

The Portland Tribune

Portland police may still see pay raises

By Nick Budnick

May 31, 2016

Despite the recent City Council approval of next year's budget, the clash over money will continue when it comes to police.

Mayor Charlie Hales has vowed to use the remainder of his term to press for funding to support police pay raises to combat an unprecedented shortfall of patrol officers.

His fellow commissioners elected to support some aspects of Hales' plan to boost police staffing, but not others. Now Hales intends to push the need for raises in upcoming council discussions, including about a potential marijuana tax — meaning revenue from a drug long fought by police officers could end up funding them.

Under the budget approved by the council, the city will invest in new background investigators to accelerate hiring, among other things. However, commissioners didn't back the costlier part of Hales' plan, to add new tiers to the police pay scale in an effort to retain the officers the city has.

In addition to dozens of retirements, Portland officers in midcareer have been taking jobs with other cities that offer less hassle and comparable or better pay.

Hales on Friday said he won't give up. Officers are "tired," and they "have to have the time," he said. "You can't just be racing from call to call if you want to maintain the (community) relationship."

Hales declined to comment on negotiations that have been underway with the city's police union. But the two sides reportedly have framed the outlines of a potential agreement that would boost police pay at a cost of about \$3 million per year in each of the coming three years. It would also implement a police body-camera policy, settle several police union grievances, and eliminate the "48-hour rule" that makes it impossible to interview officers immediately after shootings.

"We've had conversations about retention and recruitment for months," said Daryl Turner, president of the Portland Police Association. He, like Hales, declined to discuss the agreement in detail, but said, "Obviously part of that is retention and being able to keep the officers we have."

While Ted Wheeler won the election to succeed Hales, he doesn't take office until January. Through a representative, he declined to comment. Wheeler did not win the endorsement of the police union. He called for an end to the 48-hour rule, more cops and increased community policing — all goals that Hales says he is trying to achieve.

Vacancies boost workload

The City Council is expected to discuss the union negotiations in an upcoming closed-door meeting, perhaps as soon as next month. Meanwhile, discussions continue about potential new revenue sources: a possible marijuana tax that might be headed for the November ballot, as

well as a proposed city construction excise tax — one that Commissioner Dan Saltzman wants dedicated exclusively to affordable housing.

The debate over public safety spending comes as the latest numbers back up Hales' depiction of the state of the police. It's also what Portland police officers say in person: Calls are significantly up, but with about 60 vacancies, the number of cops available to answer them are down. Two dozen officers are or have retired, with dozens more on the horizon.

Statistics released earlier this month show that the total number of police calls has grown by roughly 20 percent in the first four months of this year, compared to five years ago. Thanks to reduced patrol officers, the number of calls per officer has jumped by a third in that same period.

Community policing down

Meanwhile, the number of self-initiated calls for the bureau, a statistic used as a benchmark for community policing, has plummeted by about a third overall.

Staffing levels today are what would have been considered unthinkable in the past, with one officer covering three patrol districts during some shifts, according to patrol officers speaking privately with the Portland Tribune. In the past, each district was patrolled by a minimum of one officer.

The union reportedly has filed at least two grievances related to the staffing issue. One alleges that officers are at risk, while the other questions a new shift arrangement adopted by the bureau to deal with the short staffing, saying that it should have been negotiated with the union.

If the city reaches the negotiated agreement, those grievances would be settled without going to an arbitrator.

The police bureau recently shifted to reporting crime statistics several times a year, not annually. Robbery, bike and auto thefts are up, while many other crimes are down.

Hales has cited gang violence as one of a number of problems that increased staffing would address.

The latest gang statistics for the first half of May showed a comparative lull, with six gang-related incidents, a rate that is about half of what was seen last year in May. Officers at the North Precinct gang meeting, where the numbers were announced, linked the drop to a recent sweep of gang-involved people.

But Turner says the drop is likely temporary, as June tends to be a peak month for gang violence. He predicted other crime increases based on the city's "catastrophic staffing issues."

Lame duck or not, Hales says he won't give up.

