

## **The Oregonian**

### **Portland Building to serve as emergency shelter Wednesday night**

*By Jessica Floum*

*January 4, 2017*

The Portland Building will serve as an emergency shelter Wednesday night due to "severely cold temperatures," Mayor Ted Wheeler announced Wednesday.

The city's administrative building will open as a warming center at 7 p.m. Wednesday and close at 7 a.m. Thursday. It could open again Thursday and Friday due to extreme weather.

The announcement follows the death of a 51-year-old homeless man Monday night. He died of hypothermia while sleeping under a blanket on East Burnside Street in Portland.

"The city and county are committed to not turning anybody away from shelter during the severe weather warning," Wheeler said in a statement. "The system's capacity needs to expand as the cold weather continues. The Portland Building is a good option to increase that capacity."

Transition Projects, a nonprofit that assists with emergency shelters, will provide staff for the shelter, located at 1120 SW 5th Ave. Wheeler asked city staff to also volunteer during operating hours.

Portland this week opened more than 450 beds for severe weather conditions, increasing the total number of shelter beds to about 1,600, according to the mayor's office.

For more information on the shelters, including how to donate, visit this county website.

### **Mayor Ted Wheeler calls for inclusive Portland in inauguration ceremony**

*By Jessica Floum*

*January 4, 2017*

Mayor Ted Wheeler called for a more inclusive Portland after he publicly accepted his position as Portland's 53rd mayor in an inauguration ceremony at Jason Lee Elementary School Wednesday.

Holding the ceremony in a northeast Portland location was deliberate, Wheeler said during his speech. He said he wants to make Portland "a city that works for everyone."

"The challenges, the issues of east Portland, are the challenges of all of Portland," he said.

Homelessness, police accountability and housing affordability, affect the entire community, he said.

When it comes to condemning racism, sexism and homophobia, Wheeler said, "talk is cheap."

"We have to be more intentional and more deliberate," he said. "We have to nurture and support the idea of pluralism."

It is incumbent on city governments and communities to do so.

"If we cannot make it work here, what does that say about the future of our community and what does that say about the future of our nation?" Wheeler said.

The ceremony included words from pastors, the Interfaith Alliance on Poverty, a representative of Oregon's native tribes and a disruption from protestors yelling "no more sweeps."

Jason Lee Elementary School students prompted Wheeler during his oath.

Wheeler said children like his 10-year-old daughter and those at Jason Lee Elementary school make him want to create a better future.

"It's cliché," Wheeler acknowledged. "We've heard it a million times. You know why? Because the children are our future."

The event followed Wheeler's first day on the job, during which he attached commissioners to the bureaus they will manage until April and took over three of the city's most complicated and high-profile bureaus.

Wheeler will manage the Housing Bureau and Police Bureau, two offices central to his campaign promises to increase affordable housing and police accountability.

Wheeler brings executive, financial and political experience to the mayor's office. He started his political career ten years ago when he became the Multnomah County Chair and helped get the county's budget back on track. Gov. Ted Kulongoski appointed Wheeler state treasurer in 2010. Wheeler helped develop Oregon's first retirement savings program as treasurer. He also tried but failed to reform the state's investment oversight.

Before entering politics, Wheeler worked as a financial analyst and directed an investment firm. He has a degree from Stanford, an MBA from Columbia and a degree from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

Wheeler plans to apply that experience to tackle some Portland's most challenging issues.

"Action is what matters," he said Wednesday. "I know you will hold me accountable."

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **Welcome to City Hall, Mayor Wheeler. Don't mind the angry voices**

*By Amelia Templeton/OPB  
January 4, 2017*

Like his predecessors, former Mayor Charlie Hales started every Portland City Council meeting with a reminder about the rules: Anyone can sign up to speak to the council. Keep things PG. No cursing. Don't interrupt. And don't applaud or boo.

"If you agree with someone's point of view and you want to show support, it's OK if you want to give them a wave of the hand or thumbs up," Hales told the crowd.

