

The Oregonian

Code change would allow Portland police oversight division, IA to weigh in on alleged police misconduct

By Maxine Bernstein

July 26, 2017

Portland's Independent Police Review or police internal affairs would be able to recommend whether to sustain a complaint of alleged misconduct involving a Portland officer, under a proposed change to City Code.

Currently, the commander of the officer under investigation makes the recommendation, a step that's been criticized as inappropriate by outside consultants hired by the city.

The proposed change would allow the agency that conducts the investigation of the officer to make a recommended finding on the alleged misconduct after the investigation is completed. The officer's commander would still make a recommendation as well.

The recommendations then go to a Police Review Board, which hears the case and makes a final recommendation to the chief of police.

The proposed change to City Code will be presented to Portland's City Council on Aug. 3. at 3 p.m. in council chambers.

The Council is expected to consider two other police-related measures that afternoon:

-- The proposed creation of a Portland Commission on Community-Engaged Policing made up of five to nine members who would meet twice a month behind closed doors but hold quarterly town hall meetings in public. The commission is proposed, partly to comply with a federal mandate for community engagement in the city's settlement agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice.

--The mayor's ordinance to prompt a court ruling on whether the Police Bureau can legally order officers who use deadly force to give a statement to internal affairs within 48 hours of a shooting or death in custody and keep that separate from an ongoing criminal investigation.

The Portland Tribune

New model could lower housing costs

By Thacher Schmid and Lyndsey Hewitt

July 27, 2017

Grant-funded affordable project uses shared spaces, modular construction to cut per-unit price

In January, Meyer Memorial Trust awarded Transition Projects Inc. a \$500,000 capital grant to build a 72-unit affordable housing development in North Portland's Kenton neighborhood. If fully funded, the project will occupy the same site where the city's newest homeless village, Kenton Women's Village, opened in June for a one-year term.

Like a homeless village, the development will provide low-cost homes for residents at very-low income levels — people at risk of homelessness.

But compared to a tiny-house community, Transition Projects' "modular co-housing" development will take a very different approach to driving down housing construction and operating costs.

The complex of two- and three-story buildings will be made of modular components, built off-site. About half the units will be single-resident-occupancy units, known as SROs, which will share common kitchens and bathrooms; the other half will be studios.

Modular construction, small units and shared spaces will make the building cheaper to build and operate compared to a typical apartment project, says Tony Bernal, Transition Projects' senior director of public policy and funding.

"Affordable housing in Portland is about \$200,000 to \$250,000 a unit," Bernal says. "Our model is about \$155,000."

The project, and the Meyer trust program that's helping to fund it, address a basic financial challenge facing affordable-housing providers: the poorer your residents, the harder they are to affordably house.

A person living on, say, a \$1,000-per-month disability check, can afford to pay only about \$300 a month in housing costs, according to the standard calculation for how much of one's income can be dedicated to housing.

In most markets, including Portland's, a property owner receiving monthly rent of \$300 per unit won't come close to covering a typical apartment project's monthly operating costs, debt payments and reserve requirements. Even if the owner operates as a nonprofit and the project receives public subsidies, an average unit will need to pull in at least twice that figure, absent scarce federal rent-assistance vouchers, if the project is to be financially feasible, says Michael Parkhurst of Meyer Memorial Trust's Affordable Housing Initiative.

Bernal hopes to close that gap with the "modular co-housing" model, and by collecting higher rents for the studio units. He expects to be able to rent the SRO units for \$289 to \$578 per month and still meet monthly costs.

How does that financial picture differ from a tiny-house village? That's the sort of question that policy leaders such as Parkhurst must answer to provide cost-efficient housing investments, though doing so requires making difficult apples-to-oranges comparisons.

Transition Projects' anticipated construction cost of \$155,000 per unit is high compared to the roughly \$3,000 it takes to build one of Kenton Women's Village's no-frills sleeping pods, using volunteer labor. And even the paltry rents Bernal hopes to charge aren't cheap compared to the free rent residents get living in Portland's homeless villages.

