

The Oregonian

Portland police chief under fire for hunting accident, monthlong silence: 'He screwed up and shot his friend'

By Maxine Bernstein

May 23, 2016

The decision by Portland Police Chief Larry O'Dea and the mayor to keep the chief's off-duty shooting of a friend during a hunting trip under wraps for almost a month has rankled current and retired Portland officers, who contend that anyone else would face immediate investigation and remain on paid leave or desk duty in the meantime.

"I wonder if he will be assigned to TRU," just-retired Portland Officer John Hurlman posted on his Facebook page. He was referring to the Police Bureau's Telephone Reporting Unit, basically the holding spot for officers under investigation.

Hurlman was removed from street patrol and placed on desk duty in November after supervisors learned he had written a Twitter message complaining that he'd be stuck late at work "to babysit these fools," referring to a planned Black Lives Matter march.

"I just sent a tweet. At least I didn't shoot my friend in the back," Hurlman wrote in his post.

In 1997, Hurlman's off-duty fatal shooting of a 3-year-old Labrador while he was jogging in Hillsboro in 1997 was made public days after the incident, which triggered heated criticism from animal lovers and provoked public protests. Hurlman took a voluntary two-week leave and then was assigned to a desk job when he came back. A criminal investigation led to Hurlman's indictment on animal abuse, criminal mischief and reckless endangerment charges. A civil compromise was reached later: Hurlman agreed to pay the family \$10,000, and the charges were dropped.

John Hurlman's wife, Christy Hurlman, also vented on her Facebook page this weekend, saying she was frustrated by what she sees as a double-standard.

"What really gets my goat here, is that he kept this quiet for ONE MONTH!! If an officer had a 'negligent discharge' with a hunting rifle that endangered the life of a friend, he would have been pulled out of his assigned duty," she wrote on her Facebook page.

Retired Portland police Capt. C.W. Jensen, who served as the police spokesman under former Chief Charles Moose from 1994 to 1996, said he can't believe someone in the bureau or mayor's office didn't "have the common sense" to disclose the chief's mistake as soon as possible.

"The bottom line is when people shoot other people hunting, it's news," he said.

Now, he said, "It's kind of made itself a bigger deal than it should have been, simply because of the delay in time."

"If somebody made a decision, 'Well, we're just going to lay low on this?' Really? Someone had to go to the hospital. He screwed up, and shot his friend. If it was made public the next day, it would have been interesting. You wouldn't have this question of 'Why were they covering this up?'"

The reaction among the bureau's rank-and-file was swift and ferocious. A handful of current officers who spoke to The Oregonian/OregonLive questioned the delay and said the chief's belated acknowledgement shows a disappointing lack of leadership. They asked not to be named for fear of reprisal.

O'Dea and Mayor Charlie Hales, who serves as police commissioner, didn't return calls or emails, asking them to explain why they didn't notify the public about the shooting until Friday when reporters asked.

The mayor's spokeswoman Sara Hottman said the mayor was following standard policy -- not publicizing off-duty conduct of an officer who hasn't been arrested or charged with a crime.

"The City generally does not announce such things while there are open investigations," Hottman said in an email.

The mayor, she wrote, "was and is concerned with supporting a good man and good chief, who is heartsick about hurting his friend."

But retired and current officers pointed to examples of the bureau publicizing off-duty police misconduct while officers are under investigation and before they face charges.

In one case, the bureau issued a brief release 11 days after then-traffic Capt. Todd Wyatt had a road rage encounter on Aug. 13, 2011, while returning from a vacation in Idaho. Wyatt was involved in an "off-duty incident while driving that involved another driver," the release said. Wyatt was under investigation at the time. Wyatt had flashed a gun at the other motorist, but no one was injured in the confrontation. Wyatt was later charged with exhibition of a firearm, but an Idaho jury acquitted him of the criminal offense. A police internal affairs inquiry found Wyatt acted inappropriately by displaying his gun. O'Dea, then an assistant chief, testified before an arbitrator in support of Wyatt's demotion, arguing that displaying a gun means the person is prepared to shoot. O'Dea described Wyatt's actions as reckless. The arbitrator ordered him reinstated to captain, and instead suspended without pay for 60 days.

