

## **The Oregonian**

### **Interim Portland fire chief named as city searches for a permanent chief**

*By Aimee Green*

*April 4, 2016*

Ken Burns, a Portland firefighter of 26 years, was named Monday as interim fire chief of Portland Fire & Rescue.

Burns will take on the job starting April 15. He will temporarily fill the position left by retiring Chief Erin Janssens, who became chief in 2012. Her time as chief has had its ups and downs.

City Commissioner Dan Saltzman announced Burns' appointment. Saltzman said Burns won't be a candidate for chief, but is willing and excited to head the fire bureau until a permanent replacement is found.

Burns started his career as a Portland firefighter in 1990. He became a battalion chief in 2007 and emergency medical services battalion chief in 2011. Currently, he is deputy chief of Emergency Medical Services. He and his wife live in Happy Valley and have three sons.

### **Portland officials made a promise, then ignored it after getting what they wanted (OPINION)**

*By Guest Columnist Robert Culver*

*April 4, 2016*

In regards to Mike Houck's recent guest column in response to an Oregonian editorial ("Portland officials ignored a commitment, belittled a constituent and compromised pedestrian safety"), I would like to state that I am so glad The Oregonian has helped begin a conversation that should have taken place years ago. Every story has at least two sides, and despite the Bureau of Environmental Services' (BES') lengthy description of its "Public Involvement Policy" on its website, and despite our attending not only our monthly Lents Neighborhood Association meetings, but also those at which Portland officials communicated details about the development of the Foster Floodplain Natural Area (FFNA), my partner and I were not told that dogs would be prohibited until signs were posted in early 2013.

The new no-dog rule also did not take into account the commitment made by Mayor Sam Adams (which he has verified more than once) and BES management present at an August 2009 meeting. We were promised that we would always have access to our former property with our dogs if we were to sell our home and property to the city for the development of this project.

Two other commitments involved in the sale of our home, present in our purchase and sale agreement with the city, also were not kept. As noted in a memo from BES Director Michael Jordan to BES Commissioner Nick Fish, the agreement stipulates that the sellers (my family) will work with the city to identify areas of the property that are to be protected during construction and that our pet cemetery would also be protected. Neither of these commitments were kept. The men doing the demolition of the home were told that they were to get rid of "anything

man made," and they cut down many non-invasive trees and shrubs that we had planted in hopes of attracting more wildlife to our yard. After this happened, we were told by the BES managers present at the August 2009 meeting that this had occurred because "the City of Portland is a big, complex organization."

My views as someone whose family and neighbors were displaced by the flood mitigation project now known as the Foster Floodplain Natural Area are not that different from Houck's. When Mayor Adams asked why I wanted to stay in the area so badly, I mentioned that we had deer in our back yard and could walk to Fred Meyer if we wanted to. We enjoyed the mix of a wild area with quick access to the rest of our city and did not want to move.

If this area is too environmentally sensitive to allow dogs on leashes, why doesn't the city enforce the site's no-camping rule? After reading Houck's response to The Oregonian's editorial, I went to the Post Office and sent him a photo DVD that contains images taken in FFNA showing how people without dogs have been treating this area since it opened to the public in 2013. The FFNA has been subject to people camping, cutting down trees, hunting, fishing, smoking, drinking, leaving behind garbage and syringes and using the flood plain as a toilet. This needs to stop.

The image of a dog running off leash in the water that accompanied Houck's response was nice, but I don't believe that it really pertained to the issue here. We are not, and have not asked for, an off-leash area. In 2013, after the no-dog signs were posted, we signed our dogs up for the Park Bureau's "Dogs for the Environment" program. It allowed people to walk their dogs in Portland parks and natural areas if they signed a pledge to keep them on a leash and on the trail and to clean up after them. The dog owners were sent bandanas for their dogs indicating an understanding of this pledge. The program allowed access in the natural area. Soon after we received the bandanas, however, we were told that the program had ended in 2011 and that we had been sent the bandanas "because of our interest in the program."

A simple solution would be to post signs stating that dog owners must keep their pets on a leash, on the trail and clean up after them - or be fined. We would like our safe walking route back, and we would like the city to keep its word while helping keep the flood plain clean.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **Tensions rise over homeless plans**

*By Jim Redden*

*April 5, 2016*

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said Friday she is "stunned" by the "overwhelming" number of homeless people living in tents in Portland.

Mayor Charlie Hales says the number of homeless people is not any higher than in the past, but they are more visible because the city has developed the vacant lands where many of them have lived in the past.

