

The Oregonian

Ex-state exec Michael Jordan to lead Portland's sewer bureau

By Brad Schmidt
May 08, 2015

Michael Jordan, the former state executive who abruptly resigned two months ago after Gov. John Kitzhaber's resignation, has been selected to lead Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services.

Commissioner Nick Fish, in charge of Portland's sewer and stormwater bureau, announced Jordan's hiring in a press release Friday morning. He cited Jordan's commitment to stabilizing rates, improving transparency and strengthening accountability.

"He's widely respected for his work," Fish said in a later interview. "I thought we had three very good finalists, but I thought ultimately Mike was the best fit for what I want to do with the bureau."

Jordan was named one of three finalists last week, although he seemingly had a leg up from the start. (Read Jordan's resume).

Jordan had led the state's Department of Administrative Services since March 2011 but left in March after Kitzhaber's resignation amid a growing scandal.

Jordan packs a varied resume, including stints as chief operating officer for Metro, city administrator for Canby and as an elected Clackamas County commissioner.

He came under fire in his last months under Kitzhaber. Kitzhaber told Jordan he wanted the state to hire an outsider who championed the same interests as his fiancée, Cylvia Hayes. Jordan also launched a criminal inquiry into the leak of Kitzhaber's emails stored on a state server.

After initially saying he had no intention of resigning, Jordan quit March 5, and Gov. Kate Brown named an interim replacement. Fish had breakfast with Jordan one week later, after the city's job posting was announced.

Fish on Friday said the breakfast "wasn't a recruitment pitch. It was reconnecting with someone." But Fish said he did bring up three openings or potential openings for director positions -- at BES, the Water Bureau and the Office of Management & Finance.

Fish said an evaluation committee he set up kept him at arm's length until meeting with finalists.

The city's Bureau of Environmental Services post opened this year after Fish clashed with the longtime director Dean Marriott. Although an overbudget office project was the driving narrative, Fish told Marriott their "trust relationship" had been damaged.

Portland's hiring process included a national recruitment. Among finalists, Jordan beat out Paul Gribbon, a former city employee who led the Big Pipe project, and Paul Slyman, the director of parks and environmental services for Metro.

Jordan will earn \$185,000 and begins June 1.

Fish said he wants Jordan to focus on leadership development and equity within the bureau. And with the Big Pipe project now in the past, along with an established commitment to building green infrastructure, Fish said it's time to look forward.

"What's the next part of the story?"

Commissioner Steve Novick couldn't resist referring to Michael Jordan -- NBA legend and six-time champion -- in an email Friday.

City Commissioner Steve Novick congratulated Commissioner Nick Fish on his choice of Michael Jordan as Director of the Bureau of Environmental Services, and urged Commissioner Fish to pursue Scottie Pippen to replace the retiring David Shaff as Water Bureau Director.

"The utilities should work together as a team, and with Jordan and Pippen you get a championship team," Novick said. "Mr. Pippen spent four good years in Portland, and I'm sure he'd be happy to return. And, of course, Commissioner Fish and Sonia Schmanski both have extensive experience with the triangle offense. Indeed, Sonia has long been known to insiders as the Tex Winter of City Hall. We have a tremendous opportunity here."

Free Portlandia! And put the Portland Building out of its misery: Letters to the Editor

By Letters to the editor
May 10, 2015

Free Portlandia! Years ago, I undertook a state nonprofit filing under the name "Free Portlandia" to advocate moving Portland's iconic statue from the disastrous Portland Building down to the waterfront — onto which she was disembarked and then perched in cement upon a second-story ledge, commencing an unhappy marriage to that building. As I write this letter, Portlandia is commencing her annual disappearing act behind a thick canopy of London plane trees.