But the Transitions Project development has other cost advantages. Since the nonprofit will purchase the land from the city, the project will operate for decades and won't require ongoing city subsidies in the form of a free land lease, as Portland's existing villages do. And in exchange for higher construction costs, it will be able to offer residents plumbing, heating and other basic amenities that villages don't offer.

As for the average annual maintenance and repair costs of a modular apartment unit versus a tiny home village, that's an open question.

Could either model, a tiny-house village or a low-rise modular co-housing community, be scaled up to house thousands?

Parkhurst says the jury is still out.

A tiny-house village is "not a super-efficient use of land, versus how many apartment units you could build on the same plot," Parkhurst says. And the model followed in Portland depends on access to donated land, which is in short supply. Still, he adds, given the region's housing challenges, "I wouldn't discard that (model) until we understand more about it."

The modular co-housing model is "exactly the kind of innovative thinking" about how to lower the cost of housing that Meyer Memorial Trust is seeking to promote, Parkhurst says. But it will only prove itself replicable "if it becomes accepted, and it really works, and is really as inexpensive as they hope."

Sources Say: City Council looks to courts for help

By Jim Redden

July 27, 2017

Legal proceedings becoming as important as policy votes, and Commissioner Nick Fish announces he's running for re-election

City Council looks to courts for help

After waiting months for a federal judge to determine the constitutionality of Portland's new policy against public meeting disruptions, the City Council is suddenly considering several other court appeals to reverse unfavorable rulings and opinions.

One is Multnomah County Circuit Judge Stephen Bushong's decision that the City Council needs to repay the water and sewer bureaus around \$17 million for ratepayer funds spent on projects not authorized by the city charter. Although the sum is far less than that originally sought by ratepayer attorneys, the council must decide whether to accept Bushong's standard that such spending must be "reasonably related" to the missions of the two bureaus.

Another is the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals ruling that overturned the 2016 policy restricting new and expanded fossil fuel terminals in the city. In its ruling, LUBA said the policy violates the commerce clause of the United States Constitution, which gives Congress the power to regulate interstate commerce. It can be appealed to the Oregon Court of Appeals.

And Mayor Ted Wheeler wants the courts to review Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill's advice against compelling police officers involved in fatal encounters to make statements before the criminal investigations are completed. Wheeler asked the council to approve an ordinance requiring early statements to be submitted for review.

Filtration option for crypto picked

Fish to seek re-election

Commissioner Nick Fish tells the Portland Tribune he will run for re-election in 2018.

Although Fish has not reported raising any campaign funds so far this year, he has retained Hilltop Public Solutions to manage the campaign and says he will begin raising money later this summer. Even though he was not on the ballot last year, Fish raised over \$20,000, which he donated to other campaigns and advocacy organizations.

A non-practicing lawyer, Fish was elected to fill the unexpired term of Commissioner Erik Sten, who resigned mid-term, with 61.4 percent of the vote in 2008. Fish was re-elected to a full four-

year term at the May 2010 primary election with just under 80 percent of the vote. He was reelected at the May 2014 primary election with 73 percent of the vote.

Two candidates have announced they will run against Fish. One is affordable housing advocate Margot Black and the other is environmentalist activist Julia DeGraw. They cannot officially file for the office for another month and a half.

Village movement gains traction as housing alternative, goes mainstream

By Thacher Schmid

July 27, 2017

Newer models of homeless communities address some basic needs, but some have issues with rats, drug abuse

With market forces pushing rents ever higher in Portland and throughout the state, Michael Parkhurst is looking for creative strategies to lower the cost of providing homes to those who might otherwise live on the streets.

"I think there's a widespread sense that if we keep doing what we've been doing, we're never going to meet more than a sliver of need," said Parkhurst, program officer for the Meyer Memorial Trust, who helps lead the trust's \$15 million, five-year Affordable Housing Initiative.

