

The Oregonian

Revised Plan to Loosen Renter Restrictions in Portland Heading to City Council

By Elliot Njus
May 22, 2019

Portland Commissioner Chloe Eudaly is taking another swing at loosening criminal and credit screening requirements for renters and tightening security deposit rules.

The proposals first went before the City Council in April, but a vote was put off for several weeks and then delayed by a month when the council appeared split. Now they're back for another hearing, with a vote possible as soon as next week.

Update: *The Portland City Council has delayed its discussion of the ordinance until May 29 because of a scheduling issue.*

The rewrite preserves the overarching ideas but includes substantial revisions, which Eudaly's office said would reduce the cost of compliance for landlords. Other sections were rewritten to avoid potential legal challenges.

"The major components of the policy are intact," said Jamey Duhamel, Eudaly's policy director.

The proposed ordinances faced strong opposition from landlord groups, which said they set up legal pitfalls and restricted their ability to protect their property and other tenants. They say the rewrite hasn't resolved their complaints.

"When it got delayed, we thought some of those concerns were being addressed," said Deborah Imse, the executive director of Multifamily NW, a rental industry association. "It doesn't appear they have been."

The tenant screening proposal offers landlords two choices:

- A "low-barrier" screening regimen that's more forgiving of a potential tenant's older criminal convictions or past credit issues.
- Or the landlord's own screening but with new demands. The landlord would, for example, have to weigh "supplemental evidence" submitted by a prospective tenant, say participation in credit counseling. If landlords deny the application, they must outline the reason for denying the application, specifically addressing any supplemental evidence.

Landlords also could only require tenants to earn up to two times their rent in income, or 2.5 times for apartments with lower rents. That's a lower threshold than the three times the rent many landlords require today.

The companion measure requires landlords to account more meticulously for security deposits when the tenant moves out and would allow tenants to pay security deposits in installments over three months rather than entirely up front.

A section that barred landlords from charging for basic cleaning was removed because it might not be permissible under state law.

The council will hold a hearing Thursday afternoon, but it won't vote until next week at the earliest.

Portland City Council OK's \$10 Million for City Hall Security Over Protesters' Shouts and Jeers

By Gordon Friedman

May 22, 2019

City commissioners verbally sparred with angry members of the public on Wednesday over whether to approve a \$10 million contract for security guards at Portland City Hall.

Dozens of residents showed up to oppose the contract with G4S Security Solutions, saying the city should not hire the company because of its work with Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Israeli government.

The commissioners said the contract was in the best interest of the city. G4S has been Portland's security contractor for years and the guards they provide are union members who do good work and deescalate tense situations, the elected officials said.

Mayor Ted Wheeler did not allow time for residents to testify on the contract, leading audience members to shout at Wheeler, who twice put the City Council meeting into recess and cleared the Council chamber.

Once back in session, people opposed to the contract shouted over Commissioners Nick Fish, Jo Ann Hardesty, Chloe Eudaly and Amanda Fritz as they were explaining their votes.

"You are disrupting and disrespecting me," Eudaly said.

An audience member yelled back, "You're disrespecting the people who voted for you!"

"You don't know what I'm going to say," Eudaly responded, before voting against the contract.

Disruptions continued as Fritz was called to vote. "Are you not going to let me talk?" she said over protesters' shouts.

Wheeler cleared the council chambers again.

"Third time's a charm," he said, once the council reconvened with members of the public kept outside.

"Ah, I had such a great speech and there's no one here to hear it," Fritz said before voting to approve the contract. "It's really disheartening that people are not willing to listen."

City Hall security costs have escalated under Wheeler's administration. The annual cost was \$175,000 in 2016 but had ballooned to \$847,000 by last year, driven mostly by an increase in the number of guards deployed. Those increases were approved even as officials concluded there were fewer security threats at City Hall.

On Wednesday, the Council approved spending \$2 million a year on security with G4S. The contract was approved 4-1 with Eudaly the sole vote against it.

Portland Mayor Plans to Set Aside \$1.6 Million to Fund School Resource Officers

By Eder Campuzano

May 22, 2019

Updated 5:13 p.m.

When the Portland school board voted to approve a \$1.2 million contract to staff its high schools with full-time school resource officers, the backlash from students was immediate.

Outrage at the board's December decision led to protests in front of City Hall. A group calling for the removal of Portland police officers from district schools began rallying students to the cause.

Within weeks, the board reversed course, pledging the district wouldn't fund the program.

Many students, including Roosevelt senior Breely Buttita, thought that vote would be followed by a series of conversations about the role of police officers in Portland Public Schools. Buttita left a February feedback session district officials held at her North Portland school under the impression the district soon might not have cops patrolling the halls of the district's high schools at all.

But, as The Oregonian/OregonLive has learned, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler has proposed setting aside \$1.6 million in the city's upcoming budget to provide 12 officers for the school resource officer program. Nine of those officers — at a cost of \$1.2 million — will patrol Portland Public Schools buildings, police bureau spokesman Lt. Stephen Yakots told The Oregonian/OregonLive.

