

The Portland Tribune

City Hall Update: Council weighs water treatment options

Plus, Mayor Ted Wheeler will wait for Independent Police Review report on police protest response before coming to any conclusions

By Jim Redden

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Portland Water Bureau director Mike Stuhr recommended the most comprehensive and expensive option for treating a potentially deadly parasite in the Bull Run Watershed to the City Council on Tuesday.

Stuhr said if money was no object, the council should spend up to \$500 million for a filtration plant instead of \$105 million for an ultraviolet treatment plant. A filtration plant would remove all contaminants from the water, including ash in case of a fire in the watershed.

The cost clearly concerned the council, however. The bureau has committed to numerous other expensive projects, including building an earthquake-proof water line across the Willamette River. It tentatively scheduled an Aug. 2 hearing to make a choice. The Oregon Health Authority has set an Aug. 11 deadline for the decision.

Wheeler waiting for IPR report

Mayor Ted Wheeler is going to wait until the Independent Police Review division completes its investigation into the police response to competing downtown protests on June 4 before drawing any conclusions.

Police Chief Mike Marshman defended the response in a June 21 letter to Wheeler, who had questioned some tactics in a June 13 letter to Marshman. Wheeler spokesman Michael Cox said last Tuesday that the mayor will let the exchange stand until the IPR releases its final report.

"Too often in public life, we don't ask pointed questions due to the possibility that it will seem oppositional (rather than informational). That's a disservice to the public. In this case, the mayor felt it was important to address some key questions — questions he had himself as mayor, that were also shared by the public," said Cox, adding that Wheeler thought Marshman's answers were "forthright."

Housing bureau hires Saltzman aide

The Portland Housing Bureau announced Tuesday that it is hiring Shannon Callahan, a longtime aide to Commissioner Dan Saltzman, in a newly created second assistant director position.

Callahan served as Saltzman's liaison to the bureau when he oversaw it for most of the past four years. Mayor Ted Wheeler took control of the bureau after taking office in January to keep a campaign promise of prioritizing affordable housing issues.

The new position was created in part to help administer the affordable housing bond sponsored by Saltzman and approved by Portland voters last November.

Willamette Week

Murmurs: Portland Was Going to Spend \$350,000 to Talk About Homelessness. Now That Money is Headed Elsewhere.

In other news: Protesters and Mayor Wheeler are finding a bit of common ground

*By WW Staff
July 5, 2017*

Homeless Conversation Money Finds New Home

Earlier this year, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement was criticized for its plan to spend \$350,000 to hold a series of community meetings on homelessness ("Talk It Out," WW, Jan. 11, 2017). But in fact, \$62,000 of that money went to a very different cause. It was spent on a \$171,500 severance package for bureau director Amalia Alarcón de Morris, who was pushed out by City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly when Eudaly took over the bureau. The bulk of the disputed money—\$230,000—won't go to community meetings but will pay the salaries of two staffers tasked with persuading neighborhood associations to help homeless and poor people find housing. "We determined that this money would be better spent by hiring people who will help the city deal with the ongoing housing and homeless issues we are seeing across Portland," ONI interim director David Austin says.

Portland's Resistance and Mayor in Talks

Portland's most prominent protest group had its first meeting with Mayor Ted Wheeler on June 27. Both sides expressed optimism the city will consider three criminal justice reforms: improving sanctuary-city protections for undocumented immigrants, ending racial disparities in police enforcement, and limiting confrontations between Portland police and protesters. "I think they listened and are responsive," says Portland's Resistance co-founder Greg McKelvey. The mayor's office agreed the meeting went well. "It's highly possible that there's some overlap in our agendas," says Wheeler spokesman Michael Cox.

Soda Tax Won't Pop Its Top Till 2018

What promised to be the biggest-dollar tax measure on a quiet November ballot will now move to 2018. That's the decision made last week by the group pushing a 1.5-cent-per-ounce tax in Multnomah County on sweetened drinks, including sodas, teas and energy drinks. Proponents, backed by former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, spent \$8 million to pass a similar measure in San Francisco last year. The drink industry spent \$22 million trying to defeat the tax. "With the craziness of the legislative session and the lack of a state budget, we are looking to 2018," says Christina Bodamer, a lobbyist for the American Heart Association's Oregon chapter. She's not sure whether the coalition will shoot for the May or November ballot. "We are keeping all options open," she says.

President Trump Visited Portland After All

Over the holiday weekend, President Donald Trump revved up his rumble with "fake news" by tweeting a video of himself wrestling with a foe labeled "CNN." That video originated from Trump's appearance at WWE WrestleMania 23—with a lead-up that included a February 2007 stop at Portland's Rose Garden. WW covered that event, which included the man who is now

president telling Vince McMahon, "I'm taller than you, I'm better looking than you—and I will kick your ass!" We found the full report in our archives; read it at wweek.com.