

The Oregonian

Portland Mayor Rebuts ICE Employees' Claims He Denied Them Police Protection

*By Gordon Friedman
July 31, 2018*

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler on Tuesday denied claims by the union representing Immigrations and Customs Enforcement employees that city police officers would not respond to their urgent calls for service during a recent occupation by protesters.

Through attorney Sean Riddell, the union on Monday criticized the mayor for his laissez faire approach to a protest at the local ICE field office, which lasted five weeks. When the protest began, Wheeler announced that he would not allow Portland police officers to be "sucked into a conflict" over the protest and said federal police would be responsible for protecting their own building and property.

Riddell's complaint was that Wheeler was "forbidding" officers from responding to ICE employees' calls and had "created a zone of terror" for workers at the field office.

Wheeler, in a letter responding to Riddell's charges, said vehemently that the city has no policy of not responding to ICE employees' calls for service. He cast the union's accusations that it does as "inaccurate and inflammatory."

The mayor said city police did in fact respond to 911 calls from ICE and Federal Protective Services employees "when there were imminent life safety threats." Employees of those agencies faced harassment and threats during the field office protest.

Wheeler also accused Riddell of being unable to substantiate claims of nonresponsive calls for service.

When informally questioned by a city attorney, Riddell did not assert that Portland police officers failed to respond to reports of imminent life-threatening danger, Wheeler wrote. Asked to back up his earlier claim that officers didn't show up after urgent calls, Riddell apparently cited unconfirmed reports from sources he could not divulge, the mayor's letter said.

Riddell said Tuesday that he "never claimed" the police did not respond to 911 calls. Instead, he said he provided the city with evidence the police did not respond to calls made by ICE employees to the police non-emergency line for "assistance in handling the crowd" at the protest.

Riddell said he still expects Wheeler to make Portland police officers respond to ICE employees' calls the same as they would to anyone else's. Riddell said a lawsuit is possible if the city does not make changes.

"If Mr. Wheeler continues to treat my clients differently than everybody else we will have no other recourse," Riddell said.

The Portland Tribune

Wheeler: Police Did Not Ignore ICE 911 Calls

By Jim Redden

July 31, 2018

Mayor responds to letter from lawyer representing ICE employees who claim police did not respond to calls for help during protest.

Mayor Ted Wheeler is rejecting accusations that Portland police failed to respond to 911 calls from Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents during the recent protest at their agency's Southwest Portland facility.

The accusations were made by Sean Riddell, the legal representative for the National Immigration and Customs Enforcement Council, in a Monday letter to Wheeler. It charged that the mayor prohibited police from responding to the calls from the employees when their lives were endangered by protesters, both at the facility and on their personal time.

According to Riddell, the denial of service violated the U.S. Constitution's guarantees of equal protection under the law.

But in a letter released late Tuesday afternoon, Wheeler claims Riddell had previously said that was not the case.

"In fact, when a Portland city attorney contacted you to discuss your claims, you made clear that your letter did not contend that PPB failed to respond to any 911 call for emergency services," reads Wheeler's letter to Riddell.

Wheeler admits that he "consistently stated that I did not want the Portland Police Bureau to be engaged or sucked into a conflict for the purpose of securing federal property that houses a federal agency with their own federal police force."

Wheeler says Riddell stated instead that he only had "unconfirmed reports from sources that I am not at liberty to disclose that assert the City of Portland did not respond to 911 calls."

Wheeler left open the possibility of a further response by writing, "Given that the policy you cite does not and has not existed, and there are no confirmed examples of police failing to respond to calls for service, I ask you to send any additional information you believe supports the assertions in your letter."

The 38-day protest ended last Friday when Wheeler directed the police and cleanup crews to clear the protester's camp because of health and safety concerns.

[You can read Wheeler's letter here.](#)

Willamette Week

An ICE Contractor Took Notes While Portland Police Refused to Help Him Get His Truck Out From Protester Blockade

*By Katie Shepherd
August 1, 2018*

"Told the police that we were going to get my truck out with or without them."

On June 19, a contractor for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement tried to leave the agency's building on Portland's South Waterfront. That proved difficult. The building was surrounded by a blockade of protesters.

The contractor worked for The GEO Group, which provides transportation and other services to support the detention of immigrants in ICE custody.

The contractor called the Portland police non-emergency line. He took notes from the conversation. Here they are in full:

"Called police approx. 9-10 p.m. for assistance to get my truck out of back lot. As soon as we told them where the truck was they said they couldn't help. We told them we were trying to get the truck back without violence. They still said they wouldn't help. Told the police that we were going to get my truck out with or without them and that the next phone call they received would be a call of either the protesters or us getting assaulted and police still refused to assist."