Two more officers will serve the David Douglas School District. One officer will work in the Parkrose School District.

The city has footed the bill for student resource officers for about two decades. The mayor's proposed allocation would maintain the status quo. Police bureau officials approached Portland Public Schools about picking up the tab late last year.

The school board initially voted to fund the program, only to reverse its decision under pressure.

The Portland City Council was scheduled to vote on the mayor's proposed budget Wednesday. The vote has been pushed back to Thursday.

The proposed city spending on school resource officers is the result of conversations between city leaders and officials from the city's three largest districts.

Wheeler and Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw met with the superintendents and school board chairs of each district in March and the six education leaders presented a united message, according to minutes from a David Douglas school board meeting.

The board members and superintendents indicated they want the student resource officer program to continue but have little interest in funding it.

"All three school districts expressed their unequivocal support for the SRO program and their desire to maintain the program," Nicole Grant, Wheeler's senior policy adviser told The Oregonian/OregonLive in an email. "The mayor recognizes how sensitive this issue is and believes the question of the value of SROs should be left to the school districts, their students and families."

At Portland Public Schools, district officials are waiting for the final vote on the mayor's budget before they make the next move.

"We believe there is merit in having trained SROs who know our schools and students," spokesman Harry Esteve said in a statement. "As the city budget is finalized, we will continue to work with the police bureau on a plan for the coming year, including incorporating our diverse student and staff perspective and voices into any potential agreement between our organizations."

So far, student activists say the district's priorities don't align with their own.

Buttita said she hasn't heard from district officials since they gathered feedback from Roosevelt students in February. And Sophia Lucas, a Jefferson high senior who helped found a student group that pushed for the district to drop school resource officers altogether, was under the impression that there'd be ongoing conversations about the program.

"I think it's a terrible, horrible disappointment in priorities," Lucas said. "I think it's irresponsible."

Members of the Portland school board repeatedly said they were uncomfortable with the program's \$1.2 million price during a January meeting. But both students said they don't want police patrolling their schools regardless of the cost.

Buttita said she was dismayed by reports of a Portland police lieutenant's friendly text exchanges with Joey Gibson, leader of the right-wing Patriot Prayer group. Regardless of where the money for the school resource officer program comes from, Buttita said she would prefer to see it go elsewhere.

"I honestly feel like the city paying for this even worse because there are so many homeless issues going on," she said. "The city could be focusing so much more on that."

Lucas, who graduates in June, said she feels unsafe when she sees armed police officers patrolling her school. She's Native American and Latina and said she rarely hears positive stories from people of color about their interactions with police.

Lucas plans on attending Portland State University in the fall. And if police still roam the halls of her high school then, Lucas said she'll still attend board meetings to push for an end to the program.

She wants to do it for her sisters, Lucas said.

"I know how it feels to see a cop roaming a school. And I don't really want my siblings going to school in fear," she said.

Portland City Council Delays Budget Vote After Disagreeing Over Police and Parks Funding

*By Gordon Friedman
May 22, 2019*

After disagreements so contentious that Mayor Ted Wheeler later repeatedly apologized, the Portland City Council postponed the vote on its \$5.5 billion annual budget Wednesday afternoon. The delay allowed them to honor residents' demands that their testimony be heard before the mayor and commissioners cast their votes.

The council had been set to approve the budget for the coming fiscal year on Wednesday. That plan includes vast infrastructure projects in the water, sewer and transportation bureaus and trims to parks bureau offerings.

Officials agreed to postpone the vote, however, because Commissioner Nick Fish had to leave for a pre-scheduled treatment for his stomach cancer and it was unclear whether there would be agreement on the appropriations vote. The vote is rescheduled for Thursday afternoon.

The mayor and commissioners aired contentious disagreements Wednesday over whether to fund the Portland Police Bureau's Gun Violence Reduction Team and how to plug a multimillion-dollar funding gap at Portland Parks & Recreation.

The gun violence unit, formerly known as the Gang Enforcement Team, came under scrutiny by city auditors in 2018 for its disproportionate stops of African Americans and its failure to collect accurate data about the stops and to justify them.

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, a first-year commissioner and longtime police reform advocate, moved to defund the gun violence unit and reassign its 28 officers to patrol duty. She said that should be done because the city desperately needs patrol officers and because of the reasons identified by auditors, calling the disproportionate stops "totally inexcusable."

Hardesty noted that the team changed several of its practices since the audit's publication as well as its name – though she called it the "gun reduction whatever" – but an additional audit report found police officials had not reformed some of its practices.

"The Police Bureau has shown they have no interest in being held accountable by the people they are sworn to protect and serve," Hardesty said.

Police Bureau leaders, including Chief Danielle Outlaw and two police captains, testified that the Gun Violence Reduction Team had improved its practices, pulled many guns off of Portland streets and solved many shooting cases.

