

The Oregonian

Regional Police Records System ‘A Disaster’ As Costs Mount for Portland Police

*By Maxine Bernstein
February 13, 2019*

Seven years after it was touted as an innovative electronic records system to manage police reports from 40 police agencies for sharing, the RegJIN program now has only seven participating agencies, with Portland police stuck kicking in millions of dollars to cover the bill.

Expenses for the system’s software and support kept increasing while partner agencies dropped out of a cost-sharing agreement, leaving Portland police to pick up the difference.

Portland police now are asking the City Council to approve \$1.4 million for fiscal 2019-2020 and another \$1.52 million for fiscal 2020-21 to cover the gaps, plus about \$5 million to be set aside to create a new, more affordable system for Portland police. That would happen once RegJin’s contract with Canada-based vendor Versaterm Inc. expires in July 2021.

“It really is disappointing. The costs have been uncontrollable,” Assistant Chief Chris Davis told The Oregonian/OregonLive this week. “But a functioning record management system is not something we can live without.”

The \$12.6 million Regional Justice Information Network went live on April 14, 2015, intended to encourage collaboration between law enforcement agencies. It replaced the Portland Police Database System. Though Portland police own the new software, each agency’s user fees were to help fund their use and ongoing support.

The ambitious project, though, was beset by problems from the start, with officers complaining that the new system was too cumbersome and complicated to use. They also said inflexible software made it difficult to update the system.

Agencies complained officers took twice as long to complete electronic police reports because entering information into the fields wasn’t intuitive. The regional system also didn’t match up with other important state and national law enforcement databases, so fixes had to be made.

The problems became so routine that a board overseeing the system began starting its meeting agendas with a “success story” so its sessions wouldn’t just focus on all the drawbacks.

The annual cost of running the program – now about \$2.5 million -- didn’t drop because fewer agencies were using it.

“It’s like a TriMet bus,” Davis said. “It costs the same amount of money to run it whether it’s full or empty.”

Less than a year after joining, the Clark County Sheriff’s Office pulled out in 2016, with Undersheriff Mike Cooke calling the project a “disaster.” Clark County moved to another vendor, Executive Information Systems, or EIS.

Then Clackamas County Sheriff’s Office and all municipal police agencies in the county except Lake Oswego left in 2017. They went to a records management and report entry system called Mark43, which Clackamas County Sheriff’s Chief Deputy James Rhodes described as “faster and easier,” with fewer overtime costs and training hours.

And last summer, the Washington County Sheriff's Office and the county's municipal agencies announced their exit, effective Jan. 1.

"That's when costs went through the roof," Davis said.

Though Washington County Sheriff's Office benefited from being part of a law enforcement consortium, RegJIN limited its ability to customize the system for its own needs and records classifications, said Deputy Jeff Talbot, a spokesman.

Washington County is now using a cloud-based records management system through the same vendor that costs less, he said.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office system is now paired with Beaverton police, and the Sheriff's Office hopes to connect with other city police agencies in the county, Talbot said.

In three years, the Portland Police Bureau's share of the total RegJIN cost grew from 32 percent to 83 percent, according to city budget documents.

"In hindsight," Davis said, "I'm not sure we realized what would happen if partner agencies weren't happy and started leaving... We just don't have the money in our budget to afford this."

Aside from Portland police, the other six agencies still using the regional system are the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office, Gresham police, the Columbia County Sheriff's Office and the St. Helens, Scappoose and Lake Oswego police departments.

Some of the police agencies that pulled out can still query or view RegJIN data of the remaining agencies for a lesser charge.

The city approved \$300,000 to hire a consultant to help select a replacement system for police reports, records management, crime analysis and data sharing. California-based DeltaWRX is still conducting that review, Davis said.

The bureau is considering returning to a database in which each agency has its own contract with a vendor of choice, relieving Portland of the responsibility for all agencies.

Portland police also hope to develop a "sharing hub," which will allow agencies to share information regardless of what system they're using for records management, said Tammy Mayer, the RegJIN project manager.

