

The Oregonian

Portland Mayor Taps Former Police Union President to Serve as His Senior Public Safety Adviser

*By Maxine Bernstein
April 2, 2019*

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler has selected Robert King, a former president of the rank-and-file police union and a retired Portland police commander, to be his senior adviser on public safety matters.

He'll start Monday with an annual salary of \$98,924.80, according to the mayor's office.

Wheeler's pick comes at a time when he's faced strong criticism from Portland police officers. Many were angered by his immediate condemnation of an exchange of text messages made public this year between a police lieutenant who served as the bureau's crowd control liaison and the leader of the right-wing Patriot Prayer group, which often leads protests in the city.

In a news release Tuesday, Wheeler, who also serves as police commissioner, said King supports his goal of building trust between the community and the bureau and building a stronger relationship with Police Bureau members.

"We are at a critical time when it comes to the role of public safety," the mayor said in a statement. "He brings many years of experience and insight that will be invaluable to my office. He also comes widely recommended from the community, having spent decades forging important relationships. Our police officers deserve the respect, attention and resources they need now more than ever. I hope to continue building a strong relationship with the members of the bureau and our community with the help and guidance of Robert King."

King retired abruptly from the Police Bureau as North Precinct commander in late December 2017 after a 27-year bureau career. At the time, he said he planned to spend more time with his family and travel, but he didn't mention he was the subject of an internal affairs complaint. The complaint alleged that he violated bureau policy by accessing the police database to give the name and telephone number of a hit-and-run victim to a local pastor, J.W. Matt Hennessee.

Hennessee had contacted King about the crash on behalf of the driver, the daughter of a member of his church, Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church. Hennessee apparently wanted to offer to settle the case with the victim. Hennessee confirmed to The Oregonian/OregonLive in December 2017 that he had contacted police on behalf of the driver and contacted the victim.

Before serving as commander, King got in the crosshairs of his former police union leaders when, as a lieutenant, his conclusions as to whether Officer Ron Frashour followed his training when he fatally shot Aaron Campbell in 2010 changed dramatically overnight, according to drafts of King's reviews obtained by The Oregonian then. In four drafts written from May 12, 2010 through June 15, 2010, King found Frashour acted as trained. By June 21, 2010, King veered far from his prior drafts' findings, concluding for the first time Frashour did not act as trained. The chief ultimately fired Frashour in November 2010 for his use of force, finding he violated bureau policy and training. But King's changing drafts provided fodder for the Portland police union as it fought Frashour's firing before an arbitrator. The arbitrator ruled that Frashour, considering the information he had at the time of his shooting, acted as a reasonable officer would and ordered the city to reinstate him.

King was stabbed on the job in 1991 after stopping a car on North Interstate and fatally shot his attacker, Johnny George. Six years later, King was one of three officers who fired at a suicidal man, Bill Utton, who had been holed up in a trailer and shot at a police car, police said.

After eight months of retirement, King returned as a city employee, working as a safety officer for the Bureau of Development Services. King said he looked forward to working with officers and the public again from the mayor's office.

"I respect, admire and appreciate the work done by members of the Portland Police Bureau," King said. "I am deeply committed to continuing the work of building bridges as well as finding ways to heal hurting communities."

The decision was met with varied reaction.

"What is @Tedwheeler thinking?" wrote Teresa Raiford, a local activist with Black Lives Matter, in a Twitter message.

In contrast, Norm Frink, a retired Multnomah County chief deputy district attorney, responded to the announcement on Twitter succinctly, "Excellent hire."

Five Portland Water Bureau Workers Sue City, Claiming 'Systemic Corruption'

*By Laura Gunderson
April 2, 2019*

Five Portland Water Bureau employees are suing the city and seeking nearly \$1 million in damages alleging they faced discrimination and retaliation after reporting safety issues, wasteful practices, sexual harassment and "systemic corruption."

The suit, which also names two bureau managers, claims agency leaders allowed a "toxic environment" that made it uncomfortable for employees and put their safety – and that of the public – at risk.

Jaymee Cuti, a water bureau spokeswoman, declined to comment Tuesday.

It is unclear whether any of five plaintiffs continue to work for the bureau.

The 15-page suit makes numerous allegations, including that a manager pushed "rookie employees with no heavy equipment experience to operate excavators and other large machines." When employees raised safety concerns, the suit alleges, a manager belittled their concerns or teased them "mercilessly."