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly also criticized the team, saying she found it difficult to justify funding it when the Police Bureau could not explain its techniques and when the bureau's traffic enforcement operations were "grossly underfunded."

When Eudaly also misstated the team's name, Wheeler interjected, saying, "I find it hard to understand how my colleagues could understand the substance of the program when they don't even know the name." He said auditors had raised "some very valid concerns but not necessarily concerns I agree with."

Hardesty shot back: "I just want to sanction you for being disrespectful to Commissioner Eudaly and myself."

After Wheeler turned to Eudaly and apologized for his tone, Hardesty admonished him for not apologizing to her as well.

"I'm turning to you and if you'd stop interrupting me commissioner, I can get to it," Wheeler said to Hardesty.

The mayor apologized again later on, saying his emotions had gotten the better of him. "I'm not proud of my behavior earlier," he said, adding, "I don't even recognize myself sometimes."

Cuts to Portland Parks & Recreation made up the other sticking point at Wednesday's hearing.

A deficit at the bureau has long been simmering and came to a head this year as an estimated \$6.3 million shortfall. It exists because fee collections for park services are not keeping pace with rising personnel and facilities costs.

As written, the budget would plug the hole with staffing cuts and reduced services. The Sellwood Community Center and Hillside Community Center, for example, would close after this summer. The Laurelhurst Dance Studio would no longer be run by the city but would be available to arts organizations for rent. It's unclear how many employees could face layoffs.

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Portland's City-Owned Golf Courses are Essentially Broke, Auditors Find

*By Gordon Friedman
May 23, 2019*

Portland's publicly-run golf courses are essentially bankrupt, city auditors concluded in a report published Thursday.

The courses are "at a crossroads," the report said, and were kept solvent in 2017 only through an \$800,000 taxpayer-funded bailout.

Portland has owned golf courses for more than 100 years and currently owns five courses: Colwood, Eastmoreland, Heron Lakes, Rose City and RedTail Golf Center, though RedTail is located in Beaverton.

The courses cost \$9.6 million to run in 2018 and are supposed to generate at least that much in revenue from players at the 99 city-offered holes.

The program as a whole is a money-loser, however, according to the audit. Colwood and Rose City both lost money for four straight years, for example. Administrative costs top \$1 million a year.

Audits say there are multiple causes. Golf is declining in popularity, and fewer rounds are being played on the courses. The city also employed "lax contract management" over the companies it hires to run the courses.

Losses caused the city council to approve an \$800,000 bailout in 2017, but the conditions that caused it "are projected to worsen," according to auditors, because of mounting employee retirement and health care costs.

Colwood, located near Portland International Airport on Columbia Drive, has posed a particular challenge. The city borrowed money to buy it in 2014 and restore wetlands on part of the property. But "construction challenges" delayed its opening and the city could not repay its debt as originally planned. A "balloon payment" is due in 2023.

The Heron Lakes, RedTail and Eastmoreland courses are consistent money-makers, but not enough to keep the program whole.

Parks officials have tried to stave off the losses. They cut groundskeeper positions and left two superintendent jobs vacant, for example. Officials have also tried to promote golf's appeal to recruit new players.

It's unclear if those efforts have done much, auditors found, because the city "has not collected data about consumers."

Problems caused by declining revenues compound each other, auditors said. Deferred maintenance on city-owned course clubhouses makes them less appealing for players, leading to fewer customers, for example.

The city is also inconsistent with how it manages the courses. In one instance, a city-hired course manager has become increasingly hands-off. Contract provisions are not followed at other

courses, where managers have not completed required marketing plans, performance reviews and building repairs. Management contracts were extended every five years “with little, if any, review of their terms,” auditors said.

Auditors said the parks bureau should better negotiate and monitor course contracts, come up with alternative financial forecasts and allow City Council oversight.

Portland’s parks director, Adena Long, rebuffed auditors’ conclusions, saying in a response letter that the golf courses are “a good investment for Portlanders” and “self-supporting” despite auditors’ findings.

“The golf program is unique in the city as it successfully promotes environmental stewardship and recreation opportunities, while being a self-supporting business model that responds to market forces,” Long said. Nevertheless, she committed to carrying out auditors’ recommendations.

The Portland Tribune

New Car-Free Lane to Unsnarl Hawthorne Bridgehead

By Zane Sparling

May 23, 2019

Portland Bureau of Transportation unveils bike, bus lane on Southwest Madison Street near bridge.

The Portland Bureau of Transportation has checked the box for the first of 18 projects included in its Central City in Motion plan.

Bollards and fresh paint indicate the changes on a four-block stretch of Southwest Madison Street leading to the Hawthorne bridgehead. Workers have created a lane reserved for bikes and buses — and removed parking spots used by government vehicles.

"This project doesn't take any lanes out," said Hannah Schafer, a bureau spokeswoman. "We're taking one for the team here."

