

The Portland Tribune

Your City Hall: Applicants Sought for Boards, Panels

By Jim Redden

May 28, 2019

The city is currently recruiting members for the Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund grant committee, the Unreinforced Masonry Building Work Group, and the South Portland Design Guidelines Community Advisory Group.

WHAT IS HAPPENING? The city routinely seeks residents to serve on advisory boards and commissions. This is a way for Portland to become more involved in their government short of running for office. Much of the recruiting is done by the staff of the bureau of Community & Civic Life through its website.

WHAT POSITIONS ARE OPEN? Recruiting is underway for several new and existing advisory committees. Perhaps the best known is the nine-member citizen committee that will review and recommend Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund grants to the City Council.

The fund was created when voters overwhelmingly passed Measure 26-201 at the November 2018 general election. It imposes a 1% tax surcharge on many large retailers that do business within the city limits.

The surcharge is expected to generate up to \$71 million per year to be spent on projects that support the city's Climate Action Plan, and which will benefit communities that have historically been discriminated against.

The committee will review grant applications from nonprofit organizations and recommend which ones to fund to the City Council.

Although all residents can apply, the city is especially interested in those who understand and support the purpose and objectives of the fund, and who live east of 82nd Avenue.

Applications are due by June 14.

WHAT OTHER POSITIONS ARE OPEN? The city also is recruiting for up to 24 members of the Unreinforced Masonry Building Work Group, which is charged with helping to reduce the risk of such buildings collapsing in earthquakes.

It was created after some building owners challenged the council-approved requirement that they post earthquake-warning signs. The council wants the committee to propose financial and other incentives to reduce the cost of earthquake-proofing such buildings.

The council will consider its recommendations even if the sign requirement is struck down.

Applications will continue to be accepted until all members are appointed.

The city also is recruiting for a five- to seven-member South Portland Design Guidelines Community Advisory Group to help the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability update the design guidelines in that part of town. Applications are due Sunday, June 2.

WHAT'S THE CATCH? All who serve on city advisory and other committees are considered public officials and must file conflict of interest disclosure forms that could reveal financial and other personal information.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE? Learn more about all of the open positions on the Community & Civic Life website at www.portlandoregon.gov/civic/76482. You also can be added to the notification list for each new posting by emailing a request to Advisorybodies@portlandoregon.gov.

City budget passed after tense hearing, clashing views

By Jim Redden

May 27, 2019

Hardesty's proposals rebuffed, Wheeler apologizes for criticism during two days of heated budget hearings.

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty did her best to fulfill her campaign promise to shake up City Hall during last week's budget hearings. But she lost every vote as the City Council passed Mayor Ted Wheeler's proposed budget with only her dissenting on Thursday, May 23.

When she ran for the City Council, Hardesty vowed to disregard the time-honored tradition of not interfering with the bureaus overseen by the other members.

"I was not elected to care about just (my bureaus). I don't live in a bubble, I don't live in a silo," Hardesty said during one hearing.

Although the total budget is \$5.5 billion, the council has the most control over how the record \$577.3 million general fund dollars will be spent, and that is where the fighting took place.

During the most contentious budget hearing in recent memory, on Wednesday, May 22, Hardesty repeatedly tried to defund a program in the Portland Police Bureau overseen by Wheeler and to transfer the money to Portland Parks & Recreation, which is overseen by Commissioner Nick Fish — a brash move by any commissioner, especially one who oversees neither police nor parks, and who has been on the council only since January.

Hardesty justified her actions as necessary to preserve the approximately 56 parks job threatened by the \$6.3 million shortfall in the bureau — even though Fish said he was satisfied the budget would allow the bureau to transition to more stable funding.

But Hardesty also revealed her suspicion of the police bureau when she tried to disband its Gun Violence Reduction Team. Formerly known as the Gang Enforcement Team, the unit has repeatedly been accused of racial profiling and questioned by the City Auditor's Office for disproportionately stopping and questioning African-Americans and Latinos.

Hardesty rebuffed Wheeler and bureau officials when they said the unit was changing to focus on all gun crimes, regardless of who commits them.

"The police bureau has shown they have no interest in being held accountable by the people they are sworn to protect and serve," said Hardesty, who also unsuccessfully moved to defund the bureau's pilot body camera program.

Wheeler clashed with both Hardesty and Commissioner Chloe Eudaly over the Gun Violence Reduction Team on Wednesday, and ended up apologizing for criticizing them for not remembering its new name. On Thursday, Eudaly also voted to disband the team, saying the bureau should prioritize traffic enforcement because more people are killed in crashes than by guns every year.

