

The Oregonian

Water bill assistance program still misses residents who need it most: Audit

Molly Harbarger
October 25, 2017

More than 20 years after Portland City Council launched a program to help low-income residents afford their water bills, it still falls short of helping the people who need it most.

Despite multiple task forces and committees, commissioners' promises and media attention, the city's Water Bureau has yet to figure out how to provide financial assistance to renters who struggle to pay their utility bills, a city audit released Wednesday shows.

The program gives homeowners and renters of single-family homes who make 60 percent or less of median income and who request financial help a \$142 discount on each quarterly water and sewer bill. That's about 50 percent of what a typical low-income household owes, according to auditors.

But apartment renters are out of luck. That's ostensibly because the city can't figure out how much they owe for water since most apartment buildings have a single water meter and the cost of water is rolled into the price of rent.

The money -- some \$4 million in 2015 -- to fund the discounts comes from other water users. That means that low-income renters end up subsidizing bills of homeowners, who are likely better-off and can qualify for the \$142 discounts.

Jennifer Scott, the lead auditor for the report, noted that the discount program is likely more important to the city's residents than ever, since both utility bills and the number of people living in poverty continue to rise. Mary Hull Caballero, Portland's city auditor, runs an office independent from City Hall.

The city council set a goal in 1995 of signing 10,000 people up for the program. But the Water Bureau hasn't achieved that goal due to a few key failures, the report said.

The program's most glaring failure is that no one has figured out how to provide the money to the many renters who don't have individual water meters.

City leaders have known for 20 years that a discount program for water and sewer bills isn't reaching tens of thousands of renters who otherwise meet income requirements.

Portland renters are more than twice as likely to be poor as homeowners, according to a Portland State University study. Much of Portland's new and anticipated home development is multifamily, meaning that the number of renters is likely to increase.

In the past, city committees have suggested that renters of public housing could receive assistance covering the cost of water, at the least. That has still not happened.

"Given the projections for more apartments, inaction by the city will result in a growing population that is ineligible for assistance," said the report.

The audit does not prescribe a solution for how to serve renters, but recommends the city address it.

The audit also found that the Water Bureau passively promotes the program to nearly all customers, rather than using data to target people most likely to need the subsidies.

Paper water bills carry a two-sentence disclaimer that lets people know they can call the city to find out about help paying their bill. The city does not send extra information to people who have repeatedly had their water shut off. Employees who answer calls from water ratepayers aren't told to recommend that callers who seem like they might be facing a financial crisis consider taking advantage of the program.

"If customers do not know that financial assistance exists, they would not have a reason to call and ask for it," says the report.

Water Commissioner Nick Fish said he directed Water Bureau staff to follow the audit's recommendations.

"It is time for action," he wrote in a formal response to the audit.

Water Bureau Director Mike Stuhr noted that since auditors began their work, bureau employees have started targeting mailings, phone calls and home visits to at-risk customers, plus made a few tweaks to help elderly customers stay on track. However, those might not be informed by city data about which residents have histories of water shut offs.

"Your findings and recommendations are aligned with our ongoing efforts and we are fully committed to implementing them," he wrote.

Council approves deputy chief's job, mulls requests to fund 85 more cop jobs

*By Maxine Bernstein
October 25, 2017*

Portland's City Council on Wednesday voted 4-to-0 to create a deputy police chief's job that new Chief Danielle Outlaw requested.

Outlaw last served as a deputy chief for the Oakland force before starting in Portland on Oct. 2 and is most comfortable with that management structure, said Berk Nelson, the mayor's senior adviser, and Anna Kanwit, the city's human resources director.

Now the city must figure out how to cover the estimated \$346,000 annual cost for the new position, plus another administrative assistant. The cost includes salary and benefits.

Outlaw will consider internal and external applicants and intends to keep the assistant chiefs who will report to the deputy chief. She plans to fill the job quickly, said the mayor's spokesman Michael Cox, but he didn't offer a time line.

"For her to succeed, she's asked for this one position to be created so she could be the best possible chief for the city of Portland," Nelson told council members.