Renovating the building may cost \$175 million, and this should be Portlandia's moment of emancipation. I would hope The Oregonian/OregonLive would provide much-needed leadership in returning her to the waterfront, trident and all, away from a location that has been described in this newspaper as an "eyesore." Quite apart from the defects of the Portland Building itself, "Portlandia" must endure an artistic backwash as she overlooks Southwest Fifth Avenue, which is split by MAX tracks, with narrow car and bus lanes on each side. As for the Portland Building itself, the editorial board has written, "The building's troubled construction, engineering, seismic fitness and repair history, as well as any plans for its overhaul or replacement, should be fully in the public's hands. Ditto for the destiny of Portlandia" (emphasis mine). As for the seismic allusion, the first object to go in a seismic event will be Portlandia — right onto Fifth Avenue! To say that Portlandia is the city's icon is to state the obvious. One can hardly go a day (and with those "Portlandia" television skits, some evenings) without Portlandia showing herself — first in the hearts of her citizens and then to the greater world beyond Portland.

One emphatic example: I was at the 2014 Portland Timbers opener when a three-story tifo of the statue was raised to the delight of the fans.

Bruce Hall

Southwest Portland

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Free Portlandia! Dear Honorable Mayor Charlie Hales, City Council Members and Fred Miller: Hi! It's me — the Portland Building. Well, I have to say I'm flattered by all the attention as well as the potential price tag for renovations to keep me going. About \$175 million — twice as much as the estimate from two years ago. How about that? Still, I think we need to be realistic. My time serving the city has reached its end. If after just 33 years I already need such a pronounced level of overhaul, it seems to me that it's time to say goodbye. I will never grow taller than my 15 floors, so you'll never gain additional revenue with the increased availability in rental space. My windows will never get bigger (so how much more natural light can there really be?). And the growing water-infiltration problem? Water is very crafty. Until you really get inside my walls, there is no way to know what true damage there is. Don't ask me to lift my skirt; you won't like my bone structure.

We all know with the level of renovations required that we'll easily reach that doubled amount of \$175 million — and then some. OK ... so I'm on the National Register of Historical Places. Flattered! But postmodernism and I have had our 15 minutes of fame.

How about this? Hold an architectural contest mimicking my design — but with a structure that meets today's building requirements, and is a safe and desirable place to work and spend time. (Of course it would have to include a place for our friend Portlandia.) Also, let the citizens participate by choosing the winning design. (After all, they are paying for it.)

I'm proud to have served the city of Portland for these many years, and I've witnessed many amazing and wonderful changes and growth in our unique town. But Oregon is also a state that honors the right to die ...

My honored city stewards: Let me go.

Best regards,

The Portland Building

Caroline Mae

Northeast Portland

The Portland Building, postmodern money pit: Editorial Agenda 2015

By The Oregonian Editorial Board

May 9, 2015

New York has the Chrysler Building, Chicago the John Hancock Center – and Portland the Portland Building. Each building is iconic, even monumental, and draws citizens and tourists who oooh and ahhh. But only one suffers the dog that won't hunt: Portland.

The Portland Building is undeniably famous. To acknowledge its plumage you needn't like its brightly colored façade or clever incorporation of classical elements in its exterior – all meant to throw a wrecking ball into the bleak postwar architecture of glass-and-steel office buildings. The Portland Building helped shift America's design tastes to such a degree that in 2011 it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places as significant and made its creator, the late Princeton University architect Michael Graves, a near-household name whose fanciful tea kettles sell at Bed, Bath & Beyond. If some Portlanders were wary about it, many softened in 1985, when the inspiring sculpture *Portlandia* was set above the building's entrance. Who at that point couldn't look up from the sidewalk and smile at all the eye candy?

But buildings need to do more than look cool. They must be functional, engaging to those within them, efficient and safe. And the check has come due on the Portland Building: \$175 million to overhaul the structure, which was completed in 1982 for a comparative pittance at \$25 million.

The 15-story tower imports rainwater despite repeated attempts to patch leaks. Its dank interior, which accommodates 1,300 city employees, is bleak for lack of daylight and cramped owing to a configuration penned not by Graves but by another firm altogether – and many city employees have complained about working in a tomblike environment. The building's seismic fitness falls short of today's standards. And if the city were to try to unload the Portland Building in its present state, it's such a dog – and one that can't be handled without onerous oversight from purists – that it would likely fall short of fetching even \$20 million, based on the city's estimates.