But almost every week, those rules were broken, and Hales ended up kicking someone out. Often, it was guy named Joe Walsh. Walsh had a habit of yelling at Hales when he disagreed with something the council was doing. Hales would usually attempt to reason with Walsh, but occasionally ended up recessing the meeting and ordering Walsh out.

"I grew up in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, New York," said Walsh, a former U.S. Navy engineer and union shop steward. "So I've been a fighter all my life."

Walsh's voice is strained because of medication he's on for emphysema and asbestosis. He carries a little silver oxygen tank on wheels with him. Still, he's been to almost every Portland City Council meeting during the past 10 years, usually wearing a homemade T-shirt that features pictures of the council members and a disapproving slogan.

He's quick to point out that he isn't kicked out of every meeting. Just lots of them. He also notes that he's outlasted the last three Portland mayors — that's Hales, Sam Adams and Tom Potter — each of whom served just one term. "All I have to do is stand up, and the entire City Council recesses," Walsh said. "You talk about having power, that's a lot of power."

### **A rowdy middle school?**

Walsh and Hales had a particularly explosive relationship. Walsh says it's because Hales was a bad mayor. Hales has another theory: He thinks Walsh and other activists couldn't stand him, at least in part, because he's a silver-haired white guy in a suit — "The Man."

"Maybe I look a little bit like corporate America," Hales said, "even though I'm pretty far from corporate America in my philosophy."

After Walsh made a practice of interrupting him, Mayor Hales ordered him excluded from the council's hearings for a month, and then for two months. Walsh responded by suing the city in federal court. He argued that that being excluded on the basis of his past behavior violated his constitutional right to free speech. He represented himself. His wife sat next to him at the defense attorney's table because he didn't have a lawyer. "She sat down, and said, 'What do I do?'" Walsh said. "And I said, 'Just shuffle papers. That's what second chairs do.'"

Walsh won. "Against two city attorneys who make over 100 grand a year," he said. "And I kicked their butt."

The federal judge ruled that the mayor can only exclude people from the meeting they are disrupting. The next week, the council must let them back in again.

With such limited consequences for disruptive behavior, council meetings have taken on the feeling of an assembly at a rowdy middle school. At a hearing in December, a man who gave his name as Kernel Moses signed up to testify about Portland's homeless problem. Almost immediately, his testimony took on a darker tone. He yelled at Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who is Jewish, about a day last fall when protesters were kicked out of City Hall by the police.

"I'm coming after you Mr. Saltzman," Moses said. "Where were you on Oct. 12, huh? Hiding out in your synagogue?"

Members of the council worry that the frequent disruptions, profanity and personal attacks will keep the public from wanting to participate in local government. "It wasn't civil," said Don MacOdrum, who runs the Home Performance Guild of Oregon.

He attended his first Portland City Council meeting in December to testify about home energy ratings. McOdrum says some of the things he heard, including those comments about Commissioner Saltzman's religion, made him deeply uncomfortable. "I don't know that it was overt," he said. "But there was just a violent quality to it."

McOdrum says while he was disturbed, it won't keep him from speaking up at city council. He thinks the only way the situation will improve is if more ordinary people attend council meetings and testify.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz worked as a psychiatric nurse before she was elected to office. "Some of the stuff that's been happening in council chambers just would not be tolerated inside a psychiatric hospital," she said.

But Fritz is optimistic that with a new administration taking office this week, things will quiet down a little. "You hope there's a honeymoon at least for Mayor Wheeler, so he doesn't have to start dealing with it immediately," she said.

For his part, Walsh, the activist who's outlasted all the mayors, says he's willing to give Mayor Wheeler a grace period. Maybe six months.

## **Wheeler calls on Portlanders to hold him accountable**

*By Jim Redden*

*January 4, 2017*

Mayor Ted Wheeler said he will work hard to solve Portland's problems but challenged residents to hold him accountable for his promises during his public inaugural Wednesday morning.

