

## The Oregonian

# Yelling, Venting Mark Listening Session Over Portland Police Texts with Patriot Prayer

*By Maxine Bernstein  
February 21, 2019*

### UPDATES

8:10 p.m.: The meeting wraps up. The bottom line: More yelling and venting than listening or suggestions for solutions. Full coverage coming up.

Some parting words:

Police Chief Danielle Outlaw quoted as saying: "I'm going to be honest with you, we didn't have to hold this."

One speaker quoted as saying: "Police don't need training to stop identifying white supremacy, they need to stop identifying with white supremacy."

A crowd of about 50 people yelling: "Fascists go home."

7:50 p.m.: Some reports are coming over Twitter that Patriot Prayer supporters and their anti-fascist opponents were facing off in the parking lot of the Maranatha Church. Later reports indicate Haley Adams is escorted off the church property.

7:40 p.m.: The session is continuing after it appeared Patriot Prayer supporter Haley Adams got escorted out. People at the meeting reported that Adams strode up to the front of the church, members of the crowd began chanting, "Nazi scum." Police Chief Danielle Outlaw asked Adams to leave. It appeared the meeting might end but Outlaw said she was staying.

7:30 p.m.: The Rev. LeRoy Haynes: 'We continue to have breakdown after breakdown in trust with Portland police ... there cannot be a double standard' between policing of white residents and black residents.

7:15 p.m.: The session continues with two-minute speaking slots. One woman accuses police of taking the side of "right-wingers" against residents and gives kudos to anti-fascist demonstrators for being "more disciplined than police." Another speaker asks the city to form a task force to investigate hate crimes.

6:50 p.m.: Moderator says he can shut down the session if some people in the crowd continue to shout and talk over speakers. Several people got into a tense exchange and Mayor Ted Wheeler on the mic: "Hey people, this is a church."

6:45 p.m.: Tim Ledwith, 35, who said he was punched in the face on June 8, 2018, by Proud Boy Tusitala 'Tiny' Toese, said he initially didn't want to assist police because he has a "healthy mistrust of police." But he said he got a subpoena this week to testify before a Multnomah County grand jury.

6:40 p.m.: "Please offer suggestions for solutions," Police Chief Danielle Outlaw says after some members of the crowd shout down a man who offered praise for police.

6:30 p.m.: One of the first speakers asks Mayor Ted Wheeler to give up the police commissioner's job. Another speaker accuses police of collaborating with "people who attack us." Another urges the city to broaden its investigation to look at possible "infiltration" of law

enforcement agencies by white supremacist groups. A woman thanks police (to jeers from the crowd) and urges an end to violence at protests.

6 p.m.: The listening session has begun. Brief remarks are expected from Police Chief Danielle Outlaw and Mayor Ted Wheeler. People are signing up to speak.

Outlaw: “We’re doing this because it’s the right thing to do ... I want to hear from you.” She acknowledged years of distrust of police by Portland residents.

Wheeler: “I hope I’m doing less talking and more listening.”

5:30 p.m.: More than two dozen people gathered outside the Maranatha Church before the listening session’s scheduled 6 p.m. start. Some held signs, including one that read: “Joey + Jeff = Pampered Proud Patriot Police.” Others held yellow sheets of paper that said “LISTEN” on one side and “LIES” on the other.

Those there included speakers from Jobs With Justice, Direct Alliance, Don’t Shoot Portland and Portland Democratic Socialists of America.

Some people chanted: “Cops and Klan, go hand & hand.”

\*\*\*

Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw called for a community “listening session” Thursday night to hear the public’s concerns about hundreds of text messages between a police lieutenant and the leader of the right-wing Patriot Prayer group.

Outlaw, Deputy Chief Bob Day and Assistant Chiefs Jami Resch, Ryan Lee and Chris Davis will attend, according to the Police Bureau.

Mayor Ted Wheeler and Wheeler’s senior adviser, Berk Nelson, also are planning to attend the meeting at Maranatha Church in Northeast Portland. Police said each visitor would be screened at the door for weapons.

The Portland Democratic Socialists of America and several other groups planned to protest outside before the event to call on Wheeler, who serves as police commissioner, to step down and put City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty in charge of police.

Meanwhile, Patriot Prayer posted the event on its Facebook page, encouraging its members to show up. “This community session is going to be complete slander against the Portland Police and Patriot Prayer,” the post said. “Please show up respectfully have our voice heard.”

The session was scheduled following last week’s publication of hundreds of text messages between Patriot Prayer leader Joey Gibson and police Lt. Jeff Niiya, who as supervisor of the bureau’s Rapid Response Team crowd control unit has been the police liaison to organizers of city demonstrations and marches.

Willamette Week and the Portland Mercury first published the text exchanges and then the Police Bureau released them on its website.