In September 2012, veteran Portland police Officer Joseph C. Hanousek submitted his papers to retire, two days after a Multnomah County sheriff's deputy called him to investigate a reported accidental discharge of his firearm at a bus stop while off duty. Hanousek told the deputy he did drop his .380-caliber handgun on Sauvie Island while getting off a bus after work, but he denied that it went off. Witnesses said otherwise. No one was injured.

O'Dea shot a 54-year-old friend in the lower left back with his .22-caliber rifle on April 21 while hunting in Harney County, according to Portland police and Harney County sheriff's reports. Steve Buchtel, a retired Portland sergeant and a former Portland police firearms training supervisor who had served with O'Dea on the bureau's tactical squad, called 911 to report the shooting.

The wounded man has been identified only as a "close friend" of O'Dea's. He was airlifted by LifeFlight helicopter to the nearest trauma hospital, in Boise, Idaho. He was treated and released, police said.

Investigators released no details of how the shooting happened. It's not clear whether O'Dea identified himself as Portland's police chief when questioned by Harney County deputies or if alcohol was a factor. The Harney County incident report is still being finalized, Lt. Brian

Needham said. State police and the Oregon Department of Justice are now investigating. They have declined to comment further.

O'Dea called Hales, who serves as police commissioner, at 7 a.m. on April 25, four days after the shooting, Hottman said. That was the first morning the mayor was back from a trip to Europe with the U.S. transportation secretary, she said. Hales returned to Portland the night of April 24, she said.

Retired Officer Tom Mack, a former police union president, noted that O'Dea has lengthy experience as a former member of the tactical squad known as the Special Emergency Reaction Team. The members are called in to handle high-risk encounters.

"I guarantee you, if this was one of the peons who did this in the bureau, it wouldn't be, 'OK, that's OK, Tommy, I know you're feeling bad you hurt your friend.'"

"I'm shocked and appalled the chief isn't more forthright with his behavior," Mack said. "Negligently wounding another is something pretty serious."

He's surprised it took even four days for O'Dea to inform the mayor.

"It seems pretty cavalier," Mack said. The chief must have the mayor's cellphone number and could have reached him in Europe, he said.

O'Dea needed to be forthright to set an example as a leader of the nearly 950 officers sworn to uphold the law, Mack said. "Remember, he's the one who passes judgment on other officers who make mistakes," he said.

In 1990, an off-duty hunting accident claimed the life of a Portland police officer. He was shot by his friend and fellow Portland police officer near the Big Nestucca River in the Coast Range. The Tillamook County District Attorney's Office made the shooting public the next day.

Tough transition: Can Portland's mayor and mayor-elect get along?

*By Brad Schmidt
May 22, 2016*

Ted Wheeler's head hit the pillow around 11 p.m. Election Day, just three hours removed from celebrating one of Portland's most commanding political victories in decades.

Wheeler had good reason to get some rest. Portland's newly minted "mayor-elect" had already scheduled a press conference. In front of City Hall. At 6 a.m.

That daybreak scene epitomizes Wheeler's ascension as Portland's prime powerbroker – and the simultaneous weakening of lame-duck Mayor Charlie Hales. And it signals the strong potential for an awkward seven months until Wheeler officially takes over.

It's been 32 years since a Portland mayor has seen a successor from outside City Hall named in May. By winning the open seat now, instead of November, Wheeler has far more time to set priorities, select staff and build relationships — though so far he's declined to say who's helping with his transition.

Most importantly: Wheeler's opinion now matters, especially on the big stuff.

"The power shifts pretty quickly," said Len Bergstein, a longtime Portland lobbyist and sometimes pundit. "Most people who seek decisions out of City Hall are heat-seeking missiles, and they've got a way of figuring out who has the heat and who doesn't."

While Wheeler and Hales are saying the right things about a cordial transition, they have a frayed relationship and haven't spoken — beyond trading voicemails — since Tuesday's primary election. They're not scheduled to meet until June 2.

For his part, Hales expects the transition will be "fine" and doesn't foresee hiccups in pushing his priorities, even with a successor in the wings.