Last year, the Meyer trust gave Eugene's Square One Villages \$148,200 to support an unconventional housing alternative: a homeless village. Emerald Village, which broke ground in May, is a permanent, cooperatively owned settlement. Each of its 22 tiny houses, ranging from 160 to 280 square feet of living space, will have its own kitchenette and bathroom and will rent for \$250 to \$350 per month. Construction on the village began in May.

"If you'd have asked me a few years ago, would Meyer Memorial Trust be putting money into that, I'd have been skeptical," Parkhurst says.

No longer counterculture

Originated by homeless individuals as an act of social protest, a homeless village can be defined simply as a group of homeless people living together as a self-governed community with basic hygiene facilities and trash service. Though most villages are more primitive than Emerald Village — lacking plumbing, for instance — they are cost-effective and humane compared to mass shelters, advocates say, and provide a social infrastructure that helps houseless people heal from trauma.

The model is gaining converts. The city of Portland and Multnomah County, for the first time, became founding partners in a homeless village this year, offering a year of free rent on a vacant city-owned parcel in North Portland's Kenton neighborhood, plus \$350,000 in capital, start-up and operating costs for Kenton Women's Village. It joins three other Portland villages formed by homeless individuals since 2000: Dignity Village, Right 2 Dream Too and Hazelnut Grove.

Yet to many in the profession of providing affordable housing and homeless services, including some local institutional leaders who support them, homeless villages remain controversial.

Concerns about rats, plumbing

Barbara Poppe, the former executive director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness under President Obama, says homeless villages that lack heat, plumbing and electricity are unacceptable and "substandard."

"My background is in public health," Poppe says. "I'm a firm believer, first and foremost, in human rights and public health, and what I've seen in these places is at best they offer port-a-johns. In the developed world, folks expect to have running water."

All four of Portland's villages receive at least a modicum of public support, mostly garbage and portable-toilet service, and Kenton's public subsidy is far higher than the others. But none of Portland's four homeless villages have running water, wired electricity or — other than a few exceptions for people with disabilities — heat.

At Dignity Village, Portland's oldest village at 17 years, public health hazards are a fact of life.

The community, located on city-owned industrial land not far from Portland International Airport, is amazingly clean and orderly, especially considering its 53 residents have built and must repair all 43 units, and must battle periodic coatings of black dust from the adjacent city leaf-compost facility. Still, there are piles of junk all about, and pests are a problem. Its spokesman Rick Proudfoot never leaves his door open.

"We get a lot of rats and mice," he says. "It's kind of a constant battle."

Not for families

Homeless villages are, moreover, almost universally seen as unsuitable for children.

None of Portland's four homeless villages allow kids. Andrea Cantu-Schomus, spokeswoman for the Oregon Department of Human Services Child Safety Division, confirms the state has never placed a child in state custody into a village or tiny house.

Margi Dechenne, housing transition program manager for Catholic Charities of Oregon, which is providing case management for Kenton Women's Village's 14 residents, says that's as it should be.

"Children need a more stable environment," she says.

Drug and alcohol use is another issue. One in five people experiencing homelessness has a chronic substance-use disorder, according to the 2016 annual Homelessness Assessment Report.

To create a supportive environment for those seeking sobriety, Dignity Village, Kenton Women's Village and Right 2 Dream Too prohibit the use of drugs and alcohol on-site.

But villages may adopt more lenient policies. Hazelnut Grove's 2015 code of conduct allows "No open alcohol or drug use," "No needle or meth use" and "No alcohol- or drug-related garbage to be left around."

Hazelnut Grove board member Bob Brimmer says the law of the land at the village is akin to a "sippy cup rule" — no open cups and no outrageous behavior.

A "sippy cup rule," however, could be too lenient for some people seeking sobriety or safety from those who are actively using drugs or alcohol.