Niiya’s texts and emails with Gibson in 2017 and 2018 show him sometimes telling Gibson about the movements of counter-protesters, telling Gibson if officers would be on foot or bike at protests and alerting Gibson to have one of his followers -- Tusitala John “Tiny” Toese, also a member of the far-right Proud Boys -- take care of his outstanding arrest warrant before he showed up downtown.

They drew rebukes from the mayor and two city commissioners, who said the messages fed into community fears that police favored and protected Patriot Prayer protesters while cracking down on counter-protesters and self-described antifascists.

The chief initiated an internal investigation into Niiya's communications, barring him from contact with Gibson and other event organizers until the inquiry is completed. The mayor also called for an independent inquiry into alleged police bias in their handling of city demonstrations.

Niiya's union president Lt. Craig Morgan blasted the mayor for criticizing Niiya's communications, when Niiya was sharing much of what he learned from Gibson with the mayor's senior aide and had been tasked with serving as the liaison to protest organizers.

## **Portland Cop's Texts Before Dueling June 2017 Rallies Show Warnings to All to Avoid Violence**

*By Maxine Bernstein  
February 21, 2019*

Weeks before dueling rallies in downtown Portland in early June 2017, Portland police Lt. Jeff Niiya reached out to members of Patriot Prayer, Oath Keepers, the anarchist black bloc, Occupy Portland participants and others, hoping to avoid violence, police records indicate.

Portland police on Thursday morning released Niiya's June 10, 2017, police report and transcription of his text messages from the protest day in response to a public records request by The Oregonian/OregonLive.

At the time, Niiya was the special events sergeant for Central Precinct and wrote in his report that it was his assignment to work with rally organizers. He said he was concerned about potential violence between the multiple groups.

"To achieve this, I had to make contact with all parties involved in the permitted Free Speech Rally and planned counter protests," he wrote in his report.

Niiya has come under recent fire from Mayor Ted Wheeler, two city commissioners and others for later texts and emails with Joey Gibson, the leader of the right-wing group Patriot Prayer. A police internal investigation is underway into Niiya's communications with Gibson, and Wheeler has called for an independent investigation into alleged police biases in response to city demonstrations.

The June 2017 rally was fraught almost from the start, with Gibson challenging the city's liberal sensibilities with his brand of conservative politics and rhetoric. He clashed with the mayor in deciding to go ahead with the rally only days after a horrific attack on a MAX train that led to the deaths of two good Samaritans who had intervened in what witnesses said was a racist verbal assault on two young women, including one wearing a hijab. Among those invited to Gibson's "free speech" gathering were far-right figures known for espousing white nationalist views.

Weeks in advance on May 17, Patriot Prayer's self-described security detail leader, Lawrence Cavallero, contacted Niiya and Niiya asked to meet with him and Gibson in person.

In his first call with Gibson later that day, Niiya told him he didn't want any of Gibson's followers carrying weapons in the June rally. Niiya also told Gibson he had concerns about Tusitala "Tiny" Toese's alleged assault of a man at a May 13, 2017, protest downtown, which

was captured on video. Niiya said he told Gibson that he believed the Patriot Prayer activists were the aggressors against the anarchists then and advised that Toese would have been arrested if the victim had come forward. There's no record Toese was ever charged in that assault, according to court records.

"I told him explicitly the Bureau does not take sides and we will arrest anyone," Niiya wrote.

Niiya said he impressed on Gibson the need for his followers to "control themselves and not attack others," and tried to discourage Patriot Prayer's plans to march through the city, in an effort to keep problems away from the ongoing Rose Festival's CityFair, his report says. Niiya also shared his dismay with Gibson that Patriot Prayer members were suggesting in online posts that police were supporting the patriot movement.

"This was not acceptable, and I wanted Gibson and the others to stop those types of messages," Niiya wrote in his report.

Niiya, according to his report, reached out on May 19 to activist Star Stauffer, who aligns with the anarchist black bloc, hoping to get a message out to like-minded activists to "remain vocal only and separated from the patriots." Days later, he also reached out to Jamie Partridge, a counter-protester, who shared that so-called peacekeepers would be wearing orange vests during the June 4, 2017 demonstration.

On May 30, Gibson and police met with the mayor.

Niiya's report reveals multiple text messages that he exchanged with Patriot Prayer, as well as counter-protesters and their "peacekeepers" before, during and after the June 4 rally. During the demonstrations, Niiya was in contact with Partridge's peacekeepers, for example, alerting them to concerns about a masked anarchist group, or what Niiya called the "Rose City Redneck Revolt Group."

That day, dueling rallies engulfed five blocks of downtown Portland as hundreds of Patriot Prayer supporters and counter-demonstrators hurled insults but largely avoided physical confrontation during a tense standoff. Three to four distinct groups of counter-demonstrators overtook the surrounding blocks, forming a perimeter along streets and sidewalks while chanting anti-hate messages and sometimes taunting Patriot Prayer supporters under the watchful eye of police.