Outlaw is out of town attending the annual conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police in Philadelphia. Mayor Ted Wheeler, who serves as police commissioner, was on vacation and didn't vote.

The council could grant one-time funding for the job from an estimated \$5.9 million available to city bureaus this fall from last fiscal year's surplus due to higher revenues or underspending. The

council also could direct the bureau to find money in its current budget. That decision is expected Nov. 8.

Beyond the deputy chief's job, police want a one-time green light to hire 50 officers above the bureau's authorized strength of 945 and fund 35 two-year jobs for veteran cops who retire but choose to return to work on limited-term contracts. That would mean the City Council would have to set aside for police \$3 million (\$1.6 million for the 50 officers and \$1.4 million for the 35 rehired retirees) in their fall budget adjustment process.

The bureau also asked the city to set aside another \$6.9 million to support future annual costs for those 85 positions, as the fall budget adjustment request would cover only part of a year.

Police supervisors say the additional positions will allow the bureau to get "ahead of the curve" by hiring and training recruits in anticipation of a wave of retirements over the next five years. It takes about a year and a half from hiring to get a new officer trained and riding alone on patrol. The bureau, for example, expects 50 to 60 retirements in fiscal 2020-2021.

City budget advisers, however, have cautioned the City Council not to consider multi-year annual funding during the fall adjustment. Police long-term staffing decisions should come during next year's budget season because the money sought for the added jobs would reduce money available for other city priorities or drive cuts to other city bureaus, they said.

Instead, the city budget office has recommended that the council next month place \$900,000 in a contingency fund for the police to use in the coming year to hire 10 officers beyond the bureau's authorized strength. The council granted that over-hire ability to the bureau last year but didn't provide money.

The city budget office also recommended that the council set aside \$1.1 million to support 10 limited-term jobs for rehired retirees as part of the fall budget readjustment.

The mayor supports the bureau's bigger request. "They need more positions. We want to help them. We're on board with this," said Cox, Wheeler's spokesman.

Wheeler also takes the recommendations of city budget analysts seriously, Cox said. "Over the next two weeks, we will continue to do the work necessary to get the Police Bureau what they need in the context of a limited resource environment," he said.

Officer Daryl Turner, president of the Portland Police Association, criticized the bureau's proposals as a one-time Band-Aid approach to a longstanding staffing problem. If the mayor and council recognize the bureau's needs, the council should increase its authorized strength, Turner said.

Commissioners Amanda Fritz and Chloe Eudaly said Wednesday they supported creating the deputy chief's position, but both expressed concern about the police bureau's requests for significant funding this fall for the hiring of additional officers.

Fritz said she understands that it's important for the new chief of police "to have somebody you can trust in command, who has your back."

Commissioner Nick Fish said it's not so different from deputy director's jobs in other city bureaus. Often, there's too much of a burden placed on a director, and someone is needed to delegate certain functions to, Fish said. A deputy chief's job also could be a leadership opportunity for someone who could be trained to one day succeed the chief, he added.

Kanwit said a deputy chief would help city officials and officers in the bureau know who is in charge when the chief is out of town or not available.

Several members of the public, who addressed the council, questioned why a deputy chief is needed if there are already three assistant chiefs who report to the chief. When a chief is out of town, one of the assistant chiefs now is tapped to serve as an acting chief.

Of the bureau's 945 authorized jobs, there were 18 vacancies as of last month, but the numbers constantly fluctuate. The bureau expects to fill the vacancies by the end of June.

About 375 officers are on patrol, but bureau supervisors recommend at least 390 to 400 officers on patrol. They note officers' slower response times to priority emergency calls – an average 6.55-minute response in fiscal 2016-17 compared with the 5.92-minute average the year before.

The bureau has hired 99 new officers in the last 18 months, according to spokesman Sgt. Chris Burley. But most of them are either still in training or riding with a field training officer and on probation. There are currently 17 retirees who were hired back on two-year contracts, and 12 retirees hired back on six-year contracts.

