

The Oregonian

Portland police need better training on how to avoid using force, consultants say

By Maxine Bernstein

October 5, 2017

Portland police officers aren't getting sufficient training on how to defuse tense encounters to avoid using force, outside consultants say.

After observing annual refresher training for police over the last three years, the consultants found that officers received little direction on communicating with empathy and patience to eliminate a potential threat. Instead, officers are taught to use commands and warnings.

The Police Bureau must rethink the training to bring it more in line with national best practices, the Chicago-based academics wrote in a report released this week.

"It appears PPB falls short of ensuring de-escalation as an alternative to force," the report said.

The finding comes three years after a federal judge approved a settlement agreement between the city and the U.S. Department of Justice that called for changes to police policy, training and community oversight in the wake of a 2012 investigation that found officers used excessive force against people with mental illness. The city hired Rosenbaum & Associates to monitor the city's compliance with the required reforms.

"We have called upon the PPB to give greater emphasis to building verbal communication and de-escalation skills that are essential for preventing or minimizing the use of force and to treat people with respect and dignity," the consultants wrote. "To date, however, insufficient time and quality instruction has been devoted to these important behaviors."

Portland Police Capt. Bob Day, who was reassigned to lead the bureau's training division in July 2016, said he read the report and would like to talk to consultant Dennis Rosenbaum and his colleagues to learn more.

"The concept of de-escalation runs throughout our training. It's a priority for us as an organization," Day said. "We're working hard to incorporate their recommendations and those in the settlement agreement. If we missed the mark on that, I'm interested in learning more. We're always looking to learn."

In police reports on use of force, the consultants found that often an officer's aggressive commands to a suspect are mislabeled as attempts to avoid and calm a problem.

Among examples the consultants cited: An officer yelled at someone, "You need to (expletive) stop or you may be shot! and if you don't stop, you're going to get (expletive)." In a police report about the encounter, the officer and supervisor described the approach as de-escalation and noted that profanity was used to emphasize the seriousness of the matter.

The consultants didn't provide details about the circumstances that led to the yelling.

"We have noted numerous cases wherein verbal techniques are often accompanied by a threat or warning of force," the consultants wrote. "We do not believe this complies with the requirement of 'non-force.' There appears to be large-scale confusion regarding the intent of de-escalation with the bureau and the confusion has yet to be adequately rectified through training and the evaluation of force events."

The bureau's most recent annual refresher training in September addressed some changes to the bureau's use-of-force policy, but focused more on conventional policing, such as firearm qualification, defensive tactics such as takedowns, how to rescue an injured victim and how to apply bandages to wounds.

Officers must learn techniques to calm an agitated person, promote rational decision-making and gain voluntary compliance that's not based on fear, the consultants said.

The consultants also said supervisors who review use-of-force reports aren't holding officers accountable when they don't meet the bureau's standard of using "as little reliance on force as practical."

They cited examples from police responses to protests in the last year. They found fault with one officer who used pepper spray on a protester who was shouting at officers but didn't pose a physical threat and wasn't interfering with the police.

In another example, an officer pepper-sprayed a man who was filming police with a phone or iPad from a distance away and another officer pushed the same man into other protesters on some stairs. While supervisors found the officers' actions reasonable, the consultants didn't.

The consultants don't identify where or when that occurred, but it's similar to the police response to protesters at City Hall who were demonstrating against the City Council's vote on a controversial police union contract in October 2016. Riot-clad officers ordered demonstrators out of the building. Police used pepper spray and pushed at least two people down the front steps of City Hall.

The consultants also cited another case when officers rushed and forcibly took a person to the ground who was in front of a TriMet bus on Southwest Broadway in downtown. Though police supervisors found the officers followed bureau policy, the consultants noted that video and the police reports didn't back that up.

The person wasn't fleeing but walking slowly away when the officers moved in and threw the person to the ground, the consultants said. Videos don't suggest the person posed a threat, the consultants said, yet at least one officer wrote in a report that police didn't want the person to attack other officers.

The report advises police supervisors to consider the "totality of circumstances" leading up to a police encounter and use of force, not just the "moment of force" to determine whether officers acted appropriately.