Officers used flash-bang grenades and pepper balls to scatter an antifascist crowd gathered in Chapman and Lownsdale squares just north of the Patriot Prayer rally. By 6 p.m., each demonstration had subsided without any significant violence and police had arrested 14.

The release of Niiya's June 2017 report came hours before Police Chief Danielle Outlaw and Wheeler are set to hold a public "listening session" Thursday night at a Portland church to hear community concerns raised by the recent release of hundreds of text messages between Niiya and Gibson in 2017 and 2018. At the request of the Maranatha Church, those attending the session at 6 p.m. will be screened upon entry.

Wheeler, who serves as police commissioner, last week called Niiya's messages "disturbing," said they appeared to "cross several boundaries" and "unnecessarily encourage" Gibson. In some of the messages, Niiya alerted Gibson about the movements of counter-protesters, told Gibson about police staffing plans and warned Gibson to have one of his followers take care of an outstanding Portland arrest warrant.

Niiya's union president defended Niiya's actions, and the Portland Police Commanding Officers Association has filed a grievance against the city and workplace harassment complaint against the mayor and two city commissioners.

## **The Portland Tribune**

### **Council: More Money Needed for Homeless, Affordable Housing**

*By Jim Redden*

*February 22, 2019*

**Mayor Ted Wheeler says city and council officials should coordinate their current searches for additional funding during upcoming budget-writing sessions.**

Despite spending nearly \$400 million more on homeless service and affordable housing since 2015, new revenue sources are needed to end the related crises, the City Council agreed on Thursday.

The council discussed the need for more money when it voted to extend the existing Housing State of Emergency for two years.

Mayor Ted Wheeler said city and Multnomah County officials are currently having numerous conversations about increasing funding for homeless services and additional affordable housing. He said the searches for new revenue should be coordinated during the upcoming sessions for writing the next budgets for the city and county.

"Multiple conversations are taking place. We should put them all together," Wheeler said.

The funding discussion was spurred by a request by Commissioner Chloe Eudaly that the council direct city budget and housing officials to identify an additional \$50 million a year in ongoing funding for more services. She suggested a tax of vacant housing units, saying there are currently 16,000 empty apartments in Portland.

The council first declared a housing emergency for one year in October 2015 to waive zoning regulations to speed up the siting of new homeless shelters and affordable housing projects, among other things. The council extended the emergency for another year in 2016, and extended it for 18 months in 2017. The emergency is now extended until April 2021 — five and one-half years after it was first declared.

During the discussion, council members said the homeless and affordable housing crises are aggravated by a lack of housing for lower-income households in the region. According to Portland House Bureau Director Shannon Callahan, when the emergency was first declared, Portland had been experiencing some of the highest rent increases in the country but still have one of the lowest vacancy rates.

According to Callahan, since 2015, the council has approved an additional \$103 million for homeless services and \$288 million for affordable housing projects. Much of the money has gone to the city-county Joint Office of Homeless Services, which was created to better coordinate programs designed to prevent homelessness, shelter homeless people, and move them into permanent housing.

Despite thousands of new apartments of all kinds being built since 2015, rents are still too high for many households, the council agreed.

"People are working two jobs and still can't afford to live in the city where they were born and raised," said Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, who lamented seeing a \$1,200-a-month studio apartment promoted as "affordable."

You can read the housing emergency declaration [here](#).

## **City Starts to Turn Clean Energy Initiative Into Reality**

*By Steve Law*

*February 21, 2019*

### **City Council OKs startup staff to launch the Portland Clean Energy Fund, approved by voters in November**

The Portland City Council took the first formal steps Thursday to start turning the voter-approved Portland Clean Energy Fund into reality.

In two unanimous votes, the council put rules for the program into city code and authorized the hiring of four city staff to work with a citizens committee, which will recommend projects to spend some of the \$54 million and \$71 million a year officials estimate will be raised by a new city tax on large corporations.

The campaign was led by a groundbreaking green, brown and black coalition made up of advocacy groups for people of color and environmental causes. Money will support renewable energy, energy efficiency, green agriculture and job training, much of it directed at people who have been left out of the transition to green energy.

One of the original chief sponsors of the initiative was Jo Ann Hardesty, who helped organize the coalition before departing to run her successful campaign for city commissioner.

"What we did was something that I've never seen happen before in Portland, Oregon," Hardesty said during Thursday's council hearing. "I think what that says is we're ready to move beyond our racist history."

Initiative organizers observed that everyone in the Portland area pays a utility surcharge to the Energy Trust of Oregon for energy efficiency, solar and other projects, but most of the funds go to folks with significant cash to finance those home improvements.