Brown made her comments during a meeting of the Oregon Housing Stability Council where she signed a number of affordable housing bills approved by the 2016 Oregon Legislature.

A former Portland legislator, Brown told the council, "I'm in Salem most of the time, and I'm just stunned by the number of people living in tents in Portland. It's just overwhelming."

Hales was at the meeting when Brown made her statement. Asked by the Portland Tribune for a response, he said many people are probably stunned by the number of people they see living in tents in Portland these days.

But Hales insisted the numbers are not larger than in the past, and are probably lower following the opening of three new homeless shelters by the city and Multnomah County since the housing emergency was declared. He said they have only become more visible since he directed the police to reduce homeless sweeps after the City Council declared a housing state of emergency last October.

"A 1987 homeless plan said their visibility would increase after the city develops the land where many of the homeless have lived since the earliest shipping days," Hales told the Portland Tribune.

The exchange happened the day after many Portlanders were alarmed when a homeless man allegedly shot and critically wounded another homeless man in a collection of tents along a sidewalk in inner Southeast Portland. Police are still looking for the suspect. Their names were not immediately released.

The shooting happened within blocks of where Hales wants to open a homeless shelter and multi-service center in a vacant building owned by Portland Public Schools.

Residents living near the proposed Navigation Center want more information about the project, which was first revealed by Hales in his recent State of the City.

"We really don't know anything about it. There have been no meetings with the neighborhood association to discuss it," says Susan Lindsay, a member of the board of the Buckman Community Association, which represents the neighborhood where it would be located.

School officials say the building is an unused storage facility on the southern edge of the former Washington High School campus at Southeast 14th and Morrison. Hales' chief of staff, Josh Alpert, says the mayor hopes to open the shelter before the temporary overnight shelter that opened last year in Southwest Portland closes in a few months.

According to PPS spokeswoman Christine Miles, the city must meet three conditions to lease the building.

First, the city must prioritize homeless PPS students and their families for services.

Second, the city must continue paying for the Portland police officers who serve as school resource officers for PPS and the David Douglas School District. Miles estimates that cost at \$2 million a year.

And third, the city must continue paying its share of the youth passes that allow PPS high school students to ride TriMet for free. Last year the city contributed \$966,666 to the program. PPS contributed an equal share, and TriMet forgave that amount in fare revenue.

# Critical audit leads to changes in City Council grant process

*By Jim Redden*

*April 4, 2016*

Mayor Charlie Hales announced a new competitive process for grants awarded and overseen by City Council office on Monday.

The announcement follows a critical audit of the council grants that said the one-time special appropriation grants lacked transparency and equity safeguards.

“Portland is fortunate to have a lot of great organizations doing a lot of great things, and the City has a role in supporting those efforts,” says Hales. “However, the key to funding shouldn’t be connections; it should be creative ideas and exceptional efforts. This new process will level the playing field by inviting all ideas to be considered — not just those with Council connections.”

The January 2016 audit found grants totaling \$9 million to \$17 million a year for the past five fiscal years that went to outside organizations for activities ranging from arts performances to social service programs. Many of these grants are for activities that don't fit comfortably into the city's bureau structure, and are administered out of the offices of the mayor and commissioners, where the staff is not trained to oversee them, according to the audit.

"The City Council does not conduct any upfront planning to define the program objectives for grants they fund, but instead provides grants directly to specific organizations and activities. There is no competition to ensure that public money is provided to organizations best able to provide the services. "Transparency of these grant awards is also limited, and it is difficult for the public to track who receives grants," says the audit, titled, "City Council Grants: No competition and limited oversight."

A previous Portland Tribune story on the audit can be read at [portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/289694-167046-audit-city-council-awards-millions-in-grants-with-no-competition-and-little-oversight](http://portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/289694-167046-audit-city-council-awards-millions-in-grants-with-no-competition-and-little-oversight).

Hales' announcement came the day before public hearings begin on the next city budget.

Special appropriation grants outside of city bureaus have historically been awarded during the annual budget process, when individual council members ask for a cause, capital cost or organization to be funded. A January 2016 audit by the City Auditor's Office highlighted the lack of competition among grant awards.

Under Hales' proposal, rather than lobbying council offices, groups will apply for funding through a competitive process.

The Office of Management and Finance will manage the new process, which requires:

- A certain amount of money will be budgeted for one-time special appropriations grants in the 2016-17 budget.
- Interested groups can apply for a portion of that money by a summer deadline.
- A committee will assess the applications — with an emphasis on equity — and recommend awards.
- By fall, City Council will approve the grant awards as a whole.
- The City will provide technical assistance for organizations drafting proposals in order to make the process as accessible as possible.