'Stuck' in villages?

Parkhurst says a key concern for many is that some residents might "get stuck" in homeless villages, and not transition into permanent housing.

It's a drum The Oregonian editorial page has been beating since Dignity Village's founding in 2000. "By helping Dignity become more entrenched, the city — and the many good-hearted Portlanders who volunteer at the camp — have mostly helped the homeless stay homeless," the newspaper warned in one editorial. "There's nothing 'transitional' about Dignity Village," said another.

In a May visit, a reporter talked to three of the village's 53 residents; all said they'd lived there between seven and 10 years. That includes spokesman Proudfoot, who said he's put his name on dozens of affordable housing wait lists but never gotten higher than No. 226.

Katie Mays, who works for Portland social services nonprofit JOIN, sighs audibly when asked how many Dignity Village residents she's helped find permanent housing since she started doing outreach work with the homeless village in 2014. The number, she acknowledges, is "lower than we would like" — about a dozen.

Village advocates offer unverified informal estimates of how many residents have transitioned to permanent housing from other villages.

Dignity Village and Right 2 Dream Too co-founder Ibrahim Mubarak says "over 400 people" who stayed at Right 2 Dream Too found permanent housing before he left the organization on Feb. 1. Vahid Brown, housing policy coordinator for Clackamas County and a Village Coalition steering committee member, estimates "a dozen" Hazelnut Grove residents have found permanent housing since it was founded in 2015.

Some residents, such as Brimmer, appear reticent to go back to regular apartments, though it's not always clear why.

Brimmer, who says helping construct Hazelnut Grove has turned his life around, hesitated when asked if he'd take a subsidized apartment if one came along.

"Maybe. I don't know," he says. "I have a really hard time trying to get a job that has a W-2 attached to it. Contributing to a global warming thing kind of irks my brain a lot."

Alternate options lag

David Bikman chairs the steering committee of the Village Coalition, a grassroots organization founded last year, which advocates for residents of Portland villages.

Asked whether villages can adequately control substance abuse and provide safe homes for children, Bikman emphasizes that the coalition, which has no paid staff, does not speak for individual villages or prescribe what form they should take.

"We want whatever our houseless people tell us they want," says Bikman, an administrator at Portland State University's Graduate School of Education.

"If someone says, 'I'm perfectly happy in a tiny house in a village, and that's where I want to be,' we'll say, 'OK.' "

The coalition doesn't support illegal or unsafe activity at the villages, Bikman says, though it does support villages having containers to dispose of needles used to inject drugs, such as heroin. If a village wanted to house kids, that would be "fine," he says, but it would need "extensive" support that Portland's four villages currently don't have.

Bikman points, instead, to the beneficial things villages do offer residents, which include a safe place to sleep, and something else coalition members say they want: "space in which they can be autonomous."

Some national experts on homelessness, citing reasons similar to Bikman's, say the village concept merits exploration.

"There are multiple pathways into homelessness," says Elizabeth Bowen, a professor at the University at Buffalo's School of Social Work in New York. "Because of that, there's not a single solution. Not every homeless person necessarily needs affordable housing."

While the 12 percent decline in unsheltered homeless people between 2015 and 2017 reflects efforts by the city and county to open more than 600 shelter beds, the supply of shelter beds and affordable housing does not meet the need. The 2017 Point-in-Time count of homelessness showed the county's overall homeless population grew 9.9 percent in two years.

Demand for shelter alternatives has prompted local leaders to authorize public funding for Portland's four homeless villages, and to partner in the formation of the newest, Kenton Women's Village.

Kenton Women's Village is a hybrid model of sorts, which responds to some, if not all, criticisms voiced by skeptics. Though it lacks plumbed toilets, its 14 tiny "sleeping pods" are sturdy and architect-designed. Drug and alcohol use are not allowed on site, and five case managers and a full-time village manager employed by the nonprofit Catholic Charities of Oregon will work with residents to find permanent housing and resolve conflicts or problems as they arise.