"Everybody pays into that but only people who are upper middle class have the opportunity to benefit from that," Hardesty said.

This initiative, which passed by a 65 percent margin in November, will dedicate much of the money to programs targeting low-income residents and people of color.

The money comes from a 1 percent surcharge on corporations with more than \$1 billion in national revenue and more than \$500,000 in Portland sales.

The initiative was dubbed the Portland Clean Energy Fund, though its formal name is the Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund.

The city still doesn't know for sure how much money will be raised, and may not until 2020, though tax liabilities for the big corporations began Jan. 1. The city's estimate of \$54 million and \$71 million a year is well more than the \$30 million initial estimates of campaign backers, but

less than the amount cited by some critics from the business sector who sought to derail the measure.

A parade of supporters testified Thursday in support of the city's efforts to launch the initiative. Several, including Hardesty, urged patience, noting that there are high hopes in other cities to do similar programs if Portland is successful.

"Our naysayers will be eager to publicize even minor missteps," said the Rev. E.D. Mondaine, who stepped in as co-petitioner when Hardesty bowed out, and leads the Portland chapter of the NAACP.

Nate McCoy, of the Oregon chapter of the National Association of Minority Contractors, estimated that eventually the program will help pay for 300 to 500 jobs working in the clean energy, energy efficiency and related fields.

But that will take time, as some of the focus will be on job training so more people of color and low-income people can learn skills to do much of the work.

The goal is to award the first grants for projects by July 2020.

## **Willamette Week**

### **Shouts, Stomps and Boos Dominate Listening Session On Portland Police Relationships With Right-Wing and Leftist Protest Groups**

*By Katie Shepherd  
February 21, 2019*

**Throughout the session, held inside a Northeast Portland church, people booed, jeered, clapped and cheered.**

A listening session hosted by Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw and Mayor Ted Wheeler resulted in a lot of yelling, stomping, and hissing as people aired grievances old and new against the Portland Police Bureau.

The session was scheduled in the wake of stories in WW and the Portland Mercury that revealed hundreds of friendly texts between a police lieutenant and right-wing protest leader Joey Gibson.

Two people spoke in support of PPB and said they thought Lt. Jeff Niiya's texts did not fall out of the bounds of normal police work. James Buchal, head of the Multnomah County Republican Party, urged police to do more to stop antifascist demonstrators from vandalizing property or blocking traffic—though he also said he does not "defend anybody's right to punch anybody in the face or pull people's masks off." (Gibson started a campaign to pull off antifascist protesters' masks and another Patriot Prayer regular, Tusitala "Tiny" Toese, is known for throwing punches.)

The vast majority of speakers, however, came to express concerns over police interactions with right-wing groups and the perception of bias against leftists in police tactics at protests.

Throughout the session, held inside a northeast church, people booed, jeered, clapped and cheered.

Near the end of the session, Patriot Prayer supporter Haley Adams jumped out of her seat—for reasons that remain obscure—and rushed the dais where Mayor Ted Wheeler and Chief Danielle Outlaw were sitting, among other police leaders. She was asked to return to her seat, and she stormed to the back of the room shouting "This is a church? I'm not welcome?"

Then, she stood on a pew and continued to shout before being kicked out of the church.

Other speakers appealed to the police to end the use of riot control agents that have sent protesters to the hospital, asked Outlaw to address comments she made on a conservative radio show last year, and urged Wheeler to hand the reins of the bureau to Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty.

Wheeler told WW last week that he is not considering ceding control of PPB.

## **Police Union President Demands Apology From Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, Suggests Leftist Activists Are the Real Threat to Portland**

*By Katie Shepherd  
February 21, 2019*

**"What about those who throw bricks, rocks, bottles, feces, and urine at police officers endangering not only our officers but also peaceful protesters who are exercising their right to free speech?" Portland police union president Daryl Turner said in a statement.**

Text exchanges revealed last week between the Portland police lieutenant in charge of protests and far-right Patriot Prayer leader Joey Gibson set off a chain reaction of political clashes in Portland.

The fallout has pitted police unions in open hostility against city leaders.

Within hours of reports in WW and the Portland Mercury, Mayor Ted Wheeler deemed the texts "disturbing" and Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty called for an independent investigation of bias in how the police bureau approaches protesters. Commissioner Chloe Eudaly echoed Hardesty.

The police unions have fired back.

Portland Police Association president Daryl Turner issued a press release today, in which he demands Eudaly apologize to police and implies that he, at least, considers leftist protesters who damage property a bigger concern than far-right brawlers who send people to the hospital.

Turner reacted to a tweet Eudaly wrote on Feb. 19, that was itself reacting to complaints filed by the city's other police union, which represents commanding officers.

The Portland Police Commanding Officers Association had alleged Wheeler, Hardesty and Eudaly's comments expressing concern over the texts were discriminatory and retaliatory. That union alleged Wheeler had failed to understand "even basic police work" in his two years in office.