Significantly, elected city commissioners showed preference at a work session that the Portland Building must be saved. While demolition and replacement was briefly discussed, support for saving the structure was sufficient for Mayor Charlie Hales this year to incorporate \$2.57 million into his yet-to-be-approved budget for the purpose of planning the overhaul and to map out a financing mechanism to cover project costs, two years ago estimated to be nearly half as much, at \$95 million. Apparently to allay sticker shock among taxpayers, officials recently pointed to the renovated Edith Green-Wendell Wyatt Federal Building, which required \$139 million in taxpayer funds for a total gutting and rebuild – a comparison that fails, however, because the Portland Building's skin, unlike the Wyatt's, is its core structure and must remain intact.

The math grows more daunting. Brad Schmidt, of *The Oregonian/OregonLive*, reported recently that city officials worked from a consultant's report showing that demolition and on-site replacement of the Portland Building could reach \$316 million – a figure that included an estimated \$50 million to lease temporary work space for the city's employees. That would seem to make a whopping \$175 million overhaul the better value, surely.

But a top-tier luxury office tower of 400,000 square feet with associated "soft" costs in downtown Portland in today's dollars could be built for about \$160 million, the editorial board of *The Oregonian/OregonLive* found. Even after factoring in a two-year dislocation of the Portland Building's inhabitants, it would be difficult to crack \$210 million in total project costs – though the same consultant's report worked up a scenario in which the city would find an alternate site and build a new structure on it for a total project cost of about \$214 million, leaving the Portland Building an orphan. In any event, the choice between overhaul and starting over on-site or elsewhere are worthy of deeper debate as the price difference between fix-it and new narrows.

Infatuation, even with a useless dog, blinds. That's particularly true when somebody else is paying the upkeep, in this case taxpayers. The council has failed to fully consider cheaper, outside-the-box ideas that could include moving the city's employees closer to the people government serves. It's not possible to call such a thought undesirable without asking: Is there a site well outside downtown – or perhaps sites both to the east and west of downtown – to build upon or lease space at while employees continue to work in the Portland Building, moving only when it's time? The downtown icon of postmodernism just might find a renter or buyer who does not need a dog that really can hunt. Then again, the building might fulfill a use not yet named.

Let the ideas bubble up. And let the uncomfortable questions be asked: What is the value to Portlanders of Graves' design? Is the building a hood ornament or treasure to be protected? Does money change the

answer? Separately: Must city employees work downtown – or, conversely, whose interests are served by their being downtown? Why, specifically, is leasing office space for city workers out of the question? Separately, again: Whose choice is it to save or demolish the Portland Building?

The council should deny Hales' appropriation to launch the Portland Building's overhaul. His proposal comes without sufficient public debate for an all-too-expensive project as other potential solutions remain insufficiently explored. Above all, the council should show it knows how to test itself for, and assign price to, sentimental attachments and make plain how it has done so in the case of the Portland Building.

The Portland Tribune

Hales to present budget to City Council on Wednesday

*By Jim Redden
May 11, 2015*

Mayor Charlie Hales will present his proposed budget for the next fiscal year to the City Council on Wednesday.

The council will convene as the city Budget Committee to receive the proposal at the beginning of its weekly meeting. The proposal includes \$49 million in additional General Fund revenue, the kind of dollars the council has the greatest discretion to spend.

"In good times and in bad, Portlanders' values are clear. They expect us to take care of what we have and invest in a better future. This year, the budget news is great, so this is the right year to invest wisely," Hales says in the Mayor's Message presenting the proposed budget that takes effect on July 1.

You can read the entire Mayor's Message [here](#).

Hales unveiled the the \$3.5 billion proposal last week. it includes \$484.5 million in General Fund revenue. At that time, Hales said it focuses on basic services, improving the relationship between the police and the community, and helping youth, especially at-risk kids.

"Budgets are the way the City Council puts its priorities into action," Hales said during a press conference at the East Portland Community Center, 740 S.E. 106th Ave.