Portland Mayor Calls ICE Allegations That Police Ignored 911 Calls "Inaccurate and Inflammatory"

*By Katie Shepherd
July 31, 2018*

"I did not want the Portland Police Bureau to be engaged or sucked into a conflict for the purpose of securing federal property that houses a federal agency with their own federal police force," Wheeler wrote.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler today rebutted allegations that he ordered Portland police to ignore 911 calls made by federal immigration officials last month, calling the accusations "inaccurate and inflammatory."

The mayor wrote a letter to the attorney for the National ICE Council, the union that represents U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers, responding to allegations the union made on Monday morning that the Portland Police Bureau adopted a policy of not responding to 911 calls from ICE agents.

"No such policy exists," Wheeler writes.

He says Portland police "made clear" to officials from the Federal Protective Service and ICE that local officers would respond to calls for emergency service if there was a "life safety concern."

"I have consistently stated that I did not want the Portland Police Bureau to be

engaged or sucked into a conflict for the purpose of securing federal property that houses a federal agency with their own federal police force," Wheeler wrote.

An email sent by Portland police deputy chief Bob Day, obtained today by WW, supports some of Wheeler's claims.

But it also suggests that Portland police did refuse to respond to some calls made by federal officials.

"At this time I am denying your request for additional resources from PPB," Day wrote on June 19. "I recognize this is a fluid situation that will need continuous monitoring. I am willing to revisit this inquiry after you have exhausted all alternative options besides arrests and maximized the use of FPS resources. We will respond to [calls] for assistance if your officers are assaulted and need us to facilitate a safe exit from the conflict."

Wheeler also says the lawyer, Sean Riddell, could not provide evidence of calls for service that went unheard.

"In discussions with our attorney you were unable to make any substantive claim, instead stating that you 'have unconfirmed reports from sources that I am not at liberty to disclose that assert the City of Portland did not respond to 911 calls,'" Wheeler wrote.

He asked Riddell to share proof that Portland police had failed to respond to emergency calls.

Good Job, Portland: Only One E-Scooter Has Been Thrown in the Willamette River So Far

*By Elise Herron
August 1, 2018*

Scooter startups are paying City Hall a quarter every time you ride.

Portland's newest California transplants are named Bird, Lime and Skip. City officials are watching them closely.

Last week, two Silicon Valley startups—Bird and Lime—each dropped off 400 new dockless electronic scooters in Portland.

Along with Skip—which has yet to deploy any rides—the companies are the first to be awarded permits in the city's four-month pilot program. Until Nov. 20, the city will be tracking ridership data to determine if scooters are a viable long-term transit solution in Portland.

In other places where scooters have been deployed, reactions have been mixed. The rides offer an affordable, environmentally low-impact and easy-to-use commute. However, because they are dockless, the scooters can also pose a nuisance on city sidewalks. Frustration over scooter clutter has led some cities, like San Francisco and Denver, to ban e-scooters altogether.

Portland's structured pilot program, City Commissioner Dan Saltzman announced in June, is an attempt to "report on and mitigate impacts" of scooters in the city. In short: City officials are hoping to avert the chaos other cities have suffered.

WW obtained copies of the permits Bird, Lime and Skip received from the city. Those documents, plus early reports from the startups, paint a picture of where e-scooters stand in Portland.

1

Number of scooters retrieved from the Willamette River so far, according to Lime mechanic Richard Moore

2,500

Total number of scooters allowed in Portland during the four-month pilot program

683

Number of scooters companies Bird and Lime are each allowed by the city to deploy

450

Number of scooters Skip is allowed by the city to deploy

684

Number of scooters still available to allot to competing scooter companies yet to arrive

100

Minimum number of scooters each individual company is required to deploy each day to East Portland (or 20 percent of its fleet if that number is less

\$5,000

Pilot program permit fee the companies must pay City Hall

\$250

Pilot program application fee the companies must pay to even be considered by City Hall

25¢

Charge per ride permitted scooter companies must pay the city each month to help offset the cost of overseeing the program

5

Distance in feet scooters must be parked from crosswalks, bike racks, fire hydrants, drinking fountains, public art, driveways, alleys, accessibility ramps, marked disabled parking spaces and taxi loading zones if companies want to avoid being penalized by the city

60

Number of minutes companies have to move scooters from these "non-emergency" zones before the city may issue a citation

15

Maximum speed in miles per hour the city will allow scooters to travel—though some riders report reaching speeds of nearly 20 mph

30

Distance in miles scooters can travel per charge

Tenants in Southeast Portland Launch a Rent Strike, Hoping to Stay in Their Gentrifying Apartment Complex

By Rachel Monahan

July 31, 2018

The extreme measure comes five months after the landlord offered cash incentives to uproot longtime residents.