"Does "basic police work" include ignoring racist and right wing extremist thugs while they intimidate, harass, and menace people and arresting left wing activists for no reason?," Eudaly tweeted. "Just curious."

Turner's response reveals that he considers leftist protesters, who sometimes cause property damage, to be a bigger problem.

"Does she mean the activists who destroy the property of others?," Turner wrote. "Those who set fires and vandalized downtown Portland? Is she speaking of the activists who block transit, bridges, freeway access, and sidewalks restricting access for people who are trying to get safely to work, to appointments, or home? What about those who throw bricks, rocks, bottles, feces, and urine at police officers endangering not only our officers but also peaceful protesters who are exercising their right to free speech? Or maybe the protesters who hide behind masks so they cannot be identified for their criminal activities?"

Blocking traffic has been a common non-violent protest tactic of some left-wing groups. A small number of masked protesters, often embedded in a larger group of peaceful demonstrators, have thrown projectiles at both right-wing protesters and police.

It's unclear whether Turner includes right-wing groups like Patriot Prayer and the Proud Boys in his description of "peaceful protesters who are exercising their right to free speech." Patriot Prayer rallies have repeatedly degenerated into brawls with antifascists. The most prolific brawler, Tusitala "Tiny" Toese, has mostly avoided prosecution even after confessing to police and being caught multiple times beating people on video.

Turner ends by scolding the city commissioner.

"As an elected official, Ms. Eudaly would be wise to separate her biases against police from the truth, facts, and evidence," Turner said.

Eudaly declined to comment on Turner's remarks.

The other police union, the PPCOA, has mounted a defense by alleging that Wheeler knew about the texts Niiya had been sending and was either being willfully ignorant or lying in his statements expressing shock at the content of those texts.

Texts released to WW and first reported by the Oregonian, however, suggest Wheeler's staff received only vague and basic information about Patriot Prayer from Niiya.

The mayor's spokeswoman tells WW that Wheeler only learned about the extent of Niiya's communications with Gibson by reading WW.

"These [texts] show that our office didn't really know the extent of these text messages between Gibson and Niiya," says Sophia June, a spokeswoman for Wheeler's office. "Berk [Nelson] knew that they did text as a part of intelligence gathering, the same way he knew Niiya texts leftist groups as well. But he did not know the content or how far that went. He learned about that specifically in your story."

It's clear Wheeler's office knew Niiya communicated with the group's leader, Gibson, but Niiya did not divulge significant information, beyond telling the mayor's staff when he expected Gibson's group to show up at an event and sharing an apparent threat against the mayor.

# Bill Would Make It Legal to Hail a Lyft and Uber Anywhere in Oregon, While Taking Regulations Out of Portland's Hands

*By Rachel Monahan  
February 21, 2019*

## **Law would not allow Portland regulations, but would adopt key Portland safety regulations statewide.**

Legislation to make it legal for Lyft and Uber to operate everywhere in the state of Oregon was introduced in the Legislature yesterday, again with provisions that would strip away Portland's ability to regulate the ride-hailing companies.

House Bill 3023, whose chief sponsors are State Rep. Susan McLain (D-Hillsboro), Representative Brian L. Clem (D-Salem) and Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-East Portland), would keep key Portland requirements around insurance and background checks while applying them statewide.

An attempt to pass the bill two years ago was scuttled, in part by Uber's scandals that year.

McLain, who serves on the transportation committee, did not sponsor the previous bill, and her support could mark a change in how the bill fares in Salem.

Lyft officials say that the bill has many of the same safety standards as the city of Portland put in place and provided a fact sheet on the bill.

"This legislation will ensure that the safety standards and rules that currently only allow ridesharing to operate in select cities to be in effect across Oregon," says Lyft spokeswoman Lauren Alexander in a statement.

But city officials are strenuously objecting to the approach that would remove the city's ability to regulate the companies.

Marshall Runkel, chief of staff to City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, says that city officials met with key Lyft officials on Wednesday.

"We conveyed that the city was surprised and disappointed that the legislation preempts local authority," says Runkel. "Lyft's social innovation and spirit of cooperation have distinguished it from its competition and won market share in Portland. We expressed our desire to continue to work together toward a positive outcome and promised to arrange a call directly with our bosses ASAP."

City officials argue that Portland is the place where Uber and Lyft will have the most business and the potentially the most impact on traffic and transportation, meaning local authorities should have a say in how the companies operate.

The state law would preclude future changes to existing requirements around insurance, and preclude the city's ability to collect data on the companies or to issue fines. And it would also prevent the city from passing any future fees or taxes on the companies.

"Drivers could come from all around the state to work here (where 95% of the business is) without having to be locally permitted," says Noah Siegel, interim deputy director of the Portland Bureau of Transportation. "We would no longer be able to do in-house investigations to protect customers."