The suit also alleges that one of managers called one of the plaintiffs "my dirty girl," and "made crude, sexist jokes about women and seemed to take delight in referring to his female technicians as his 'kids' and 'problem children.'"

The employees allege that when they reported problems, they were either terminated, harassed, refused promotions or ignored.

The suit was filed on Monday in Multnomah County Circuit Court. The plaintiffs are represented by Fargey Law of Portland. The law firm did not immediately return a call for comment.

The Portland Tribune

‘Fund Jobs, Parks’ - Portland Budget Gets Public Forum

By Emily Burris/KOIN 6 News

April 03, 2019

City Council gets earful about proposed budget cuts and police spending at first public session before Mayor Ted Wheeler proposes his budget.

The City Council held a public forum Tuesday evening to discuss the Portland's next budget and hear resident's opinions on proposed cuts.

Many groups gathered ahead of the forum at the IRCO headquarters on Northeast Glisan to raise awareness for changes they believe need to happen.

Some were calling for no job cuts and no closures in the Portland Parks & Recreation department. Instead, some want cuts to fall on the shoulders of the Portland Police Bureau.

Members of the Democratic Socialists of America Portland said they didn't want a single cut under the new budget.

City officials are considering closing the Columbia Pool — North Portland's only public indoor pool — and the Selwood Community Center.

"This is bigger than a budget issue — this is a quality of life issue," said former park ranger Christina Harris with Laborers' Local.

LeeAnne Griffin, an employee with the parks department, attended the rally. She called the city's proposed budget "shocking and devastating."

"We're in a time when we have plenty of money," said Griffin. "We shouldn't be going for the front line positions."

Nothing yet finalized

Mayor Ted Wheeler spoke at the forum and told those gathered inside the community center that the budget had not been finalized and the feedback city officials would hear at the forum would play a role in their decision-making.

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty reassured those gathered that the forum only marked the beginning of the budget discussion.

"It's clear sitting here that people have some misconceptions about what's been done and what's been decided," said Hardesty.

Hardesty added that the budget shortfall is hefty.

"What has been put out is a proposal from the director of parks," she said. "Understand that there's a \$7.6 million deficit."

To read a previous Portland Tribune story on the issue with the schedule of upcoming public forums, [go here](#).

Ax Cuts Deep Into Portland Parks Budget

By Jim Redden

March 27, 2019

Portlanders loves parks but the City Council faces tough time paying for them because of rising costs.

Protests against potential cuts to the Portland Parks & Recreation budget are growing.

But no one should be surprised the bureau has proposed laying off around 50 employees and closing facilities, including the Sellwood Community Center and Columbia Pool. Budget officials have been warning that parks spending has exceeded available revenue for years.

That does not mean parks users or workers are ready to accept the cuts. When rumors first surfaced that the Sellwood center was on the chopping block, longtime parks booster Gail Hoffnagle pushed back.

"Many programs at the center have long waiting lists, showing a desperate need for more services, not fewer. As our neighborhood has steadily increased in density — we're becoming increasingly jam-packed like sardines — we need more indoor places to gather, to stay connected with each other," said Hoffnagle, a former parks employee.

North Portland residents and neighborhood associations are opposing the potential closure of the Columbia Pool. Among other things, they have launched a Save Columbia Pool page on Facebook. It is the only public pool in that part of town.

Also proposed to be closed — either outright or if funding partners cannot be found — are the Community Music Center, the Laurelhurst Dance Center, the Multnomah Arts Center and the Fulton and Hillside community centers.

About 9 percent of the bureau's staff would be laid off if the proposed cuts are approved, although the largest share is concentrated in the Recreation Division that staffs the community centers. There, more than 20 percent of employees could be let go.

"These are the people that interact with the public every day. Highly skilled, passionate employees that teach our children, provide space for our gatherings, and create a conduit for us to be our best selves," said Christina Harris, an organizer for Laborers' Local 483, which represents most frontline bureau workers.

Parks employees who spoke to the Portland Tribune say they were blindsided by the proposed cuts. The employees — who asked that their names not be used for fear of retaliation — admit the bureau has had budget problems for many years. But they do not understand why the bureau is looking at laying off so many employees, especially considering the Portland economy is booming and bringing in more general fund revenue than ever before.

"Parks & Recreation deserves to be fully funded. The community deserves these services, and the employees that run it deserve to keep their living-wage jobs," Harris said.