According to police figures from the second quarter of this year: 45 percent of police use of force incidents involved transients; 15 percent involved people who were perceived to have or suffered from mental illness; 21 percent involved armed suspects.

Portland's new police chief was on 'Wheel of Fortune' in 1996 (video)

*By Eder Campuzano
October 5, 2017*

Portland may know Danielle Outlaw as its newest police chief. But more than 20 years ago, "Wheel of Fortune" viewers and host Pat Sajak were introduced to her as "Danielle Bowman from the University of San Francisco."

Years before she would become head of the Portland Police Bureau, Outlaw won \$40,000 in one of America's most famous game shows. She told OPB about her stint on the show earlier this week.

After a bit of internet sleuthing, the Portland Mercury found the video on DailyMotion. And it's just as nostalgia-inducing as you'd think.

Outlaw was one of three students to appear on "Wheel of Fortune" for its Nov. 22, 1996 college week contest. She was up against two dudes: "Mel from San Jose State University" and "Thayer(?) from Emory University."

Despite her winning ways in the days leading up to this Friday showdown Outlaw scores lower than her competitors, leaving the Emory kid to clean up.

You can watch the entire episode above. If you can stand the buzzing throughout the broadcast, there are plenty of retro commercials to transport you back to the time when the Nintendo 64 and original PlayStation were top-of-the-line machines.

The Portland Tribune

Could scrapping gang list have unintended consequences?

*By Jim Redden
October 5, 2017*

Community concerns over long-term effects of labeling spur police action, but a study suggests investigations might be slowed

Reflecting criminal justice reforms sweeping the country, the Portland Police Bureau has announced it will no longer identify anyone as a gang member or associate — and will purge the hundreds of names in its existing gang list.

According to the bureau, the change, announced on Sept. 8, was made because being labeled a gang member or affiliate can have lifelong negative consequences for those trying to overcome the challenges they face.

"This police bureau is very serious about rising to the challenge of building and maintaining trust with the community it serves," Mayor Ted Wheeler said when the change was announced. "This is a great example of how the Portland Police Bureau is doing it right."

At the same time, however, the bureau still will maintain the Gang Enforcement Team (GET) and the Gang Violence Reduction Team (GVRT), which work together to investigate incidents of gang-related violence. For example, gang investigators responded to a Sept. 18 shooting where a man and woman were wounded while driving in Northeast Portland.

The bureau said there is no contradiction between the two policies. According to bureau spokesman Sgt. Chris Burley, gangs are criminal organizations, and the bureau will continue to monitor their activities. And GET officers will still investigate crimes with gang characteristics, such as drive-by shootings.

"The police bureau recognizes that crimes will continue to be committed in the furtherance of an organization or a group. The police bureau further recognizes that identifying a person as a gang member does not address the criminal act that was committed and diminishes credibility in the

community and can have long-lasting effects on those designated as gang members," Burley said.

But Matthew Valasik, a Louisiana State University sociology professor who has studied police responses to gangs, said the change could have unintended consequences. He said some future gang-related crimes might not be solved as quickly or at all.

"From a civil liberties perspective, it might be the correct thing to do. But at the same time, there are going to be consequences that people should be aware of," said Valasik, who first wrote about the change in an opinion piece in the Sept. 19 Portland Tribune titled, "Halting gang database a concern."

Valasik bases his opinion in large part on a study he co-authored about what happened when a Los Angeles Police Department gang unit in one division was temporarily disbanded in 2010 and 2011. In addition to experienced officers being reassigned, the collection and dissemination of gang-related information from that unit throughout the department also was suspended. Arrests of gang members dropped during that time, not only in the district the unit had been assigned, but citywide.

"You're losing a lot of institutional knowledge that can help shape investigations," Valasik said.

Police Capt. Mike Krantz admitted some officers are concerned that the lack of previous and new intelligence on gang members could compromise their safety. Krantz led GET from 2013 to 2016. Speaking on OPB radio after the decision was announced, he said officers might now approach gang members without knowing they are gang members.

Krantz said the issue of "officer safety" is more than offset by the gains in community trust from eliminating the list, however.