## **The Portland Mercury**

# **Tensions Flare at Portland Police Listening Session About Controversial Cop Texts**

*By Alex Zielinski  
February 21, 2019*

It didn't take long for the Portland Police Bureau's "listening session" with the public—meant to address concerning text messages between police and an alt-right leader—to go off the rails.

"Sit down! Nazi scum!" Yelled a faction of attendees just 15 minutes into the meeting, held in Northeast Portland's Maranatha Church. By the 30 minute mark, a scuffle broke out in the middle of the pews. An hour in, a woman associated with an alt-right group rushed the stage yelling threats at Mayor Ted Wheeler as her opponents chased after her, swinging punches.

None of this came as a surprise.

PPB chose to hold this event after transcripts of text messages sent between Lt. Jeff Niiya and Joey Gibson, leader of the Vancouver, Washington alt-right group Patriot Prayer, were made public last week.

The messages, obtained by the Portland Mercury through a records request, illustrate a relationship of trust and support that seems to go beyond regular police liaison protocol. The messages seem to validate a suspicion held by many members of the public: That Portland cops are more sympathetic towards Patriot Prayer than the liberal locals who regularly counter-protest Patriot Prayer rallies.

PPB is currently investigating whether Niiya violated any of the bureau's directives and Mayor Ted Wheeler has called for an independent investigation into bias toward members of the alt-right within the police bureau. But Thursday night's listening session was meant to be an opportunity for the public to share their concerns and solutions with Wheeler and PPB's top brass.

"It's time for us to hear you and be active in that. I want to be able to show that we're about what we say," said PPB Chief Danielle Outlaw, who sat at a table with Wheeler and PPB assistant chiefs at the front of the room. "Please know I am acknowledging this is a symptom of the mistrust that occurred over year and years and years between the community and the police. This is important to me. I'm not just saying this because it sounds good."

Outlaw asked the nearly 80 people who had signed up to speak to pair their comments with solutions.

The panel heard a variety of suggestions—ranging from "disband the police force" to "support our officers"—with little consistency. One person suggested that out-of-town members of Patriot Prayer be taxed for forcing Portland's police force to work during the group's protests. Another asked that PPB create a hate crimes task force to specifically focus on biased violence allegedly instigated by Patriot Prayer members.

One particular solution was mentioned by at least five different speakers: Have Wheeler step down as police commissioner and hand the responsibility over to city council's newest addition, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty.

"We elected her to change our police department for the better," said one speaker. "I think she should be given the chance."

It's the same request that Portland's Democratic Socialists of America faction called for after the text messages were made public last week.

Hardesty did run on a platform of police reform—a response to Portland's history of police violence against people of color and those with a mental illness. Wheeler's made no indication he plans on forfeiting his job as the commissioner in charge of the PPB, a role that's historically been held by Portland mayors.

Like Outlaw, Wheeler didn't say much throughout the evening (except for replying to the question: "Ted do you want to kill me?" from a speaker with "No, I don't").

At least two people spoke about getting death threats after PPB made the Niiya-Gibson text messages and emails public, since PPB had not redacted their names from the transcripts.

"I'm here to let you know that you guys have actively put my life in danger," said one woman, address the panel. "Who am I supposed to call when I'm being threatened? I certainly can't call you."

Another woman echoed this complaint, asking Outlaw directly how she was supposed to trust her after hearing Outlaw make statements on the Lars Larson show about kicking protesters' butts.

"How could we possibly trust you?" she asked. "You are collaborating with right-wing white supremacists who have engaged in a two-year campaign against our city."

Many people who testified were interrupted by cheers or boos by activists—most of them representing left-leaning groups. Some of the negative interruptions ended in indecipherable yelling matches between people affiliated with Patriot Prayer and left-wing activists. (One example: Shouting variations of "No, you're the racist!" at each other across the room.) Despite the presences of PPB's top officials, it took intervention by church leadership to calm down the crowds.

"Don't boo him," said Maranatha's senior pastor T Allen Bethel at one point, after people accused a man of pushing them. "Just look at him and hold him accountable for his actions. He has to deal with his actions himself."

After one scuffle, an African American woman took the mic.

"First of all, this is a product of your forefathers," she said, addressing the majority-white crowd. "My family has been through this, my brother was beat up by a cop in the 70s. Northeast Portland has always been this. I need you guys to understand this. We have been crying this for years... I come to talk about the Black community that was replaced by you."

The session ended shortly after 8 pm, with around 50 people still waiting to speak. It's unclear if PPB plans on holding any similar sessions in the future.

Bethel, a longtime civil rights leader in Portland's African American community, sat patiently in the front pew throughout the evening session. He said he was happy to hold the tense discussion in his church.

