Mr. Brokaw's light-colored Durango throughout Squirrel Hill and in parts of Shadyside on May 19. Authorities linked the vehicle

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Megan Guza/Post-Gazette

Jeremy Brokaw, left, looks on as his attorney, Joshua Smith, addresses the media following a traffic court hearing in Pittsburgh Municipal Court on Tuesday. Mr. Brokaw, of Zanesville, Ohio, was found guilty of the more than 150 littering citations filed against him in relation to antisemitic flyers he left throughout Squirrel Hill earlier this year.

Deal could be test case for market's recovery

By Madaleine Rubin
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A prominent Downtown skyscraper is on track to change hands before the end of the year in a sale that could indicate how the corridor's struggling office market is faring on the road to recovery from the pandemic.

New York-based developer Cheskel Brach is in serious talks to purchase Liberty Center, the 27-story office tower that's home to the investment management firm Federated Hermes, local real estate sources confirmed. Mr. Brach did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

CBRE Investment Management acquired the building for around \$98 million in 2016 and put the building up for sale two years ago, listing it with Jones Lang LaSalle real estate firm's Pittsburgh office.

Now, the office tower built at the tail end of a Downtown renaissance that

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Weather

Nice with times of clouds and sun. Daytime high, 73; tonight's low, 50.
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