"We've had elections before," said Hales, who abruptly dropped his re-election bid last year after Wheeler challenged him.

Wheeler found himself in a similarly awkward position 10 years ago, when he beat Multnomah County's incumbent chairwoman. But the circumstances are different this time because Wheeler is now Oregon's elected treasurer, with duties he must balance until year's end.

As far as Wheeler's concerned, "it's on me" to ensure a successful transition with Hales. But when asked about the state of their relationship right now, Wheeler demurred.

"I'm not sure I want to go there," he said, calling Hales "classy." "It's exactly what you would expect it to be."

"Exactly where I stand"

If all goes as planned, Wheeler hopes to make his mark shortly after taking office Jan. 1 — if not before.

Among his top priorities, in order: stopping widespread tent camping, implementing a just-cause eviction process and beginning the slow crawl toward stronger community policing.

"You've got to strike while the iron's hot," Wheeler said in a 45-minute interview from his campaign headquarters. "Part of the transition is identifying what comes first: Where do you want to make the biggest impact the most quickly?"

To be successful, Wheeler knows he'll need buy-in from Portland's four city commissioners.

He appears to be on his way.

Nick Fish was the only commissioner to endorse in the mayor's race, picking Wheeler over 14 opponents. Fish is positioned to be Wheeler's strongest ally and presumably a reliable second vote toward building majorities — like the relationship then-Mayor Sam Adams and then-Commissioner Randy Leonard shared from 2009 to 2012.

While Wheeler won't have any formal say until Jan. 1, Fish said the mayor-elect will nonetheless have an important soapbox.

"He will be inevitably woven into the narrative," said Fish, who, like Wheeler, has objected to Hales' tent-camping policy. "And when he is supportive or critical of what the council is doing, that has more weight now because he's the mayor-elect."

Commissioner Dan Saltzman has also reached out to Wheeler to offer early support through the transition. It could be the start of an early three-person coalition — and those ties could make it more difficult for Hales to muscle through what's left of his agenda.

Wheeler said it's not appropriate to spend the next seven months being critic-in-chief to Hales. But he recognizes his newfound clout, and said he expects to speak with each city commissioner several times a week.

Wheeler isn't sure how frequently he'll meet with city bureau directors, although he expects to spend a lot of time with officials who oversee housing, transportation, police, building permits and sewer services.

"They'll know exactly where I stand," he said of city leaders.

Commissioner Steve Novick, who is fighting to keep his seat in a November runoff, said he can envision scenarios where Wheeler's preferences would matter before taking office.

"I don't imagine that we'll be going to Ted and saying, 'Are you OK with this?' because we don't always do that with the existing mayor," Novick said.

But at the same time, Novick said, a presumptive 3-2 vote by Hales' City Council might not be worth it if Wheeler is vocally opposed.

"It's a situation that could be changed at the drop of the hat once he gets in," Novick said. "So why bother?"

"He's a grownup"

Portland's mayoral transition will be unlike any in 32 years.

Although Adams won in the 2008 primary, he was already a city commissioner with relationships inside City Hall. Just as important, Adams didn't enter the race until Tom Potter decided not to seek a second term, though Potter did ultimately support Adams' opponent.

Back in 1984, however, barkeep Bud Clark upset Mayor Frank Ivancie in the primary. "We had very little communication," Clark remembers of the transition.

But that didn't stop city bureaucrats from reaching out. His chief of staff, Chris Tobkin, remembers quickly becoming inundated with memos and binders.

"It was stacking up against the wall in the campaign office because nobody knew what to do with it," she said.

Wheeler's already been through one potentially difficult transition — and he heaps credit on his predecessor at the time for helping him succeed.

In 2006, Wheeler overwhelmingly defeated Multnomah County Chairwoman Diane Linn in the primary. Linn could have made things difficult. She didn't. A few weeks after losing by 46 percentage points, Linn honored Wheeler's request to walk with her in the Portland Pride Parade.

"That was a healing, and important, thing to do," Linn said.

Wheeler remembers Linn offering up her leadership team and allowing frequent meetings with department leaders. Wheeler's office was just outside hers.

