

**From:** Commissioner Eudaly  
**Sent:** Friday, November 10, 2017 2:26 PM  
**Subject:** A word about BDS and communications...



**Commissioner Chloe Eudaly**  
City of Portland

Dear BDS Employees,

I'm writing to you to describe the role of the communications team and its additional members that the City Council approved this week. As I am sure most of you know, my former deputy chief of staff, Dave Austin, is leading the bureau's new approach to communications. Dave is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist. After 22 years at The Oregonian, he served as the communications director at Multnomah County where he built a team that not only served as the single point of contact for the public for many aspects of county government but also revolutionized the way that county staff communicated with each other to create better work outcomes.

We live in an era that is defined by our rapidly evolving approach to communications. Unfortunately, we can no longer rely on a daily newspaper to help us understand what is happening in our community because such a paper no longer exists. Instead, journalists working at the website that replaced the paper are pushed to rush out salacious, inaccurate stories that serve as click bait for advertisers.

It's ironic that one of those stories prompted me to communicate directly with you in order to correct many of the factual errors and misleading statements contained in it. To set the record straight, here are the facts:

- 1) The new team will be made up of the public information manager, two public information officers, a senior community outreach and information representative, a graphic designer III, a graphic designer II, a senior administrative specialist and two video production specialists. The team in the past was made up of six positions -- some of which have been vacant. So I authorized the addition of three new positions to help with the work, not nine as the article implied. These three new positions represent only a fraction of the jobs we added at BDS in the Fall BMP -- 30 positions that include inspectors, office support specialists, supervisors and technicians.
- 2) The resources for the communications positions comes from development fees, not the general fund. As you know, nearly all of our personnel are covered by these fees. The article incorrectly characterized how the positions will be funded and also inflated the salaries of the communications team members.

3) The reporter interviewed BDS Director Rebecca Esau, my Chief of Staff Marshall Runkel and Multnomah County's new communications director Julie Sullivan-Springhetti but did not use information from any of them that would've helped clarify our plans for the bureau. When the reporter contacted me at the end of the day, at the beginning of a holiday weekend and after her stated deadline, I told her I was busy and understood that she had already talked to several other people. Yet, she chose to make it seem like I refused to provide her with any information.

The BDS communications team will have a variety of functions: increasing applicants' knowledge about how to successfully apply for a permit and track the status of applications; increasing BDS staff's awareness of service delivery goals by making performance information available in real time; and making it easy for the public to learn about development issues and help shape how the bureau can contribute to making our city a more livable place for all of us.

Based on the amount of permit activity that will occur this year and the extra cost associated with our new communications team, we would have to become roughly .03% more efficient to justify the investment in communicating better with our customers and each other. I'm confident that we can far exceed that modest return on this investment.

Because of your hard work, BDS is on track to set an all-time record for the amount of permitting activity that will occur in 2017. You deserve an enormous amount of credit for being able to be effective despite struggling with an outdated software system, leadership changes and the tragedy of losing one of our BDS family earlier this year.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chloe Eudaly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.