

The Oregonian

Portland Reserve Officers Defect to Sheriff's Office After Bureau Failed to Provide Federal-Mandated Training

*By Maxine Bernstein
April 16, 2019*

Eighteen Portland police reserve officers, including their commander, defected to the county sheriff's office last summer when they couldn't convince the bureau to provide them federal-mandated training given to all other bureau officers.

The volunteer officers – who complete a reserve academy, carry guns, wear the standard police uniform and can make arrests -- now back up Multnomah County deputies.

The switch came after Portland police in late November 2017 ordered the reserves off the street because their training didn't meet the higher standard required by the city's 2014 settlement with the U.S. Department of Justice over officers using excessive force against people with mental illness. It's unclear why it took the Police Bureau until then to recognize that its reserve officers were out-of-compliance with the settlement agreement.

The bureau left the reserves in limbo for months without providing any new training program.

The U.S. Department of Justice also wasn't informed that the reserve officers had been working without the necessary training until after the reserve unit disbanded, according to Kevin Sonoff, a spokesman for Oregon's U.S. Attorney's office.

"The Settlement Agreement does not require that the city volunteer when it believes it is not in compliance," Sonoff said. "We do not know, in this situation, if the City believed it was not in compliance. That said, we have advised in our court-filed reports that the PPB Training Division should have an annual training plan that addresses all trainings."

The defection was first reported last week by Willamette Week.

The reserves needed to get up to speed on new use of force and deadly force policies, de-escalation tactics, crisis intervention and implicit bias instruction, among other training.

The bureau tanked an effective unit that helped out at a time when the bureau is struggling to fill vacancies and can't hire recruits as fast as retirees head out the door, several former Portland reserves said. They stressed that the reserve officers have given thousands of hours to the bureau, and the only cost has been training and equipment.

"We asked for training all the time," said Bob Ball, who was a Portland police reserve commander and now is a reserve for the Multnomah County Sheriffs Office. "Rather than doing the hard work and fixing it, they just chose to let it go. This was a failure of leadership from the Training Division head to the chief's office to the mayor's office."

The reserves often rode together in two-person patrol cars and assisted patrol officers on calls, usually providing backup or cover. They also helped at scenes of traffic collisions and staffed parade, Sunday Parkways and marathon routes.

Ball and former reserve Lt. Tim Bailey, who also went to the sheriff's office, said they pressed for more training in meetings with then-Portland police Training Capt. Bob Day, who is now deputy chief, and then-Commander Steve Jones, who led the Professional Standards Division. Ball also met with staff from Mayor Ted Wheeler's office.

“It really was very discouraging that the one thing that was always paramount to us, training, was the one thing that killed our program,” Bailey said. “Had we been incorporated into the training when the DOJ reforms were incorporated into training, this wouldn’t have happened.”

Assistant Police Chief Chris Davis said the bureau estimated the reserve officers would need about 500 hours of additional training. Because many of the reserves hold full-time jobs elsewhere, the training likely would have had to occur every Saturday for at least a year, Davis said.

“The bottom line was to get them up to this level of training would have taken this huge investment,” said Assistant Police Chief Chris Davis. “We would have had to do most, if not all, of this catch-up reserve training on overtime.”

The training division had challenges figuring out how to fit in training for the police reserves while delivering the federal mandated training to the nearly 1,000 sworn officers on the force, and maintaining annual review training and an advanced academy for new police recruits, Davis said. It also was difficult to get reserves to attend training, he said.

Gary Moore, who served as a reserve officer for Portland police from 1996 until the summer of 2018, when he transferred to the sheriff’s office, said he responded to traffic crashes, shots-fired calls and made arrests for Portland police, usually working Friday night shifts. He also holds a full-time job as a service writer for an auto repair shop.

He said sometimes the Police Bureau would offer training at 8 a.m. on a weekday, when most reserves couldn’t attend. The unit offered to pay overtime to bureau instructors to train reserves at night or on weekends, Moore said.

Moore said he took a week off of work to get the needed 40 hours of crisis intervention training in Columbia County with other area officers only to learn that Portland wouldn’t accept the instruction under the new federal Justice Department standards.

Portland police policy requires the training division to annually update its training curriculum for all sworn officers, which includes reserves, who under state law are “peace officers,” although they’re not certified by the state Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.

The police reserves usually got training at their monthly Wednesday night meetings, and on some scheduled Saturdays, but bureau leaders were concerned the reserves’ lack of ongoing “practical applications” of the training created a liability for the bureau, according to bureau supervisors.