But Fish and Commissioner Amada Fritz joined Wheeler to save the unit and the body camera program.

The debate prompted Wheeler to volunteer to hold a series of public work sessions in the future to discuss such policy issues as city-funded school resource officers — officers assigned to work in public schools — and the use of body cameras on police.

Hardesty also repeatedly talked about transferring money from other general fund programs to parks, but did not formally propose doing so.

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

The motion died when no one seconded it. Hardesty moved it again Thursday afternoon, but lost on a 4-to-1 vote.

The city budget takes effect on July 1. Before that, the public can testify on it again at the Tax Supervising and Conversation Committee hearing on June 11, and then again when council formally adopts it on July 12.

Details emerge in fatal shooting of Andre Gladen

By Zane Sparling

May 25, 2019

Grand jury testimony reveals man had grabbed knife worn by Portland Police Bureau officer Sid Vosu.

A police officer responding to a trespassing call at a Southeast Portland group home shot and killed a man who had grabbed the officer's knife and was advancing toward him, according to jury transcripts.

The Sunday, Jan. 6, shooting death of Andre C. Gladen was determined to be a lawful act of defense by a Grand Jury convened by the Multnomah County District Attorney's office a month later.

The newly released transcripts confirm that Gladen — a 36-year-old legally blind man with schizophrenia who was visiting from Sacramento — grabbed Officer Consider "Sid" Vosu's Benchmade brand fixed-blade dagger, which was clipped to Vosu's vest.

Vosu, 42, told the Grand Jury he never saw Gladen grab it. The officer said he never intended to kill Gladen, who was shot twice in the left lung and died after being taken to a hospital.

"I've never been in a situation like this before in my life where someone is actively trying to kill me," Vosu said. "I struggle with it every day."

Vosu responded to the six-person group home for mentally challenged individuals at 9610 S.E. Market St. around 2 p.m. after dispatchers received 911 calls from the home's owner, Lidiya Omelchenko, and tenant Desmond Pescaia.

Pescaia told jurors he was taking a nap when he was woken up by knocking like a "25-pound sledgehammer" on his front door. He described seeing Gladen in dirty clothes, missing his shoes and wearing a hospital gown underneath his shirt.

At first he gave Gladen a roll of quarters for TriMet, and then a glass of water, but Pescaia said Gladen kept pounding on the door for a third time, so he told his landlord and called police.

"I did not feel safe. I did not feel that I could handle the situation," Pescaia said in the transcripts. "I did not want to do anything that would bring myself or this young man harm."

Vosu arrived and approached Gladen, who was under a blanket. Pescaia came out of his house and picked up a four-foot-long tree limb, but Vosu ordered him to put it back down. That's when Gladen slipped inside the house, quickly pursued by tenant and police officer.

Gladen's wet socks caused him to slip and fall on the hardwood floor, and a struggle ensued — with Pescaia grabbing Gladen's legs and Vosu straddling Gladen's chest. Both men told the jury Gladen kicked them off. Vosu ended up in a bedroom with Gladen between him and the exit.

Vosu pulled out his Taser.

"Go ahead and 'tase' me...." Vosu said he heard Gladen say.

Gladen fell to the ground after the Taser's barbs connected with his chest, but he was back on his feet seconds later.

Pescaia and Vosu testified that they saw Gladen pull out the knife and move toward Vosu. "I observed Officer Vosu's face just turning ghost white like he was scared for his life," Pescaia said.

Vosu testified that he orally warned Gladen, then fired three rounds from his pistol, striking Gladen twice.

Oregon's Chief Medical Examiner, Michele Taylor Stauffenberg, testified that Gladen's toxicology report showed he had an anti-seizure drug, cannabinoids and recently metabolized methamphetamine in his blood, which she said indicated he used meth "within a very short period of time" prior to his death.

Gladen's cousin and fiancée, Diamond Randolph, said she woke up early that day in her 145th Avenue apartment after Gladen started talking to his deceased cousin, Ernest. Then Gladen picked up a knife and bat and threatened to kill Randolph, so she called police.

Police later found Gladen in some bushes a few blocks away. He was taken by ambulance to Portland Adventist Medical Center, but was quickly released after being given the anti-seizure drug.