Previously, Southwest Madison had two auto lanes and spots for Parking Enforcement and police vehicles. The two auto lanes have been saved, but meter-readers will use nearby structured parking, while law enforcement will park on a different street.

The bus and bike lane peters out at Fourth Avenue, but later will be extended to Fifth after the remodel of the Portland Building is completed. The total cost of the project is \$160,000.

TriMet says the changes will speed up bus service on five lines — 2, 6, 10, 14 and 30 — which provide an estimated 23,000 trips per day to North and East Portland, Gresham and Estacada.

"When we make buses faster downtown, that reverberates across the entire system," Schafer said.

A spokeswoman for TriMet, Tia York, says the agency doesn't know how many minutes will be saved yet, but says they will be monitoring the new layout in order to collect data.

"It's also going to improve the ride for drivers as we help to decrease congestion," York added.

The Central City in Motion plan was approved by City Hall in November. As part of the plan, PBOT will begin work on a bus lane on the Steel bridge this fall, and an eastbound bus lane on the Burnside Bridge after Multnomah County finishes its maintenance work there.

The Central City plan includes blueprints for nine future dedicated bus lanes. TriMet says every bus in service can take more than 60 cars off the road.

Council Postpones Emotional Budget Vote

By Jim Redden

May 22, 2019

Accusations fly between City Council members considering next year's budget over the Portland police.

The City Council postponed the vote on next year's budget until Thursday after an emotional and personal clash over priorities during Wednesday's hearing.

The delay happened after the council acknowledge too many people had signed up to testify to be heard before the end of the lengthy May 22 hearing.

Eudaly volunteered to postpone her most recent renter reform measures to free up the time for the continued hearing.

Before that, Mayor Ted Wheeler forcefully defended the work of the Gun Violence Reduction Team, which Commission Jo Ann Hardesty proposed to defund with the possible support of Commissioner Chloe Eudaly. But Wheeler apologized after Hardesty accused him of disrespecting the two of them by pointing out they did not know the name of the unit, which was formerly called the Gang Enforcement Team. Wheeler repeatedly said he did not mean to offend them.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz then defended the team, saying she has heard from many community members who support it.

The exchange exposed tensions within the city. Hardesty, who is African-American, repeatedly criticized the police during the opening minutes of the budget hearing. She said black and brown people are afraid to turn their backs on officers during traffic stops.

Wheeler said the bureau acknowledges and is working to change its previous problems, saying that the Gun Violence Reduction Team, which now has a focus on all gun crimes.

Much of the public testimony that followed opposed the proposed cuts in Portland Parks & Recreation. The budget would eliminate 56 positions and close several community centers to help eliminate a \$6.3 million funding gap. It is unclear how many of the employees would be able to fund jobs in other bureaus.

Hardesty said she wants to disband the Gun Violence Reduction Team in part to free up money to prevent the park bureau cuts. She proposed other cuts in the police bureau and other general fund programs for the same reason.

Hardesty's first attempt to formally raise her budget concerns fizzled earlier in the day. She moved that the council delay the first hearing of an ordinance to grant a 3.9 percent cost-of-living-adjustment to city employees who are not represented by unions. The percent is the average of what represented employees are scheduled to receive.

Hardesty wanted to delay the hearing on the ordinance until the council considers the overall budget for the next fiscal year. Hardesty said she could not in good faith vote to give herself a raise at the same time the council is considering cutting some of the lowest-paying jobs in the parks bureau. Wheeler noted the council will not actually vote on the COLA ordinance until next week. Hardesty's motion died when it was not seconded by another other council member, and it was scheduled for a second hearing and vote next week.

Wednesday's hearing is expected to continue for hours.

Council Approves \$24 Million Superfund Cleanup Planning Agreement

By Jim Redden

May 22, 2019

Portland partners with Oregon and EPA on unique \$24 million agreement to encourage those responsible for pollution in the Portland Harbor to create cleanup plans.

The City Council unanimously approved an agreement to jumpstart the cleanup of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site on Wednesday, May 22.

Portland, the State of Oregon and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have agreed to create a \$24 million fund to encourage the design of cleanup plans for the polluted portions of the site. The city and state will each contribute \$12 million to a trust administered by the EPA, which designed a 10-mile stretch of the lower Willamette River a superfund site in 2000.

The money will be offered to the more than 150 parties identified by the EPA with potential liability for paying cleanup costs in 2017. Under the agreement, \$80,000 per acre would be available to the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) to help pay for the remedial design of their cleanup plans.

"Today we are taking a major step forward toward a cleaner and safer Willamette River," said Commissioner Nick Fish, who is in charge of the Bureau of Environmental Services, the city's agency most involved in the cleanup

Portland's share of the money would come from a superfund-related charge being collected in the city's combined water-sewer-stormwater management bills. Oregon's share would come from funds already approved by the Legislature for cleaning up the site.