Surprisingly, the workers who spoke to the Portland Tribune are not complaining that newly hired Parks Director Adena Long is being paid \$29,000 more than her predecessor. They believe she deserves the money, arguing the parks director has historically been paid less than other bureau heads.

No word from Wheeler

The proposed cuts are included in the budget the parks bureau has requested for the fiscal year that begins July 1. The City Council was briefed on it on Tuesday, March 19. After all bureau briefings are finished, Mayor Ted Wheeler will submit his recommended city budget to the council on May 1.

He has not yet said whether it will include any of the proposed cuts.

Wheeler assigned the bureau to Commissioner Nick Fish earlier this year. It had been overseen by Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who convinced the council to approve temporary fixes to the growing problem over the past few years.

"I want to acknowledge that there's no easy fix here — every implication of this proposal is painful — especially with layoffs, program cuts and closures," Fish said at the start of the council briefing.

At the same time, Fish admitted, "The bureau has been running at a deficit for years, as costs have risen faster than revenues. ... The independent City Budget Office has confirmed this, and advised that the previous practice of patching the hole with one-time strategies is not sustainable."

The budget office analysis said the current shortfall has been predicted for years. Specifically, the analysis cited the 2015 settlement of a labor grievance by Laborers Local 483, which represents most of the bureau's rank-and-file workers. The union charged the bureau had been using more than 100 temporary workers to do work that its contact with the city required be done by union employees. The conversion added nearly \$4.4 million to the fiscal 2016-17 parks budget, a cost that has carried forward each year.

"Previously, recreation staff could reduce or increase seasonal hours in response to demands for classes and programming, but after the transition to permanent positions, there was less flexibility to decrease costs if revenue targets fell short," the analysis reads.

But that is not the only factor. So is a minimum wage increase approved by the council at the same time, along with previous and estimated cost increases for health care coverage and Public Employee Retirement System benefits.

Although the total parks request is \$265 million, most of that is fixed costs. Instead, the council is focusing on \$93 million in discretionary funds over which it has the most control, including fee-generated revenues. The projected \$6.3 million shortfall is a significant portion of that money, requiring cuts, fee increases or both to achieve the balanced budget required by Oregon law.

Even after approving the settlement, the bureau was reluctant to significantly increase fees for parks programs to generate more revenue. The goal was to keep programs as affordable as possible, especially in historically underserved communities in East, North and Northeast Portland. But that contributed to the ongoing shortfall, which Fish insists the council must finally address this year.

The cuts also are being proposed after several years of the council directing an increasing amount of general fund dollars to homeless services. Wheeler is expected to request more than \$20 million for such programs in next year's budget.

Partnership, private fundraising could help

If the council approves the cuts, some could be offset by private fundraising, according to the bureau. For example, the Community Music Center is supported by a nonprofit partner that could raise more money to support its operation. Such additional support also could be found for some of the other centers targeted for cuts.

An existing example is the successful partnership at the St. Johns Racquet Center. It is operated under a lease with nonprofit Portland Tennis and Education organization. The center manages the building for public tennis, and offers one-on-one tutoring, group tennis instruction, life skills instruction, and parent advocacy and training to school-age participants in a year-round program.

A team within the bureau's Recreation Division is studying which fees to increase and by how much. The council does not need to approve such increases. They have not been significant in the past, averaging between 3 percent and 5 percent per year to remain affordable. Any increases will be announced by the bureau before they take effect.

The park workers who spoke to the Portland Tribune do not believe such moves will come close to making up for the service cuts, however. They presented bureau-prepared budget documents that suggest entire programs at community centers will be eliminated because there will not be enough employees to staff them.

"How the City of Portland spends our money is a choice, and we are urging the public to let their priorities be known and contact their commissioners in regards to these potential losses," Harris said.

Public budget forums

The first public forum on next year's budget is a town hall budget forum scheduled from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 2, at the IRCO Main Office Gym, 10301 N.E. Glisan St., Portland.

Information on additional future public budget forums can be found at www.portlandoregon.gov/cbo.

PPB: 60 Applicants, Only Three Passed Background Checks

*By KOIN 6 News
April 02, 2019*

With so many vacancies in the Portland Police Bureau, some council members wondered if there should be fewer supervisors and more patrol officers.

There are now 120 sworn officer vacancies in the Portland Police Bureau. At a City Council meeting Tuesday, Chief Danielle Outlaw shared some of the challenges they face in hiring new people and filling those positions.