City of Portland human resources director stepping down unexpectedly

*By The Oregonian
October 25, 2017*

Anna Kanwit, director of human resources for the city of Portland for the past 5 1/2 years, announced Wednesday that she is resigning effective Nov. 30. Her departure was unexpected.

She helped oversee a workforce of about 8,000 people, including seasonal and part-time employees. She took the lead on negotiating with the city's many unions.

An October 2016 city audit found that her bureau took "too long" to recruit candidates for open positions, putting the city at risk of losing top candidates to other employers. And it noted that women and Latinos are dramatically underrepresented in the city's work force compared with Portland's population.

In her email announcing her departure to city council members, Kanwit wrote that "I even have fond memories of the many extremely difficult personnel issues we worked through and the numerous collective bargaining crises."

Negotiations with the city's largest bargaining group, the multi-union District Council of Trade Unions, are in a rocky place. The contract with those workers ran out at the end of June and negotiations are still underway, with the union having voted to authorize a strike if things don't improve.

In her email announcing her departure, she acknowledged that work is incomplete.

"I do not intend to be a lame duck and I am committed to reaching a negotiated agreement with the DCTU, so no worries there. :)" she wrote.

In his campaign to become mayor of Portland, Ted Wheeler pledged to make major changes at the human resources bureau. He said trust between the city and its unions was at an all-time low. And he pledged to bring both HR and labor relations directly under the control of the mayor.

But he stopped short of making the promise that fellow candidate Jules Bailey made: Bailey said he would fire Kanwit.

Meanwhile, Ted Wheeler says labor relations at the city are "deeply broken."

Wheeler beat Bailey handily, however, so Bailey didn't have the chance to show whether he would in fact do so.

Neither mayoral spokesman Michael Cox nor Tom Rinehart, the city's chief administrative officer and Kanwit's boss, responded to after-hours emails asking for more information.

The Portland Mercury reported Wednesday that Rinehart named Serilda Summers-McGee, who joined the city's human resources bureau as an assistant director in July, to serve in the director's post after Kanwit leaves.

The Mercury said it was uncertain if Summers-McGee's appointment is temporary or permanent. She previously headed human resources at the city's economic development agency for less than a year and served as HR director at the Oregon Department of Education for three years.

Portland development bureau gets permanent leader, 2nd woman to hold post

The Oregonian
October 25, 2017

Rebecca Esau, former assistant director of Portland's development bureau who was acting as the interim bureau director, was named the permanent director Wednesday.

Portland City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly announced Esau's appointment in an email to all Bureau of Development Services employees just after 5 p.m. Esau is only the second woman to head the bureau in its 100-plus year history, she wrote.

Eudaly forced out the previous development bureau chief, Paul Scarlett, in April.

She did so just three days after the City Budget Office released a summary report detailing problems within the bureau.

Operations there cause delays in the permitting and inspection process required to build affordable housing, the report said. Unfilled job vacancies posed workload challenges, the report found. And low staff morale, poor customer service and a confusing process for new developers contributed to development delays.

In her email, Eudaly praised Esau's work as interim director, saying she "worked extremely hard to provide clear direction and vision, and bring a level of stability." She said the city conducted a national search before picking Esau as the bureau's permanent leader.

Prior to becoming assistant director, Esau managed the bureau's land use services division for 14 years.

Eudaly wrote that the bureau's accomplishments so far this year, mainly under Esau's leadership, include:

- Handling record-breaking workload, including permitting more than \$502.4 million in apartment and condo development. That put the bureau on track to exceed the most recent high-water mark for such development by more than \$200 million, Eudaly wrote.
- Taking steps to resolve bottlenecks in the bureau and in connection to other city bureaus.
- Supporting development of more accessory dwelling units on the properties of existing homes to help lessen the city's housing crisis.

The Portland Tribune

Eudaly hires second new bureau director

*By Jim Redden
October 26, 2017*

Interim Bureau of Development Services director Rebecca Esau named to top spot on Wednesday

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly has appointed Rebecca Esau as director of the Bureau of Development Services.

Eudaly oversees BDS, which issues building permits and enforces city building codes.

Esau has been acting as interim director since Eudaly ousted former director Paul Scarlett in April.