Yet in the big picture, homeless villages are still on the fringe: Portland's four villages combined provide shelter for only about 160 people. And public leaders have not yet endorsed expanded investment in villages.

Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury spoke encouragingly at a June 9 media event for Kenton Women's Village of those who "stepped up" to try a different approach. Yet Kafoury says temporary shelter options like the Kenton village are not going to solve the county's fundamental shortage of affordable housing.

"I still think that every dollar we invest in something other than permanently affordable housing is a dollar away from permanently affordable housing," Kafoury says.

Marc Jolin, director of the city-county Joint Office of Homeless Services, a coordinating and funding partner of Kenton Women's Village, says that homeless villages can be a part of a larger strategy of moving houseless people into permanent housing, "as long as we don't get comfortable with that."

For Jolin, the big hope for Kenton is that residents will use the village as a springboard to a rental contract.

"I think we're all hoping to draw on the benefits of the village model, and the power of the self-governance concept, and couple it with a commitment to providing the kinds of services that will quickly allow (residents) to transfer into permanent housing," Jolin says.

For his part, Parkhurst says he still has questions about the long-term durability and "all-in" costs of tiny homes, but believes the scope of the crisis demands creative solutions.

"We literally need to think outside the box here," he says. "There's almost nothing in between that affordable apartment building and living in a doorway."

Willamette Week

Murmurs: Who's Afraid of an Election Integrity Commission? Not Multnomah County Voters

In other news: Housing Bureau picks property to buy with Airbnb money.

*By WW Staff
July 26, 2017*

Multnomah County Voters Undaunted by Federal Probe

What, Portlanders worry? President Donald Trump's Election Integrity Commission hasn't led to a wave of Multnomah County voters canceling their registrations. This month, The Denver Post reported that Colorado voters were canceling their registrations in unprecedented numbers, fearing the federal government would receive their personal information. But Multnomah County elections director Tim Scott says as of July 20 just 17 county voters have asked for cancellation since the federal commission was announced—two more than the previous month. "And the vast majority of them said they had moved out of state," Scott says.

Housing Bureau Picks Property to Buy With Airbnb Money

Three years ago, Portland City Hall approved a tax on Airbnbs and other short term rentals to spend on affordable housing. Now the Portland Housing Bureau has selected its first purchase using short-term rental tax dollars: a 50,000-square-foot property at 3000 SE Powell Blvd. with a price tag of \$3.72 million. The land could be developed into as many as 300 units of affordable housing using funds from another pot of money: a chunk of the \$258 million housing bond. (The city is still picking those projects.)

Gorge Residents Sue Jail for ICE Contract

Residents of Oregon's Wasco County have sued a regional jail in The Dalles for imprisoning undocumented immigrants on behalf of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. On July 21, four residents sued the Northern Oregon Regional Correctional Facility in federal court, claiming the jail is misusing their tax dollars and violating state law by imprisoning immigrants for the federal government. WW reported this spring on the jail holding immigrants in possible violation of Oregon's 1987 sanctuary law, which forbids state and local resources from being used to find and deport undocumented immigrants ("Trapped in the Gorge," WW, May 10, 2017).

Mural Artist Discovers His RV Painting Is Now a Home

A Portland mural artist was surprised to see an RV decorated with a Mount Hood landscape on WW's cover last week—because he painted it. The freelance painter, who goes by Joseph the Human, had airbrushed the abandoned Country Camper four years ago when it was dumped in front of his art studio in Northwest Portland. He says it was "moldy and unloved—completely ditched." The RV was hauled away by the city a few weeks later. It is now home to Sheila Fitch, who has parked it in St. Johns ("Zombieland," WW, July 19, 2017). Portland Bureau of Transportation spokesman John Brady says private tow companies can resell towed RVs.