Vosu followed a non-traditional path to law enforcement, spending years teaching at the School of Digital Arts in New York City and working as a digital imaging specialist at the city's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In a release, Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw said detectives suspected that Vosu's knife was involved early on, but were unable to confirm it until the Grand Jury meeting.

"Following all officer-involved shootings, the Police Bureau makes every attempt to be as transparent as possible, without jeopardizing the investigation and Grand Jury process," Outlaw said.

Willamette Week

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty Finds Herself Isolated as Portland City Council Cuts Parks and Preserves Police

By Rachel Monahan
May 25, 2019

Hardesty was the lone holdout on the city's \$5.6 billion budget.

Portland Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty was the lone vote against the city's \$5.6 billion budget this year. After public drama, Mayor Ted Wheeler's third budget passed easily, though without the unanimous vote of the past two years.

Hardesty, elected last November, didn't play by the traditional rules at City Hall during budget season, which involve compromise and quiet negotiation.

But unlike earlier in her tenure, when she wrested a majority of votes from the mayor, this time she failed to garner the three votes necessary to pass an amendment to preserve jobs at Portland Parks and Recreation. Roughly 50 positions at the parks bureau are slated to be cut as part of the budget.

In the first few months of her tenure at City Hall, Hardesty tackled two high-profile issues—the city's policy on unreinforced masonry buildings and withdrawal from the Joint Terrorism Task Force—and demonstrated that she could put together the votes necessary to beat the mayor. This time she took a more hard-line, uncompromising and losing position.

In part, that's because Hardesty is coming late to a longer-term discussion of the budget gap at parks, which the other commissioners believed could no longer be addressed simply by finding one-time funding to patch over, as has been done in years past.

It may also be an indication that the majority of City Council is more conservative than Hardesty, and unwilling to de-fund police—or make policy changes at police bureau—even in the face of criticisms that the Gun Violence Reduction Team may still be disproportionately targeting people of color.

To be sure, Hardesty succeeded in championing some potentially dramatic changes to the city's response to homelessness, including funding for a consultant to the Bureau of Emergency Communications to prepare for having a nurse on-hand to address less-critical calls to 911, as well as an effort to develop a street response team to homeless people, as championed by the newspaper Street Roots.

But in the end, the mayoral meltdown on Wednesday in which Wheeler insulted his colleagues had no immediate impact on their votes.

Hardesty's fellow commissioners on Thursday were careful and complimentary while voting down her amendments to fund parks with a cut and a transfer of funds from police or, alternatively, a freeze in wages to parks employees making \$80,000 or more and not represented by a union.

Hardesty pulled no punches in the midst of the discussion: "There are not two sides to this," she said. "There is justice; there is fairness."

After the passage of the budget, she released a statement continuing to press her point:

"I'm incredibly disappointed council did not vote to save dozens of Parks jobs despite community-wide outcry over the cuts. Cutting jobs of the dedicated frontline workers and closing community centers is not how we support our people. Continuing to fund a police team that disproportionately targets people of color is not how we support our people."

The Daily Journal of Commerce

Bridge Design Moves Closer to Approval

By Alex Visser

May 24, 2019

The Portland Design Commission on Thursday applauded the proposed design of a bridge to connect Lloyd and the Central Eastside Industrial District across Interstate 84, and serve only bicyclists and pedestrians.

The bridge, to be named after U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer, will connect the two neighborhoods at Seventh Avenue. With an arched design extending north to south, white painted steel and lights underneath, the bridge is intended to become a local icon.

The design calls for a 24-foot-wide path, with 10 feet allotted for pedestrians and 14 for cyclists. The north and south landings would contain spaces to rest and gather, with green space and boulder-like seating that conveys a natural feel. Each end would have more artistic, slender lights mounted to poles. The south side would feature a tree-like design.

Developers said the bridge will need to be able to accommodate emergency vehicles, but trees, benches and curbs might be used to ensure people understand the structure is designed specifically for foot and bike traffic. Those same features will be used to make a clear separation between pedestrian and cyclist paths.

Commissioners were largely in favor of the proposal, with Chairwoman Julie Livingston calling it an "elegant structure" and a "really happy design result." Praise in particular was given to the south landing, which commissioners said would foster a sense of community in the area.

Limited criticism was given to plans for the north landing, which would be much smaller than its counterpart and have less space for users to relax. Also on the north end, commissioners requested a more transparent demarcation between space for cyclists and pedestrians.

The bridge is expected to cost between \$9 million and \$13 million, and open by December 202