"Hopefully, this will help reconnect all the local agencies again and meet the main intent of RegJIN, which was to share data," she said.

The Portland Tribune

Portland's Terrorism Task Force Vote Splits Anti-Hate Coalition

*By Nick Budnick
February 12, 2019*

City Council may drop out of pact, but some say white supremacists merit FBI-backed group's focus.

Some of the activists who supported the Portland City Council's resolution last week to condemn white nationalists are decidedly less enthusiastic as the council mulls whether to withdraw from the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force this week.

The task force in Portland has at times played a prominent role combating white supremacist hate groups, and on paper still does — even as hate crimes in Portland and elsewhere are on the rise. Just last month, according to the Daily Astorian, an activist handed out fliers in Astoria entitled "The KKK Wants you!!!"

So while some hate crime watchers are not actively opposing Portland's pullout from the task force, they're not supporting it either. And many are openly skeptical.

"I have great respect for both sides" in the FBI task force debate, said Randy Blazak of the Oregon Coalition Against Hate Crime, who has not taken a formal position on the issue. "But my main position is that threat (of white extremism) is real and the Northwest has long been a center for that thinking. ... There is a value in keeping the channels of communication open (between agencies) about what the real threat is."

"It's kind of ironic," said Brian Levin, director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism in California, "that at a time when it's the white nationalists who are demonstrably the leading, most prominent threat, that we're now having conflicts which could affect the effective monitoring of potentially violent white nationalist extremists."

Indeed, a scan of the website of the most prominent group to track hate crimes, the Southern Poverty Law Center, shows that local JTTFs have sometimes been viewed by racist extremists as a primary nemesis. For instance, a co-founder of the Vinlanders Social Club — a Phoenix-based white nationalist group — bragged that his JTTF file is "a mile long," according to the center's website.

But the FBI and its terrorism task forces also have been accused of violating civil rights and spreading fear among local Muslims, sparking longtime concerns by the ACLU of Oregon, The Oregon chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations and Portland Copwatch. And Jo Ann Hardesty, the newest member of the City Council, has made it clear she wants the city to pull out.

Since so little of the group's work is public, it's hard to get a grasp on how much the JTTF focuses on white supremacists — especially under the Trump administration, said Heidi Beirich, who serves as director of the Southern Poverty Law Center's research arm that tracks hate groups.

"There has been very little information provided by federal officials on how seriously they take white supremacy," she said. "It's hard to know."

Loren "Renn" Cannon, special agent in charge for the FBI in Oregon, has been advocating publicly for the city to stay in the task force, saying local participation is key to efforts to share information and react appropriately. He said the local task force assessed about 300 "threats" last year to determine if they merited further investigation.

"We work very actively against white supremacists' violent actions. It is a priority for the FBI," he said. "It's something that we take seriously and devoted resources to."

The council will discuss the issue at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 12 and 2 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 13.

Task force looked at hate

Beefed up as part of a national initiative in the wake of 9-11, the task force in Oregon has made headlines mainly for its role in prosecuting local Muslims like the "Portland Seven," which sought to travel to Afghanistan to fight American troops.

But it has tracked hate and violent white extremists as well.

In the late 1990s, the task force targeted the white racist group Volksfront, though the group is thought to have imploded of its own volition.

Years later, at a time when members of the white nationalist prison gang the European Kindred were allegedly taking out "contracts" to kill members of law enforcement, the task force opened a racketeering investigation into the group, which some observers said helped rein in their activities. In the end, however, European Kindred's leader, David Patrick Kennedy, was brought down by local cops investigating home invasion robberies.

More recently, the task force investigated the Bundy organization that took over the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

And in 2017 the task force monitored Jason Schaefer of Rock Creek, who was allegedly making bombs and issuing violent threats, though his motive was not thought to be white supremacist in nature.

More recently, a Clark County sheriff's memo surfaced in local media reports saying the FBI was depicting the Proud Boys, conservative group whose members have been involved in several violent incidents, as an "extremist" group. But Cannon of the FBI then denied that the entire group had been categorized in that way.