Eudaly announced the appointment of Esau in an email to BDS employees on Wednesday.

Eudaly previously replaced the director of another bureau she oversees, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement. She recruited an outsider, Suk Rhee, vice president of strategy and community partnership of Northwest Health Foundation, to head it.

Sources Say: Documentary on gentrification to debut

*By Jim Redden
October 26, 2017*

Plus, Commissioner Nick Fish criticizes The Yard and 2018 City Council races heat up

A critical yet nuanced look at the history of gentrification in North and Northeast Portland will open the 44th Northwest Filmmakers' Festival on Nov. 1.

Titled "Priced Out," it is directed by local journalist Cornelius Swart as a follow-up to his 2002 documentary on the subject titled "Northeast Passage." Where some of those profiled in the first film were hopeful about the changes occurring at that time in their part of town, the mood in Swart's newest film is largely one of despair for African-American residents who have lost their community.

At the same time, "Priced Out" does not downplay the very serious problems that existed in much of North and Northeast Portland in the past, including rampant crime and the deteriorating conditions of many homes and businesses before the recent real estate boom.

"Priced Out" will premiere at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 1, in the Whitsell Auditorium of the Portland Art Museum, with Swart in attendance.

Fish criticizes The Yard

Commissioner Nick Fish panned The Yard, the 21-story building at the east end of the Burnside Bridge, when discussing the proposed Central City Plan update last Wednesday. Because of a late design change that the Bureau of Development Services did not catch, the building turned out much more foreboding than the brightly illuminated version shown in original drawings.

When talking about potential redevelopments at other bridgeheads with chief planner Joe Zehnder, Fish brought up the building and asked, "Is that a model or a cautionary tale?"

Caught by surprise, Zehnder responded that although a tall building was appropriate for that site, the answer depends on what one thinks about its design. "Well, there's no accounting for ...," Fish replied without completing his obvious thought.

City Council races heat up

Two more candidates have announced for the City Council seat being vacated by Dan Saltzman next year.

One is Andrea Valderrama, who works as a policy adviser for Mayor Ted Wheeler and previously was employed by former City Commissioner Steve Novick. She is also on the David Douglas school board. The other is Spencer Raymond, a former OPB newscaster and owner of The Civic Taproom and Bottle Shop.

The three other candidates who previously announced are NAACP of Portland President Jo Ann Hardesty, neighborhood activist Felicia Williams, and Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith, who cannot formally file for the office until next year without having to resign her current post. Architect and affordable housing advocate Stuart Emmons also says he is considering running for the seat.

And Commissioner Nick Fish formally filed for re-election on Monday. Only environmental activist Julia DeGraw has announced against him so far.

Crypto detected twice in five days

By Jim Redden

October 25, 2017

Portland officials say Bull Run water is safe to drink but advise those with compromised immune systems to consult their doctors

A potentially deadly microorganism has been detected in the Bull Run Watershed for the second time in five days.

The Portland Water Bureau announced on Wednesday that *Cryptosporidium* was detected in a water sample collected on Sunday, Oct. 22. The previous one was collected on Wednesday, Oct. 18.

Portland officials continue to insist the primary source of the much of the region's water is safe, but advise those with compromised immune systems to consult their doctors.

Many of the positive results have followed heavy rains, which could have washed animal feces, where crypto is found, into the city reservoir there.

The reservoir provides water to Portland and many surrounding communities. Although it has historically been very clean, beginning earlier this year, *Cryptosporidium* has been repeatedly detected in the water there.

Because of that, the City Council approved the construction of a filtration plant that will remove crypto — as the microorganism is commonly called — and other contaminants from the water. It will cost up to an estimated \$500 million and not be completed for another 10 years or more.

According to the Portland Water Bureau, in the Oct. 22 sample, three oocysts (an indicator of crypto) were detected from a total of 50 liters of water. In the Oct. 18 sample, one oocyst was detected in the 10-liter sample. These detections follow other low-level detections from January through March and again in September of this year.