"When you think back to the Civil Rights Movement, a lot of it happened in meetings inside churches. I chose to allow a place for the community to gather tonight to talk about the issues that brought so much tension in our community," Bethel said. "Oftentimes, we don't have a safe place for people to come together and talk. I get that people's passions get flowing, and

sometimes can get a little over the top. But this shows me that there are people in the community who really want an opportunity to speak."

## **OPB**

# **Portland Police Hear Fiery Testimony After Lieutenant's Texts**

*By Ericka Cruz Guevarra  
February 21, 2019*

A listening session with the top echelons of the Portland Police Bureau nearly ended Thursday night when a well known member of the group Patriot Prayer marched to the front of Maranatha Church in Northeast Portland.

People stood up from the pews and chaos ensued as Haley Adams — a well known supporter of far right causes — attempted to confront bureau leaders, even as others waited their turn for the microphone.

Portlanders at the meeting who opposed Adams' presence demanded she leave the listening session about recently released text messages between a PPB lieutenant and Patriot Prayer's leader. Those messages raised concern about favoritism at the police bureau between officers and right-wing demonstrators who repeatedly clash with antifascist counterprotesters on Portland streets.

Despite what appeared to be an attempt to hold the highly-anticipated session in a peaceful sanctuary with ties to the black community, police bureau leaders could not seem to overcome distrust and skepticism toward police that has festered, as Police Chief Danielle Outlaw put it, "for years and years."

"We're not leaving," Outlaw said after eventually calling for Adams' removal. Adams is a known presence at right-wing rallies, and organized a controversial #HimToo rally last year.

The listening session was billed as the community's opportunity to share thoughts with bureau leaders about text messages between Portland Lt. Jeff Niiya and Patriot Prayer leader Joey Gibson, first reported by Willamette Week and the Portland Mercury. Mayor Ted Wheeler, Outlaw, Deputy Chief Bob Day and assistant chiefs Jami Resch, Ryan Lee and Chris Davis were present for the meeting that lasted around two hours.

Outlaw, who called for the session, appeared repeatedly frustrated, sometimes leaning forward to request a stop to moments of discord.

At one point, Outlaw sat with her head rested on her hand as a Patriot Prayer supporter took to the mic, agitating crowds.

"Solutions, please. Solutions," the police chief said under her breath.

By the session's end, some 50 people remained on a list of those hoping to speak before the bureau's top leaders.

Those who did speak shared concerns, disappointment and anger. Fewer people at the session shared support for how the police have handled frequent clashes between protest groups in the city over the past two years.

Northeast Portland resident Debra Wilson said current concerns about Portland Police are only the latest in a long legacy of mistrust toward city law enforcement.

“So let me let you guys understand this,” Wilson said, facing the crowd. “Your cry, honey, we’ve been crying this for years. I done been through it, and my family has been through it; my brother has been beaten up by police in the ‘70s. Northeast Portland has always been this.”

Tim Ledwith told bureau leaders that he was assaulted by a member of the Proud Boys in the middle of the day while crossing a cross walk. But, he added, he wasn’t confident the police would do a good job at investigating the incident.

“What bothered me was I didn’t want to participate in an investigation because I have a healthy mistrust of the police and all that,” Ledwith said. “And every step of the way, I was completely validated in that; it seemed like you didn’t want anything to do with it.”

Philip Wolfe, who challenged city commissioner Nick Fish in the November primary as Portland’s first deaf City Council candidate, said he has tried repeatedly to talk to Outlaw and Wheeler but at times hasn’t heard back from them.

“You have a responsibility to speak to us, your community members, and you have to speak to us and work with us instead of white supremacists,” Wolfe said. “I tried to do my part. Where is your effort?”

Community members floated several solutions: more diversity training for officers, rules prohibiting masks and weapons at protests and a wholesale overhaul of the bureau.

Just hours before the session, PPB released a new batch of messages between Niiya and protest groups during a June 2017 protest. They show Niiya communicating with members of the OathKeepers and Patriot Prayer — as well as with left-wing counter protesters.

In a report he wrote about the incident, Niiya said he was trying to talk to people on all sides of the demonstration to avoid a potential violent conflict.

Wheeler has asked the bureau to investigate allegations that communications between Niiya and Gibson show favoritism toward a group of right wing demonstrators. Niiya has been temporarily removed as the bureau’s liaison to protesters.

At one point during the listening session, a section of the crowd accused a man of pushing people in a pew, demanding he be kicked out.

Instead, the man was called up to speak for his turn, resulting in another burst of chaos.

“Can we get some leadership in here?” a person could be heard yelling from the crowd.

The moderator turned to bureau leaders for guidance. But it was Pastor T. Allen Bethel, who sat in the front row with a walker tucked in front of his knees, who took the microphone and got the crowd to calm down. He asked to let the man speak.

