

The Oregonian

Beat Check podcast: The legacy and challenges left by Portland's departing police chief

*By Andrew Theen
January 13, 2020*

Danielle Outlaw arrived in Portland in 2017 to much fanfare. The first African American woman to lead the city's police bureau was young, blunt and appeared eager to rebuild trust between the community and law enforcement.

But in the hazy, sleepy holiday stretch between Christmas and New Year's, she was gone. Outlaw was named the new chief of Philadelphia's police department and tasked with addressing that agency's significant problems. The department faces lawsuits over harassment and discrimination within its ranks. Meanwhile, the city moved to fire more than a dozen officers because of racist and violent posts made to police social media pages, according to the Associated Press.

Where Mayor Ted Wheeler conducted a national search to land Outlaw, he didn't look far from home, quickly and enthusiastically naming Outlaw's hand-picked deputy, Jami Resch, the next chief.

Maxine Bernstein, The Oregonian's veteran cops and federal courts reporter, talked about Outlaw's legacy in her brief time in Portland, how she broke the story of her departure, and what insiders make of her successor, Jami Resch on the latest episode of Beat Check with The Oregonian.

Bernstein also spoke about the nearly a dozen chiefs she's covered in the past two decades (there were many interim chiefs as well), why their job is so tough and what challenges await Resch.

[Here's the full episode.](#)

Cops in schools? Portland police say they want to keep the program going

*By Eder Campuzano
January 11, 2020*

As budget season nears for Portland city leaders, deploying armed city police officers in schools is again being debated as officials mull the \$1.6 million price tag and its effectiveness as a tool to keep kids out of the criminal justice system.

Leaders of the city's largest district, Portland Public Schools, decided last year that although they want police officers patrolling its nine high schools, funding should fall on the bureau's shoulders.

Mayor Ted Wheeler proposed the city pick up the tab for at least one more year, which it did.

On Wednesday, Portland Police Deputy Chief Chris Davis pitched the City Council on the program's continuing existence during a work session, saying having specially trained officers in schools helps keep students out of the criminal justice system.

“The criminal justice system is not a good solution for almost all of the problems that we have with kids in schools,” he said.

Davis said school-based police officers, commonly referred to as school resource officers, get a bad rap because of cops who make national headlines for the wrong reasons. He cited a 2015 case in South Carolina in which a Richland County Sheriff’s deputy slammed a student to the ground during an arrest.

What’s often missing in public discourse when those stories break, he said, is that those officers are typically dismissed or charged with misconduct.

Portland’s youth services division currently has 10 officers who patrol high schools in the city’s three largest districts. The bureau’s budget is funded to provide 12 school resource officers so that every high school in city limits would have at least one, but the positions are vacant at Portland Public Schools’ Cleveland High and Jefferson High.

One officer is assigned to the Parkrose district and splits time between the high and middle schools and the David Douglas district, with the county’s largest high school by far, has two officers, Davis told the City Council.

Officers who apply for those positions undergo about 350 hours of training to meet national standards to work in schools, Davis said, which includes a focus on restorative justice. The officers are also chosen based on their desire to work with youth, which Davis said sets them apart from their peers on the force.

“Frankly, not all police officers are cut out for this role,” he said.

Should the program go away, Davis said, the bureau’s day-shift patrol officers would need training on working with school-aged youth that “would cost well over \$1 million.”

Davis also told the City Council that school officers’ primary concern is to keep kids from developing a rap sheet. Only 20 students were arrested as a result of more than 5,000 calls for service in the 2018-19 school year, he said.

“We have no interest in a school-to-prison pipeline,” Davis said, stressing that the youth services division is the bureau’s most diverse in terms of age, race, gender, language fluency and sexual orientation.

Students of color who oppose the program have said they feel uneasy around armed police officers and also long contended they don’t feel comfortable sharing their problems with adults in their buildings, particularly because so few of those employees look like them. They have also said that counselors and mental health professionals, not armed police officers, seem like the best people to help quell conflict, suicidality and other teen angst at school.