"The next available funds that come before the City Council I'm going to say, 'How about now?'" he said in an interview following the gang meeting. "And if that doesn't work, I'm going to do it on the next available source of funds. As long as I'm in office, I'm going to take every opportunity to make the case."

Hales' chief of staff leaving for global climate job

By Jim Redden

May 27, 2016

Josh Alpert, Mayor Charlie Hales' chief of staff, is resigning July 1 to join the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, a network of the world's megacities taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Portland is an active member of the organization.

Alpert will be replaced by Tera Pierce, who is currently Hales' deputy chief of staff. Diana Nuñez, currently community outreach director, will be promoted to deputy chief of staff, and will retain her outreach role.

"Josh is a great friend and colleague, and he will be missed," said Hales. "In addition to the innovative initiatives he's led in homelessness, the sharing economy and issues of equity, he's helped lead the great climate work we've done here, and I'm glad he's continuing that work at C40."

According to the mayor's office, Alpert ran then-Commissioner Hales' last reelection campaign as a city commissioner, worked on then-Commissioner Hales' staff as a policy advisor, and later helped lead candidate Hales' mayoral campaign team in 2012. He originally served as Policy Director and Director of Strategic Initiatives in the mayor's office.

"It has been the greatest honor and privilege of my career to serve Mayor Hales and this amazing city," Alpert said. "I made this decision knowing that Tera and our team will carry forward Mayor Hales' agenda seamlessly. Being surrounded by the most dedicated mayoral team and city employees in the world has made a very difficult job much easier, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to have served."

Alpert has a bachelor's in philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania, and a juris doctor from Lewis & Clark College. He joined Mayor Hales' staff after seven years at the Trust for Public Land.

At C40, Alpert will serve as Director of Special Projects, initially working on climate equity, partnerships, and climate finance initiatives.

Hales did not run for reelection and will leave office Jan. 1, 2017.

Willamette Week

Auditor Wants Portland Cops to Charge Presidential Campaigns for Their Services

By Nigel Jaquiss

May 31, 2016

The city of Portland has spent at least \$180,000 on police services for visiting presidential candidates in the past two years and in a report released today, city Auditor Mary Hull Caballero says it's time to make the candidates' campaigns foot the bill.

The most expensive recent visit, estimated at 1,400 staff hours worth \$89,000, came when President Barack Obama visited in May 2015 to make a speech at Nike promoting the controversial Trans Pacific Partnership, a free trade agreement.

As with visits that presidential wannabes such as Hillary Clinton, U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-Vt.) and others have made, the Portland Police Bureau put officers on streets to handle traffic and security but did so without compensation.

Should presumptive GOP presidential nominee Donald Trump visit Portland before the November general election, the cost of putting police on streets could eclipse the costs of earlier visits by Clinton and Sanders.

Here's the gist of the audit:

The Police Bureau has not tried to charge campaigns or event organizers for the City's costs in the last two years. It did so many years ago, but more recently Police officials believed campaigns would not pay. The Secret Service did not reimburse Portland. The City got reimbursed only once, when an event venue requested and paid for off-duty, secondary employment police officers. This was Bernie Sanders' August 2015 visit.

The audit notes the \$180,000 estimate for the past two years understates the cost of candidate visits because it only includes salaries and not benefits and other indirect costs.

Police Chief Larry O'Dea, who is now on administrative leave after presenting conflicting accounts of an April 21 incident in which he shot a friend in the back, agreed with the auditor's recommendations.

"I am hopeful this audit's findings will assist in the billing and collection of such payment from presidential campaigns," O'Dea wrote.

Mayor Charlie Hales' Chief of Staff Jumps Ship

*By Beth Slovic
May 27, 2016*

Josh Alpert, Mayor Charlie Hales' chief of staff since June 2015, is leaving City Hall to take a job as director of special projects for C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, a network of cities working to address climate change.

The departure is not entirely surprising. Hales' carriage turned into a pumpkin last week when a majority of voters picked Ted Wheeler to be Portland's next mayor. By squeaking past the 50 percent threshold, Wheeler avoided a November runoff, and Hales became a lame-duck mayor six months sooner than some expected.

