

## **The Oregonian**

# **Jo Ann Hardesty Sworn in to City Council, Cementing Portland's Liberal Legacy**

*By Gordon Friedman  
January 2, 2019*

Jo Ann Hardesty was sworn in as a city commissioner on Wednesday, ushering in a new era for the Portland City Council in which women hold the majority of its seats for the first time and Hardesty, long a critic of City Hall, has become one of its power brokers.

Hardesty, 61, also made history as she became the first African American woman to join the council. She is its third African American member and the first since 1992.

An activist and former state representative, Hardesty rose to power defying historical norms for city council candidates, who have typically been white, male businessmen. She lives in East Portland, has scraped by on a modest income and has for years pushed from the outside for police reform – experiences that helped her connect to voters.

Now, the critic is the commissioner.

“When I look around me, I see a city filled with people with hope and I don’t take that hope lightly,” Hardesty said after taking the oath of office, administered before a crowd of supporters at City Hall by Adrienne Nelson, the first African American justice of the Oregon Supreme Court.

“I look forward to what we’re going to be able to do together as Portlanders,” Hardesty said.

Hardesty won election to the council in November when she beat then-Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith by more than 65,000 votes, a decisive victory.

The campaign was intense. Both women disagreed vehemently about how best to address Portland’s pressing homelessness crisis and weathered credible accusations of misconduct. Smith was scrutinized over a county investigation of her management and spending, and Hardesty was the subject of news coverage that detailed her use of a nonprofit to direct a \$10,000 contract to herself – income she did not report to tax authorities.

Hardesty rode her activist credentials to victory on Election Night, promising to amplify outsiders’ usually muffled voices within City Hall and to bring a new tack to housing and police policy. Her platform includes mandating anti-bias and de-escalation training for police officers, reassigning officers from schools and gang enforcement teams to street patrols, giving new teeth to police oversight bodies, and supporting programs that give rental units to the homeless and tighten regulations on landlords.

Since Mayor Ted Wheeler, not she, oversees the police and housing bureaus, she would at a minimum need to line up majority votes on the council to require any of that. Hardesty has embraced that fact. “I have an office that won’t stay in the box we’ve been assigned to,” she said.

When it comes to working with Wheeler, who is also the police commissioner, Hardesty said they have more in common than they do differences. But she said she will look for others commissioners' support for her ideas when Wheeler is not supportive. “Sometimes he’ll be successful, and I hope most of the time I’m successful,” she said.

As a city commissioner, Hardesty's day-to-day agenda stands to draw her attention far from issues of police and housing. Wheeler has said he will assign Hardesty to oversee the Portland Fire Bureau and the departments that run 911 services, emergency management and firefighters' pensions – agencies with annual budgets exceeding \$387 million. Former Commissioner Dan Saltzman, whose seat Hardesty now occupies, had been assigned the same bureaus.

Hardesty told reporters Wednesday that her vision for those bureaus includes rethinking how first responders take calls for service and whether mental health professionals can at times intervene instead of police officers or firefighters.

In another first, the city council's more than 100-year male majority ended Wednesday. Wheeler called the day "momentous and historic" in a Twitter post, saying he "could not be more proud to sit beside these powerful, brilliant and successful women." Whether Hardesty will form a voting block with Commissioners Amanda Fritz and Chloe Eudaly remains an open question.

After taking the oath of office, Hardesty took her seat at the council dais to the left of Wheeler and began her first council meeting.

Hardesty's first vote was perfunctory: to make Eudaly the council president, a ceremonial role that rotates between the commissioners every few months. Hardesty voted "yes."

Her warm welcome quickly faded.

Wheeler was not 10 seconds into congratulating Hardesty as a "tireless leader" and "an effective advocate" before he was interrupted by a shouting, swearing heckler, who was eventually removed by security. Minutes later, Wheeler ordered the council chambers emptied after another man flopped on the ground after a meandering rant in which he called the commissioners "serial killers" and chided Hardesty for a lack of accomplishments in office.

"It's kind of an interesting start," Hardesty said.

As the commotion erupted she turned to Wheeler: "I leaned over and said to the mayor, 'Is this normal?' And he said, every week."

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **'Tireless leader' Hardesty Takes Her Seat on City Council**

*By Nick Budnick*

*January 2, 2019*

#### **City's first elected African-American woman says 'this is where it starts.'**

Longtime Portland activist Jo Ann Hardesty was sworn in to the Portland City Council Wednesday morning, becoming the first African-American woman to be part of the council in the history of the city.

"I'm feeling good," she told the Portland Tribune. "This is where it starts."

Hardesty garnered nearly two-thirds of the vote in November against former Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith.

Hardesty was sworn in inside City Council chambers by Justice Adrienne Nelson, the first African-American to serve on the Oregon Supreme Court.

As the Portland City Council meeting started at 9:30 a.m., Mayor Ted Wheeler greeted Hardesty and noted that not only was her presence a first for the city, so was the fact that women constitute a majority on the council. Wheeler called Hardesty a "tireless leader, effective advocate and someone who cares deeply about everyone in our community," as members of the audience applauded.