"She had no reason to want to work with me," Wheeler said. "And she did everything exactly right."

Linn said she had an obligation to fulfill her term as chairwoman but also to get Wheeler up to speed.

"I did not feel like he took over as county chair until I left office," she said. "The handoff was as smooth as possible."

Wheeler's transition with Hales has a similar dynamic. Although Wheeler didn't defeat Hales, that was the plan when he entered the race last fall.

Hales ended his re-election bid soon after, unable to win over campaign donors who had flocked to Wheeler.

"It's a strange, emotional time for Mayor Hales," said Saltzman, who will have witnessed four mayoral transitions during his five terms on City Council.

"He did want to be mayor for a second term. He's dealing with the person who was largely the undoing of that – at least the personification of the undoing of that," Saltzman said. "It's tough. But he's a grownup, and I think he can deal with it quite capably."

City office in the works

In other ways, the handoff from Hales will be different.

Wheeler's term as state treasurer carries through December. He's looking to launch a new retirement-savings program before he leaves. And he's got a second transition to manage: His own replacement won't be elected until November.

Asked if he'd split his time between his mayoral work and his duties as treasurer, Wheeler said "that's not unrealistic." He answered the same when asked if that means spending 25 hours a week on state business and 25 hours preparing to become mayor.

"I am mindful of my responsibilities as state treasurer, and I will not shirk those responsibilities," he said.

But Wheeler offered scant details about his transition process or the size of his eventual mayoral staff, saying he's not ready to make those announcements.

Wheeler said he met Wednesday with his campaign manager, Michael Cox, and his longtime chief of staff, Tom Rinehart, who started with Wheeler in Multnomah County and followed him to the Treasury. Wheeler said he'd like both to join him at City Hall, although the mayor-elect was non-committal on whether Rinehart would continue as his top aide.

Pressed to name people he'll consult with on hiring, Wheeler listed Rukaiyah Adams, chief investment officer for the Meyer Memorial Trust; Nichole Maher, chief executive of the Northwest Health Foundation; and Kayse Jama, executive director for the Center for Intercultural Organizing.

"We have seven months," he said. "I will engage broadly in the community."

Wheeler also wants an office in Portland's administrative headquarters next to City Hall — and soon. The City Council approved \$85,000 in its budget for transition costs. That'll cover the eventual cost of moving into City Hall and two transition staffers for Wheeler, but only in November and December.

He said he'll bring it up with Hales next month, after Hales returns from a previously planned trip to Washington, D.C.

"We want to reach a compromise that is not awkward for him," Wheeler said, "but also allows us to have access to key individuals."

"Conversations I'm already having"

Wheeler insists he's not out to undercut Hales. But he's been vocal nonetheless about several pressing issues — and he's already working to flex some muscle.

Wheeler wants the city to reel back Hales' policy allowing tent camping, saying it's not compassionate and isn't necessarily helping people into shelter or housing.

"It's certainly a conversation I'm already having with city commissioners," said Wheeler, before quickly adding that "there's no presumption" he can get the City Council to do anything before taking office.

Wheeler also isn't keen on Hales' planned \$195 million renovation of the Portland Building, which would include moving hundreds of city employees to rental space next year.

"The City Council has approved a strategy, and I'm not sold on it yet," he said. "There are questions I have about it, and there are alternatives that I would like to discuss with the commissioners."

Likewise, Wheeler long ago called on Hales to postpone hiring the next executive director of Portland's urban renewal agency. But Hales moved forward undeterred, and Wheeler now says he'd like to interview the finalists.

"That has not been offered to me yet, but that is absolutely what I will ask for," he said.

Hales has also been working quietly to finish a new labor contract with Portland's rank-and-file police union. Wheeler wouldn't say if he wants the City Council to hold off or, at a minimum, give him tacit veto power.

"I don't think it's appropriate for me to talk about, in public, what I will or will not accept today," he said.

But even if Wheeler won't say it, others know his opinion matters.

A few years back, Rob Wheaton negotiated a contract on behalf of about 1,500 unionized city employees. Negotiations for the District Council of Trade Unions could begin again this October, with the lame-duck mayor, and Portland's mayor-in-waiting, each with a vested interest.