The new special appropriations grant process will be incorporated into Hales' proposed budget, which will be released in a month or so. The council must approve it as part of the budget process.

Hearings on next year's budget are scheduled as follows:

- Tuesday, April 5, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at Wilson High School, 1151 SW Vermont St.
- Tuesday, April 12 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Alice Ott Middle School Auditorium, 12500 SE Ramona St.

In addition, a hearing on the city and Portland Development Commission budgets will be held on Thursday, May 12, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at City Hall, 1221 SW Fourth Ave.

## **Willamette Week**

### **Portland Names Ken Burns Interim Fire Chief**

Burns replaces Chief Erin Janssens, who retires this month.

*By Beth Slovic*

*April 4, 2016*

Portland Commissioner Dan Saltzman on Monday promoted Deputy Chief Ken Burns to interim chief of the city's Fire and Rescue Bureau.

Burns replaces Chief Erin Janssens, who retires this month after a tumultuous three-year tenure as Portland's first female fire bureau chief. Her time at the helm included an episode in which an assistant fire marshal told a downtown sex club how it could ignore potential fire-code violations, and Janssens' own grabbing of a subordinate in a threatening manner during a meeting.

Burns will serve until the bureau appoints a permanent director. He will not be a candidate for the permanent job, says Saltzman.

Burns joined the bureau in 1990.

## **The Portland Mercury**

### **Polluters—the City Included—Have Filed A Massive Records Request That Some Worry Will Delay Willamette River Cleanup**

*By Dirk VanderHart*

*April 4, 2016*

A little less than a month ago, as the US Environmental Protection Agency was working to complete a complex plan for cleaning up Portland's toxic harbor, a group of polluters responsible dropped a mammoth request on the agency.

On March 9, an attorney for the Lower Willamette Group, a collection of 14 polluters that includes the City of Portland and Port of Portland, filed a request for four years worth of comprehensive records on a huge array of elements [PDF]. For essentially any factor the agency might have taken into account when deciding how to mandate cleanup of the Willamette's badly polluted river bed, the LWG wanted all records—e-mails, recordings, internal communications, technical findings—from March 2012 onward.

Now, some people who have been watching the discussion around Portland's superfund cleanup are crying foul.

"This is going to be hundreds of thousands of documents," says Bob Sallinger, conservation director at the Audubon Society of Portland. "You're talking about several years and massive amounts of communication. This is the kind of thing you get in discovery when you file a lawsuit."

Of course, anybody has a right to petition the federal government for public records—a point LWG spokesperson Barbara Smith raised repeatedly. But Sallinger and others are incensed by the request because of a unique time clock that exists around the Superfund—more than 2,000 acres of contaminated river bed extending roughly from the Fremont Bridge to the Columbia River.

After 16 years, the EPA is finally about to propose a cleanup plan that would have to be paid for by the entities who polluted the Willamette for more than a century (the potential list runs longer than 150 parties). Once that happens, there will be two months of public comment and a lot more haggling, and eventually the EPA will issue a final proclamation for the plan, the "record of decision." And the agency really wants to do that this year.

Why? Donald Trump. And Bernie Sanders, Ted Cruz, Hillary Clinton, et al. At the beginning of 2017, there will be a new president in office, and that could have huge implications for the management of the EPA. So there's a big press to get a decision on the books ASAP.

Now, there's this records request. Requests, actually. Aside from a big ask from the LWG, there's another, filed by a Chicago attorney on behalf of an entity called the Portland Harbor PCI Group. No one the Mercury's talked to knows precisely who's behind the group (the attorney hasn't returned our message), but its request is even more massive than LWGs.

"From my standpoint, this is a delay-and-disrupt tactic," Sallinger says. "You don't drop massive FOIAs on the EPA without an intent to disrupt the process."

"It's becoming more annoying given where we are in this process," says Travis Williams, executive director of Willamette Riverkeeper.

The LWG argues it's just doing its due diligence.

"It is in no way a delay tactic. Absolutely not," says Smith, the spokesperson. "We recognize they're trying to get everything done this year. We're not at all disputing or asking for a delay."

Smith says the motivation is pure, and calls Sallinger and Williams' ire a "non-story." She notes the EPA is set to release something called a "feasibility study" next week, along with a proposed plan for cleanup. The study will set forth a range of options the agency contemplated when making its recommendation, and the LWG will have two weeks to respond. Smith says it's important they have all the information on hand to do so.