Exposure to crypto can cause cryptosporidiosis, a serious illness. Symptoms can include diarrhea, vomiting, fever and stomach pain. People with healthy immune systems recover without medical treatment. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), people with severely weakened immune systems are at risk for more serious disease. Symptoms may be more severe and could lead to serious or life-threatening illness. Examples of people with weakened immune systems include those with AIDS; those with inherited diseases that affect the immune system; and cancer and transplant patients who are taking certain immunosuppressive drugs.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has estimated that a small percentage of the population could experience gastro-intestinal illness from crypto and advises that customers who are immunocompromised and receive their drinking water from the watershed consult with their healthcare professional about the safety of drinking the tap water. To learn if your drinking water comes from Bull Run, please contact your local drinking water provider.

Public health surveillance during and after a similar series of low-level detections from January through March of this year did not see an increase in crypto-related illness. The general public is not advised to take additional precautions.

In addition to the city of Portland, PWB provides Bull Run water to Burlington, the City of Gresham, the City of Sandy, the City of Tualatin, Green Valley, GNR, Hideaway Hills, Lake Grove, Lorna Portland Water, Lusted, Palatine Hill, Pleasant Home, Raleigh, Rockwood, Skyview Acres, Tualatin Valley, Two Rivers, Valley View and West Slope Water Districts.

The public is encouraged to view all sampling results posted to the City's website at www.portlandoregon.gov/water/cryptoresults.

Customers with questions regarding water quality can call the Water Line at 503-823-7525.

Audit: Residents need help with water bills

*By Jim Redden
October 25, 2017*

City has not met its longtime goal of providing discounts to 10,000 water and sewer customers

Portland needs to do more to provide utility discounts to low-income households, according to an audit released Wednesday by the City Auditors Office.

The audit is titled "Utility Payment Assistance: Program improvements would enable city to assist more customers." It says the Portland Water Bureau, which administers the combined water and sewer billing program, has not done nearly enough to identify those customers who need a discount and provide it to them.

The audit notes that the City Council approved a low-income discount program in 1995 and set a goal to enroll 10,000 customers, but that goal has never been reached.

Those most in need include low-income households in multifamily buildings that do not have individual water meters for each unit, the audit says. The bureau currently has no way to identify which of them meet income requirements to receive the discounts authorized by the council and provide them.

"The city has studied how to offer discounts to those who live in apartments and pay for some utilities, including water, as part of their rent rather than directly to the Water Bureau, but solutions have been elusive," the audit says.

The audit recommends focusing outreach for payment assistance on customers most likely to be eligible and in need, and ensuring that general information about payment assistance is easy to find and understand.

Paying for additional discounts is a problem not addressed in the audit. To maintain existing services, water and sewer rates would have to be raised to offset the lost revenue from discounting more bills. According to the audit, the median quarterly bill is \$300 in the current fiscal year.

In a response letter, Commissioner Nick Fish, who is in charge of the water and sewer bureaus, praised auditors and said he has directed the bureaus to implement their recommendations.

"The percentage of Portlanders living below the poverty level is growing, and we are experiencing a community housing emergency. It is time for action," Fish wrote.

You can read the audit at tinyurl.com/yb86hkyg.

Willamette Week

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly Selects Second New Bureau Director

*By Rachel Monahan
October 25, 2017*

City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly has appointed a woman to head the Bureau of Development Services—the second in the bureau's history.

Rebecca Esau, who served as interim bureau director after Eudaly pushed out the previous director, Paul Scarlett, will now take the helm officially.

Since taking office in January, Eudaly kicked off her oversight of both bureaus she was assigned by dismissing the previous leadership.

She recruited an outside candidate to lead the Office of Neighborhood Involvement. This time, she opted for an internal candidate without a search.

"I offered her the job because she brings a high level of competence, diligence, passion and dedication to this position at a critical time for the city," Eudaly wrote in an email to BDS staff on Wednesday.

"She has strong support from the development community, neighborhoods, BDS staff and leadership at other city bureaus, as well as that of the Mayor, the City Council and me. That's why I determined that doing a national search when we have already identified the best candidate would be a waste of taxpayer dollars at a critical time."