Despite its occasional surfacing in high-profile cases, the terrorism task force is an enigma to even many in local law enforcement, said one retired law enforcement official.

"The organization probably does great things," the ex-official said sarcastically. "We never figured out what it was. We would feed the FBI information and we just would not get anything back."

"Is it wise that Portland's pulling out? I don't think so. Is it the end of the world? I don't think so."

The danger is that individuals don't need to run in extremist circles to adopt their ideology and to act out in violence, as did Timothy McVeigh, the 1995 Oklahoma City bomber. It's in those cases, where an extremist's online activity is often key, that the FBI's resources are irreplaceable, some say.

To track the emerging trend of "loner" violence, the FBI's resources are key, Levin, of the California-based hate crime center said. But he said federal agents also need to pay more attention to the problem.

"I'll make it simple: When the next Timothy McVeigh does something, do you want a splintered and disjointed law enforcement approach?" he said. "The problem is, we have to have these federal agencies paying more attention to the most prominent problem out there, which is white nationalists."

Portland Waffling on Earthquake Building Signs

By Jim Redden

February 12, 2019

Attorneys representing owners of unreinforced masonry buildings are not yet willing to postpone Feb. 26 lawsuit hearing.

Portland officials are offering to revise and delay controversial requirements that owners of unreinforced masonry buildings post warning signs they could cause harm in earthquakes.

Building owners are suing in federal court to overturn the requirement, which was adopted by the City Council last October. But on Tuesday, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, who is in charge of the Bureau of Emergency Management, filed a resolution to eliminate and delay some of the requirements.

The requirement is scheduled to take effect for owners of commercial buildings on March 1. But on Tuesday, the City Attorney's Office wrote attorneys representing building owners and asked if they would postpone a hearing in the case scheduled for Feb. 26.

Attorneys for the building owners said no, but asked for more information. Among other things, the attorneys noted the city attorney's office said Hardesty's resolution could change between now and next week.

As introduced, Hardesty's resolution would delay the posting requirement for commercial buildings from March 1, 2019, to Nov. 1, 2020. It would also eliminated the requirement that a signed agreement to post the signs be filed with the deed to the building.

The legal sparring is just the most recent twist in a controversy that stretches back years. There are approximately 1,800 URMs in Portland. Of those, 1,640 are believed to have not been retrofitted to survive an earthquake. The council discussed requiring owners to bring all of them up to current earthquake codes, but felt the cost — an average of \$105 per square foot — is too expensive.

But now a majority of the current council has come out against the posting requirement, which was only approved by two of its current members, Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioner Amanda Fritz.

Many building owners have objected to the requirement before and after it was approved, saying it will discourage people from entering their buildings and reduce their value. They also say an agreement the city is requiring them to sign and record with their deed is an encumbrance that could affect their ability to sell or borrow money against their buildings in the future.

Some owners have sued in federal court to stop the requirement, arguing it violated their free speech and due process rights. Those supporting the lawsuit include the Portland chapter of the NAACP, which says such placards would discourage attendance at and decrease the value of many African-American churches.

A number of groups — including MusicPortland, the NAACP, tenants' rights organizations, Save Portland Buildings and the Council of Churches — protested outside City Hall on Jan. 5 to highlight what they said are flaws in the requirement.

The development services bureau has released a schedule of potential fines for not posting the placards that range from \$257 per unit per month for buildings with one or two units to \$515 per unit per month for buildings with 20 or more units. That means the owners of a 60-unit building that does not post the warning could be fined \$38,350 per month.

You can read the proposed ordinance [here](#).

PBOT Postpones Construction of West Hillsdale Bridge That Would 'Make You Feel Like You're In the Trees'

*By Bill Gallagher
February 10, 2019*

Another delay of at least a year not sitting well with advocates of the Red Electric Trail Bridge

Southwest walkers, runners and bicyclists who've been waiting for a new elevated bridge across the ravine that's just below Beaverton Hillsdale Highway will have to wait at least another year.

Plans to start construction on the Red Electric Trail Bridge at a spot across the street from Verde Cucina in West Hillsdale have once again been postponed.