But it's unclear whether EPA will be able to wrangle the many, many requested documents by the time LWG has to respond to the feasibility study. And it's equally unclear the group could meaningfully sift through all those documents in time.

Smith points out that the LWG offered to modify its request to make it easy on the EPA. She shared a document detailing some of those proposed modifications—including decreasing the scope of the request, or working with EPA to extend the deadline for commenting on its feasibility study. It's unclear if any of those modifications have been made.

The EPA has been clear that the requests are a burden on its Seattle-based staff. Still, the agency says it will commit to releasing a cleanup plan next week. It didn't answer when the Mercury asked about delays that could occur after that plan's release.

"The two large Freedom of Information Act requests clearly add a significant workload for the staff who are preparing the Portland Harbor Proposed Plan, but we remain committed to our stated schedule and to releasing that plan in the next couple of weeks," agency spokesperson Mark MacIntyre said in an email last week. "We are also fully committed to transparency in our work and to fulfilling our obligations under FOIA."

Sallinger, meanwhile, is calling on the city to distance itself from the LWG's records request.

"It's absolutely disgusting that the City of Portland's and Port of Portland's names are on there," he says. "It goes to show how utterly indifferent they have been to the public side of this equation."

So far, two Portland elected officials who've been keeping tabs on the Superfund issue haven't said whether they see anything problematic with the records requests. Commissioner Nick Fish, who runs the Bureau of Environmental Services, the city's lead agency on the superfund matter, said last week he hadn't seen an email from Sallinger laying out the issue (Fish was CC'd, along with this chief of staff).

"It looks like the city is not a party to one of the requests," he said in a text message. "More later."

We've not been able to reach him since. Meanwhile, Mayor Charlie Hales' office is looking into questions we sent along this morning. We'll update with new information from either official.

**Update, 5:20 pm:** Michael Jordan—the one who's director of BES—has responded to Sallinger's concerns. In an email sent this afternoon, Jordan said "obtaining this information through a FOIA request is routine and good practice."

And while Jordan says city officials share the concern over delay in the Superfund process, Jordan, like Smith, notes the LWG offered to tailor its request to make things easier on EPA. Here's his entire reply:

*I understand that you have concerns regarding the FOIA request that the LWG, including the City, sent to EPA. The public records that were requested relate to EPA's revisions to and approval of crucial studies and reports, such as the Feasibility Study. The decisions that EPA is making are important to the community and the City is interested in transparency in that decision-making. Obtaining this information through a FOIA request is routine and good practice.*

*The City shares your view that the Superfund process should not be unnecessarily delayed. However, I understand that the LWG has made every effort to work with EPA*

*for the specific purpose of not overburdening the agency or causing further delay in the proceedings. For example, LWG representatives have contacted EPA by phone and in writing, offering to discuss ways to identify the requested documents or to stage the production of the records. Finally, with respect to your question regarding the Allocation Group, the City did not join in that FOIA request.*

*Thank you for your email and ongoing engagement in the Portland Harbor Superfund process.*

## **The Portland Business Journal**

### **Hales backs JP Morgan Chase's \$125M 'disadvantaged neighborhoods' program**

*By Andy Giegerich  
April 5, 2016*

Portland's mayor is one of several municipal leaders who've signed off on a large bank's effort to bring more economic opportunities to disadvantaged neighborhoods.

JPMorgan Chase & Co. launched the PRO Neighborhoods program Tuesday. The \$125 million, five-year program looks "to identify and support solutions for creating economic opportunity in disadvantaged neighborhoods around the country."

A release detailing the program didn't indicate whether it's part of Community Reinvestment Act requirements that call for banks to help meet credit needs in their communities. It also didn't reveal how much money Portland will receive.

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales, though, praised the efforts in a Chase release.

"Portland is a city growing with new residents, and economic opportunity," Hales said in the release. "But far too many of our families and neighborhoods have been left behind in the recovery. We need equitable access to our city's resources and economic opportunities, so that every Portlander experiences its blessings.

"I am excited that, with JPMorgan Chase's new commitment through the PRO Neighborhoods initiative, Portland will be able to support even more neighborhoods with access to good-paying jobs, affordable housing and community services."

Chase said the new initiative will enhance small businesses, create health and social service facilities and improve access to affordable housing.

The program follows a \$33 million Chase pilot program that backed low-income communities.

Among other initiatives, the new effort will work with community development financial institutions that lend money and offer other programs within specific areas.

The \$33 million pilot program helped those community groups to raise more than \$226 million, according to the Harvard Joint Center on Housing Studies.