

The Oregonian

Portland Hires 2 Firms to Develop New Community Policing Group

*By Maxine Bernstein
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The city of Portland has hired two different firms to help create and facilitate a new community group aimed at working with Portland police to engage local residents and review bureau policies.

The move comes a day before city officials return before a federal judge to discuss the status of police reforms required after federal investigators found that Portland officers used excessive force against people with mental illness.

A hearing is scheduled Thursday morning before U.S. District Judge Michael H. Simon to determine if the city's yet-to-be-formed Committee on Community-Engaged Policing meets the requirements of a 2014 settlement agreement in the case.

The mayor's office identified the two firms as Training 4 Transformation and the Brad Taylor Group. They're scheduled to start work by the end of the month.

What the two firms will be paid hasn't been finalized yet, but the maximum amount is not to exceed \$100,000 for each company, according to Michael Cox, the mayor's spokesman.

Training 4 Transformation's owners say they were survivors of numerous racial profiling cases and turned to civil rights advocacy to build partnerships between communities and police. Brandon Lee, one of the owners, was born and raised in Oakland, the former home of Portland's new Police Chief Danielle Outlaw.

Taylor is a former city of Portland mental health specialist and crime prevention coordinator, a social worker and former mobile mental health crisis response worker in Multnomah County who serves on the board of Street Roots, the local newspaper sold by homeless people.

"The city is excited about the opportunity to improve upon the community engagement and oversight process of the settlement agreement," Mayor Ted Wheeler said in a statement. "We remain committed to a more authentic, transparent process that centers the experiences of people impacted most. We look forward to engaging with the community in this process."

The agreement with the city followed the 2012 excessive force findings by the U.S. Department of Justice and calls for changes to police policies, training and oversight. A central part of the settlement mandates independent oversight of the reforms by community members.

The initial Community Oversight Advisory Board disbanded in January 2017 over internal conflicts and lack of feedback from former police chiefs, city officials and federal officials to the group's more than 50 policy recommendations on police use of force, improving police encounters with people in crisis and ways to combat bias-based policing.

The new committee is supposed to make recommendations on how police can improve their community outreach, develop relationships with diverse communities in Portland, host at least quarterly town hall meetings and share public grievances with the Police Bureau.

It also is expected to hold two meetings a month, with at least one open to the public.

Training 4 Transformation and the Brad Taylor Group will help establish an "equitable process" for recruiting and selecting committee members, plan a retreat for the committee, ensure "group cohesion" by setting ground rules and a vision for the committee's work and facilitate its public meetings, the city said.

The Albina Ministerial Alliance's Coalition for Justice and Police Reform pushed for Thursday's fairness hearing in federal court. The advocacy group members have said they're concerned that the new oversight committee envisioned by the mayor's office gives "less autonomy and authority to the community."

The new committee's mission is more focused on improving the Police Bureau's engagement with the community instead of independently monitoring the reforms, the coalition said.

Former County Race Bias Analyst Hired as Top-Tier Portland Auditor

*By Gordon Friedman
April 18, 2018*

Amanda Lamb, a former Multnomah County analyst fired for disclosing racial disparities data, has been hired as a chief deputy auditor for the City of Portland.

Lamb began the job Monday on an interim basis, said Auditor Mary Hull Caballero.

Lamb previously worked on a county project to create a public dashboard melding police, prosecutor, court and parole officer data. The interface was intended to shed light on racial disparities in the county's criminal justice system.

She gave a presentation on the data last year at a conference in Las Vegas and was fired shortly after. County officials said Lamb had disclosed confidential information. Lamb contends, through her attorney, that she is not bound by a county non-disclosure agreement because she never signed it.

After her firing from the county, Lamb, who holds a masters in public administration, went to work as an analyst for the city's Independent Police Review, a police oversight body housed in the office of the city auditor.

Before working at Multnomah County, Lamb was also a state and local government auditor. She worked as an auditor in the office of former Multnomah County Sheriff Dan Staton, who dismissed her days after she produced a report highlighting evidence that Staton's jail deputies used disproportionate force against black inmates.

Lamb's attorney filed paperwork with Multnomah County and Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum's office on April 3 to put the county and state on notice that Lamb may sue to seek damages for what they believe is her unlawful firing.

Major League Baseball Backers Have Spent \$30,000 Lobbying Portland City Hall

By Gordon Friedman

April 18, 2018

The businessmen behind an effort to bring a Major League Baseball team to Portland have spent at least \$30,000 lobbying City Hall officials, newly released records show.