The assistant chief told the the council that out of more than 60 people who applied for public safety specialist jobs, only three passed background checks. The biggest reasons for their disqualification is past drug use or dishonesty in their application.

Police applicants who have used marijuana in the past year don't pass a PPB background check because marijuana remains illegal under federal law.

With so many vacancies in the PPB, some council members wondered if there should be fewer supervisors and more patrol officers.

"Is there a way to reconfigure your workforce to have more officers on the street rather than in supervisor or specialty units?" Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty asked.

"I'm sure there is a way to flatten the hierarchy," Outlaw said. "But the issue with that is to maintain accountability and chain of command."

Hardesty and Commissioner Chloe Eudaly also both told the chief they are not OK with her plan to cut public self-defense training classes as a move toward the 1% budget cut requested by Mayor Ted Wheeler.

The meeting was part of the city's budget process to get a budget in place by July 1. A public forum is scheduled at the IRCO Building on Northeast Glisan beginning at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Willamette Week

Mayor Ted Wheeler Chooses Former Portland Police Union President as His Public Safety Advisor

By Katie Shepherd

April 2, 2019

Robert King served as a Portland Police Officer for 27 years before retiring in 2018.

Mayor Ted Wheeler chose a former Portland Police Association president to advise his office on issues of public safety.

The new public safety advisor, Robert King, retired as a police commander in 2018 after 27 years with the Portland Police Bureau.

At the time, he was the subject of an internal affairs investigation after he allegedly gave the phone number of a hit-and-run victim to a local pastor who wanted to settle the case privately on behalf of the driver, who was the daughter of a church member, The Oregonian reported.

King joined the Bureau of Development Services as a safety officer after retiring from PPB.

"He brings many years of experience and insight that will be invaluable to my office," Wheeler said in a statement announcing the new hire. "He also comes widely recommended from the community, having spent decades forging important relationships. Our police officers deserve the respect, attention, and resources they need now more than ever."

King will join the mayor's office on April 8.

"I respect, admire, and appreciate the work done by members of the Portland Police Bureau," King said in a statement. "I am deeply committed to continuing the work of building bridges as well as finding ways to heal hurting communities."

The Portland Mercury

A Pitch to Bring Equity to Rental Screening Process Heads to City Hall

*By Alex Zielinski
April 2, 2019*

It's been two years since Barrett Ross stopped looking for rental housing in Portland. After a search that lost him hundreds in non-refundable rental application fees, Ross was ultimately rejected from an apartment complex that discovered his teenage marijuana possession charge.

When he tried to challenge the decision, the property management company said Ross' income was too low to qualify for an apartment anyway.

“It was so discouraging and depressing. I just gave up,” Ross recalled. “I had no incentive to keep searching. I've been technically homeless for two years now.”

Between couch surfing and living in a motorhome parked in a friend's driveway, he's made it work.

But Ross considers himself lucky. For many Portlanders, being rejected by a rental company for having a criminal record, a spotty rental history, or simply being too poor may be the sole factor determining whether or not they'll be sleeping outside or returning to an abusive home.

This week, Portland City Council will consider expert testimony and public comment on a sweeping plan to standardize the rental application process across the city—and, in doing so, remove discriminatory barriers that have left renters like Ross without a reliable place to call home. Commissioners are expected to vote on the ordinances next week.

If successful, the proposed city code changes could give hundreds of low-income renters—especially renters of color—a fair shot at finding affordable housing in Portland.

While landlord organizations argue that the overly complicated code changes will waste time and put other tenants at risk, tenant advocates say the updates will bring needed equity to a historically discriminatory housing market.

“We are in a housing crisis in this city, but we're still allowing landlords to exclude the most vulnerable renters,” says Jamey Duhamel, policy director for Commissioner Chloe Eudaly. Duhamel has led the years-long effort to create more equitable application system for Portland renters, who make up 47 percent of the city's population.

The proposed changes, informed by months of conversations with landlords and tenants, are separated into two ordinances that will be simultaneously considered by commissioners

One creates standards for how much a landlord can charge a new tenant for a security deposit (no more than one month's rent) and the circumstances that determine if a landlord can refuse to completely refund that deposit at the end of tenancy.

The second ordinance creates strict guidelines around what tenant information a landlord can consider when reviewing an application from a prospective renter. Landlords currently follow their own screening criteria that usually restricts those with criminal records, poor credit, spotty rental histories, or any other factors they deem “risky” from renting their property. This practice is allowed under Oregon law.