Davis pointed to recent surveys of Portland Public Schools students that shows very few teens enrolled in the state’s largest district feel unsafe in class. Only about 14% of seventh and 10th graders said they worry about violence at school.

A group of administrators representing Portland Public Schools — easily the city’s largest district with enrollment nearing 50,000 students — and the David Douglas district backed Davis’ claims to the council and spoke in support of the program Wednesday.

Madison High Principal Adam Sykes recounted an instance in which a neighbor reported a fight in a vacant lot near campus. Instead of dispatching a patrol officer to the scene, the police bureau called Madison High’s regular officer Carlos Ibarra, who had a vice principal tag along on the call.

What Ibarra and the vice principal found at the scene, Sykes said, was a group of about 20 students, two of whom were “doing what they were not supposed to.”

Sykes said the teens may have fled if they didn’t recognize the police officer approaching them. But because they were familiar with both Ibarra and the school administrator, they stayed put.

“I have concerns about what that work looks like without the program,” Sykes told the City Council. “I have concerns around what happens to our students when we don’t know who’s responding.”

City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, who was the sole “no” vote on the program’s budget last year, pushed back on Davis’ data. While Portland police logged 5,000 calls for service across the city’s schools, she asked how many of those were generated when a campus officer filed a report based on something they saw but wasn’t necessarily phoned in.

Davis said the data isn’t “high enough resolution” to suss out those details.

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly asked if people other than police at schools, including counselors, administrators — and possibly even students — could be trained to resolve minor conflicts typically handled by resource officers.

Hardesty echoed the concerns that Portland Public Schools students relayed to The Oregonian/OregonLive last January, which tipped the scales in the school board’s decision to reverse course on its initial agreement to foot the bill for the program.

“My personal dialogue and conversations with students, and especially students of color, over and over again say they’re uncomfortable with having law enforcement in their school,” she said.

The Portland Tribune

Commissioner Fish's life to be celebrated Feb. 8 at PSU

*By Jim Redden
January 08, 2020*

Details of the event will be announced by Portland State University next week.

A celebration of Commissioner Nick Fish's life will be held at 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8, in Hollman Hall at Portland State University.

Fish died of stomach cancer on Jan. 2. A special election to choose his replacement will be held in the May 19 primary. If no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote, a run-off election will be held on Aug. 11.

Sonia Schmanski, Fish's chief of staff, said PSU will announce more details on the event next week.

Fish has served on the City Council since winning the special election to replace former Commissioner Erik Sten in May 2008.

Schnitzer unveils Wapato plan: Bybee Lakes Hope Center

*By Zane Sparling
January 12, 2020*

Oregon nonprofit Helping Hands Reentry Outreach Centers seeks funds for North Portland homeless shelter.

Would a jail called by any other name smell more sweet?

The backers of the proposed Bybee Lakes Hope Center certainly think so.

Plans to convert the never-used Wapato Corrections Facility into a North Portland homeless refuge took a step forward Saturday, Jan. 11 — with the unveiling of the Oregon nonprofit that would operate the center if enough funds are found to save it from the wrecking ball.

Helping Hands already operates 11 emergency shelters and re-entry programs in Clatsop, Tillamook, Yamhill and Lincoln counties, and founder Alan Evans says he will rely on his own experience with homelessness to create a data-driven, trauma-informed center here.

"I lived on the streets. I nearly froze to death. I committed crimes to survive," Evans said in an emotional speech, recounting how a childhood of abuse led to years of addiction. "We are the right people for this. If we can fix this thing here, this will be a model for the rest of the nation."

As described, Bybee Lakes would initially serve 228 people — all referred to the center by other local agencies — who would live in three dorms, with one each for men, women and families. That would still leave another six dorms empty, which could be dedicated to detox, mental health, job training or other specific needs down the line.

But first, the money.