The Portland Bureau of Transportation announced the latest delay on Thursday Feb. 7. "Unfortunately, the project will be delayed for up to a year. The bids that we received at the end of November 2018 came in significantly higher than anticipated and we were not able to award the contract. This was a frustrating setback," the PBOT release reads.

The proposed bridge would be 500 feet long and 14-feet wide and rise 14 feet above the ravine. People can see where it's to be built from the unimproved parking lot across Capitol Highway from Sasquatch Pub. A trail connection would extend the Red Electric Trail to Southwest Bertha where it continues at Beaverton Hillsdale Highway. The budget to build the bridge is \$3.9 million.

Work was to have begun in late February, cutting down trees in the area.

Construction was supposed to start in May with the bridge completed by Spring 2020. If PBOT doesn't again postpone the project, construction won't start until then. PBOT says it won't go out for bids on the work until next November.

"I'm very disappointed but I'm not surprised," said Don Baack, founder of Southwest Trails. "PBOT makes a habit of this. What they've done is put it off and put it off and put it off. As a result, we started with a \$2 million project and it grows each year with inflation in construction costs. Because of their delays, the cost of this bridge has gone up dramatically."

As a matter of fact, in narrating a video about the Red Electric, www.swtrails.org. Baack states, "An example of a key project that's underway and will be completed in 2015 is the bicycle and pedestrian bridge at the west end of Hillsdale."

In November 2018, the project was still on track. PBOT's Capitol Projects Manager Nicole Pierce shared this vision of the bridge with the Portland Tribune, ""There's a look, if you're looking straight at the front of the bridge, that you're in the tree canopy level," Pierce said. "It will very much feel like you're in the trees, in the air."

But not for a while. Glenn Bridger, a retired highway engineer who volunteers with the Hillsdale Neighborhood Association said he's not sure how the cost can be reduced enough to get the project on track. "I don't think that they're going to make enough in savings to make this delay worthwhile. I interpret this delay as PBOT saying they're going to be able to save money by redesigning some of the footings without changing the scale of the project. I have difficulty believing that," Bridger said.

Debbie Small has lived for three years on Southwest Bertha, a block from what would be the west end of the bridge project. "Yes, I'm surprised and disappointed by this delay. It's been delayed before but we thought for sure this time it was going to go through."

Like Baack and Bridger, Small volunteers on trail-building projects with SW Trails.

Baack figures construction of the Red Electric Trail Bridge in West Hillsdale has now been postponed three times, the first time when former Mayor Sam Adams was the Commissioner in charge of PBOT. Volunteers already have done a lot to clear the path for a bridge.

Pointing out the area where the bridge would start, he said, "This is so cleaned up from what it used to be. This was all covered with blackberry bushes. It was a mess. Some of the neighbors were hoping to build a small park here."

Work continues for SW Trails on other parts of the Red Electric Trail, which follows the old route of the Red Electric train line that ran from South Waterfront to the border with Washington County more than 100 years ago. SW Trails is trying to make as many segments of the old trail safer for walkers, runners and bicyclists.

Willamette Week

How the Diversity of Portland Compares to That of Its Elected Officials

*By Rachel Monahan
February 13, 2019*

A new report calling for governmental reforms is already dividing the City Council.

A new report calls for diversifying the Portland City Council by junking its commission form of government. It is already dividing the council.

A City Club of Portland report released Feb. 10 argues the city commission form of government is broken, in part because elections for citywide office have failed to provide a city council that reflects the city's makeup.

"A larger council offers more chance to represent diverse viewpoints and backgrounds," the report says.

But the move to create a larger council—as many as eight commissioners—and employ a city manager to oversee city bureaus comes as voters have elected the most diverse Portland council ever.

The City Council has never reflected full racial or gender equality, but City Commissioner Amanda Fritz argues against jettisoning the city's current (and highly unusual) form of government now.

"Isn't it ironic that at the epic moment we have a majority of women serving on the council, the City Club and The Oregonian are calling for a change in the form of government to reduce the authority of the council?" Fritz says.