The Dialogue: What Readers Said About the RVs the city is Now Authorized to Tow, and the People Who Live Inside

"It's definitely become a crime to be homeless."

By WW Staff
July 26, 2017

Here's what readers said about the caravans of RVs the city is now authorized to tow, and the people who live inside ("Zombieland," WW, July 19, 2017).

Adam Robins, via wweek.com: "I live within sight of this strip of RVs. I don't appreciate being used as an excuse by those who would seek to forcibly displace people who are living on the margins and have no realistic options. I am glad to see an article that seeks to humanize those living in this desperate state and afford them a voice to speak to their own experiences."

Hucklebert, via wweek.com: "I wish the media would quit portraying all homeless people as innocent victims affected by the housing crisis. Denying reality is not going to solve this problem...and by the way, people have to decide when they want to get clean...someone else can't do that for them."

Joeb99, via wweek.com: "Why can't we acknowledge that some people living on the streets are mentally ill, some are drug addicted, some are criminals, and some are people who are genuinely displaced due to financial concerns. We're talking about four distinctly different populations here, each with a potentially different 'best solution' for helping them."

Katie Zinsli, via Facebook: "So where should they live, the homeless? It sounds like every option has been and will be taken away under penalty of law...it's definitely become a crime to be homeless."

Chelsea Burgwin, in response: "There definitely should be more help for the homeless. But parking on a residential street is not the solution, and these people should be searching out other options. I feel for them, but still don't want them parked outside my house."

Catie Gould, via Facebook: "There aren't enough beds in Portland for the homeless population. I'd rather them be in an RV than on the street, especially when the weather turns cold in a few months."

Jonathan Howell, via wweek.com: "Build a low-income RV park next to Dignity Village. There's a decent solution. Tag and tow the rest."

Darren Venhuis, via Facebook: "Time to tow, crush and turn them into new cars. Just because they can't afford rent doesn't mean they get to clog our streets with RVs."

Dusty Eppers, via Facebook: "'One of our jobs is to make sure our city is a livable place,' says City Commissioner Dan Saltzman. Well, maybe if apartment costs didn't double or triple in a lot of neighborhoods, or if housing purchase prices weren't triple what they should be, maybe this wouldn't happen."

Gabriel Minchow, via Facebook: "So, tiny homes are in, but RVs are out?"

Letters to the editor must include the author's street address and phone number for verification. **Letters must be 250 or fewer words.**

Submit to: 2220 NW Quimby St., Portland, OR 97210.

Email: mzusman@wweek.com

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Apartment developers find a fit with 19 units

By Chuck Slothower

July 26, 2017

A new development proposal popped up in mid-July for a 19-unit apartment building that would be built along Southeast Division Street in Portland. Two weeks prior, a separate proposal was unveiled on Southeast Milwaukie Avenue. The size: 19 units.

For apartment projects 20 units or larger, developers in mixed-use zones must build affordable units or pay a hefty fee.

Portland planning officials are watching carefully to see whether multifamily developers are avoiding providing affordable apartments by keeping the number of units just under the 20-unit threshold.

“We’re tracking it,” said Tyler Bump, senior economic planner for the **Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability**.

By one measure, proposals for apartment buildings with fewer than 20 units are steady. There were seven proposals for apartment buildings of 15-19 units from Feb. 1, when inclusionary housing requirements took effect, to July 7. During the same period last year, there were eight such proposals, according to Bump.

Bump is preparing a report on the inclusionary housing policy’s first six months. He noted many developers are busy with proposals that vested under the old rules, which did not require affordable units.

The city would be most concerned if developers are building small structures on large lots, Bump said. That would indicate developers aren’t building projects with as much density as city officials desire.

“If they’re bigger sites, that’s certainly an issue,” Bump said.

Design Commission Chairman David Wark said density is also his primary concern with small apartment buildings.

“If those start becoming 19-unit buildings across the city, the real question is how many units could have been built?” he said. “That might be the unfortunate byproduct of a low threshold.”