The Portland Mercury

Laundry Service and Restrooms Might Be Coming to Portland's Homeless

By Dirk VanderHart

October 25, 2017

As Ted Wheeler's Frets About Spending, He's Mulling Nearly \$450,000 in New Cleanup Costs

IF INTERNAL plans come to life, the City of Portland could supply mobile restrooms and laundry service for its growing homeless population in coming months.

And if a request by one city bureau is approved, the city will pay for ramped-up campsites "cleanups" on par with the massive 2016 effort that saw hundreds of homeless people moved off the Springwater Corridor trail.

In total, these efforts could amount to nearly \$450,000 more than what's currently budgeted to battle Portland's homelessness crisis—a notable allotment given Mayor Ted Wheeler's heartburn about ever-greater sums of the city's general fund being spent to fight the problem. They also highlight part of Wheeler's homelessness strategy that's gotten relatively little attention: He's cleaning and clearing out homeless camps at an unprecedented clip, and getting serious about other means of tamping down the "livability" problems they can bring.

"Whereas we cleaned six campsites the first week I took office, this last week we cleaned 40," Wheeler said at a press conference earlier this month (not bothering to mention that he took office during severe weather conditions, when cleanups are deprioritized). "We increased funding for posting and cleaning up camps that were impacted by public health, public safety, or environmental issues by over 350 percent in this budget."

With that money, the city has sharply increased the contractors it hires to clean up human waste and clear out campsites—from four workers last summer to 16 today, according to internal budget documents. Weekly reports posted online list dozens of sites those contractors "clean"—a term that can mean anything from trash pickup to camper displacement.

Now Wheeler's open to spending more.

The mayor hinted at new laundry and restroom trailers during the press conference earlier this month, saying he hoped business groups would help pitch in. A clearer picture of the proposals comes from internal documents obtained by the Mercury, as well as requests filed in anticipation of an upcoming budget adjustment, in which Portland City Council will dole out \$12.3 million in surplus funds.

As part of that process, Wheeler's office slipped in a last-minute request of \$100,000 for a program dubbed "PDX Pit Stops." Following the lead of cities like Sacramento, San Francisco, and Denver, the program would supply two three-stalled restroom trailers that would serve the Central Eastside and Lents.

The two neighborhoods include some of the highest concentrations of homeless residents in the city, but have scant access to public restrooms, according to an analysis carried out by the city's Office of Management and Finance (OMF). That imbalance creates issues.

“The City of Portland’s One-Point-of-Contact system receives hundreds of citizen complaints a day,” reads a project proposal [PDF]. “Many of these are reports of human waste on sidewalks, in city parks and natural areas, and even on private property.”

According to the document, the cost of buying two trailers and operating them five days a week for six months is roughly \$159,000—meaning Wheeler’s budget request is likely not enough on its own.

It’s also not necessarily going to be granted. Such late requests are typically a sign that a councilmember is making a project a priority, but mayoral spokesperson Michael Cox tells the Mercury the \$100,000 budget ask could get crowded out by competing needs.

“We can also get creative on financing,” Cox says.

There’s even less certainty surrounding a \$138,796 proposal [PDF] to purchase and operate a 10-station laundry trailer—an idea city officials say could reduce the amount of discarded clothes city crews pick up, as well as risks from hepatitis and other health hazards.

The city “spent approximately \$866,957 in the fiscal year of 2017 on cleaning up property and trash left by homeless individuals in illegal campsites,” reads a proposal for a “Portland Mobile Laundry” pilot project. “It is estimated that approximately 70 percent of these cleanup costs are associated with dirty and used laundry.”

Cox cautions the idea isn’t “fully baked” yet, but according to the proposal, a laundry trailer would be available Monday through Friday from 8 am to 4 pm. Officials have also considered setting up a brick-and-mortar laundry service, or funding vouchers homeless people can use to pay for laundry.