Police reserves said the training division lost records of the instruction they received, and on one occasion, bureau trainers stood reserves up at one of their scheduled firearms training and qualification sessions on a weeknight at the bureau’s training center.

Months after the unit was taken off the street, Ball wrote to Chief Danielle Outlaw in March 2018 that the reserve members were getting “restless” and starting to lose interest.

With no training plan in place, Ball spoke with Sheriff Mike Reese, a former Portland police chief, and Reese offered to adopt all the Portland reserves into the county office. The unit met with Reese one night at the Police Bureau’s North Precinct and then voted to leave Portland.

“When you go out and you work for nothing, the best thing is when you have a sergeant who tells you, ‘thank you.’ That’s what you’re working for,” Moore said.

While other Portland officers recognized their worth, Moore said he never got the same appreciation from the bureau’s “upper echelon.”

Davis said he understands why the reserve officers decided to leave.

“I don’t have any ill will. I was sad to see them go,” Davis said. “When I found out about the training deficit, I knew we had a problem that we needed to correct. It certainly exposed the city to risk and didn’t frankly meet the community’s expectations.”

Mayor Ted Wheeler, who serves as police commissioner, said he’s appreciative of the reserves’ volunteer service, but “it became apparent that the program was no longer feasible.” Reserve officers are only required to commit to 20 hours of monthly service, though he acknowledged many exceeded that.

“It was not reasonable to expect them to meet the onerous training and accountability systems applicable to full time” Portland police officers, nor was it reasonable to exempt them from those standards, said the mayor, in a statement issued by his spokeswoman Eileen Park.

Ball said Wheeler’s statement shows “he’s out of touch.”

“It lacks a true understanding of the training we had and were willing to do,” Ball said.

The Portland Tribune

New MAX Line Needs Transit to Marquam Hill

*By Bill Gallagher
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\$20 million budgeted for connection but final cost will probably be higher as the current options show.

If it ever gets built, one of the trickiest tasks facing the Southwest Corridor MAX line proposed on Barbur Boulevard will be providing some kind of connection to Oregon Health & Science University and the various other medical facilities located 300 feet above the route.

The decision is scheduled to be made Wednesday, May 8, by the project steering committee.

The Gibbs Street station is expected to be the second busiest along the proposed route. There are 21 centers and institutions on Marquam Hill, with 11,000 workers at OHSU, 3,000 at the Veterans Administration hospital — and 19,000 daily trips to those facilities. And many of the visitors will have medical and mobility issues.

In the very early estimated budget for the project, a maximum of \$20 million is projected as the cost of building what's called the Marquam Hill Connector. A second tram to the top of Marquam Hill already has been ruled out. TriMet staff has narrowed the original list of nine options down to three: an elevator and a bridge; an elevator and a pedestrian tunnel; and an inclined elevator.

The first option would resemble the elevator at the east end of the tram line in South Waterfront that connects to the Darlene Hooley Pedestrian Bridge over I-5. This is the least expensive option at an estimated cost between \$15 million and \$25 million. The elevator tower would rise 108 feet from the area near Barbur Boulevard and Southwest Gibbs Street. The bridge would be about the length of two city blocks. It would take pedestrians as far as the Terwilliger Boulevard entrance at Southwest Campus Drive. The elevator and bridge could operate 24 hours per day.

Option No. 2 would replace the bridge from the elevator with an enclosed tunnel for light rail passengers on their way to Marquam Hill. This option is estimated to cost anywhere from \$55 million to \$125 million.

Staff cites "the high risk of cost and budget overruns" with this option and raises the possibility of a user fee being charged. The tunnel in this option would be the length of three-and-a-half city blocks. It, too, would probably only go as far as Terwilliger Boulevard. Hours of operation are uncertain.

Option No. 3 would be a single vehicle ride to Terwilliger Boulevard aboard what's called a funicular/inclined elevator. Basically, this would be a relatively short but steep railway from Barbur and Gibbs. This is estimated to cost between \$35 million and \$45 million. Hours of operation would probably be limited and attendants would have to be on hand. A user fee is probable.

"It's pretty complex, like a series of chutes and ladders getting people to where they're going," TriMet's Carol Mayer Reed recently told the steering committee.

Some nearby residents already oppose the third option.

"Inclined elevators are nice but it will cut all the vegetation down on Terwilliger Parkway. That's not what we want. Terwilliger Parkway is a park, it's open space and it's not to be built on," Leslie Pohl-Kosbau said at a TriMet-sponsored open house April 10, a gathering designed to display the various options. She's a board member with the Hillsdale Neighborhood Association and has been following the planning process closely.