Fritz says public financing of election campaigns could bring a wider variety of candidates without scrapping the current commission structure.

Jo Ann Hardesty, the first black woman elected to the council, and a supporter of campaign finance changes, disagrees. "I was elected to City Council not because of our form of government, but despite of it," Hardesty says. "I support moving forward with a change to how Portlanders are represented."

Here's how the current City Council compares with the city it represents.

Proportion of Portland residents who live east of the Willamette River: 4 in 5

Proportion of the Portland City Council that does: 2 in 5

Percentage of Portland residents who are white: 71

Percentage who are black: 6

Percent who are Asian: 8

Percent who are Latino: 10

Percentage of city commissioners who are white: 80

Percentage who are black: 20

Percentage who are Asian or Latino: 0

Median age of Portlanders: 36.8

Median age of city commissioners: 60

Percent of Portlanders who are renters: 47

Percentage of city commissioners who rent: 60

The Portland Business Journal

E-Scooter Safety in Portland and Other Cities Under Scrutiny

*By Caitlin Mullen
February 13, 2019*

The arrival of electric scooters in cities across the country is increasing scrutiny of their safety.

According to a new Consumer Reports investigation, which did a spot check of hospitals and public agencies such as police departments, an estimated 1,500 people have been injured in e-scooter-related crashes since 2017.

Hospitals in Atlanta and Nashville, for example, have seen 360 and 250 patients with injuries related to e-scooters, per CR.

CR contacted the two biggest operators, Santa Monica, California-based Bird and San Francisco-based Lime, which each have scooters in more than 100 locations worldwide. Neither provided injury or crash figures, per CR, but said that safety is a top concern and that, "they're eager to work with cities to safely deploy scooters."

The publication obtained records from Portland indicating that the two companies were aware of at least 470 injuries from scooter accidents through July 2018.

Bird saw the largest share — 411 — while Lime reported 59 injuries. The data was provided last summer when the companies applied to bring scooters to Portland, per Consumer Reports.

Portland allowed Bird and Lime to bring scooters to the city during a four-month pilot program. During that time, 176 people were injured in scooter crashes, according to the Portland Bureau of Transportation's e-scooter findings report.

The city's e-scooter findings report notes 34 percent of residents and 48 percent of visitors to the city used scooters instead of using a car to get to a destination. The report recommends a second e-scooter pilot this year beginning in early spring.

Neither company offered comment to CR on the injury data provided to Portland, but both said they've handed out thousands of free helmets and work to ensure riders are educated on proper safety guidelines.

Dockless electric scooters tend to be scattered around a city, and riders can access them through an app and pay for rides — that can't exceed 15 mph — by the minute.

In Austin, where a scooter rider died last weekend after colliding with a car, city leaders have asked the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to investigate scooter-related crashes and injuries. The first-ever CDC scooter study will also look at how accidents could be prevented, according to Time. Findings are expected in March, and "could have far-reaching effects as cities across the country grapple with reports of injuries from these e-scooters," per Time.

Doctors around the country are seeing pedestrians injured by the scooters, and they can be especially dangerous for elderly and disabled pedestrians, per The Washington Post. Tara Williams told the Post she was struck by a young man on a scooter, which resulted in almost \$1,000 in medical bills.

"We see tons of little kids on these scooters, some of them not even tall enough to see over the handlebars," Williams told the paper.

Bird — and Lime, in some states — say users must upload a photo of their driver's license to ensure they're 18 or older when creating an account. But some teens have used a parent's license to get around that, Curbed reports.

A January study by the JAMA network looked into injuries related to e-scooters during a year's time at a southern California medical center, finding the most common injuries among 249 emergency room patients were fractures, head injuries and soft-tissue injuries.

Less than 5 percent of riders were wearing helmets, more than 4 percent were intoxicated, and almost 11 percent of patients were under 18, per the study.

The Portland Observer

Hardesty Moves on Campaign Promise

February 13, 2019

Portland City Council will vote Wednesday whether to pull out from the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, an issue Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty promised to bring to the fore during her campaign last year.