It was already clear last month that Hales' had the future employment of his staff on his mind as he railed against a proposal from the city's elected auditor to broaden Portland's prohibitions on former top-level city employees' returning to City Hall as lobbyists. Due in part to Hales' distaste for the new regulations, a vote on the auditor's proposal has been delayed.

Alpert rose from policy director to chief of staff in summer 2015 after Hales eased out Gail Shibley, a move then seen as a sign that Hales was preparing for a 2016 re-election bid. Hales decided in October 2015, however, not to run for a second term.

Alpert has been instrumental recently in helping Hales to address the housing emergency in Portland.

Alpert's last day is July 1. His new job, while based in Portland, won't involve any lobbying of city government, says Sara Hottman, a spokeswoman for the mayor.

Tera Pierce, Hales' deputy chief of staff, will replace Alpert.

Portland Commissioner Amanda Fritz Proposes City Commission for Immigrants and Refugees

By Jenna Mulligan

May 26, 2016

Portland Commissioner Amanda Fritz wants the city to create a New Portlander Policy Commission to advocate for Portland's immigrant and refugee populations.

The move would give more power to an existing volunteer group dedicated to helping Portland's immigrants and refugees. The new commission also would join the city's volunteer Human Rights Commission in promoting equity and justice for marginalized Portlanders.

"There is a growing awareness that we have many different communities of new Portlanders, including refugee and immigrant communities," says Fritz, adding that those communities are eager to take part in decision-making in the city.

The committee—up for consideration by the City Council on Thursday afternoon—grows out of an effort Fritz launched in 2011 that established a less formal policy council with similar advocacy goals.

For several years, that council has worked with mutual assistance associations and community-based organizations to build programming that will make city services valuable and applicable to refugee and immigrant populations.

Recently, in partnership with the Bureau of Parks and Recreation, the council has helped organize transportable playgrounds for children in outer Southeast Portland neighborhoods, where many immigrants and refugees live.

The council formed a strategic plan in 2014, which emphasized its appeal for a permanent commission to advise the city on all policy.

By moving toward the designation of a commission, the leadership of the New Portlander Policy Council hopes to have more say in city decisions.

"It's pretty much voluntary for the bureaus to listen to us right now, even though it's something the city really finds important," says Linda Castillo, co-chair of the New Portlander Policy Council. "This ties up the loose ends, creating a formalized structure that leads us toward equity, inclusion and diversity."

The proposed commission would be made up of 25 voting members appointed by the City Council to represent the broad variety of ethnicities, languages, and religions in Portland, where one in five people are foreign-born.

City staff would also sit on the commission as non-voting members.

The City Council will review this proposal Thursday, and vote on the formation of a commission at its June 8 meeting. The city has set aside \$86,000 to support the commission in its first year.

"There is a diverse background of new Portlanders," Castillo said. "We have an opportunity to create a reflection of that community in city government."

The Daily Journal of Commerce

\$6M earmarked for Southeast Portland park development

By Beverly Corbell

May 31, 2016

At present, only five acres of the 25-acre Parklane Park in Southeast Portland is developed, but the allocation of \$6 million in development fees will pave a path for its eventual build-out.

Portland Parks Commissioner Amanda Fritz announced the funding Friday during a tour of the park. Money will be invested over the next five years, she said, in improvements to eventually serve more than 2,100 households.

On its five developed acres, the park at Southeast 155th Avenue and Main Street has a play area, drinking fountains, pedestrian paths, picnic tables, benches and a basketball court along with a sports field for softball and one for soccer.

Fritz said that in eastern Multnomah County only two out of five households have easy access to a park. In the rest of Portland, she said, four out of five households live within half a mile of a park or natural area.

The Centennial neighborhood where Parklane Park is located has a significant lack of parks, open spaces and recreational facilities, according to the master plan. However, upon build-out the park will be one of the largest in the area and be able to "meet the needs of the greater southeast community as well as the immediate neighborhood."