The city's proposal hopes to eliminate the potential discrimination that accompanies those standards by giving landlords a choice: Either follow the city's newly minted "low-barrier" screening criteria—which, instead of automatically rejecting applicants based on traditionally "risky" factors, also considers what steps they've taken to improve—or continue to use more restrictive screening criteria, but be prepared to explain, in detail, why they've rejected a prospective tenant's application and how it wasn't a discriminatory choice.

Creating rules where there weren't any before isn't an easy sell.

For landlords and property owners who have only had to comply with state and federal housing laws—and flexible industry standards—for decades, these proposed rules have been coolly received.

"This is going to make the application process that much longer for renters," says Nicholas Cook, owner of Sleep Sound Property Management.

Cook also chairs the Government Relations Committee for Multifamily NW, a landlord advocacy group that's raised the loudest opposition to the screening criteria ordinance.

While Multifamily NW and other for-profit landlord groups have been involved in the ordinance's planning process, Cook says their input has been largely ignored by Commissioner Eudaly's staff.

"I think the city is tackling issues worthy of a discussion," says Cook. "But what we're seeing is a lot of political ideology being crammed down the throat of the [housing] industry just because they can."

One of Cook's concerns with the proposed changes: The city criteria approves tenants whose monthly income is just two times the amount of monthly rent. Most private property managers ask prospective tenants to prove their income is three times the monthly rent.

This new rent to income ratio "sets a person up for failure," says Cook, who fears the lowered standard will lead to more evictions.

Duhamel says it's not the landlord's job to speculate.

"Landlords don't have to be paternalistic about their tenants," she says. "And it's not like landlords ever care about someone's income ratio when a tenant is already in a house or when they chose to raise rent."

Cook's biggest problem, however, is how the new criteria will make it much harder for landlords to deny tenancy to people with a criminal history

"Renting to people with a criminal past threatens the safety of other tenants and of the neighborhoods where we rent," says Cook. "I'm concerned that they city is willing to put a lot of other people at risk for a marginal improvement."

The city, for its part, hasn't taken this concern lightly.

The proposed screening criteria only approves renters who have been convicted of a felony if it's been at least seven years since they were sentenced. This number is rooted in national recidivism data showing that, after seven years, the likelihood of a former felon committing a crime is nearly equal to someone who's never been charged with a felony.

In addition, a 2019 study by Wilder Research found that criminal offenses that happened more than five years prior to a tenant's move-in date had "no significant effect" on that person's ability to be a decent renter.

Cook didn't offer any research or anecdotal evidence to illustrate how people with a criminal history make bad tenants. He's more concerned with the hypothetical threat.

"It's all fine until we have a dramatic situation and sometimes is harmed," Cook says.

Cook prefers if people with a criminal past live in separate rental complexes overseen by landlords who are given federal incentives to handle the risk that comes with renting to former felons.

"If you're a private property owner and you rent, you're taking on the liability of residents," he says. "It's unfair to burden landlords with the mistakes of other people."

Margot Black, an organizer with Portland Tenants United (PTU), says there's something familiar about Cook's argument.

"That's exactly what landlords said about the Fair Housing Act," she says.

Since 1968, landlords have been required to adhere to the Fair Housing Act (FHA), which prohibits landlords from refusing to rent to tenants based on their race, national origin, religion, sex, family size, or disability. But despite FHA's guidelines, Black says landlords have found less overt ways to discriminate against prospective tenants.

"When landlords say they don't want to rent to certain people," Black says, "they are acknowledging that the Fair Housing Act is not enforced and that is their right to find ways to get around it."

For example: A landlord is currently allowed to sift through all rental applications and simply select their personal favorite, a decision that can be informed (even if unintentionally) by a landlord's biases.

"It could be the decision between a white couple without kids and a single Black mother with three," says Margot Black. "We see that kind of discrimination all the time."

Studies conducted both at the local and national levels reflect Black's anecdotal evidence. A 2018 study by the Oregon Fair Housing Council found that Portland landlords treat one in four prospective renters differently based on that person's race or national origin.

And a national 2018 study by the Urban Institute found that the vast majority of the time, landlords refuse to rent to tenants who plan to use a housing choice voucher, a government subsidy program, previously known as Section 8, that is available to low-income Americans.