Noted philanthropist and businessman Jordan Schnitzer, who controls the property and has delayed turning it into a warehouse, says renovations, start-up and the first two years of operations at Bybee Lakes will cost \$4 million. Yet only \$1.4 million has been raised so far. Donations are being solicited by Helping Hands.

"If there's a viable program, with a lot of community partners and it's well funded, I can't imagine any agency in this community saying no. I just can't conceive of it," said Schnitzer, adding in an interview: "It's not a jail, there's not a single cell."

Multnomah County's elected commission has flatly rejected the idea — as have some of the homeless service providers who receive funding from the county. Instead, Chair Deborah Kafoury and the board have focused on the Bushong Building, which they purchased along with a downtown parking lot for \$5.8 million. Government planners say it will cost another \$15 million to \$20 million to retrofit it into a mental health facility.

Schnitzer says he passed on buying the Bushong Building, 333 S.W. Park Ave., calling it a "piece of junk" and saying it was probably worth \$3.5 million.

Other hurdles faced by the Bybee Lakes project include convincing the city to rezone the industrial property and persuading TriMet to improve bus service in the area.

"Why would we tear something down to go try to raise the money to build this someplace else, when we have a building that will work?" asked Evans, the nonprofit founder. "We're not going to take no for an answer."

But the question of the jail that never was is hardly over. Schnitzer's permit to demolish the facility expires in March.

Infill project hearings set for Wednesday and Thursday

By Jim Redden

January 13, 2020

The City Council has scheduled two hearings this week to take public testimony on the controversial plan to increase residential density

The City Council is scheduled to hold two public hearing on the Residential Infill Project that proposes to increase density in single-family neighborhoods.

The first hearing is set for 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 15. The second hearing is set for 5 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 16. Both hearings will be in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

The first work session, at which public testimony will not be accepted, is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 29.

RIP — as the plan is commonly called — has divided the city. Affordable housing advocates, land use watchdogs, social justice activists and homebuilders argue it will encourage a greater range of less expensive homes, helping to reduce the affordable housing crisis. Neighborhood activists and preservationists say it could change the character of the city without providing the opportunity for many more Portlanders to afford a new home.

During a Dec. 11 briefing on RIP, a majority of the council said they cannot support until a plan is approved to reduce the displacement of lower-income and minority households it is expected to create.

Current recommendations in the plans include:

- Increasing the range of permissible housing types (such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and additional accessory dwelling units) in single-dwelling zones.
- Reducing the maximum allowable sizes of new single-family homes to 2,500 square feet
- Allowing structures with multiple units to be larger than single-family homes, up to 3,500 for a fourplex.
- Removing minimum parking requirements and adding new garage design requirements.

Despite the questions, the council is facing a deadline to adopt the Residential Infill Plan, or something like it. The 2019 Oregon Legislature passed a bill requiring Portland and other large cities to allow duplexes on nearly all residential lots by July 1, 2022. The RIP recommendations allow more density, but could legally be scaled back in all existing single-family zones.

To learn more, go to www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/67728.

Willamette Week

Unite Oregon Executive Director Kayse Jama Won't Run for Portland City Council

*By Rachel Monahan
January 12, 2020*

The Council race after City Commissioner Nick Fish's death won't include one notable name.

The race to replace City Commissioner Nick Fish won't include a well-regarded nonprofit leader who was mulling a bid.

Kayse Jama, executive director of Unite Oregon, has decided against a run. "After thoughtful consideration, I decided not to run for Fish's seat," Jama tells WW.

Jama last sought office in 2018, when he challenged incumbent state Sen. Rod Monroe (D-East Portland). He finished third, behind Monroe and the winner, Sen. Shemia Fagan (D-East Portland).

Those who've told WW they will run for Fish's seat are Metro Councilor Sam Chase; Cynthia Castro, a policy adviser to City Commissioner Amanda Fritz; Julia DeGraw, a community organizer who ran against Fish last year; and Margot Black, co-chair of Portland Tenants United.