The estimated cost for final build-out of the park is estimated at \$18.7 million, according to the master plan. Although not finalized, proposals call for an outdoor aquatic center, a community garden and outdoor education center, tennis courts, more pedestrian paths, two parking lots, expanded picnic areas, a children's play area, an off-leash dog area, a skate park, sports fields, tennis courts, fencing and new trees.

The \$6 million, according to the master plan, will go toward the first phase of development – investigation of the condition of the undeveloped 20 acres. Native Americans occupied the land, according to Portland Parks and Recreation, before it became an airfield and later a gravel quarry.

After addressing site remediation, according to the master plan, Portland Parks and Recreation will hold an extensive public process to determine what can be included in the park over the next few years. That process will begin in 2018.

The investigation of the 20 acres will take around eight months, Portland Parks and Recreation spokesman Mark Ross said, and involve various surveys, geotechnical analyses, environmental testing and information gathering. The exact duration for these studies has not been determined yet, he added.

“We also will then go through a competitive process to hire a design team before we are able to get started on design and the public process,” he said.

Once a design team is chosen, he said, the public process and conceptual design phase will take place simultaneously. Next will come land use and design review followed by acquisition of building permits.

“Once we have permits in hand, the project will be bid through a competitive process and then constructed,” he said, but a timeline for those steps has not been established yet.

The \$6 million will come from system development charges (SDCs), one-time fees assessed on new development that can only be used for expansion of existing parks or creation of new parks.

The size of Parklane Park will attract not only neighboring residents, but all Portlanders, Parks and Recreation Director Mike Abbate said.

“One of our biggest needs is providing soccer fields, and there’s room at Parklane for a couple of fields, which are badly needed as the population grows because a lot of young people are playing soccer,” he said.

Blame it on the boom: reservoir project cost jumps

By Garrett Andrews

May 27, 2016

The expected cost to cover and seismically secure city water stored at Washington Park has ballooned as a result of a tight construction market and shortages of labor and materials.

The Portland City Council on Wednesday agreed to a guaranteed maximum construction price of \$152 million, and accepted a contract with Hoffman Construction.

The estimated price of construction has risen by \$12 million and the overall price has increased by \$20 million to \$190 million since the project previously went before the council in September 2015, when designs were 90 percent complete. The water bureau’s lead engineer, Teresa Elliott, said the construction market has changed as the project team has hammered out final details.

“We’ve had to adjust our prices for labor and materials escalation,” she told the council. “And we’ve added some contingencies so we don’t have to come back to you.”

Elliott said the project team is on track to meet federal compliance dates, including a July 1 deadline to begin construction. Work burying and fortifying Reservoir 3 is to be completed by

2019. Work on the now-disused Reservoir 4 is to conclude by 2020, and the overall project is to wrap up by 2024.

Wednesday's hearing also included discussion of the city's lofty equity goals for the project. Hoffman, which performed preconstruction services for the project, helped convince a five-member selection committee that it was serious about meeting diversity targets by identifying DMWESB (disadvantaged, minority-owned, women-owned or emerging small business) subcontractors it intended to work with. Five of them – O'Neill Electric, F.M. Burch & Associates, PLI Systems, Star Construction Services and IQ Traffic Services – already make up 26 percent of the subcontracting goal.

The city will employ the Community Benefits Plan for the project to disburse subcontracts set aside for DMWESBs. Similar to "Community Benefits Agreements," CBPs contain guarantees that project developers make to various interested parties. The water bureau tested the efficacy of CBPs as a way of boosting minority participation in a pilot program involving two recent projects – the new Kelly Butte Reservoir and the Interstate maintenance facility renovation.

Water Bureau Director Michael Stuhr acknowledged that with CBPs there is potential for conflicts of interests. But he said all players for the Washington Park Reservoir project will sign pledges to avoid them, and city staff will oversee the process.

"The actual choice to disburse city funds will be made by city employees," Stuhr said.

Approximately \$1.1 million will be disbursed through the CBP, with up to 75 percent going to workforce training and support, and 25 percent going to DMWESB subcontractors. Approval of the CBP will require a second reading by the council.

Saltzman proposes construction excise tax

By Garrett Andrews

May 26, 2016

Portland Commissioner Dan Saltzman on Wednesday presented his plan to tax new development to raise money for affordable housing.