Black and other tenant advocates say the screening ordinance will close the loopholes landlords use to discriminate. For starters, the ordinance requires landlords consider rental applicants on a first-come-first-serve basis.

"Instead of just saying they're not biased," Black says, "landlords will have to prove it."

Non-profit housing providers—which help low-income people own and lease homes—are less resistant to the screening changes.

"In many ways, the ordinance aligns with our own screening practices," says Dan Valliere, director of Reach CDC. Valliere joined eight other affordable housing nonprofits in signing a March 29 letter to city commissioners offering their cautious support of the two ordinances.

Yet Valliere still sees a number of details baked into the ordinances that could trip up those wanting to comply with the new rules.

“The city will be changing operational details at a very fine level,” he says. “It could impact every single interaction we have with a client. It’s really hard to estimate how that will financially impact our work, but I’m guessing it will.”

Before the policies reach a council vote, Valliere wants to see more financial and operational support from the Portland Housing Bureau.

“Portland has the opportunity to be the pioneers in this area,” Valliere says. “We could build a framework other cities could follow... that is, if we take the time to get it right.”

City council has blocked off Wednesday afternoon for a detailed presentation on the proposed ordinances and Thursday afternoon for public testimony.

Duhamel said she learned from the last time Eudaly’s office introduced a contentious pro-tenant policy—2017’s renter relocation ordinance—to give both commissioners and the public enough time to raise concerns and digest the complicated policies.

“We want to make sure commissioners fully understand what we’re proposing. We know that industry opponents can give them cold feet,” says Duhamel. “I can only hope commissioners listen to and trust the community that asked for these changes. It’s a moment to be courageous.”

Former Police Union President Hired as Mayor's Top Police Policy Advisor

By Alex Zielinski

April 2, 2019

Mayor Ted Wheeler has hired Robert King, a former Portland police commander and former police union president, to serve as his senior policy advisor on public safety.

King enters Wheeler's office after 27 years with the Portland Police Bureau (PPB). King retired in 2018, while he was serving as PPB's North Precinct commander. He's leaving retirement to fill the city position vacated by Wheeler's former public safety advisor, Berk Nelson, in early March.

In an interview with the Mercury in March, Nelson said he decided to leave the mayor's office—in part—due to the incredibly high-stress demands of the position, which often felt like a 24/7 on-call job.

King's resume reflects someone familiar with this type of work environment. According to a press release sent by Wheeler's office, King has served as a Special Emergency Response Team (SERT) officer, detective, patrol supervisor, and as the president of PPB's police union, the Portland Police Association (PPA). King also served as the PPB spokesperson under former Chief Mike Reese.

King is perhaps most famously known for writing the training review that served as the basis for the city's decision to fire Officer Ron Frashour, the cop who fatally shot Aaron Campbell in 2010. His participation in this process made the former PPA president reviled by current PPA President Daryl Turner.

But, when it comes to officer-involved shootings, King has his own record.

In 1992, King fatally shot an 18-year-old involved in a convenience store theft after the teen stabbed him in the shoulder. In 1997, King was one of three officers who shot at, and killed, a 65-year-old man who officers believed was suicidal.

King also has a rocky record on police accountability and systemic racism.

While PPA president in 2008, King fought then-Mayor Sam Adam's attempt to create a racial profiling committee to evaluate traffic stop data and recommend policies that eliminate discriminatory practices in the PPB. King went as far as to hire an out-of-state statistical consultant to "prove" that racial profiling within the PPB doesn't exist. (Spoiler: it did and it still does).

A direct quote from King at the time: "Portland police do not engage in racial profiling." It should be noted: That particular racial profiling committee was chaired by now-City Commissioner JoAnn Hardesty, who admonished King's outright denial.

In a press statement, Wheeler said King's decades of experience will help address the "changing needs" of Portland. He also hinted that King's background might help the mayor's office regain officer trust and respect—which is currently at a low point.

“We are at a critical time when it comes to the role of public safety,” Wheeler said. “Our police officers deserve the respect, attention, and resources they need now more than ever. I hope to continue building a strong relationship with the members of the Bureau and our community with the help and guidance of Robert King.”

King echoed this sentiment in his own statement, included in Wheeler's press release.

"I respect, admire, and appreciate the work done by members of the Portland Police Bureau," King said. "I am deeply committed to continuing the work of building bridges as well as finding ways to heal hurting communities."

King's first day in City Hall will be Monday, April 8.