Portland officials are encouraging bigger and denser multifamily development as part of their response to the city’s self-declared housing emergency.

Wark said the city should incentivize developers to build more densely, rather than find ways to punish those who build smaller structures.

“It’s really about focusing on incentives versus more requirements, let’s say,” he said.

The inclusionary housing policy requires developers to provide 15 percent affordable units at 80 percent of the Portland area’s median income, or 10 percent affordable units at 60 percent of median income. The fee in lieu of providing affordable units varies from \$19.50 to \$29.85 per gross square foot, depending on location and zoning.

The most recent proposal for 19 units was for a four-story apartment building at 4130 S.E. Division St., part of the eastward creep of redevelopment on the Southeast Portland neighborhood. The property is currently the site of Division Medical Clinic. Its single-story, 2,880-square-foot building was built in 1957.

Efforts to reach the developer through the applicant, Jennifer Rinkus of **Baysinger Partners Architecture**, were not successful. A staffer at the clinic said she was unaware of planned development on the site.

Another recent proposal calls for an 18-unit apartment building in the Alphabet District of Northwest Portland. In June, a 19-unit proposal emerged for a five-story building at 5340 S.E. Milwaukie Ave. The proposed building would replace an existing eight-unit apartment building. The applicant, architect Sinan Gumusoglu of Wilsonville, could not be reached for comment.

Nineteen-unit buildings are the natural result of developers attempting to make their projects pencil out, Wark said.

“It’s not a surprise,” he said. “People that are trying to build apartments are trying to make them work financially. And if they can’t make them work financially with affordable housing, they turn to the metrics that make them work.”

City permitting system upgrade cost rises again

*By Garrett Andrews
July 26, 2017*

The cost of the long-running effort to streamline and digitize the city’s slow permitting system has again been revised upward.

The latest segment of the **Portland Online Permitting System** is now expected to cost \$1.6 million, or \$100,000 more than the previous estimate.

The City Council was updated on this by members of the Technology Oversight Committee on Wednesday at a quarterly check-in hearing.

For years, **POPS**, formerly known as the Information Technology Advancement Project (**ITAP**), has experienced cost overruns and missed deadlines. It’s already cost the city \$12 million, and two city staffers involved with the project no longer work for the city – former Bureau of Development Services director Paul Scarlett and former ITAP project manager Rebecca Sponsel.

Last fall, the city severed ties with its first vendor for the project, Sierra Systems.

The project is still considered to be in the “discovery” phase.

OPB

Portland Prepared To Pull Russian Software Used To Scan Malicious Emails

By Ericka Cruz Guevarra

July 26, 2017

The City of Portland's Bureau of Technology Services is prepared to stop using software from Moscow-based cybersecurity company Kaspersky Lab. The move comes after Reuters reported the Trump Administration removed the company from its list of approved vendors used by government agencies because of concerns over cyber-espionage.

Christopher Paidhrin, Chief Information Security Officer for the City of Portland, says the city did not receive direct communication from the Government Services Administration regarding its removal of Kaspersky Lab from its list of approved vendors for purchasing technology equipment and software.

"We are concerned, we are mindful and we are extremely interested in learning more about the federal concerns for this software," said Paidhrin.

The city currently uses Kaspersky Lab software to filter inbound email for spam. It's one of three pieces of software the city uses to filter malicious emails.

The city currently evaluates all its software and hardware on an annual basis. It has not independently determined Kaspersky Labs to be a threat to the city's security.

Still, Paidhrin said the city is already consulting with its security appliance vendor about whether or not it can turn off the software.

"We will be cautious, and we will seek United States territorial sources for our devices and software," he said.

"The world of information security is global, and therefore we constantly deal with foreign actors and foreign threats, not particularly targeting the city of Portland but generally. The bad actors of the world are constantly knocking at our digital door," said Paidhrin.