"This is an example of good governance. It is a milestone we can all celebrate," said Mayor Ted Wheeler.

The EPA has never approved a similar proposal — called the City and State Settlement Agreement — to help clean up a superfund site before.

The EPA has estimated the total cleanup costs at around \$1 billion. It has been in secret negotiations with the PRPs for several years. The goal is to get them agree on how much each should contribute to cleaning up all of the polluted locations in the site. Portland and Oregon are both potentially liable for multiple locations.

Some of the PRPs have already admitted potential liability and begun working on locations. They include the city, the state, the Port of Portland, PGE and Northwest Natural. Others are believed to be reluctant to admit liability and incur cleanup costs.

The EPA informed the PRPs in December 2018 that they must begin negotiations June 30 to perform remedial design work for the areas not already under agreement and sign remedial design agreements by December 31. Portland and Oregon support those efforts.

The EPA can go to federal court to force compliance. The fund is intended to encourage compliance instead. Under the agreement, the EPA will credit the city and state for the trust funds spent for remedial planning by the other PRPs.

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

Sources: Eudaly Renter Ideas Still Drawing Flak

*By Jim Redden
May 23, 2019*

Plus, other cities fear Portland housing solution and greater survey input wanted

The changes City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly made to her most recent renter protection measures did not satisfy the leading landlord organizations.

The City Council first heard Eudaly's measures for easing screening and security deposit requirements on April 3 and 4. Although tenant advocates supported them, landlords complained about their complexity and charged they could require them to rent to serious criminal convicts.

Eudaly pushed the next hearing to Thursday, May 23, to work out compromises.

It didn't work. Multifamily NW, the major lobbying group representing Portland area landlords, still opposes the revised measures, arguing that they don't address their concerns. The organization also complains the revisions were not released until Monday, May 20, a mere two days before the May 23 hearing.

The council vote cannot take place for another week, at the soonest.

Other cities fear housing solution

The 2019 Oregon Legislature is considering House Bill 2001, which would prohibit exclusive single-family zoning in larger cities to encourage the construction of so-called missing middle housing, such as duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes. The bill, sponsored by Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek, who represents much of North and Northeast Portland, is similar to the recommendations of the Residential Infill Project heading to the City Council.

But, as Oregon Public Broadcasting reported, Albany Mayor Sharon Konopa thinks the state shouldn't tell cities how to make zoning decisions. She said the bill is trying to force a Portland solution for the housing crunch onto smaller cities like hers.

"We're the ones that know what would be a good fit for our community. And we spend years trying to be able to plan for our community and looking long range," Konopa told OPB.

Greater survey input planned

The city is inviting all residents to participate in the annual Portland Community Insights Survey this year.

The satisfaction and livability survey is conducted each year to give the mayor, the City Council and city bureaus information about the priorities of residents and how city government can improve its programs.

Questions range from the greatest challenges facing Portland to recommendations about how specific city bureaus can improve their operation. The survey also asks about difficulties facing the respondents and their involvement in city programs.

The survey has traditionally been conducted among a limited number of residents by the City Auditors Office. It has been redesigned this year by the City Budget Office as an online survey open to everyone from May 8-28.

The survey also will be conducted in Portland communities with the help of a multilingual crew of 40 canvassers, including students from Portland State University, Portland Community College and local community leaders.

The survey can be taken online at <https://www.research.net/r/PDXspeaks>.

Willamette Week

Portland Mayor Lashes Out During Police Budget Debate, Then Apologizes: “I Don’t Even Recognize Myself Sometimes”

*By Rachel Monahan
May 22, 2019*

The mayor spars with colleagues, even though he already had the votes to pass his budget.

Until today, budget season has been a high point of Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler's year.

After public grumbles and stumbles last fall, he seemed poised to win the support of the majority of his colleagues for his third budget without major changes. (A vote is expected Thursday.)

But in a hearing today he sniped at colleagues with personal attacks in a discussion of whether to defund the Gun Violence Reduction Team, as City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty has repeatedly proposed.

Hardesty has argued that, despite a name change from the Gang Enforcement Team, the team is still marred by a record of disproportionately impacting communities of color. The officers in that team, she's proposed, should be moved over to street patrols.

Eudaly said she's interested in analyzing the program but doesn't necessarily plan to support the Hardesty change as part of the budget, and in her remarks she stumbled on the name of the group.

The fact that Eudaly has projected her support for the mayor's budget made it all the more surprising when Wheeler went after her error.

"I find it hard to understand how my colleagues could understand the substance of a program when they don't even know the name of the program," he said.

"Oh, wow," Eudaly could be heard saying.

Wheeler went on to defend the substance of the policies at the Portland Police Bureau, but then Hardesty got a chance to speak, and the dialogue is worth reading for what counts in City Hall as public drama.

"I want to sanction you for being disrespectful to Commissioner Eudaly and myself," said Hardesty. (Wheeler last month had scolded Hardesty for the tone with which she questioned an expert witness before council.)