"You kind of need to get the OK with them both," Wheaton said. "They're both equally important at this point."

With 6-month promise looming, Charlie Hales set to close homeless shelter

By Brad Schmidt

May 20, 2016

Six months after opening a temporary homeless shelter in Southwest Portland, Mayor Charlie Hales has a big problem: He doesn't have a replacement site locked up, and vulnerable women and couples could be forced back outside in 11 days.

And as of late Friday, that appeared all but certain.

The shelter's operator said a proposal to keep the facility open three more months — giving Multnomah County time to find new beds — was off the table.

That idea had come up at an emergency meeting Thursday night where Hales and Multnomah County Chairwoman Deborah Kafoury spoke with neighbors of the temporary shelter, known as the Jerome Sears facility at 2730 S.W. Multnomah Blvd.

"We have been informed by the city that Sears will not be extended," George Devendorf, executive director of Transition Projects, wrote in an email Friday night. "We are therefore working flat out to find an alternate solution so that no one needs to go back out onto the streets once Sears closes."

On Friday morning, spokeswoman Sara Hottman said Hales was "still thinking through what he heard" and that he hadn't decided whether to push to keep the shelter open longer. But on Friday night, Hottman confirmed the imminent closure.

"The mayor has decided to fulfill his commitment to the community," she said.

As for where residents of the Sears facility might go? "We'll hopefully have more information very soon," Hottman said.

Kafoury on Friday said she'd like to see stronger action from Hales, who was loath to go back on his word after his office had promised to close the shelter after six months.

"I'm concerned that it seems the mayor, at the 11th hour, is worried about his ego more than he's worried about the lives of 165 people in the shelter," Kafoury said.

Hales' office didn't announce Thursday night's meeting and it wasn't listed on the mayor's public calendar. KOIN reported details of the meeting Thursday.

If the Sears shelter closes May 31, the city doesn't have any single location where some 165 women and couples could go. Hottman said city officials would try to open a new outdoor camp and also push for downtown shelter beds that typically are provided only during cold winter months.

Hottman said city officials worked diligently to find new shelter space over the past six months but it proved harder than expected.

"It is, unfortunately, as we're learning, extremely difficult to open new shelter space and extremely difficult to establish new campsites," she said.

"I can't emphasize enough how difficult it is," she added.

Hales opened the Sears facility to homeless Portlanders on Thanksgiving after the City Council declared a housing emergency. While the city owns the building, officials had to get approval from the federal government. That's because the building was a former U.S. Army Reserve center and Portland is supposed to use it for emergency operations.

Earlier this month, Hottman said the shelter would need to close after May 26. She said that's now been rounded to May 31.

Officials had long been resolute the closure would happen.

"Is the City guaranteeing that the shelter will be closed at the end of six months?" reads the city's frequently-asked-questions document.

"Yes."

At the end of six months, the document said, city and county officials "will likely have created many more bed spaces."

But as it stands, there's no obvious place for the Sears residents to go.

Hottman said the idea of seeking an extension was floated by Kafoury in a phone call with Hales last week. The county will have additional shelter capacity later this year, which would provide an easy transition for residents of Sears.

An extension would need approval from the federal government's General Services Administration.

Hales has taken heat in the past for reversing public promises. In 2015, he suddenly reversed his support for building a propane terminal in North Portland.

David Austin, a county spokesman, said county officials hope to bring more than 300 beds online later this year -- more than enough for residents of Sears.

Kafoury agrees with Hales that finding new shelter space is difficult, but she questions whether the city has done everything possible before considering closure.

"While I don't have any ability to open or close this shelter, I am a problem solver," she said. "We've got all the boots on the ground trying to find alternative spaces for these people. It's completely unacceptable to put 165 people out on the street."

Getting rid of 48-hour rule should be for public, not political gain: Editorial Agenda 2016

*By The Oregonian Editorial Board
May 21, 2016*

With mayoral candidates largely driving the conversation around getting rid of Portland Police's controversial "48-hour rule," it was surprising to hear the current mayor take the wheel. But as The Oregonian/OregonLive's Maxine Bernstein reported, Mayor Charlie Hales has been behind efforts to reach a new contract with the police union that would drop the provision that bars personnel investigators from questioning an officer for at least two days after a police shooting.