"Talk is cheap. Action is what matters. I know you will hold me accountable and that's what I want," Wheeler said at the standing-room-only ceremony held in the auditorium of Jason Lee Elementary School in East Portland.

Wheeler said he intentionally chose the school for the ceremony to highlight both the challenges and accomplishments of East Portland.

"You know what they say about East Portland. The stories always say it is struggling. But there are other chapters. It is an example of a thriving and diverse community," Wheeler told the crowd that included hundreds of students from different racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds.

Wheeler also said he chose the school because children are the future, even if they think politics is something boring that adults do.

The oath of office was administered in sections by rotating groups of students and included promises that Wheeler, who was state treasurer until the end of last year, does not own a business in Portland or have a contract with the city.

"I'm now officially, unequivocally the mayor of Portland," Wheeler said after completing it.

As he was preparing to speak, Wheeler was briefly interrupted by two protesters who rushed forward chanting, "Stop the sweeps, people are dying on the streets," an apparent reference to sweeps of homeless camps. Wheeler did not mention them after they were quickly escorted

outside by police. Nor did he refer to several other people in the crowd that held signs calling for a rent freeze during his talk. But he listed homelessness and housing affordability among the challenges he intends to address.

"I want to change the slogan on the side of city vehicles from "the city that works" to "The city that works for all of us," wheeler said to applause.

Before he spoke, several community leaders delivered short remarks referring to Wheeler a visionary leader and calling on him to help Portland achieve its potential as a national model of progress and tolerance. They included Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Tribal Council Secretary Jon George, Albina Ministerial Alliance President Rev. Dr. T. Allen Bethel, Interfaith Alliance of Poverty Co-chair Carol Turner, and AMA Coalition for Justice & Police Reform Chair Rev. Dr. LeRoy Haynes.

## **Frigid temperatures prompt mayor to open Portland Building as emergency shelter**

*By Lyndsey Hewitt*

*January 4, 2017*

Following the first homeless death by hypothermia since 2011 on Monday night and ongoing frigid temperatures, Mayor Ted Wheeler has announced the Portland Building, 1120 S.W. Fifth Ave., will serve as a emergency shelter Wednesday, Jan. 4.

It will open at 7 p.m. and close at 7 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 5. But due to extreme weather, it possibly will be open Thursday and Friday nights as well.

"The city and county are committed to not turning anybody away from shelter during the severe weather warning," Wheeler said in a press release. "The system's capacity needs to expand as the cold weather continues. The Portland Building is a good option to increase that capacity."

Transition Project Inc., a nonprofit organization that operates several shelters in the Portland metro area, will help staff the facility along with city of Portland staff. Staff with the city will be paid for their time.

"It's good news that additional space has opened up ... because it has been a really tough and really unusual week," says George Devendorf, executive director of Transition Projects.

He said on Tuesday night shelters were over capacity and that they can expect the same to continue through Thursday night and Friday night, possibly Saturday as well.

He said between Transition Project's two emergency shelters, Imago Dei, 1302 S.E. Ankeny St., and the Emergency Shelter at Bud Clark Commons, 650 N.W. Irving St., 264 people sought shelter, and that was an "all time high or close to it."

Due to crowding, the SOS shelter and Peace 2, which both generally operate overnight only, are operating 24 hours a day. A temporary place for homeless to sleep has also opened again in the Multnomah County East government building in Gresham.

In total, Portland has opened more than 450 beds during this week's cold snap, with a total of 1,600 beds.

Anyone seeking shelter should call 211. Find a list of all shelters, their addresses and hours of operation at [www.211info.org](http://www.211info.org) and by texting "pdxshelter" to 898211.

Shelters are also in need of donations of warm clothes and blankets. For information about donating, visit [www.211info.org/donations](http://www.211info.org/donations).