The race could be shaped by former mayor Sam Adams and former county commissioner Loretta Smith, the latter of whom made clear she's giving the city time to mourn Fish before officially announcing plans.

Candidates can begin filing with the city to officially run on Jan. 13.

Portland Mayoral Candidate Ozzie González Calls Financial Complaint Filed Against Him “Meritless”

*By Camille Soleil
January 11, 2020*

González and two others were accused of violating campaign contribution limits by Honest Elections Oregon.

A running dispute over whether Portland's contribution limits apply to this year's elections resulted in one candidate for mayor holding a brief press conference in City Hall this week, saying an overzealous effort to police campaign spending was discouraging people of color from seeking office.

Ozzie González, who is challenging Mayor Ted Wheeler in the May primary, held the press conference on Jan. 6 to dispute the elections complaint filed Dec. 19 by Ronald Buel of Honest Elections, a local advocacy organization. Buel argued that González, Wheeler and Jack Kerfoot, who is running for Portland City Commissioner, had violated the campaign-donation limits passed by voters in 2018.

González's official response to the city auditor? The complaint is "defective and void on its face." Kerfoot responded in a similar manner, saying it's "groundless." (As of now, the city auditor does not have a response from Wheeler.)

González, 41, is the director of sustainability and diversity for Howard S. Wright, a construction company, and serves on the board of TriMet.

González said the campaign-spending limits "are not currently in force and were not in force at the time of the filing, nor were they in force at the time of the cited contributions," and that these portions of the code "have been ruled unconstitutional by the Multnomah County Circuit Court." The latter was echoed in the auditor's office initial letter to the candidates—which seemed to acknowledge that until the limits are upheld in court, they can't be enforced.

All three complaints allege a violation of Portland Charter Chapter 3, Article 3, and Portland City Code Chapter 2.10. This includes, among other things, that a candidate cannot receive an individual donation of more than \$500.

The complaint states González received four contributions in apparent violation, the highest being \$10,000 and totaling \$14,000. The other two documents claim Kerfoot accepted four donations in violation and Wheeler 15 donations above the limit.

Dan Meek, an advocate for the spending caps, says it's not clear whether the measure passed by voters will pass constitutional muster—so candidates ought to voluntarily abide by it.

"It's fully expected, it's a long fight and we will continue to attempt to achieve what the voters of Multnomah County and Portland have wanted," Meek said. "We will get limits."

González was outraged enough by the complaint to hold a press conference about it.

He said he does not believe in buying his way into victory and mentioned that candidates of color face many barriers that their white counterparts do not.

"Like many of you, I am deeply concerned about the role big money plays in politics," González said. "Portland deserves an inclusive democratic process and the complaint filed against me is working against inclusion."

He mentioned three of the four donors listed in the complaint were first-time donors to a political cause, which he is "very proud of," and two of the four are non-white.

"Every single one of the businesses that has donated to my campaign thus far is either a minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned or a local small business; people who don't typically give to campaigns," he said. "Every one of my donors is doing something courageous right now. They are investing in a better democracy by contributing to my campaign."

Snow Freakout 2020: Portland Braces For the Worst, Despite Knowing Nothing

*By Elise Herron
January 10, 2020*

Two local agencies and Pacific Power warn Portlanders to prepare for snow.

Say the word snow and Portland panics (for good reason). But while the forecast for next week is still uncertain, government agencies are warning Portlanders to prepare for the worst.

Portland Bureau of Transportation this morning issued a travel advisory, warning Portland commuters to prepare for potentially treacherous road conditions next week.

"With a variety of forecasts all calling for freezing temperatures and the potential for snow next week, PBOT urges the traveling public to get ready for winter this weekend," the agency wrote, adding that road crews will go to work Sunday preparing equipment for snow and ice responses.