The goal is one Portlanders should support: Police accountability experts have long criticized the 48-hour waiting period, noting that the delay allows for officers' memories to fade or be compromised by outside factors. The U.S. Justice Department, which sued Portland Police over excessive-force concerns, has repeatedly pressed the city on the issue, as well. The settlement resolving the Justice Department's lawsuit dictates that the bureau review and revise its policies of requiring post-shooting statements in non-criminal inquiries to comply with "current professional standards." And settlement aside, getting rid of the rule should be a top priority for the city to help rebuild the public's confidence in the police and in the bureau's willingness to hold its officers accountable.

However, there are reasons to be cautious about how far Hales, who has just seven months left in office, takes this effort.

Already, Hales' office has linked progress on the 48-hour rule with the mayor's push to increase the business-license tax to fund \$3 million in raises and incentives for police officers. Fellow city commissioners wisely shot down the proposed tax increase, noting the city's record revenue and questioning whether the city could afford the cost of such pay increases over time. But Hales' willingness to trot out the 48-hour rule as a political tool to leverage support for unjustified taxation proposals is one reason to be wary. The council's denial hasn't stopped negotiations, Hales' spokeswoman Sara Hottman said in an email. Rather, the mayor's office is hoping the council identifies another source for \$3 million to go for officer retention payments.

Another concern is how a new contract, negotiated by the outgoing mayor, will hamstring Mayor-elect Ted Wheeler, who won the seat outright in Tuesday's primary. Hales is looking to negotiate a new agreement that would replace the current contract, now set to expire in June 2017, with a four-year deal that would remain in effect until June 2020, covering most of Wheeler's expected four-year term. Hales so far doesn't seem interested in looping in Wheeler. "That hasn't been determined," Hottman wrote, in response to a question of whether Hales would consult Wheeler on the contract. "Right now, Mayor Hales remains focused on working with Council and the (Portland Police Association) to reach an agreement." Wheeler, who plans to keep the police bureau in his portfolio of city departments, clearly should have input on the contract.

And Hales isn't just trying to break new ground on the 48-hour rule. Negotiations also include efforts to craft a body-camera policy, details of which the mayor's office won't release. While body cameras can be an effective tool for promoting transparency and trust, the actual value of the cameras depends on how they are used. While Hottman said a draft, when completed, will be made available for public comment, it's questionable whether the body camera policy – and the 48-hour rule for that matter – should be negotiated as part of the police contract to begin with. Accountability policies shouldn't be bargained for with financial incentives or by dangling extra benefits. Rather, they are matters that can and should be negotiated separately.

Certainly, removing the 48-hour protection would be a win for Hales, who advocated modifying or getting rid of the rule in his own mayoral campaign four years ago. Police officers who fire at suspects should be required, as they are in other jurisdictions, to explain to internal affairs investigators without delay what led to their use of deadly force. These statements, which cannot be used in any criminal investigation against the officer, are critical for helping the police bureau determine whether the officer violated training procedures or other employee policies that merit discipline.

But it's also too important an issue to rush through without sufficient attention and input. The last thing Portland needs is to institutionalize a bad policy that, like the 48-hour rule, proves almost impossible to drop.

Willamette Week

Charlie Hales Learned of Accidental Shooting Involving Police Chief Nearly A Month Ago

By Nigel Jaquiss

May 22, 2016

Accidental shootings happen often in Oregon and are frequently reported by local authorities. Not, apparently, when it involves the chief of the Portland Police Bureau.

Chief Larry O'Dea accidentally shot a friend on a Harney County hunting trip on April 21. No mention was made for 29 days, until WW broke the story on May 20. Even so, officials have released little information, other than telling The Oregonian that the unnamed victim had to be flown to a hospital.

Neither Harney County Sheriff Dave Ward or Harney County District Attorney Tim Colahan would comment.

"As this is an active criminal investigation being conducted by OSP and the Oregon DOJ, we have no further information responsive to your request at this time," Colahan said via email.