"I'm disappointed that you would take the opportunity to take a pot shot," added Hardesty.

Wheeler: "I want to keep this to the budget discussion, but Commissioner Eudaly, I do apologize, I do apologize."

Hardesty: "You apologize to her but not to me."

Wheeler: "If you'd stop interrupting me, commissioner, I could get to it. I apologize to you too. But here's the deal: I have listened while we cast aspersions on the employees of this city and not give them an opportunity to defend themselves. Let's hear them out."

Eudaly: "I'm sorry. Once again, questioning staffing levels, allocation of resources, policies and procedures of the police bureau is not disparaging individual officers. I've stated time and time again, I respect the hard work of many of our officers, I recognize the work is stressful, the work is dangerous, and I just refuse to allow this a narrative to continue from the police union, the bureau or the mayor that I can't have differing opinions without dismissing and disparaging the entire bureau. That's not what this is about. It's about the smart allocation of our limited resources."

At the end of the discussion, Wheeler apologized further to both Hardesty and Eudaly.

"I'm not proud of my behavior earlier, Commissioner Eudaly or Commissioner Hardesty," he said. "I don't even recognize myself sometimes. This is a very emotional issue. It's an important issue. At the end of the day, it's a budget conversation. And I let my emotion on this issue get the better of me.

"You deserve better," he said while looking at Hardesty, before turning to Eudaly.

"Commissioner Eudaly, you deserve better than this, and I apologize. ... I'm disappointed and I'm embarrassed."

It's not clear what impact his comments will have on the budget vote scheduled for Thursday. But the mayor's strident defense of police, after he ran three years ago for office on a platform of reforming the Police Bureau, continues to create conflict in City Hall.

The Portland Mercury

After Tense Council Meeting, City Pushes Budget Vote to Thursday

*By Alex Zielinski
May 22, 2019*

To make time for an abundance of public testimony, Portland City Council delayed its Wednesday vote on the city's 2019-2020 budget until Thursday afternoon.

Nearly 60 Portlanders signed up to share passionate testimony on Mayor Ted Wheeler's proposed budget this afternoon—many of them critical of programs the city's poised to cut or continue funding. Yet the most combative moments of the three-hour meeting came from the other side of the dais.

Mayor Ted Wheeler began the council meeting by introducing his proposed budget and inviting city commissioners to propose any last-minute changes. As expected, Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty introduced an amendment that suggested slashing the police bureau's Gang Violence Reduction Team (GVRT) budget and rerouting its 28 officers to cover street patrol positions.

Hardesty's defended this decision with a 2018 city audit that found the GVRT (which was then called the Gang Enforcement Team) was disproportionately targeting African Americans. Portland Police Bureau (PPB) has not provided any information on how its improved the GVRT following this audit. An update to that audit published earlier this week, however, shows little action taken by PPB to follow the audit's recommendations.

"What the police bureau has shown is that they have no interest in being held accountable by the people they are sworn to protect and serve," said Hardesty.

Commissioner Eudaly seconded Hardesty's amendment, raising concerns with the lack of data proving progress within the PPB and how small PPB's traffic division is in comparison (Eudaly is currently the commissioner overseeing the Portland Bureau of Transportation).

Both Eudaly and Hardesty stumbled over the GVRT's name, referring to it by the Gang Enforcement Team—the name it's carried up until October 2018.

"I fault myself that my colleagues don't know more about the program—that's on me," responded Wheeler, who has defended the GVRT as a critical public safety tool. "I find it hard to understand how my colleagues could understand a program when they don't even know the name of a program."

"Oh, wow," Eudaly remarked, shaking her head.

After he finished speaking, Hardesty turned to face Wheeler. "I want to sanction you on being disrespectful to Commissioner Eudaly and myself," she said.

The reason she believes GVRT changed its name in the first place, she said was because, "they do not want to be held accountable" for the blistering 2018 audit.

Wheeler then invited PPB Chief Danielle Outlaw to speak before City Council on the GVRT's success.

"I have listened while we cast dispersion on the employees on this city and not give them an opportunity to defend themselves," said Wheeler.

Eudaly didn't let that jab pass unnoticed.

"I respect the hard work of our officers, I recognize it is stressful, it is dangerous," she said. "I refuse to allow this narrative from the [police] union, [police] bureau, or the mayor that I can't have differing opinions without disparaging Portland officers. That's not what this is about. This is about the allocation of our funds based on data, not fear."

"That's fair," Wheeler responded.

He gave a longer apology before introducing public testimony.

"I'm not proud of my behavior earlier," Wheeler said. "I don't even recognize myself sometimes. This is an emotional discussion. I let my emotion on this issue get the better of me. Commissioner Eudaly you deserve better than this, I apologize. I'm disappointed and I'm embarrassed."