Amid the forecast uncertainty, TriMet also issued an assurance that it has "coordinated the staff, supplies and equipment necessary to keep our buses and trains rolling if snow begins to fall."

"All of these preparations are intended to keep our buses and trains moving," TriMet wrote. "However, if conditions become unsafe for our riders, employees or equipment, we will temporarily adjust service. Riders should plan ahead for possible delays during winter weather events and check trimet.org/alerts before they head out."

And, in the case of power outages, Pacific Power has warned Portlanders to prepare emergency outage kits (including a flashlight, a battery-operated radio, batteries, non-perishable foods, a manual can opener, bottled water and blankets), keep mobile phones charged and to avoid downed lines.

"We are monitoring the situation closely and are ready to deploy crews as needed should the storm cause any substantial outages," said David Lucas, vice president of operations. "We work throughout the year pruning trees and making sure dangerous limbs are not too close to powerlines. Wet heavy snow on tree limbs is the biggest power outage risk with a storm like this."

It's still not clear what next week's forecast will bring. David Elson, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service Portland, says it's still too soon for a detailed forecast to be available.

"During the course of the week it's looking likely that we'll see something," Elson says. "We're just not able to provide a lot more detail yet."

But Oregon's Cascade mountain passes are predicted to get four feet of snow accumulation from Friday to Sunday, the Statesman Journal reports. Maybe this is a good weekend to stay in town.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Contentious project on verge of approval

*By Chuck Slothower
January 10, 2020*

A controversial proposal for a 23-story mixed-use building won tentative approval from the Portland Design Commission on Thursday despite opposition from Pearl District neighbors.

Commissioners voted 6-0 (Chairwoman Julie Livingston recused herself) to approve the design by Otak Inc. They will hold a final vote on Jan. 16 to adopt findings on the project.

The Hyatt Place and Allison Residences project would bring 160 hotel rooms and 113 residential units to a quarter-block site at Northwest 12th Avenue and Flanders Street. The building would replace a surface parking lot.

The 197,118-square-foot project is a joint venture of Seattle multifamily developer Vibrant Cities and hotelier The Sunray Companies of Madison, Mississippi. The project was valued at \$66 million by the city's Bureau of Development Services.

Plans were scrutinized by the Design Commission in two previous advice meetings and two review hearings, most recently in November.

Pearl District residents have objected to the project for months, lodging concerns about the planned height, mass and density for the small footprint. At 250 feet, it would be by far the tallest building in the south Pearl District under higher limits established by the Central City 2035 Plan.

Commissioners, city staffers and residents have also expressed concerns that traffic from the hotel and residential development would conflict with plans for the Northwest Flanders Bikeway Project – a future path between the waterfront and Northwest Portland that would pass next to the building.

Commissioners did not directly address the largest issues. They said the building’s height and mass were within the zoning rules, giving the design panel little leeway, and potential traffic conflicts were an issue for the Portland Bureau of Transportation to resolve.

“The context issues – height and massing – are not something we can deal with anyway,” Commissioner Don Vallaster said.

The design has improved over time, Commissioner Zari Santner said.

“They have really done a great job of making the building far more coherent than it first was when it came to us,” she said.

Most recently, Otak incorporated warmer colors into the exterior palette and raised water fountains at the entrance. After objections from neighbors, the valet zone was moved from Flanders Street to 12th Avenue.

The Pearl District Neighborhood Association registered opposition to the project, as did the Pearl Neighbors for Integrity in Design – a private group that is distinct from the city-sanctioned association.

The neighborhood association, in a letter, objected to design elements such as metal cladding and the “near-blank wall” appearance of the east facade.

Bateman Seidel’s Carrie Richter, a land-use attorney for PNID, attempted to speak to the commission on Thursday. Commissioners declined to hear her testimony, saying the record was closed.

Patricia Cliff, president of PNID, said the building would bring intense use to the intersection, with valet parking and two loading docks competing with traffic from two neighboring residential buildings and the planned bikeway.