The JTTF, which is a partnership between federal and local law enforcement agencies, was dissociated back in 2005 by then Mayor Tom Potter, a former police chief. It was fully re-established in 2015. San Francisco chose to dissolve a similar partnership in 2017.

Some local advocates have voiced their support of pulling out of the agreement, including those of nearly 50 individuals and organizations who co-signed a letter calling for an end of cooperation with the FBI's Terrorism Task Force.

Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform, ACLU of Oregon, NAACP Portland Branch, Unite Oregon, Veterans for Peace Chapter 72, Portland's Resistance, and Occupy ICE PDX were among the signers and endorses. Critics said the JTTF lacks transparency and oversight, and promotes profiling based on race, religion, or country of origin.

"Now, under a president who targets people based on their religion (Muslims), national origin (immigrants), and political beliefs (protestors, Black Lives Matter), it is more important than ever to stop participating in the federal government's dragnet surveillance and spy program," the ACLU of Oregon stated in a message to city councilors.

Supporters of the law enforcement partnership, like Commissioner Nick Fish, who voted to rejoin the JTTF in 2015, said at that time he believes it can strengthen public safety and security.

While Commissioners Hardesty and Amanda Fritz both support pulling out of the FBI partnership, Mayor Ted Wheeler said he recommends preserving it. Commissioner Chloe Eudaly is expected to be the swing vote on the matter, but she had not publicly stated her definitive stance on the issue.

City Targets Racism

February 12, 2019

A city ordinance condemning white supremacy and alt right groups has the unanimous approval of the Portland City Council.

Adopted last Thursday, the resolution calls for the city to work with community organizations to inform the public about the historical discriminatory impacts of white supremacy in Portland and the state and how to identify and push back against racist ideologies today.

"This is not a silver bullet, but I'm hopeful this resolution is the start to meaningful action," Mayor Ted Wheeler said.

The measure comes in part as a response to rise in hate crimes. The Portland non-profits Council on American-Islamic Relations, Oregon Justice Resource Center, and the Western States Center all voiced support of the resolution and outlined six action items they would like the city to address in regard to white nationalist and alt-right group activity in Portland.

"Our proposals build on the important step Mayor Wheeler and the City Commissioners have taken today," said Bobbin Singh, executive director of the Oregon Justice Resource Center.

In a joint statement, the three organizations said they hope to work closely with City leadership to implement action items.

OPB

Portland Commissioners Grill FBI, DOJ Over Terrorism Task Force

*By Amelia Templeton
February 12, 2019*

Portland city commissioners grilled the state's top federal law enforcement officials Tuesday, one day before a likely vote on whether the city will withdraw from the FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Force.

The session was largely a repeat of past debates about whether the group's investigative practices violate Oregonian's civil liberties, albeit with fresh twists — including sharp questions from several City Council members about how the FBI and Department of Justice investigate white supremacist violence and left-wing protesters.

Portland has an on-again, off-again relationship with the task force, joining it in the late 1990s, withdrawing in the early years of the post-9/11 “war on terror,” and then rejoining in 2015.

Fulfilling a campaign promise, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty has introduced a resolution to once again pull city police from the task force, while Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioner Nick Fish are pushing to remain involved.

With Hardesty and Commissioner Amanda Fritz on record in favor of withdrawing and Wheeler and Fish in favor of staying in, Commissioner Chloe Eudaly likely will cast the deciding vote.

She said the FBI's history of unjustified surveillance of left-wing political activists is weighing heavily in her thinking.

“How do we justify the risk of civil and human rights violations by our continued involvement in JTTF?” Eudaly asked. “That is the core question for me in this conversation.”

Billy Williams, the U.S. attorney for Oregon, replied with an apology.

“I think there has to be an acknowledgement of the scenarios and situations that you've outlined ... here in Oregon as well as nationally, and recognize mistakes have occurred,” he said.

“Thank you,” Eudaly interjected.

“Groups advocating for review and policy changes, congressional oversight, all of those things are so critical for us being better at what we do. And at the same time balancing that with being able to make assessment of threats,” Williams continued.

