

The Oregonian

Portland's next human resources chief 'intentionally recruited' to serve for the long haul

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Serilda Summers-McGee, a 35-year-old human resources professional who has worked for the City of Portland for just a year, was suddenly thrust into one of the higher-ranking jobs in city government -- director of human resources -- Wednesday.

But her elevation to the key role, overseeing the hiring and firing of a workforce of 8,000 people, was not a shock, for her or Mayor Ted Wheeler. Rather, it was planned by Wheeler's top administrator long before current human resources chief Anna Kanwit unexpectedly announced she will resign next month.

Summers-McGee, who served as human resources director at the Oregon Department of Education for three years, was hired to head human resources and workforce development at the city's economic development agency last October. She was elevated to Kanwit's assistant director in July.

Tom Rinehart, the city's chief administrative officer, made that move with the intention that Summers-McGee would become the city's human resources director for the long haul. Before Rinehart accepted the job as Wheeler's top administrator in Portland, he was Wheeler's closest aide when he chaired the Multnomah County Commission and also during his tenure as Oregon state treasurer.

Rinehart said in a statement to The Oregonian/OregonLive Thursday Summers-McGee was his choice to recruit and train "the next generation of city employees."

Normally when a city bureau director departs, the Portland city commissioner in charge of that bureau names an assistant director or similar person to head the bureau on an interim basis while a search is conducted for a successor. But Rinehart said he and unspecified others had already searched for the right person to succeed Kanwit and found her: Summers-McGee.

"We intentionally recruited Serilda Summers-McGee to become the next director of human resources; this was part of our succession planning," he said. "She has a successful record building diverse and inclusive organizations and is also a leader in workplace excellence."

Kanwit is the sixth city of Portland bureau director to announce departure plans in the past year. The heads of the office of neighborhood involvement, government relations, the police department, the bureau of emergency communications and the development services bureau already have stepped down.

Most of those directors were forced out and most were paid six-figure severances. Neither Rinehart nor mayoral spokesman Michael Cox responded to a request for Kanwit's severance agreement Wednesday and Thursday.

In his statement, sent by spokeswoman Jen Clodium, Rinehart praised Summer-McGee's track record at economic development agency Prosper Portland, the state education agency and Kaiser Permanente, where she was "diverse talent planning manager."

"I am confident she will make a tremendous difference as we recruit and train the next generation of city employees," Rinehart said. "The city is very fortunate to have her."

When Summers-McGee takes over next month, she will become the second black woman running a city bureau, joining Danielle Outlaw, who became Portland's police chief this month.

The Portland Mercury

Portland's New Supportive Housing Push Could Cost \$300 Million—Just for Starters

*By Dirk VanderHart
October 26, 2017*

The mood in city hall was upbeat last week, when Portland City Council set into motion a plan that could see 2,000 units of deeply affordable housing sprout up in the city during the next decade.

As we reported at the time, the minor step of studying how to expand so-called "supportive housing"—in which cheap rents are paired with social services—is seen among some as a sign the City of Portland, Multnomah County, and others will ultimately support those new units, and therefore shift their focus to housing people who are exceedingly difficult to house.

But while there's widespread acknowledgment this effort will be costly, not many people are offering specifics. Which is odd, because they've been available for months.

According to an analysis completed earlier this year by the New York-based Corporation for Supportive Housing, creating and operating 2,000 units of supportive housing would cost roughly \$300 million over 10 years. And once the housing's all established? It'll cost \$41 million a year to operate, the analysis suggests.

That's a lot of money—more than local governments or the city's housing authority, Home Forward, have to throw at the matter. Officials haven't been shy about previewing the fact they'll be seeking new revenue to fill gaps in funding for this push. The only question is where they will look. (Mayor Ted Wheeler has said he doesn't want a property tax increase, and there's some interest around a cell phone tax.)

The CSH analysis is built on a set of assumptions—for instance that roughly 1,200 of the supportive units will

be built into new projects, while the remaining 800 will be come in the form of existing units in the community.

Heather Lyons, the Portland-based director for CSH who authored the document, tells the Mercury those assumptions came from speaking with local officials about what kind of mix they'd like to see.

Lyons' analysis suggests roughly \$184 million of the \$300 million estimate would go toward "capital costs for building new units." The rest would go toward operating, paying for social services, and leasing.

Not all of that would need to come from new taxes and fees.

"There are existing resources for services that can be matched to housing, and there is existing housing in the community that can have services attached," the document says. "Moreover, a wide-ranging coalition of systems and partners, well beyond the City of Portland, Multnomah County and Home Forward, will pool their resources to sustain this system over time."

On top of that, Lyons and others argue that supportive housing ultimately offers cost savings to communities, reducing visits to the Emergency Room and hospital stays, as well as cutting down on law enforcement costs.

"Supportive housing has been rigorously tested for more than two decades, and the results are clear: It improves lives and communities and reduces costs," the analysis says. Lyons tells the Mercury she's hoping to get grant money that would enable CSH to study what sorts of savings might be possible here.

Meanwhile, local officials have discussed finding a way to funnel cost savings back into the ongoing costs of operating this kind of housing. It's unclear how that would work.

Here's the full report.

Portland Police ID Officer Who Shot Bank Robbery Suspect on Tuesday

*By Doug Brown
October 26, 2017*

A Portland Police Bureau (PPB) officer shot a man that they say was a bank robbery suspect on Tuesday afternoon in North Portland.