It is standard for law enforcement officials to decline to provide details about a pending criminal investigation.

What is highly unusual is to not share information about an accidental shooting, let alone one involving an officer of O'Dea's stature, in the first place.

WW learned that Mayor Charlie Hales has known about the shooting for more than three weeks, and also chose not to make the information public.

"Chief O'Dea first informed the mayor of the incident," Hales' spokeswoman Sara Hottman tells WW.

"The mayor was in Europe with U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx until Sunday, April 24, so Chief O'Dea called him at 7 a.m. Monday, April 25."

Hottman says the decision not to make public disclosure of the shooting was normal.

"There are both internal and criminal investigations that occur without contacting media at the start," Hottman says. "This is standard in handling incidents such as the Chief's."

The criminal investigation now underway in the shooting is being overseen by the Oregon Department of Justice.

In most cases, Portland police officers under criminal investigation are placed on administrative leave. O'Dea, however, remains on duty. He declined to be interviewed.

It's not clear what if anything the rest of the police bureau knew about the shooting.

On Friday afternoon, when WW contacted Portland Police Bureau spokesman Sgt. Pete Simpson, Simpson said he was unaware of any shooting incident involving O'Dea. "First I've heard of it," Simpson said.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Hales meets with equitable contracting group

By Garrett Andrews

May 20, 2016

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales on Thursday pledged his office's "full support" to the city's Equitable Contracting and Purchasing Commission and apologized for appearing distant at a meeting that showcased all the issues raised by progressive advocates.

It was the first time the mayor attended a meeting of the ECPC, and it came after months of talk by commissioners of feeling ignored.

"I'm not interested in having this appear to work; I'm interested in this actually working," said Hales, who sat alongside commissioners and took notes. "I'm not interested in photo-ops or shelf studies. What should we do?"

Following Hales' exit, to attend a different meeting, commissioners resumed airing their frustrations with his office.

"One thing we've been missing is the other side," said Marcela Alcantar of Alcantar and Associates. "We can't go too long. It becomes a rathole, and I think right now, we are in that rathole."

The ECPC was formed by ordinance last year to increase the utilization of minority-owned and women-owned businesses in city contracting. In the months since, its nine members – a mix of community leaders and minority business owners – have complained of being stonewalled by City Council and city staff and not given requested data.

The commission voted "no confidence" in the City Council at a charged meeting in February. The matter was compounded when the city delayed release of the meeting video and omitted hostilities from the meeting minutes.

Hales' office has responded by sending city personnel – including Office of Management and Finance Director Fred Miller and Chief of Staff Josh Alpert – to ECPC meetings.

Thursday's meeting was held at the water bureau's Interstate Maintenance Facility, the renovation of which was one of two projects in a pilot program testing so-called Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) as a means of disbursing city contracts. The two projects (the other was the Kelly Butte Reservoir project) were hailed at the meeting for achieving much higher participation rates than the traditional low-bid procurement method.

“What I’m hearing from everyone here is there’s a disconnect in the process, and you cannot have equity with a disconnect,” said audience member Ranfis Giannettino Villatoro of the MRG Foundation. “I’m led to believe it’s deliberate.”

He said MRG supports CBAs.

A regular source of frustration for commissioners, notably Maurice Rahming of O’Neill Electric, is the way the city has handled a set-aside for DMWESBs for the upcoming renovation/seismic retrofit of the Portland Building. The council voted to allot 1 percent of the cost of the highly-technical design-build-relocate project. ECPC commissioners have questioned why the figure is 1 percent of rough construction costs (approximately \$100 million) rather than the total project cost (\$195 million).

Beyond that, Rahming has said repeatedly that he wants the conversation regarding minority participation in the Portland Building project to involve the “99 percent” rather than a 1 percent set-aside.

The request for proposals for the Portland Building project includes participation targets of 18 percent for minority-owned businesses and 9 percent for women-owned businesses. Those goals aren’t “aggressive” enough, according to Rahming.

“A CBA can produce 50 percent,” he said.

Three design-build teams submitted proposals for the Portland Building project; the city is expected to select one next month.