The bureau started its gang list over 20 years ago when urban gang violence was increasing in Portland and other cities across the country. Its legality has been challenged in the past, prompting the bureau to purge an earlier list and allow those proposed to be placed on the new one to formally appeal their designation as a gang member. Only about 5 percent ever did.

The new decision to purge the gang list and stop designating people as gang members was announced at a biweekly meeting of the Community Peace Collaborative. The informal public gathering is regularly attended by community members, including social service providers and relatives of designated gang members, who argue such labeling is discriminatory and creates an obstacle for young people who may or may not have made mistakes, but who want to become contributing members of society.

At the same time, the bureau has long recognized that race-based gangs are real and pose special threats for minority communities, including street-level violence that harms innocent victims, too. The problem grew especially apparent in the 1980s, when gangs fought over territories for control. Like many major cities, the bureau created a unit to specifically track and respond to such violence. The size has changed over time as the City Council revamped the bureau's budget for fiscal and policy reasons.

Today, after many changes, the Gang Enforcement Team consists of officers, detectives, sergeants and a lieutenant who investigate and proactively attempt to deter gang violence. It coordinates with the Gang Violence Response Team, which is comprised of three officers, two detectives and one sergeant from GET.

According to the bureau, GET personnel assigned to GVRT respond to gang-involved Measure 11 crimes, which are the most serious kind. When GET members are assigned to GVRT, they are

on call and respond to and investigate gang- involved Measure 11 crimes around the clock. Officers, detectives and the sergeant are assigned to be on call for GVRT for a period of time and then switch out with other members of GET. This allows the team to have a method to provide 24-hour response coverage.

At the time of the announcement, gang officers had responded to 81 incidents of suspected gang violence this year. That is roughly 25 percent less than by the same time in 2016 and about 50 percent less than the same time in 2015, when a record 193 incidents were investigated in Portland. Police believe the numbers were higher in the 1980s and 1990s, however, although gang incidents were not recorded separately then.

You can read Valasik's study at tinyurl.com/y9qbeet8.

Willamette Week

Sam Chase Will Not Run for City Council Seat After All

By Nigel Jaquiss
October 5, 2017

Metro Councilor Sam Chase, who recently said he was seriously considering running for city council next year, will stay where he is.

"It's not the right time for me," Chase tells WW.

Chase, a former chief of staff to City Commissioner Nick Fish and housing advisor to the late City Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury, has long connections to the affordable housing and low-income medical worlds in addition to City Hall experience.

But he says the council does not need another white man.

"It's been 25 years since there was a person of color on council," Chase says. "There needs to be some room for folks to step up."

Incumbent Commissioner Dan Saltzman then announced in September he had changed his mind and would not seek re-election.

Jo Ann Hardesty, a former state lawmaker and the head of the NAACP of Portland, entered the race earlier this year. Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith, who cannot seek re-election because of term limits is all but in the race: She cannot officially announce until January or she'd have to resign her seat. And mayoral aide Andrea Valderrama is also mulling a bid.

World-Renowned Japanese Architect Helping Design the Tall Apartment Towers Proposed for Portland Waterfront

By Rachel Monahan
October 4, 2017

If a proposal to bring tall apartment towers to the waterfront comes to fruition, an internationally renowned architect might have a hand in shaping Portland's new skyline.

Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, who designed the Portland Japanese Garden's new buildings and Tokyo's 2020 Olympic Games stadium, is working on the designs to build skyscrapers at RiverPlace.

WW first reported this morning that the project's developer is offering to build as many as 500 affordable apartments, in exchange for the city allowing the buildings to rise as high as 400 feet tall. The new neighborhood would step down from Portland State University to the Riverplace Marina and Tom McCall Waterfront Park.

Kuma's firm is the second architect listed on project documents. The other is locally based GBD Architects.

WW has obtained the early designs, which are being circulated in City Hall. Four city commissioners have expressed interest in the project—which needs their votes to change the height limits near RiverPlace. (The latest plans only allow developers to erect 200-foot buildings.)

Here's a look at the preliminary imaginings of what the apartment towers could look like if City Council lets Kuma go tall.