Lastly, the OMF, which Wheeler oversees, has asked for \$150,000 as part of the upcoming budget adjustment for its Homelessness and Urban Camping Impact Reduction Program (HUCIRP). The money would be used on “cleanups on the scale of the 2016 Springwater Corridor cleanup” carried out by former Mayor Charlie Hales, the request says, and is needed because “a confluence of events has resulted in unanticipated growth of the homeless population and is challenging the capacity of the program to respond.”

The request warns that “service levels will be impacted” if council denies the request, but OMF says the work was already completed.

“The campsite cleanup funding is backfill for work already carried out this summer,” spokesperson Jen Clodius says, “not new work.”

A City Budget Office analysis (pg. 114) pointed out that HUCIRP was given \$500,000 for cleanups in the current city budget, but has only spent something like \$170,000. OMF didn’t respond to questions for clarification by the Mercury’s deadline.

In an Abrupt Move, the City's HR Director Is Resigning

*By Dirk VanderHart
October 25, 2017*

The city's top labor negotiator is resigning.

In an abrupt move, Anna Kanwit, a long-time city employee who for the last five years has served as director of the Bureau of Human Resources, sent word this morning that she's leaving her position next month.

"I am resigning my position as the BHR Director, effective November 30," Kanwit wrote in an email to city officials Wednesday morning. "I have truly enjoyed my 26 plus years in public service."

The decision comes as Kanwit oversees fraught negotiations with the city's largest labor group, the District Council of Trade Unions (DCTU), which voted last week to authorize a potential strike if a new contract can't be hammered out.

There's no sign the bargaining is necessarily related to her decision to leave, but Kanwit alluded to the negotiations in her letter to the city's elected officials, saying: "I do not intend to be a lame duck and I am committed to reaching a negotiated agreement with the DCTU, so no worries there. :)"

Kanwit did not immediately respond to our inquiry. Mayor Ted Wheeler's office, meanwhile, issued a terse statement.

"The mayor has a tremendous amount of respect for Anna Kanwit and is grateful for her service to the city," Wheeler spokesperson Michael Cox said. Asked whether the mayor had forced Kanwit out, Cox said only: "We don't discuss personnel matters."

Wheeler is out of the office, on vacation with his family.

News of Kanwit's departure came as a shock to Rob Wheaton, an AFSCME employee who bargains with Kanwit on behalf of the DCTU.

"Anna was talking about retiring next year, so it is strange to see the term 'resignation' versus 'retirement,'" Wheaton tells the Mercury. "This is something that seemed a bit far off the last time I discussed it with her."

Wheaton says he has no idea whether Kanwit's announcement has to do with the ongoing bargaining. He says he forwarded Wheeler a copy of email correspondence between he and Kanwit on Monday asking the mayor to intervene.

Tom Rinehart, the city's chief administrative officer, sent an email to employees this morning announcing Kanwit's impending departure.

"Her knowledge of the City and our workforce will be missed, and I thank Anna for her time leading the Bureau of Human Resources," Rinehart wrote. "Mayor Wheeler wanted me to relay his appreciation for the time Anna has dedicated to public service and to the people of Portland. He thanks her for the many accomplishments she's achieved during her time with the City and her ability to move important initiatives forward."

Rinehart has tapped Assistant Human Resources Director Serilda Summers-McGee to take the director's job. She's been with the BHR only since July, and has held human resources positions with Prosper Portland (formerly the Portland Development Commission) and the Oregon Department of Education, according to her LinkedIn profile. It's unclear if that appointment is temporary or permanent.

Kanwit began her tenure at the City of Portland in 1991, as a deputy city attorney focused on employment. She moved over to human resources in 2000, taking a job as assistant director. She was appointed director in 2012.

Kanwit appeared before Portland City Council this morning, shortly after announcing her resignation, to present a proposal to create a new "deputy chief" position in the Portland Police Bureau.

Here's Kanwit's full announcement:

I am resigning my position as the BHR Director, effective November 30.

It has been an honor to work with each of you but particularly with the elected officials with whom I have worked with for so many years on wonderful innovative programs and policies for the city such as Employer of Choice, Model Employer for Persons with Disabilities, the fragrance policy and paid parental leave to name just a few of the things we accomplished. I even have fond memories of the many extremely difficult personnel issues we worked through and the numerous collective bargaining crises. I have truly enjoyed my 26 plus years in public service.