After taking an hour and a half hashing out the budget, city commissioners realized they didn't leave enough time for the 56 people who had signed up to testify. Commissioner Nick Fish had

to leave early for an appointment, meaning that if everyone spoke, he wouldn't be around for the final vote.

Another lengthy discussion on how to accommodate the public's input ended with city commissioners deciding to continue hearing public testimony and bump the budget vote to Thursday afternoon.

The majority of public testimony centered on what's become the most contentious piece of this year's proposed budget: expected cuts to community centers run by Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R). While Mayor Wheeler has found funding to extend a few community centers' lifespan for three more months to a year, PP&R has yet to propose a plan to close the bureau's growing budget gap moving forward.

Along with closing several community centers by the end of the summer, Wheeler's budget suggests cutting at least 56 full-time PP&R jobs.

"I don't see how Parks and Recreation can come back to what it is now if you make these cuts," said Troy Broat, an instructor at PP&R's Mt. Scott Community Center, who is slated to lose his job under the new budget. "The services that I help provide are vital to the working families in this community who can't afford to live here. It's mind-boggling to me that this is even on the board right now and I'm really upset about it."

Several people testified against the pending closure of Sellwood and Hillside community centers, including a mother who said the elimination of Sellwood's affordable preschool program might keep her from returning to college next year.

"What's the plan?" she asked city commissioners.

Commissioner Nick Fish, who oversees PP&R said his office was in process of "doing a scan of different options in the community."

Fish also introduced a plan to save some of the PP&R jobs by reshuffling the people laid off into other vacant positions within the bureau that are more vital. For now, Fish said the city's human resources department has found positions for at least half of the people who are facing the first 22 round of jobs cuts in June. There will be another round of layoffs in September. Fish is also looking into allowing those employees to move into vacant positions in other bureaus.

"We take very seriously the... potential for layoffs and losing valued employees," he said.

The proposed budget introduces several new programs, including \$500,000 to fund a homeless response program drafted by Street Roots, \$183,000 for a new program that connect nurses to people who call 911 low-level physical and behavioral health issues, \$878,000 for three mobile bathrooms and three mobile showers to serve homeless communities, \$150,000 for mediation services for disputing tenants and landlord, and \$200,000 to fund a water taxi called Frog Ferry.

City Council is scheduled to vote on the budget at 3:30 pm Thursday.

OPB

Mayor Wheeler Apologizes After Lashing Out At City Commissioners In Budget Hearing

*By Amelia Templeton
May 22, 2019*

After a contentious hearing, the Portland city council postponed until Thursday their vote on the mayor's proposed \$600 million general fund budget for 2019-2020.

The council delayed the vote in order to extend the time for public testimony into the evening. Much of the public testimony was critical of the mayor's proposed cuts to Portland Parks and Recreation, which has a \$6.3 million annual budget deficit.

The hearing became heated as Mayor Ted Wheeler lashed out at two of his colleagues during debate over funding for the police bureau's Gun Violence Reduction Team.

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty has long been a critic of the team, and has proposed eliminating it and reassigning its 28 officers to patrol, and shifting the cost savings to the parks bureau.

Hardesty's amendment defunding the team does not appear to have the votes it needs to pass, but she used the budget hearing as a platform to raise concerns about how the team polices African-Americans and other people of color.

A 2018 auditor's report found that a majority of the people the team stopped were African-Americans, and it didn't adequately document the reason for its stops.

"In a city with a six percent African-American population, this is absolutely inexcusable, and it must be addressed," argued Hardesty, who as a black woman, is the only person of color on Portland City Council.

Hardesty has suggested that the team's name change was just a rebranding, and at one point referred to it as the "the gun reduction whatever," prompting approving laughter from some members of the public gathered in city hall.

Commissioner Chloe Eudaly then echoed some of Hardesty's comments, saying she remains concerned about the overpolicing of black communities in Portland. She questioned whether some of the team's officers could be reassigned to other divisions – and stumbled over the team's name in the process.

That's when Wheeler – who serve as police commissioner – lobbed a personal barb at Eudaly and Hardesty.

"I find it hard to understand how my colleagues could understand the substance of a program when they don't even know the name of the program," he said.

Eudaly let out an "oh wow," in response. Hardesty waited for the mayor to finish his comments defending the police bureau's work, and then rebuked him.

"I just want to sanction you on being disrespectful to Commissioner Eudaly and myself," she said. "I am disappointed, mayor, that you would take the opportunity to take a potshot at your colleagues."

Wheeler made his first attempt at an apology.

"Commissioner Eudaly, I do apologize," he said

“Only to her and not to me?” Hardesty asked.

“I’m turning to you, and if you’d stop interrupting to me, I could get to it. I apologize to you too.” Wheeler said. “I have listened while we cast aspersions on the employees of this city and not give them the opportunity to defend themselves. Let’s hear them out.”

That comment only further frustrated Commissioner Eudaly.