Five months ago, the landlord at a Southeast Portland apartment complex deployed an extraordinary tactic to try to dislodge low-income renters: offering them cash to leave.

Now the tenants who remain have voted to use a radical strategy to fight back: a rent strike, when they withhold monthly payments until the landlord meets their demands.

As many as 21 renters at the Holgate Manor complex have signed on to stop paying their landlord beginning Aug. 1, tenant leaders say. Another six are considering whether to join.

It's the largest and most significant rent strike in Portland in decades.

Organizers of the strike say the tenant protections passed by the City Council last year are inadequate and extreme measures are needed. Renters at Holgate Manor say they now live in a construction zone for the new, richer tenants the owner hopes to woo.

"I'm just so disgusted," says tenant Sara Brassfield, 35. "There's still cockroaches and rats. There's nails everywhere."

Gallatin Public Relations spokeswoman Jill Eiland, who is representing the landlord and property manager, said she could not respond to specific questions by press deadlines.

"The Princeton Property Management team remains focused on addressing the needs of its current residents and is dealing directly with each tenant as questions arise or requests are made," says Eiland. "Upgrades to the units that will benefit residents continue on schedule at Holgate Manor.

Holgate Manor, in the Creston-Kenilworth neighborhood, was the first major complex in Portland to launch a buildingwide effort to push tenants to leave after the city instituted landmark tenant protections, which require landlords to pay tenants' moving costs under some circumstances ("Sold Out," WW, March 28, 2018).

The campaign started after a California investor bought the 82-unit complex in January from a local family who'd kept the rent low for decades. The apartment complex was filled with refugee families who'd fled war and religious persecution to live in Portland.

The investor, Fred Kleinbub, offered an incentive for tenants to get out while apartments were rehabbed: He'd give tenants up to \$5,200 to leave. (His company didn't say that most of the payments would be required anyway in the event of no-cause evictions.) Kleinbub's property managers volunteered to pay tenants the money required by city rules, plus a bit more for moving out quickly.

The property manager followed up the carrot with a stick: a 9.9 percent rent increase.

Now 29 units are vacant, tenant advocates say.

Meanwhile, the occupied units are in a construction zone as the landlord overhauls old units. The construction feels like one more way the landlord is encouraging tenants to leave, say the tenants.

"We need rent abatement while this construction is going on," says Brassfield. "It's a very intentional play. They don't want us to live here."

Brassfield, who works as a Lyft driver, says her earnings have been cut in half because she can't sleep during the day due to construction noise and therefore can't work at night. "If I get four hours of sleep, I can't stay up late into the night without compromising my safety or the person I'm with."

On July 30, Portland Tenants United organized a vote among the remaining Holgate Manor tenants. It wanted enough tenants to sign on to make an economic impact on the landlord.

PTU says it got the votes of 21 of the remaining 53 households in the complex.

Brassfield voted July 30 to join the rent strike, and delivered a letter to the property manager July 31.

The strike hinges in part on another allegation of the tenants: that repairs haven't been made to the apartments where tenants are still living, despite repeated complaints.

The city's Bureau of Development Services backs up those tenants' claims. A letter from the bureau documents at least six fire, life or safety violations and seven health and sanitation problems, including exposed wiring and mold on windows.

"None of this is new to the landlord," says Portland Tenants United organizer Margot Black. "It's what New York landlords, like the president's son-in-law, do. They make life miserable and people move out." (She's referring to an investigation of Jared Kushner, who's accused of pushing rent-control tenants out of New York City buildings with construction noise.)

Landlord-tenant law in Oregon gives Holgate Manor residents a means to fight back.

It allows tenants to withhold rent when repairs aren't made. But that's a risky move in a state with few other protections for tenants—there's no ban on no-cause evictions, for example.

A handbook from the Legal Aid Society of Oregon says four times in all-capital letters: "YOU SHOULD NOT WITHHOLD RENT UNLESS ADVISED TO DO SO BY A LAW OFFICE!"

Legal Aid didn't respond to a request for comment. But PTU organizers say tenants aren't at risk of an eviction if they follow some carefully defined rules.

State law allows tenants to stop paying rent to a landlord if there are housing code violations in their apartment—as long as they are prepared to pay their monthly rent into a court account.

That happens, but rarely. Multnomah County counts eight such cases in the past two years.

But a building wide strike is virtually unheard of. Holgate Manor could exceed the number of recently recorded cases in just one building.

Longtime Portland tenant lawyer Craig Colby says the only local rent strike he's heard of dates from a 1988 appeals court case.

"The particular tenant withheld her rent because of a rental increase but didn't have claims against the landlord," he says. "She got evicted, and she owed attorney fees. I discourage people from withholding rent if they don't have habitability or other complaints against their landlord."