I do not intend to be a lame duck and I am committed to reaching a negotiated agreement with the DCTU, so no worries there. :)

Thank-you and best wishes, Anna.

Hall Monitor: Danielle Outlaw Wants a Helper

By Dirk VanderHart

October 25, 2017

Turns Out the Police Chief's Been Planning a Big Change for Bureau Leadership.

ON HER second day on the job, Police Chief Danielle Outlaw told reporters it was too soon to talk about any changes at the police bureau.

"I'm only on day two," Outlaw told the Merc's Doug Brown. "If there is a time to make some shifts and moves, that's what I'll do. But I'm not there yet."

She was totally there.

As first reported by the Mercury last week, Outlaw reached an understanding with Mayor Ted Wheeler upon accepting the police chief gig: She needed a second in command.

Under an arrangement Outlaw is proposing with the mayor's blessing, the city would create a brand new "deputy chief" job within the Portland Police Bureau (PPB).

It's a stark change for the bureau. Whereas past chiefs like Larry O'Dea and Mike Marshman took reports directly from the bureau's three (and formerly four) assistant chiefs, Outlaw wants those reports to be fielded by her deputy.

That additional buffer "will provide her the opportunity to focus on the strategic goals of the organization," PPB spokesperson Sergeant Chris Burley told me in an email.

Something else it'll do: create higher costs and raise questions about operational redundancies—especially in a bureau that a 2014 city report concluded was top-heavy.

The deputy chief's salary would top out at \$186,576 a year, and receive a take-home vehicle valued at \$75,000. Figure in benefits and the new administrative assistant the deputy chief would get, and you're talking about costs of nearly \$350,000.

Despite these big changes, the city has kept the deputy chief proposal close to the vest. News of the change surfaced when a city council agenda item was posted online last week—but the ordinance [PDF] was attached to the council's "consent agenda," meaning it won't get an individual hearing unless someone specifically requests one. (It's not uncommon for new classifications to be put on the "consent agenda.")

Funding, too, has come in under the radar. Though city Human Resources Director Anna Kanwit told me the deputy chief position was discussed as part of Outlaw's hire, Wheeler's office requested \$347,000 to pay for the position late in the game—in a list of last-minute requests for funding as part of a November 1 budget adjustment.

Such late requests sometimes irk city budget watchers, who see their timing as a way to avoid scrutiny by City Budget Office analysts.

The fact it was attached to the consent agenda is a sign that council likely supports Outlaw's request. The next big question is who she'll hire.

Burley says Outlaw will take applications from both inside and outside the bureau, but the classification has very few strings attached to it, according to Kanwit. Outlaw is free to hire, for instance, a close confidant from her former job at the Oakland Police Department—a move that would make Wheeler's rare decision to tap a chief from another agency even more rare. Suddenly two Oaklanders could be atop the PPB.

But perhaps it's too soon to speculate. Outlaw has been on the job less than a month, after all. Let's take her word for it that she still has much to learn.

OPB

Portland City Council Votes to Create Deputy Chief of Police Position

*By Ericka Cruz Guevarra
October 25, 2017*

Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw is poised to get a deputy chief of police who will assist her with overseeing and managing the police bureau.

Portland City Council voted Wednesday to authorize the city to create a deputy chief of police position for which the Bureau of Human Resources recommends a maximum annual salary of \$186,576.

Before the vote, council members sat through testimony from members of the community who said they fear the position will create a buffer between them and the new police chief.

Community members also raised concern over why the position is necessary in the first place, questioning Outlaw's ability to run the bureau on her own.

Commissioner Nick Fish attempted to quell concerns, saying this was just the first step.

“All this does is authorize HR to create a position. It's not funded, and we haven't figured out how to fill it,” Fish said. “Our HR rules require that we go through this in stages, and there will be plenty of opportunity for you to come tell us whether we should fund it or not.”

The position was requested by Mayor Ted Wheeler's office. The ordinance to create the position was approved unanimously.