Portland Diamond Project, the company set up by the would-be pro ball management group, spent that amount to hire lobbyists Gary Oxley and Eryan Andries, who each held in-person meetings with Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioner Nick Fish in January, according to an initial filing of the company's first quarter lobbying statement. The filing, which is a public record, is not yet posted on the city website, and Portland Diamond Project has until April 25 to amend it.

As The Oregonian/OregonLive first reported, retired Nike vice president Craig Cheek formed Portland Diamond Project last July -- though his name wasn't on the incorporation paperwork. Cheek was listed as the company's director on paperwork filed with federal Securities and Exchange Commission showing it sought to raise \$6 million and had sold \$500,000 of equity to two unnamed investors. It was previously known that former Trail Blazers announcer Mike Barrett was also part of the MLB-to-Portland effort.

Since then, Portland Diamond Project has disclosed that former state senator Jason Atkinson is also a managing partner. Atkinson signed the lobbying disclosure paperwork, dated April 13.

Portland Diamond Project announced Tuesday that it had placed offers on two close-in Portland properties, hoping to buy one for construction of a 32,000-seat ballpark and 8,000 units of housing. One site is the location of the Portland Public Schools headquarters, just north of the Moda Center. The other is the site of a shut-down foundry owned by manufacturing company Esco in Northwest Portland, the same property as the former Vaughn Street Stadium.

When trying to lure a professional sports team to town, city officials are often asked to provide taxpayer funding to underwrite construction of a new stadium or other costs. But Portland Diamond officials have said they won't seek new taxpayer underwriting. City officials could offer other perks in the form of zoning changes, funding from urban renewal districts, or Portland Diamond Project could tap a \$150 million bond fund the Legislature set aside for ballpark construction. Wheeler said he has not been asked for public incentives from Portland Diamond Project, nor would he entertain such a request.

The Portland Tribune

Sources Say: PERS Problems go National in New York Times

By Jim Redden

April 19, 2018

Plus, proof that Portland is still a small town and the non-candidate raising the most campaign money in a city race.

The financial problems being caused by Oregon's lavish public employee retirement payments made the front page of Sunday's New York Times.

The April 15 story spotlighted the high pensions being paid to retired OHSU President Joe Robertson and UO football coach Mike Bellotti to help explain why local governments are laying off employees and cutting services to pay for the increasing cost of the Public Employee Retirement System.

The article says that Robertson is being paid \$76,111 a month and Bellotti is receiving more than \$46,000 a month from PERS.

"That is considerably more than the average Oregon family earns in a year," the story says of Robertson's payment.

The story is headlined, "Strange math leaves pensions in pinch of their own making." It cites numerous examples of local governments cutting programs to raise money for mandatory PERS contributions that are growing faster than the recovering economy. The story also says the increases are expected to continue until the current generation of retirees start dying.

Career employees with 30 years of service average \$45,252 annually. Newer employees are enrolled in a different program that will eventually pay less. You can read the story at tinyurl.com/y85aw8hj.

How big is Portland?

Although city leaders keep saying Portland is growing up, sometimes it still seems like a very small town.

Speaking at the City Club last Friday, Mayor Ted Wheeler welcomed Portland native David Bangsberg back to town. An experienced public health administrator, Bangsberg is now the founding dean of the joint Oregon Health & Science University-Portland State University School of Public Health. Both men participated in the April 10 press conference announcing the homeless navigation center and shelter to be built in the Pearl District by the Oregon Harbor of Hope.

But, as Wheeler told the Friday Forum crowd, his relationship with Bangsberg goes back much further. They both went to Lincoln High School at the same time, where Wheeler beat Bangsberg in the race for senior class president.

Saltzman top fundraiser this year

The top City Council campaign fundraiser this year isn't running for office. He's Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who's so far raised over \$188,500 to support Measure 26-197 on the May 15 primary election ballot. It would renew the Portland Children's Levy for five years.

Saltzman chose not to run for re-election this year. The levy, which he first sponsored in 2002, is one of his proudest accomplishments. It has been approved by city voters three times, providing more than \$150 million to programs with track records of serving needy children in Portland.

The only council candidates to break the \$100,000 fundraising mark so far this year are Commissioner Nick Fish, who is running for re-election, and Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith, who is running for Saltzman's seat.

The Portland Mercury

Hall Monitor: Law and Disorder

By Alex Zielinski

April 18, 2018

Portland's Problematic Government Is Still Problematic

Mayor Ted Wheeler is feeling increasingly iffy about his role at the Portland Police Bureau.