The Portland Mercury

Portland's Chipping in \$50,000 to Help Local DACA Recipients

By Dirk VanderHart

October 5, 2017

The City of Portland is spending \$50,000 to help DACA recipients re-apply for protections and get legal advice.

In a unanimous vote this afternoon, the Portland City Council approved a grant that will reimburse advocacy groups that have been helping "Dreamers" pay the \$495 fee to re-apply for protections under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, as well as for legal advice.

Since 2012, DACA has offered a measure of certainty to undocumented immigrants who arrived in the country as children, allowing them to work and go to school without fear of being deported. Donald Trump rescinded the policy on September 5, meaning an uncertain future for hundreds of thousands of people. Among the groups that have formed up to advocate for Dreamers is the Oregon DACA Coalition, which has been awarding "scholarships" to people scrambling to re-apply for benefits. The funding for those scholarships came from Causa, another immigrants rights group.

"Unfortunately our nightmare came true on September 5," Causa Executive Director Andrea Williams said this afternoon. "We made this sacrifice because we knew that this could potentially be the last chance in the foreseeable future to provide real protection from deportation and a work permit for DACA recipients."

Today, 31 days after Trump's order rescinding DACA, was the deadline for Dreamers to reapply for safeguards. In the last month, the Oregon DACA Coalition has awarded 54 scholarships, according to Leonardo Reyes, a co-founder. Williams said more than 30 people have received legal services in that time.

The city council's decision today approves a grant of \$50,000 to reimburse Causa for its efforts in the last month—money that will be set aside in an upcoming budget adjustment. In a symbolic gesture, the council also reaffirmed Portland's support for DACA, and for congress to pass the DREAM Act, which would reinstate some protections.

The resolution comes weeks after US Attorney General Jeff Sessions dropped into Portland to rail against our sanctuary city policies.

In 1996, Portland's Police Chief Won \$40K on Wheel of Fortune. Here's Video.

*By Dirk VanderHart
October 5, 2017*

In the autumn of 1996, Danielle Outlaw was a long way from where she is today: the first woman of color atop the Portland Police Bureau. In late November of that year, not so far from Thanksgiving, Outlaw (then Bowman, actually) was a junior at the University of San Francisco. And she was raking it in on America's Game.

Context for what you are about to see: It is November 22, 1996, and Outlaw is a finalist on Wheel of Fortune's College Week in San Fran. She's been killing it, in fact. As Outlaw approaches the Wheel on this day, she's already won more than \$40k in a previous appearance—\$20,000 of that in the form of a grand prize MasterCard. ("Can you handle that?" condescends Pat Sajak. "Yes I can!" Outlaw responds.)

This is, it would appear, a formative moment in Chief Outlaw's life. In an interview with OPB earlier this week, she explained her appearances on Wheel led her to get one of her three tattoos: "A tribal band circles her right arm, a Taoist symbol of eternal life and divine blessings."

But here, the only one of her appearances for which we could find a video (which loads unreliably), she has a run of bad luck. Two "BANKRUPT" spins in a row?!

We're still waiting to learn more about this new police chief, and the philosophy she'll bring to the Portland Police Bureau. As she was right to point out to reporters on Tuesday, it was only day two of her tenure.

So let's look back, to an evening when Danielle Outlaw, now-chief of police of the City of Portland, lost to a terrible Emory University student named Thayer.

H/T to Casey for helping us unearth the video.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Portland City Council extends housing provisions

*By Chuck Slothower
October 5, 2017*

The Portland City Council voted Wednesday to extend a housing emergency that would have expired otherwise.

The council first declared a housing emergency on Oct. 7, 2015. It was kept in place with two annual extensions. This week's action marks the third.

During the housing emergency, the city has passed inclusionary housing rules that require multifamily developers to include affordable units or pay a hefty fee, created an inter-bureau process to speed approvals of affordable housing and instituted mandatory relocation assistance for tenants who are evicted without cause.

The city also replaced Type II design review with a speedier, staff-driven process, Type IIx, for affordable housing projects.

The council on Wednesday also extended the relocation assistance program, which was set to expire on Oct. 6, until April 6, 2018. The relocation assistance program requires landlords to pay a fee to tenants when evicting them without cause or imposing rent increases of 10 percent or more that force their relocation.