“Just look at him,” he said. “And hold him accountable for his actions.”

# New Texts Offer Window Into Portland Officer's Relationship With Protest Groups

*By Amelia Templeton*

*February 21, 2019*

For the past week, a single lieutenant at the Portland Police Bureau has become the flashpoint in a debate over whether the police have shown a bias toward right wing groups over their left wing counterparts during the past two years of demonstrations and street battles.

Lt. Jeff Niiya has been temporarily removed as the bureau's liaison to protesters, after the Willamette Week and Portland Mercury published text messages the mayor and two city commissioners have said raise questions about whether Niiya was too cozy with right wing groups.

In advance of a community listening session with the mayor and the police chief Thursday, PPB released Niiya's police report following one of the most high-profile demonstrations he worked – a June 4, 2017, Patriot Prayer protest and massive counter demonstration. That event took place in the weeks after a man on a Portland light rail train used racial slurs, and killed two people.

The report includes a full account of texts Niiya, who was then a PPB sergeant, exchanged with a broad range of right and left wing protest groups.

While Niiya's union has aggressively defended him, the new records provide, for the first time, Niiya's own account of the relationships he was building with protesters.

They show Niiya communicating with members of the OathKeepers and Patriot Prayer — as well as with left-wing counter protesters.

In his police report, Niiya said he was trying to talk to people on all sides of the demonstration to avoid a potential violent conflict.

“I felt the possibility of a serious assault or injury was to be expected,” he wrote. “My outreach and recommendations to the Bureau were to minimize this possibility while allowing all participants to exercise their rights safely. I believe the cooperation we received from everyone involved assisted in not having major confrontations between the protesters.”

In Niiya's police report, he notes that members of the group Patriot Prayer appeared to be deliberately spreading the message on social media that they have a special relationship with the police.

“I had seen posts online in which people were saying the police were working with or supporting the patriot movement. This was not acceptable and I wanted Gibson and the others to stop these types of messages,” he wrote in the June 10 report.

Niiya refers to Patriot Prayer as an alt-right group, while mentioning that many members of the public believe Gibson's demonstrations attract Nazis and white supremacists.

“Gibson had attracted well known Alt-Right speakers to come to his event. Some of these speakers have made statements in the past which have contributed to the public's beliefs,” Niiya wrote. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

The new records cover just one demonstration – while the text messages published by the Willamette Week and Portland Mercury span months of communications between Niiya and Gibson. And the report released Thursday doesn't address Niiya's most controversial text to Gibson – in which he told him about an arrest warrant for a member of his group.

Below are examples of the texts Niiya sent to protest organizers during the June 4 rally:

Lawrence Cavallero, lead for security detail for Patriot Prayer: “It goes without saying but a huge thank you from my group. Your officers did an outstanding job and we are extremely grateful.”

Niiya: “Thank you for working with us. I appreciate the cooperation.”

Niiya: “Good morning Sir. Sgt Niiya here. I would like pictures of those who will be armed. I don’t want a blue on blue issue.”

Brian Krogman, Oathkeepers: “As soon as our group is assembled I’ll send those. At this point we have ONE CCW holder who WILL NOT be in the park but I will confirm ASAP and send photos.”

Niiya: “Being told black Bloch made their way into your group FYI. Can the peacekeepers get them out?”

Jamie Partridge, counter protest organizer: “We’re doing our best. We’re asking them to unmask and give up weapons.”

Siobhan Burke, designated peacekeeper by counter protesters: “We can’t hear that loudspeaker — is that instructions from the police”

Niiya: “It’s telling people to not jaywalk and to stay in their parks. You guys are good. Working on getting you another lane of traffic.”

Burke: “Seeing more black bloc heading onto 4th. One guy had stuff to throw.”

Niiya: “Ok we will let your peacekeepers work on that.”

Niiya: “Good morning Star. This is Sgt Niiya. I wanted to reach out and say I hope there is no violence today. I have warned the patriots if they try and come across the street to Chapman they will be arrested. I know you and your friends do not like us, but I am really trying my best to keep the police just in between and allow everyone to voice their opinions. This is my work cell so feel free to text me or call me if you or others your around need anything. My only role today is to communicate with as many people as I can to keep it safe. Thanks Jeff.”

Star Stauffer, left wing activist: “I can assure you that anyone showing up to counter is likely doing so with the intent to maintain peace. Please tell your officers to remember these are the community they serve. Who do you protect? Who do you serve? Today we’ll see.”

Niiya: “I will.”

Niiya: “Just to keep you informed and also if you can pass it along. I have (warned) the patriots if they are in the street they are subject to arrest. Can you please ask your folks on Chapman to stay out of the street as well? Thank you.”

Mimi German, left wing activist: “We know.”

Niiya: “Ok I just want you to know I’m telling the same thing to the patriots.”