Five minutes later, Hardesty got her first taste of sitting behind the council dias during what has become a common occurrence. That's when Wheeler called his first council meeting recess of the year due to a member of the audience who spoke out of turn.

Hardesty, a frequent critic of police and who is considered one of the more progressive or liberal of the city's sitting commissioners, replaces Dan Saltzman, the long-time commissioner who was considered moderate and more aligned with police as well as business.

Two other African-American men — Dick Bogle and Charles Jordan — have been elected to the City Council.

## **Willamette Week**

### **Jo Ann Hardesty Officially Becomes the First African-American Woman to Serve on Portland City Council**

*By Rachel Monahan  
January 2, 2019*

**The Council is now majority women.**

City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty was sworn in as a city commissioner today, becoming the first African-American woman to serve on the Portland City Council.

With Hardesty, the Council also reached another historic milestone. For the first time, the council is majority women.

Mayor Wheeler called it a "historic moment" as he opened official business for the morning.

"This is the first time in the history of the city where there have been a majority of women," he said. "This is also the first time a woman of color has been elected to the Portland City Council."

With that, council began its business—with multiple disruptions from protesters.

## **The Portland Mercury**

### **Meet Commissioner Hardesty's City Hall Staff**

*By Alex Zielinski  
January 2, 2019*

Today marks the first day of work for Portland's newest city commissioner, Jo Ann Hardesty. But she's not the only one starting a new job on City Hall's second floor this week. Hardesty is joined in her brand-new office by her brand-new staff, made up of community organizers, former campaign staff, and financial experts. While she shared the names of a few potential staff last

year, Hardesty's full staff lineup has only recently been made public. Here's what you should know about the incoming commissioner's team.

We'll start with the most anticipated hire, Kristin Johnson, a city employee who will serve as Hardesty's financial policy advisor. (Hardesty is also the only commissioner who has a dedicated financial advisor.)

Hardesty made headlines in September after an OPB investigation revealed that while Hardesty was president of the Portland NAACP, she had paid her own consulting firm to work on an NAACP event—and neglected to report that income to the federal government. In following interviews, including one with the Portland Mercury, Hardesty admitted she had made a mistake and said that, if elected, she would hire someone with strong financial chops to make sure she doesn't make a similar error with taxpayer dollars.

That person appears to be Johnson, a longtime financial analyst in the City of Portland's Office of Management and Finance. According to Johnson's LinkedIn profile, she's spent the last decade assessing the city's budget and longterm funding plans. An internal hire of someone trusted enough to balance the city budget may help assuage lingering concerns over Hardesty's financial missteps.

Hardesty has also promoted her campaign chair, Karly Edwards, to chief of staff. Like Hardesty, Edwards has a history of activist organizing, from representing the Oregon Nurses Association to working as the director of the Oregon Working Families Party for three years.

Hardesty has plucked Derek Bradley to serve as her policy director. Bradley spent the past few years working to fine-tune and analyze local ballot initiatives. Most recently, Bradley penned the City Club's critical review of Measure 103, a failed ballot measure that would have banned future taxes from grocery stores.

To lead her communications team, Hardesty has selected Lokyee Au, a former communications manager for both the Regional Arts and Culture Council and the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon. Matt McNally, Hardesty's campaign field director, will serve as the commissioner's community outreach coordinator, and Angelita Morillo will be Hardesty's administrative assistant.

R. Lyne Martin-Modica is the only carry-over from former Commissioner Dan Saltzman's office. She'll act as Hardesty's office manager.

## **Jo Ann Hardesty Sworn In As Portland's First African American Woman on City Council**

*By Alex Zielinski  
January 2, 2019*

Dozens of Portlanders crammed into city council chambers this morning hoping to catch a glimpse of history being made with the swearing in of Jo Ann Hardesty, the first Black woman to serve on Portland City Council.

Hardesty, a former state representative, NAACP chapter president, and community organizer, replaces former Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who served on the council for 20 years.

Many attendees dressed up for the occasion and some brought their children along to witness the brief, yet monumental, event. Longtime community activists who've worked closely with

Hardesty—like Right 2 Survive's Ibrahim Mubarak, Mental Health Association of Portland's Jason Renaud, minority-owned business advocate James Posey.

"This is a very historic day," said Posey. "Now, the work really begins."

Not only is Hardesty the first African American woman to sit on council, but her appointment makes the five-member council majority female for the first time in history.

Hardesty was sworn in by Adrienne Nelson, the first African American judge for the Oregon Supreme Court. Before joining her new colleagues at the council dais, Hardesty addressed the crowded room.

"What I see all around me is a city filled of people with hope. And I don't take that hope lightly," she said. "I look forward to what we're able to do together as Portlanders."

Hardesty is the third African American commissioner to sit on Portland City Council. The last commissioner, Dick Bogel, stepped down 27 years ago. Hardesty starts her term as the commissioner in charge of the Portland Fire Bureau, Bureau of Emergency Communications, Bureau of Emergency Management, and the Fire and Police Disability & Retirement Fund.