"I'm interested in talking about the elevator and bridge and what that would do. I want to make sure people are safe. I'm not sure about being exposed to the elements because there will be some sick people," Pohl-Kosbau said.

Her preferred method for getting up the hill from the Gibbs Street station is the elevator and enclosed tunnel. "I know it's expensive but in the long run it makes sense. Look what we've done at the zoo — it's paid off," she said.

The entire 12-mile light rail line from Downtown Portland to Tualatin is projected to cost somewhere between \$2.6 billion and \$2.9 billion. Local voters could be asked in November 2020 to approve an increase in property taxes to partially fund it. Half of the remaining funding would be sought from the Federal Transit Administration in Washington, D.C.

Willamette Week

Murmurs: 911 Dispatchers Seek to Join Police Union

April 17, 2019

In other news: Board member intoxicated at school event.

911 Dispatchers Seek to Join Police Union: Employees at the Bureau of Emergency Communications filed paperwork this month to decertify the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees as their union and seek representation by the Portland Police Association instead. The Oregonian reported in January that the police union had distributed letters courting the 911 dispatchers. Now the dispatchers have filed the form required to leave AFSCME so they can vote on unionizing under the PPA. Expanding the police union would make it a more powerful force in the city. Dispatchers have long been frustrated by wages,

understaffing and being shuffled between new commissioners, says Joe Baessler, political director of Oregon AFSCME Council 75. Police union president Daryl Turner did not respond to a request for comment.

Brown Spreads the Pain on PERS: Two long-awaited policy proposals dropped in Salem last week. On April 11, lawmakers led by state Sen. Mark Hass (D-Beaverton) and Rep. Nancy Nathanson (D-Eugene) finally released their plan to raise about \$1 billion a year in new taxes on corporations, while lowering personal income taxes about a quarter of a percentage point. The next day, Gov. Kate Brown released her proposal for stabilizing government contributions to the Public Employee Retirement System. Brown's rationale: If PERS contribution rates continue to climb as projected, they would consume much of the new tax revenue, meaning taxpayers would not see any benefits in the form of more teachers or added public services. The governor is calling on public employees to contribute to their pensions; taxpayers to surrender their kicker refunds; and state-owned workers' comp insurer SAIF to fork over \$486 million in excess reserves. Meanwhile, Brown hopes capital gains and estate taxes boom. She says her plan is based on "shared responsibility by both employees and Oregonians, with every party contributing to address the unfunded liability in a proportional way."

Board Member Intoxicated at School Event: A Parkrose School Board member showed up visibly intoxicated at a Feb. 6 film screening and an equity discussion, both school events. Board Chairwoman Sara Kirby said witnesses reported board member Dave Carter "stumbling, slurring his speech and speaking in nonsensical, incoherent language." He publicly apologized at a board meeting the following week, saying he had "really wanted to watch this film and participate in the equity meeting." He explained that he suffers from back spasms and had taken muscle relaxers and drunk a glass of wine earlier that afternoon to remedy the pain. He said in hindsight he should have "stayed home and rested." The Parkrose School District covers portions of East Portland. Kirby says no disciplinary action has been taken against Carter, and the incident hasn't been reported until now.

Climate Change and Gentrification Make East Portland's I-205 Corridor the Most At-Risk Area for Heat Extremes and Flooding

*By Elise Herron
April 17, 2019*

Think of the parking lots of Mall 205, which turn to ponds in the rainy months but bake like an asphalt Sahara each summer.

Every winter, Gary Sargent worries a flood could put him out of business.

Since 1988, Sargent has owned Sargent's MotorSports, a motorcycle shop on Southeast Foster Road at 102nd Avenue, just off of Interstate 205. He says flooding has gradually worsened in the decades he's owned the property. In 2015, an overflowing Johnson Creek submerged Sargent's shop under 4 feet of water. He's still working to make back the \$50,000-plus in damages the flood cost him.

Sargent isn't alone. As weather in Portland becomes more extreme, residents who live on the eastside along the I-205 corridor are the most likely to be impacted by increasing environmental hazards.

That's among the findings of a Portland State University study released last week. It tracks gentrification and climate change to map out which parts of the city will be hit hardest by flooding and extreme heat.

"Historically, redistricting policies and class-based segregation have led to largely uneven risks for environmental disasters," the study reads. "Areas most affected by climate-induced risks frequently contain marginalized populations, such as non-white, low-income, and persons with economic hardships."