“It is not a user-friendly building, and it could be potentially dangerous for pedestrians, drivers and bicyclists,” she said.

Also on Thursday:

No vote yet on hotel project’s design

The Design Commission tackled review for the Proper Hotel, another Pearl District project at Northwest 12th Avenue and Irving Street.

Commissioners identified some issues with a vertical column, and a lack of a water feature. However, they were largely complimentary of the design for a nine-story building with approximately 170,000 square feet.

Past projects have met design guidelines for a water feature reflecting Tanner Creek with everything from poetry to sound. Commissioner Jessica Molinar said future projects should include water features that incorporate actual water.

“It’s not a deal-breaker this time, but it will be a deal-breaker for me in the future,” she said. “Please do not come back with another project that does not include an actual water feature.”

The project is being designed by ZGF Architects for Proper Hospitality, a Santa Monica, California-based company with hotels in California and Texas.

Commissioners did not vote whether to approve the project; the hearing is set to continue on Jan. 23.

OPB

Nonprofit Begins Fundraising To Turn Wapato Jail Into Homeless Services Facility

*By Meerah Powell
January 11, 2020*

An Oregon Coast-based nonprofit is kicking off its fundraising campaign Saturday to turn North Portland’s never-used Wapato Jail into Bybee Lakes Hope Center, a mixed-use facility for people experiencing homelessness.

The nonprofit Helping Hands Reentry Outreach Centers, operates multiple emergency shelters and reentry program facilities in four counties near the coast.

It’s working to hit a goal of \$4 million to transform Wapato Jail into a facility offering support services, emergency shelter and program-based transitional housing.

“That will cover the start-up costs for renovating the space and making the changes we want to make to make it appropriate for group housing and trauma-informed supportive services,” said Raven Russell, director of data and major projects for Helping Hands.

“That will cover the start-up and operating expenses for the first two years.”

Russell said reaching that funding goal will ensure Helping Hands has time to do a “proof of concept period” at the space and to gather data through a database she said was developed for Helping Hands by volunteer software developers.

“That’ll allow us to collect the data about who exactly in the Portland area is needing our services out there, what our utilization rates are and exactly what services they need from us,” Russell said. “Our approach is very trauma-informed. We take the time to learn each individual’s story and their circumstances that brought them into homelessness because their story is going to dictate what services they need in community, and we do not expect people to fall into a cookie cutter.”

Specifically, Helping Hands is looking to open three of the nine wings at Wapato Jail and house up to 228 beds in the first year of operation — one for men, one for women and the remaining wing for families.

The total bed space capacity for the facility is more than 500 beds.

“We want to phase in operations there so we can make sure to do this in a sustainable way,” Russell said.

Along with those beds, Russell said, Helping Hands is looking to work with community partner agencies which will be able to provide services on site such as job training.

“We have brought in a few community chefs from the area that want to do some vocational training programs in the kitchen, so they would be donating their time and working with clients who are living there that have an interest in gaining those skills in the kitchen and that would make them hireable in kitchens,” Russell said.

Helping Hands is also looking to develop partnerships with services like “detox and treatment, services like medical and dental health, mental health,” Russell said.

“We’re trying to get as many relevant services on site at Bybee Lakes Hope Center as we can so we can increase access and help people to get the right services at the right time in their treatment plan,” she said.

So far, donors have committed about \$1.3 million to Helping Hands, Russell said.

“We’ve only been working on fundraising for a few weeks now, but we’ve had a lot of people who really believe in the project and really see our vision,” she said.

Wapato Jail’s owner, Jordan Schnitzer, has set a deadline for Helping Hands to hit its goal by mid-March, at which time he will decide whether to demolish the building.

“We’re feeling very confident,” Russell said about hitting the \$4 million goal.

Helping Hands is kicking off its official fundraising campaign at a community education event Saturday, from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at 915 Southwest Harvey Milk Street in Portland.

It is also accepting donations through its website.