“Questioning staffing levels, allocation of resources, policies and procedures of the police bureau is not disparaging individual officers. I’ve stated time and time again that I respect the hard work of many of our officers,” Eudaly said. “That’s not what this is about.”

Mayor Wheeler concurred. Later in the hearing, he apologized again, and then a third time.

“I’m not proud of my behavior earlier, Commissioner Eudaly or Commissioner Hardesty,” he said. “I don’t even recognize myself sometimes.”

He continued, “I let my emotion get the better of me,” he said. “You deserve better,” he told each of his colleagues.

Drama aside, the hearing provided a robust debate about the police bureau’s evolving work on gun violence.

Police Chief Danielle Outlaw and her assistant chief Andy Shearer were there to present on changes the bureau has made in response to criticism of the Gang Enforcement Team’s approach.

Shearer said PPB has hired an independent group to review the past year of homicides and non-fatal shootings to analyze patterns of violence in the city. Roughly one person a week is shot.

“Today the focus is solely on violent gun crime, and not just crime committed by gang members, as it had been investigated in the past,” Shearer said.

In response to a question from Commissioner Hardesty, Shearer said the team cleared 29% of the gun crimes it investigated last year — close to its 30% target.

“I think the real question on the table is whether or not we all experience the Portland police the same, and based on the data that I have in front of me, we have totally different experiences when it comes to the Portland Police,” Hardesty told Chief Outlaw, saying she felt like the bureau was not willing to own up to its problems.

Chief Outlaw said she is committed to understanding the reasons why African Americans are more likely to be stopped and searched.

“I think it’s important to acknowledge that there is a disparity there, and what we should be looking at is why,” Chief Outlaw said.

After it became clear that the council would not have enough time to hear from all 57 people who’d signed up to speak about the proposed budget and to vote on it, the council agreed to postpone its vote on the budget – and Hardesty’s proposed amendments to it – until Thursday.

Portland Leaders Approve New City Hall Security Contract Amid Complaints

*By OPB Staff
May 22, 2019*

Portland city leaders took heat Wednesday over a relatively routine question: Who should provide security at City Hall and other government offices?

City leaders took bids for the security contract earlier this year, and the winner was Portland's longtime provider, G4S Secure Solutions.

G4S is the U.S. arm of the world's largest security company. The British firm has drawn complaints of mistreating detainees at U.S. immigration facilities, among other alleged human rights violations around the world.

Protestors cut off city commissioners repeatedly Wednesday, demanding to be allowed to testify against the contract. But City Council policy says contracts such as the one for security — presented to city leaders as a “report” rather than an “ordinance” — aren't up for public testimony.

Mayor Ted Wheeler called a brief halt to deliberations twice because of the disruptions. Once the vote recommenced, Commissioner Amanda Fritz said she believes in the people who work for G4S at Portland City Hall.

“These are good people doing good work in very difficult circumstances,” she said, before approving the contract. “Frankly, because of disruptions like this, it becomes a very nasty place to work at times.”

Only Commissioner Chloe Eudaly voted against the contract, which will pay G4S \$10 million over five years.

“I want to make something very clear: I support and appreciate our security team. I'm grateful that they have good stable jobs with benefits thanks to their union representatives,” she said. “But I believe there are ways we can achieve a safe work environment and a better world for others at the same time.”

Portland City Council Approves Funding For Superfund Cleanup Plans

*By Erin Ross
May 22, 2019*

The Portland City Council voted Wednesday to authorize a spending agreement that pays for planning for the cleanup the Portland Harbor Superfund site.

The 10-mile section of the Willamette River stretches from Sauvie Island to the Broadway Bridge and was heavily polluted by over a hundred years of industrial use.

The Environmental Protection Agency in 2017 named the site as one of 21 Superfund locations targeted for immediate attention and had given polluters a deadline of June 30 to start planning their cleanup projects. In addition to the city of Portland and the state of Oregon, more than 150

other parties are considered responsible for the pollution in Portland Harbor. That's made it difficult to get the ball rolling on cleanup work.

Under the new agreement, the city of Portland and state of Oregon will each contribute \$12 million to a trust fund. Responsible parties can draw from the trust to finance research and development for their cleanup plans. The city and state aim to provide an incentive to move ahead with cleanup plans. By setting up the fund, Portland and Oregon have also made it less likely that the EPA will take enforcement actions against them for this phase of work.

These funds can only be used for research and development, City Commissioner Nick Fish stressed, adding, "The trust will not subsidize private parties or absolve them of their responsibility as polluters."

That means the funds can only be used for planning, not administrative work. It also means that taxpayers shouldn't be footing the bill for the cleanup, which is expected to cost over \$1 billion and take over 30 years.

The hope is that by creating this fund, the city and state will be saved the cost of managing a number of design proposals. It also allows each polluting party to design their own cleanup proposals, customizing their design plans based on current and future uses of their respective areas.

The cleanup could involve dredging toxic sand out of the river and capping other sources of pollution in cement.