“One of the great oddities of our form of government is that I am... maybe the only person in the United States who is both a mayor and the police commissioner,” Wheeler said at last week’s city council meeting. “And I will write a book on this subject someday, because it is fraught with peril and contradictions.”

It may be the only thing Wheeler and his critics agree on: That the guy elected on a platform of police reform shouldn’t also be running the police bureau’s internal operations.

“Ordinarily, the mayor would be in the position of holding the police commissioner accountable,” Wheeler said at a interview following his “State of the City” address last Friday. “We don’t have that.”

In fact, Portland hasn’t been allowed to hire an outside police commissioner since 1913, when the city adopted a now-archaic form of government that makes the mayor and city commissioners agency executives rather than regional representatives. Under this “commission” form of government, the mayor tasks himself and city commissioners with overseeing million-dollar city bureaus... while also expecting them to deliver fair votes on city issues that may affect their bureau. One of those bureaus is police, which Portland’s mayor has traditionally assigned to themselves.

This Jim Crow-era commission model is unavoidably classist. (I’d also call it racist, but it was voted into city charter before Black people could even legally move to Oregon. So.) Unlike our state and national forms of government, commissioners elected to each seat don’t directly represent people living within a certain community—a community where they’re expected to live. In Portland, that means city commissioners have historically lived in the affluent neighborhoods on the west side of the Willamette. Without representatives who experience life in their various communities, this has repeatedly left lower-income neighborhoods feeling ignored and unrepresented.

It’s certainly not a type of government that favors accountability—which is probably why so many cities have ditched it. Along with Columbus, OH, Portland is the last major city in the US to stick with this century-old model. Which doesn’t make it endearingly quirky.

More than a few candidates in this year’s city council race have stated that one of their first goals, if elected to office, would be overhauling this structure.

Julia DeGraw, a candidate running to unseat incumbent Commissioner Nick Fish, says this form of government is a driving force behind Portland’s inequity issues, especially when it comes to housing.

“It’s made it hard to come up with good, community-centered decisions when it comes to solving our housing crisis,” she told the Mercury last week. “If city council was a group of people representing the entire city, I think they would be a lot more responsive to the affordability issues—and would have been more responsive earlier, frankly.”

According to the city, all that stands in the way of upending this structure is a vote to tweak the city charter. But that step has an unusually unsuccessful track record: A measure to scrap the commission government has been shot down no fewer than eight times by Portland voters.

Perhaps Wheeler's passion to ditch the police bureau will reignite this fight. Asked Friday if he'd be open to discussing a government overhaul, Wheeler replied: "I'd be delighted!"

Former FBI Investigator Testifies Against Portland's Joint Terrorism Task Force

By Kelly Kenoyer

April 18, 2018

Former FBI Investigator Michael German spoke at city council this morning against Portland's continuing participation in the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), a collaboration between Portland Police and the FBI that he says infringes on civil liberties. The city rejoined the task force—a partnership between various levels of law enforcement meant to take action against terrorism—in 2015 after leaving the agreement in 2004.

Portland's participation in the JTTF includes the assignment of two full-time officers to the task force who share local information with the FBI.

German's comments at the council meeting followed a panel discussion put on by the Oregon division of the American Civil Liberties Union last night, where he joined other panelists who had been affected by FBI monitoring of their communities, including Brandon Mayfield, a Muslim attorney who was wrongfully arrested by the FBI in connection with an attack in Madrid in 2004. Mayfield arrest likely played a role in the end of Portland's involvement with the JTTF back in 2005.

Panelist Zakir Kahn from the Council on American-Islamic Relations said the FBI's monitoring of Muslim communities is traumatizing for community members, yet investigators seem less interested in investigating hate crimes, despite their rising frequency.

German also made reference to the Christmas Tree Bombing in 2010, a plot which the FBI manufactured by leading the suspect into performing an attack with a fake bomb.

Mayfield says the FBI and task force admitted they had no evidence he committed a crime, but FBI agents and local law enforcement continued to gather information about his movements and religious associations. He says it's illegal to do so.

German argued that Portland should withdraw from the JTTF because the it breaks local statute. Portland police are required to follow the reasonable suspicion standard, meaning investigations are based on specific facts instead of just a hunch. The FBI doesn't follow that standard and instead gathers intelligence on entire swaths of the population based on racial demographics and political affiliations, according to German. When the FBI shares that data with local police it breaks local statute requiring local police to abide by a higher standard, he said.

Mayor Ted Wheeler has previously expressed satisfaction with Portland's involvement with the JTTF.

Michael German's full testimony before city council can be viewed below. [Portland city council from ACLU of Oregon on Vimeo.](#)