It notes that as temperatures warm, winter snowfall changes to rain. Wetter winters and drier summers will affect areas like East Portland most—where there is less vegetation, more traffic, and fewer trees and investments in green infrastructure. As rising costs push people to the edge of Portland, residents here are increasingly low-income, minorities or immigrants.

Heejun Chang, chairman of PSU's geography department and the study's co-author, says the I-205 corridor is particularly vulnerable in winter because it sits at a lower elevation and its drainage systems can't accommodate heavy rainfall. The area is also an urban heat island—meaning it absorbs heat during the day and releases it in the evening after the sun sets. (Think of the parking lots of Mall 205, which turn to ponds in the rainy months but bake like an asphalt Sahara each summer.)

Chang says the city is using the study to help inform infrastructure planning, but that it could do more to address the socio-demographic factors that put eastside residents at greater risk.

"The city can do better in education and outreach to those populations who are not aware of flood risks and might not speak English," Chang says. "[It] needs to prepare for changes in climate and understand the changing geography of the area."

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Biotech Campus in the Works in Southeast Portland

*By Josh Kulla
April 16, 2019*

A development firm based in Lake Oswego is planning to build a pair of connected, 10-story laboratory buildings on a full block in Southeast Portland.

Summit Development Group's New Industrial Revolution (NIR) campus, will have approximately 347,000 gross square feet of space designed by Hennebery Eddy Architects to accommodate lab, research, office and retail use.

The project will be built by general contractor R&H Construction on property comprised of four separate parcels on the block between Southeast Stark and Washington streets and Ninth and 10th avenues. The parcels were jointly purchased by NIR OP LLC, on March 6, for \$5.79 million, according to public records.

"We are creating a very innovative building using cross-laminated timber supported by steel core," Summit Development Group President and Chief Operating Officer Eric Saunders stated in a press release.

The two buildings will be joined in an 'H' shape and feature a common courtyard, several small restaurants or coffee shops or other commercial tenants.

Specific features planned for the NIR include: complete HEPA filtration; a modular layout designed for research and development; BioSafety Level 2 laboratory space; segregated laboratory plumbing and independent HVAC systems; backup power; underground vehicle parking; and extensive bicycle parking with locker rooms.

The campus will rise near Summit Development Group's Eastside Innovation Hub, at 808 S.E. Alder St. The two projects are the first ones to be built in the Central Eastside specifically for emerging and growing bioscience firms, according to the developer. It's part of the Portland Innovation Quadrant initiative – a priority within the city's 2035 Comprehensive Plan. The first project to come out of that was the Collaborative Life Sciences Building in the South Waterfront District. The Knight Cancer Research Building came next, and then the 40,000-square-foot Eastside Innovation Hub was announced last year.

“We consider this project, the NIR Center, to be at the heart of the Innovation Quadrant's intent,” Summit Development Chief Development Officer Eric Myers stated in the press release. “The project repurposes an industrial-zoned site for innovative research and development.”

Development will grow with the arrivals of additional tenants, according to Myers, with Phase I (approximately 163,000 square feet) expected to be ready by summer 2021.

Two letters of intent have been signed by life science tenants for space in NIR, according to Summit. Leasing is being handled by Real Estate Investment Group.

OPB

Elders In Action Says It's Closing After 22 Years

*By Kristian Foden-Vencil
April 16, 2019*

The Portland nonprofit Elders In Action announced Tuesday that it's closing after 22 years.

The agency positioned itself as a voice for older adults in the metro area. It advocated for affordable housing and improved access to services. It also fought against elder abuse and tried to reduce social isolation for older adults.

But the board of directors issued a statement saying that after reviewing funding options, it could not find a path to sustainability.

Its financial statement for 2018 shows that the nonprofit's contracts with the City of Portland remained stable, but its contract with Multnomah County dropped from about \$200,000 a year to \$50,000.

Erin Grahek with Multnomah County's Aging, Disability & Veterans Services Division said she was somewhat surprised by the closure because Elders in Action had a good reputation.

She said she's hopeful their services will be picked up by other organizations.

“I think that they're trying to be really intentional in terms of reaching out to partners in the aging network. They have been actively engaged with AARP and the county. And so I think that they're trying to reach out and see if there are other places and entities that can pick up some of the work,” Grahek said.

Requests to the organization also dropped from about \$115,000 to just \$3,000 last year.

The board of directors' statement says Elders is working to finish its services with clients and close by the end of May.