Officer Ryan Reagan—a 19-year PPB veteran—shot, but didn't kill, the still-publicly unidentified 25-year-old man shortly after a robbery at the U.S. Bank on North Lombard around 1:30 pm yesterday. It was shortly after police responded to robbery at a nearby check cashing business by someone matching the same description as the bank robber: a Black male in his 20s, wearing a dark baseball hat, and dark clothes.

The man was unarmed when he was shot, the police note, and the guy didn't show any weapons during the robberies. The PPB said in both robberies, the "suspect entered the location, demanded money, produced a note, obtained and undisclosed amount of cash and left the locations."

When the two responding cops—Reagan and his partner—found the guy deemed to be the suspect, police say they stood 50 to 60 away from him while ordering him to put his hands in the air.

"The suspect did not follow the officers' commands, turned towards the officers and advanced towards them as he reached into his pocket," the cops say today. Reagan fired "multiple" times at the man. The police don't say how many times the guy the got shot. But he survived and was transported to the hospital.

The PPB said they won't release the guy's name until he's released from the hospital and booked in jail.

This is the second time in two months that a Portland police officer shot, but did not kill, a bank robbery suspect (see: "Portland Police Shoot Person During Attempted Traffic Stop"). It also marks the first police shooting since Danielle Outlaw took over as police chief earlier this month.

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Interim BDS director hired to serve permanently

By Chuck Slothower

October 26, 2017

Rebecca Esau has been appointed permanent director of Portland's Bureau of Development Services, Commissioner Chloe Eudaly said Wednesday.

Esau had served as interim director since April. Her permanent role took effect Wednesday.

In a statement, Eudaly said she offered Esau the job because she "brings a high level of competence, diligence, passion and dedication to this position at a critical time for the city."

Esau's appointment comes as little surprise. In a June interview, Eudaly said she was "really pleased with the work Rebecca Esau has done and would expect her to be a strong candidate if she chooses to apply."

Eudaly decided against conducting a national search for candidates.

"Doing a national search when we have already identified the best candidate would be a waste of taxpayer dollars at a critical time," she said.

Esau previously served for 14 years as division manager of BDS' Land Use Services.

The Bureau of Development Services is a key agency for the Portland building industry. Project designs and permits go through the agency, and wait times can delay major projects. BDS this year has approved multifamily projects totaling \$502.4 million, Eudaly stated.

BDS employees have been buffeted by a record flood of permits and turnover at the agency. Eudaly acknowledged the difficulties in a memo to staff, telling them she's "committed to doing whatever I can to help make your jobs secure and fulfilling."

Work group to study North Portland property

By Chuck Slothower

October 26, 2017

Redevelopment of a vacant North Portland block near Legacy Emanuel Medical Center will have to wait a bit longer.

The city of Portland is forming a work group to study redevelopment of the 1.7 acre-block in the Albina neighborhood. The move comes after members of Prosper Portland's own oversight committee complained they hadn't been consulted on plans to use urban renewal dollars at the North Portland property.

It also delays bringing the block – bounded by North Williams and Vancouver avenues and Russell and Knott streets – into an urban renewal area that would trigger up to \$32 million in available tax-increment financing.

Shawn Uhlman, spokesman for Prosper Portland, said the delay is necessary to make sure members of the North/Northeast Community Development Initiative Oversight Committee are comfortable with the path forward.

“The timing is less important than ensuring what the project working group needs, and what the oversight committee needs, to have their questions answered,” Uhlman said.

Mayor Ted Wheeler’s office is preparing a solicitation for nominations to the work group, spokesman Michael Cox said. The solicitation is expected to be issued Friday.

“The goal of the project working group is just make sure the process is transparent, that it’s community-centered, that there’s meaningful community engagement,” Cox said.

At an Aug. 9 board meeting, Prosper Portland’s board considered adding the Legacy property into the Interstate Corridor urban renewal area. It appeared ready to sail through until several members of the North/Northeast Community Development Initiative Oversight Committee testified that they weren’t consulted about spending plans.

Committee member Chonitia Smith said the African-American community and the oversight committee should be consulted. The oversight committee was formed to oversee allocation of the \$32 million in tax-increment financing.

Rahsaan Stuart Muhammad, a representative of the Emanuel Displaced Persons Association, said he was opposed to anything other than housing being constructed on the property.

Since that meeting, little progress has been made.

Vicki Guinn, spokeswoman for Legacy Emanuel, said the project work group would focus on the African-American community, but not exclusively.

“Part of the project is really engaging with the community to get input into what people would like to see there,” Guinn said. “So, yes, we’re gathering names and organizations that we would like to see be a part of this process.”

Prosper Portland’s goal is “really to try to do a community-led redevelopment of the property,” said Tory Campbell, entrepreneurship and community economic development manager for the city agency.

There is no set date to have the work group report back to Prosper Portland’s board, Campbell said.

“It’ll be sometime, obviously, in the next year,” he said.

The property was razed around 1975 as part of urban renewal efforts that destroyed scores of black-owned businesses and homes. The Hill Block Building, a commercial hub for the black community, was demolished.

The property has since sat vacant. Last summer, Prosper Portland Executive Director Kimberly Branam discovered a 1980 deed provision that gave Legacy Health until 1990 to redevelop the property. No action had been taken in the 27 years since the deadline passed.

After realizing the oversight, Prosper Portland officials began discussing the property with Legacy Health, and the Daily Journal of Commerce submitted a public records request for information about the property. The agency denied the records request, but shortly thereafter announced a partnership with Legacy Health to move toward redevelopment of the block.