More than a dozen members of the Portland Fire Department, including Chief Mike Meyers, attended the morning event, along with Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw. Before kicking off her inaugural council meeting, Mayor Ted Wheeler noted the day's significance.

This is the first time in the history of the city that there has been a majority of women on city council. This is the first time that a woman of color has been elected to city council," Wheeler said. "I know Jo Ann Hardesty to be a tireless leader and effective advocate. Commissioner Hardesty, I welcome you to the dais."

Wheeler added that the day's council agenda was the shortest he's ever seen. No significant votes were passed. However, Commissioner Amanda Fritz elected Commissioner Chloe Eudaly to be the council president—a rotating role that makes Eudaly the second in command if Wheeler is absent.

Hardesty will hold a public swearing-in celebration this evening at 6 pm at Portland City Hall. And then, she said, the work begins.

"I want to remind you that this is only day one. It doesn't mean that after the party today you get to go home. You need to come back to this chamber," Hardesty said. "Let's make sure we keep this chamber looking like the city of Portland, keep coming back, keep making sure your voice is being heard. Because that's why you elected me."

## **The Portland Business Journal**

### **Hardesty Sworn in as Portland City Council Starts its New Year**

*By Andy Giegerich  
January 2, 2019*

Portland's first city council meeting of the year was a historic one.

As KGW, a news partner of the Portland Business Journal, reports, Jo Ann Hardesty took office around 9 a.m. today. She becomes the first African-American woman to take a seat on the Portland City Council.

Hardesty, a former state lawmaker, handily defeated Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith. She'll fill the seat held by Dan Saltzman, who's retiring after 20 years on the council.

Smith had earned the bulk of business support leading up to the election.

**OPB**

## **Jo Ann Hardesty, 1st Woman Of Color On Portland City Council, Takes Office**

*By Amelia Templeton*

*January 2, 2019*

Portland Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty took the oath of office Wednesday, becoming the first African-American woman to serve on the City Council.

Hardesty told a crowd of hundreds of supporters and colleagues in City Hall that she started her day with a commute on a MAX train, reflecting on the two African-American commissioners who preceded her: Charles Jordan and Dick Bogle.

“It’s been 25-ish years since an African-American has had the privilege of serving the people of Portland,” she said. “What I see all around me is a city filled with people with hope, and I don’t take that hope lightly.”

In a nod to the historic moment, Justice Adrienne Nelson led a brief ceremony. Nelson is the first African-American to serve on the Oregon Supreme Court.

Mayor Ted Wheeler, Police Chief Danielle Outlaw and Fire Chief Mike Meyers were in the crowd, alongside many of Hardesty’s longtime supporters, such as homeless activist Ibrahim Mubarak and civil rights activist James Posey.

Portland is the only large American city that elects commissioners citywide, instead of by district or ward.

Courts have struck down such at-large election systems in other cities — including a recent case involving the Yakima City Council — because they can dilute the power of minority voters.

In Portland, very few people of color — or residents of poorer neighborhoods like East Portland — have been elected to the Council.

Hardesty, who lives in East Portland’s Gateway neighborhood, is a Navy veteran, civil rights activist and consultant who served in the state Legislature from 1997 to 2000.

On the campaign trail, Hardesty often downplayed the historic nature of the election. Her chief opponent, Loretta Smith, is also an African-American woman. Instead, Hardesty focused on her long record as an activist and her powerful grassroots campaign.

“My campaign is not because I want to be the first black woman on Portland’s city council,” she said at one of the final candidate debates.

“It’s all about the service I’ve provided to the city, for free many times, because I love Portland,” she said.

In Portland’s unique commission form of government, City Council members also manage city services.

Mayor Wheeler has assigned Hardesty four bureaus to oversee: Portland Fire and Rescue, the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management, the Portland Bureau of Emergency Communications and the Fire and Police Disability & Retirement Fund.

Hardesty’s election could mean a further shift to the left for the City Council, particularly on public safety issues, posing a challenge for Wheeler, who also serves as police commissioner.

Hardesty has pledged to push for a vote to withdraw Portland from the Joint Terrorism Task Force, a partnership between local and federal law enforcement established by the FBI in 2000.

She has also proposed hiring mental health professionals to triage calls in the city’s 911 call center and for alternatives to sending police officers to respond to people in a mental health crisis.

Commissioner Dan Saltzman, whose seat Hardesty fills, was a moderate who reliably supported Wheeler’s agenda.

Saltzman retired after serving five terms on the Council. He held on to his seat longer than any other commissioner in the past 50 years.

Saltzman said his advice to Hardesty is to focus.

“It’s going to be like trying to drink out of a fire hose,” he said. “Really have two or three specific priorities that you want to own and make happen, and be relentless about them.”

A celebration of Hardesty’s swearing-in will take place at City Hall at 6 p.m. Wednesday and is open to the public. Capacity will be limited to 250 guests.