Vera Kozavich, 78, who receives a Section 8 housing voucher and plans to withhold her portion of the rent, says she was planning to move to a new apartment within the complex, but even an apartment with more recent renovations failed to pass the inspection required for Section 8 vouchers.

"I don't want my rent increased with such poor conditions," she says. "I want them to fix my apartment."

A New Dream Rises in Portland: A Housing Development Where Everyone Rides the Bus for Free

By Rachel Monahan

August 1, 2018

Broadway Corridor at the old Post Office site could resurrect hopes for a Fareless Square.

- 14 acres
- 3,100 residents
- Approximately 7,100 free transit passes

The U.S. Post Office site in Old Town is the canvas for big dreams.

Last year, a local architect floated a notion for the tallest skyscraper on the West Coast. That's been discarded. But another dramatic vision has emerged: a housing development where nobody pays to ride the bus.

A coalition of progressive advocates want a free TriMet pass for every single person who lives and works in the development.

Prosper Portland, the economic development agency of the city of Portland, projects the Post Office site could include 2,400 apartments and space for 4,000 jobs. It's hard to say for certain how many transit passes that translates into: The number goes up if more people move in per apartment, and goes down if there's overlap between people who work and live in the development.

Prosper Portland and City Hall have agreed to negotiate a community benefits agreement with the advocacy groups, but they haven't committed to any specifics.

Mayor Ted Wheeler said July 27 he was open to the idea of free transit passes.

"That certainly should be considered amongst many, many other things that I also think should be in that conversation," he said.

The Healthy Communities Coalition, which includes labor, environmental and social justice groups, are working together to push for a wide range of benefits, including the transit passes.

Portland used to have a section of town where people could ride buses and trains for free. Fareless Square operated from 1975 until 2012, when TriMet required paid fares throughout downtown again. Advocates for low-income riders have been looking for a replacement ever since.

"There's no reason someone working and living in the Broadway Corridor site would have to own a car," says Vivian Satterfield, deputy director of Opal Environmental Justice, which has long worked to provide especially low-income Oregonians access to free public transit.

Murmurs: Portland Braces for Street Clash

*By WW Staff
August 1, 2018*

In other news: A consultant recommends more power for the Portland mayor.

Portland Braces for Street Clash: Washington U.S. Senate candidate Joey Gibson is hosting a right-wing rally on the Portland waterfront Aug. 4, and Gibson has suggested his supporters in the group Patriot Prayer will bring guns. "We've always had guns at the rally," Gibson said in a video on Facebook. "Everyone should be carrying around guns at all times." Berk Nelson, a staffer for Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, tells WW the city cannot disregard the state's open carry law. "Unless he's on federal property, that's the only way we can actually take weapons away from anybody," Nelson says. "There's nothing police can do to take weapons away from lawful gun owners." The last Patriot Prayer rally in downtown Portland led to a violent riot that sent five people to the hospital. Perversely, the prospect of violence is likely to increase turnout. A large coalition of antifascist protest groups, organizing under the name POPMOB, short for "popular mobilization," plan to confront Gibson and his far-right allies, a men's fraternity called the Proud Boys.

Ballot Measure Would Require Vote on Tolls: State Sen. Julie Parrish (R-Tualatin) has found a new way to push back on the interstate highway tolls proposed for the Portland metro area. She's backing a proposed initiative petition for the 2020 ballot that would require Oregon voters to approve any tolls on existing highways without new construction. "I've heard more about opposition to tolling than just about any other matter from constituents in the last few years," Parrish writes on Facebook. "I don't believe you should have to pay a toll on roads we've already built just to go to the store for a gallon of milk."

Budget Consultant Suggests City Overhaul: A consultant hired by Portland City Hall to analyze the city's budget process offered a backdoor approach to giving the mayor more power. In a June 16 report, former Multnomah County chief operating officer Bill Farver recommended diminishing the authority of city commissioners as well as the independent City Budget Office. Mayor Ted Wheeler, who has long favored amending the city charter, says he first plans to try to make other, less controversial changes suggested by the consultant this year, focused on finding a new avenue for public input, setting budget numbers earlier and shifting the way bureaus approach the budget.

From the Department of Shameless Self-Promotion: Willamette Week took home eight prizes at the 2018 Association of Alternative Newsmedia Awards, including three first-place awards for arts criticism, photography and special sections. The annual contest drew from a field of nearly 700 entries submitted by 55 publications nationwide. Visual Arts editor Shannon Gormley won first place in the Arts Criticism category for a trio of reviews. For the second year in a row, WW's Going Coastal magazine, our guide to the Oregon Coast, topped the Special Sections category. Daniel Stindt took home a first-place prize for Best Photography. His images captured a dramatic range of Portland life: political brawls on the waterfront, people living in so-called "zombie RVs," and Iggy Pop.