Hardesty was the sharpest critic of the counterterrorism task force.

In one exchange, she pressed the FBI's special agent in charge, Renn Cannon, to provide more information about the people the group investigated in Oregon last year.

“Can you give me a demographic breakdown of the individuals who were identified as a potential threat?” Hardesty asked.

“Three hundred threat assessments were opened and worked. What I can say is those roughly mirror the demographics of the state,” Cannon answered.

“So 3 percent would have been African-American, 10 percent would have been Latino, and the rest would have been white people who were investigated?” Hardesty pressed.

“I don’t have a specific ... I’d have to go back and try to find those,” Cannon said.

“Well then you shouldn’t try to answer it if you don’t have the answer,” Hardesty fired back.

Hardesty also asked Williams to comment on how the Portland Police Bureau has handled street violence and protests in Portland.

“We’ve seen the Proud Boys and other white supremacist groups marching throughout the street. We’ve seen Portland Police officers attack counterprotesters,” she said. “Is that a model of law enforcement living up to what you believe their role should be?”

Williams answered cautiously: “It’s a baited question,” he said. “I think you’re trying to offer an answer in a question. You can come up with all kinds of examples of great police work.”

Asked why the FBI hasn’t been more outspoken about the threat posed by white supremacists, Cannon said the FBI has noted a rise in white supremacist hate crime and has been involved in prosecuting cases of white supremacist violence in Kansas City, upstate New York and Los Angeles.

Two Portland police officers have been assigned to work with the terrorism task force on a part-time basis since the city rejoined the partnership in 2015. Historically, much of the debate over Portland’s involvement in the JTTF hinges on two questions: How much oversight do Portland’s civilian leaders have over the work of those officers? And will working on the JTTF lead those officers to violate Oregon’s expansive state laws protecting civil liberties?

Those statutes include a ban on local law enforcement from collecting information on a person’s political or religious views, and the so-called “sanctuary law” that prohibits the use of state and local resources to enforce federal immigration laws if a person’s only crime is their immigration status.

Cannon and Williams said that Portland’s officers are walled off completely from any cases that involve immigration status, and said the FBI’s does not target individuals for investigation based on race, religion, national origin or political beliefs.

“Doing so is both illegal and, in my view, immoral,” Williams said.

The JTTF officers report to the Police Bureau’s assistant chief for investigations, who reports directly to Police Chief Danielle Outlaw. Outlaw is in the process of obtaining the proper security clearance to be briefed more fully on the work of the JTTF.

Mayor Wheeler signed a non-disclosure agreement to receive limited briefings on the officers’ work, but Cannon confirmed that Wheeler isn’t in line to get a security clearance.

The two Portland police officers assigned to the JTTF testified by phone Tuesday, using only their first names, Matt and Brian, to protect their undercover work. Both said they’d never violated Oregon law in their work with the JTTF.

Those assertions were met with skepticism from some members of council.

“You said Portland police officers are walled off from immigration issues. Just how are they walled off from immigration issues?” Fritz asked.

“They are not assigned anything, they do not work on anything where the individual who has the potential criminal activity has an immigration status,” responded Jessica Anderson, the supervisor for the Portland FBI’s international terrorism unit.

Fritz, unsatisfied, noted that Portland Police officers assigned to the JTTF could have access to federal databases that could include information prohibited under Oregon’s laws.

A panel of outside critics of the JTTF were also invited to give presentations to the council, including an attorney from the Council on American-Islamic Relations and a former FBI agent who now works with the Brennan Center for Justice.

They pointed to press reports of a number of cases in which the FBI has subjected Muslim Americans to unwanted and intrusive surveillance or attempted to recruit them as informants, including the example of a Google engineer in San Francisco questioned after visiting family in Pakistan.

Kayse Jama, a community organizer and Somali-American, urged the council to withdraw from the JTTF, noting it was his third time in a decade he'd appeared before them to make the same argument.

"I'm tired of this city paying lip service to the idea of being a sanctuary city," Jama said. "My community is very fearful, just of getting a knock on the door."