It's the first such tax proposal since the Oregon Legislature in March struck down a ban on construction excise taxes in a package of bills intended to give local governments more options for affordable housing initiatives.

The proposed fees on new residential and commercial construction would raise approximately \$8 million annually. The tax amount would be set at 1 percent of permit valuation, meaning an average new 3,844-square-foot single-family residence would be taxed \$3,636. A new 42,610-square-foot commercial building would be taxed \$60,000.

A number of costly system development charges, some greater than \$500,000 for large projects, are already applied by the Portland Bureau of Development Services. A frequent criticism by developers and project owners is that whatever they're taxed ultimately is paid by buildings' eventual occupants.

Saltzman testified in Salem in favor of the reforms during the recent legislative session.

“I think their point has truth to it,” he told the DJC. “But I think we need a diversified source of funds in order to stimulate more affordable housing production. And that is just not happening in the private sector right now.”

A representative of Saltzman’s office said the proposal was vetted this month by a panel of experts, including several developers. Mike Salsgiver, head of the Associated General Contractors’ Oregon-Columbia chapter, said it would have been nice if Saltzman had consulted with members of the construction industry.

“We would have appreciated some outreach,” he said. “On the other hand, the most important issue for us is what it would do to the cost of projects ... In an era when the city of Portland is expecting to realize a \$26 million surplus, it seems to me the last thing it should be doing is looking to tax businesses more.”

Under the new state law, there are a number of restrictions on how the excise tax revenue must be spent, though Saltzman’s proposed tax would go entirely to affordable housing, with a small amount going to the BDS.

Under state law, a number of construction types would be exempt, including affordable housing, public improvements and improvements to private schools, hospitals, religious facilities and agricultural buildings. Under Saltzman’s plan, the city of Portland would in addition exempt accessory dwellings for two years and improvements valued less than \$100,000.

A hearing on the tax proposal before the Portland City Council will take place June 16. The public is invited by Saltzman’s office to submit to it comments by phone, email or in writing.

The Portland Business Journal

Mayor Hales' chief of staff leaves for climate group

*By James Cronin
May 31, 2016*

Mayor Charlie Hales' chief of staff is leaving city hall to focus on climate issues.

Josh Alpert is leaving the mayor’s office to join C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, a global network of cities working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Portland is a member of the nonprofit.

Alpert was hired as a policy adviser to the mayor after his 2012 election after helping lead the campaign team. Alpert also ran Hales’ last campaign as a city commissioner. He became chief of staff a little less than a year ago.

At C40, Alpert will be director of special projects, focusing on climate equity, partnerships and finance, according to a statement from the mayor's office.

“In addition to the innovative initiatives he’s led in homelessness, the sharing economy and issues of equity, he’s helped lead the great climate work we’ve done here, and I’m glad he’s continuing that work at C40,” Hales said in the statement.

Alpert's last day in city hall will be July 1. Tera Pierce, deputy chief of staff, will be promoted to chief of staff. Diana Nuñez, community outreach director, will be promoted to deputy chief of staff.

"It has been the greatest honor and privilege of my career to serve Mayor Hales and this amazing city," Alpert said in the prepared statement. "I made this decision knowing that Tera and our team will carry forward Mayor Hales' agenda seamlessly."

The Portland Observer

Police Chief Investigated

By The Portland Observer

May 25, 2016

Portland Police Chief Larry O'Dea accidentally shot a friend last month during a hunting trip in eastern Oregon's Harney County, but news of the shooting only reached the public Friday when the incident was disclosed by the Willamette Week.

In addition, the chief may have misled a Harney County sheriff's deputy about the April 21 incident, according to Harney County Sheriff Dave Ward. He said O'Dea and some of his companions at the scene steered the investigating deputy into believing the shooting was a "self-inflicted" accident.

Ward said the deputy didn't learn O'Dea was involved until he was able to interview the wounded man a week ago on May 16. At that point, Oregon State Police was called to help investigate.

By Tuesday, the chief was placed on administrative leave by Mayor Hales pending the outcome of internal and external investigations.