## **Willamette Week**

### **Mayor Ted Wheeler Opens Portland Building as a Cold-Weather Shelter While Frigid Temperatures Drop**

*By Tarra Martin*

*January 4, 2017*

With Portland bracing for the coldest night of a freezing week, Mayor Ted Wheeler has ordered the first floor of the Portland Building to remain open overnight as a warming center.

"The city and county are committed to not turning anybody away from shelter during the severe weather warning," Wheeler said in a press release. "The system's capacity needs to expand as the cold weather continues. The Portland Building is a good option to increase that capacity."

This week's cold Portland weather has already proven deadly, with 51-year-old Mark Elliot Johnson dying of hypothermia on an East Portland sidewalk Monday night. Tonight's overnight low is forecast to be 20 degrees.

Per Wheeler's order, the Portland Building will be open as an emergency shelter from 7 pm Wednesday to 7 am Thursday, staffed by the Transitions Projects nonprofit and city employees who have volunteered for shifts. (The city staff will be paid for their work.)

The Portland Building, a block north of City Hall on Southwest 4th Avenue, holds the offices of most city bureaucrats.

Here's a list of other warming shelters open tonight in Multnomah County.

Wheeler spokesman Michael Cox says the Portland Building will likely continue to serve as an emergency warming center for the rest of the week, as overnight temperatures are expected to drop into the high teens on Thursday and Friday nights.

When asked if the city building would stay open if the weather stayed cold, Cox replied: "Most certainly."

This is the second time in a year Portland officials mulled turning city facilities into a homeless shelter.

Former Mayor Charlie Hales in May considered turning the first floor of City Hall into a shelter at the request of county officials, according to text messages between Hales and his chief of staff, Josh Alpert.

But Hales quickly dropped that idea because of a spat with Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury over another shelter's impending closure.

## The Portland Mercury

# The City's Opening a Cold-Weather Shelter in the Portland Building—And Asking Staffers To Help Out

*By Dirk VanderHart*

*January 4, 2017*

Mayor Ted Wheeler announced this afternoon he's opening up the Portland Building as a severe weather homeless shelter—a first-of-its-kind move as the city seeks sanctuary for people caught out in the cold.

The 90-bed shelter will be set up in the mezzanine level of the building, the city government's administrative heart, says Wheeler spokesperson Michael Cox, and will be staffed by staffers for shelter provider Transitions Projects Inc. (TPI)—along with any city employees interested in helping the effort.

"We have sent out an email to city employees asking for their assistance with TPI," Cox says. "If anyone signs up, they'll get paid."

The announcement, days in the making, was a product of discussions between Wheeler's office and the county's Joint Office of Homeless Services, which is working to rapidly expand shelter space in Multnomah County. It's also in line with Wheeler's campaign pledge to rapidly expand shelter beds, though it's only slated to be around as long as the recent cold snap.

"The city and county are committed to not turning anybody away from shelter during the severe weather warning," Wheeler said in a statement. "The system's capacity needs to expand as the cold weather continues. The Portland Building is a good option to increase that capacity."

As the weather plummets below freezing each night (and hovers around 32 degrees with biting winds during the days) officials have opened up all available warming shelters, and stressed that no one needing shelter will be turned away. Around 450 beds of emergency space have opened this week, according to numbers from Wheeler's office. But the cold has taken a toll. On Tuesday, police announced a homeless man had frozen to death while sleeping on an East Portland sidewalk.

This isn't the first time officials have mulled using a city administrative building to shelter the homeless population. This summer Willamette Week reported Mayor Charlie Hales and his staff considered letting people sleep in City Hall.

Cox couldn't offer specifics on what the Portland Building's pop-up shelter will cost. He says Wheeler's office was approached yesterday with the possibility of using the enormous public building to house the homeless, and jumped.

The shelter beds will be set up in a room down the hall from the Portland Building's auditorium, with plastic laid over the carpet. It will be open from 7 pm to 7 am beginning tonight. It will be kept around on Thursday, Friday, and potentially Saturday if needed, Cox says.

For information on other warming facilities, check out this post from earlier today.