Here's where Hales wants to spend most of the additional General Fund revenue:

- Street projects would receive nearly half of the increase, almost \$20 million. The additional money would continue the city's commitment to maintain 100 miles of streets a year, add safety improvements in East Portland so TriMet will start frequent service on 122nd Avenue, and finally begin funding the long promised "Up From the Mud" program to pave the 50 miles of dirt roads in the city.
- Continuing police reforms, including creating the new positions required to implement the U.S. Department of Justice settlement agreement to end the bureau's historic use of excessive force against the mentally ill. Hales is also proposing spending \$500,000 to help fund the new regional Psychiatric Emergency Center with Multnomah County and other partners called for in the agreement.
- Expanding hours for teenagers at Portland Park & Recreation community centers and other facilities to provide safe options to being on the streets. Among other things, Hales wants to spend \$2 million of the additional funds to reduce the user fees that were begun during the Great Recession to offset budget cuts.

Another public safety-related request is for \$1.38 million to restore 26 Portland firefighter positions eliminated during the Great Recession but retained with a federal grant that expires halfway through the coming fiscal year.

Hales' proposed budget also includes an additional \$6 million for the homeless and affordable housing, including funds to keep an existing women's shelter open year-round, increased focus on homeless camps, and more housing assistance. The total housing budget is \$99 million.

"We do have an affordable housing crisis, and it is not going away anytime soon," says Hales.

Hales is also proposing to increase joint water and sewer rates a little less than 5 percent. He says that is less than projected several years ago and mostly for necessary capital projects, such as the \$55 million water conduit under the Willamette River designed to withstand earthquakes.

Although Hales proposed budget would add 128 new positions, he insists most will provide needed services, not administrative overhead.

Unlike many previous budgets, Hales' proposal does not include much one-time spending. Hales says a lot of that money went to projects the council knew would be continued in future years anyway. He wants to end that practice but folding them into the regular budget, beginning with \$300,000 for the East County Action Plan that has already been funded for many years by the council.

Despite that, Hales is still proposing a few one-time appropriations he calls appropriate. In addition to the \$500,000 for the regional mental health crisis center, they include:

- \$2.57 million to start design work for renovating the Portland Building. The rest of the project — currently estimated at \$175 million — would be funded through a financial instrument backed by future rents from the bureaus housed there.
- \$1.93 million to promote Portland and provide public access to the 2016 IAAF World Indoor Championships, schedule for March 16-18 next year at the Oregon Convention Center. The international track and field competition is part of 10-days of athletic competitions, including the 2016 USATF Indoor Track & Field Championships on March 11-12. Hales says the events are an unparalleled opportunity for Portland to showcase itself before the 200 or so participating countries, and he also wants those who are not attending to view it on a Jumbotron screen at Pioneer Courthouse Square. For more information, visit portland2016.com.
- \$400,000 for a joint project between Concordia University and Portland Public Schools to rebuild Faubion School as a PK-8 with more ties to the nearby university.

The council will consider and possibly change Hales' proposed budget over the next two months or so. The next Community Budget hearing is May 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 1221 S.W. 4th Ave.

More information is available on the City Budget Office website at <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/cbo>.

Daily Journal of Commerce

Hales rejects propane terminal proposal

*By Inka Bajandas
May 10, 2015*

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales is urging a Canadian company planning to build a \$500 million rail-served propane export terminal at the Port of Portland to withdraw the proposal.

Officials from Calgary, Alberta-based Pembina Pipeline Corp. signed an agreement last fall with the port to construct and operate the terminal along the bank of the Columbia River near a dredge material handling facility on North Marine Drive. But the proposal, which would require a city zone change to allow a pipeline that would carry propane from train tracks to ships in the river, has drawn harsh criticism from Portland residents and environmental groups.

In a written statement released Thursday, Hales said he was most concerned about the environmental implications of the proposed terminal.

"I do not believe Pembina has made the case as far as Portland's environmental standards are concerned," he said. "And for that reason, I am asking Pembina to withdraw."

When Pembina and port officials first announced plans for the terminal it was scheduled to open in 2018 and receive 37,000 barrels of propane a day from Canada for export to Asian markets. Officials estimated approximately 600 to 800 temporary construction jobs would be created by the project.