

The Oregonian

Portland gives renters win with new screening, security deposit rules

By Elliot Njus

June 19, 2019

The Portland City Council on Wednesday adopted a slate of new policies intended to make landlords more forgiving of criminal records and poor credit when screening prospective tenants.

The council voted 3-1 to approve what its champion, Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, called the most comprehensive reform of its kind in the country. Commissioner Amanda Fritz cast a “no” vote; Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty was absent, though she expressed support Wednesday on her Facebook page.

A companion measure that requires landlords to more thoroughly account for security deposit funds withheld for repairs passed along the same line. That ordinance also allows tenants to pay security deposits in installments over three months.

The policy, which will take effect in March, is intended to increase access to housing for people who have been locked out of the conventional market because of years-old convictions or financial defaults. It’s doubly needed in a city where affordable rentals are in short supply, Eudaly said.

Long-standing federal fair housing laws that bar discrimination against protected classes such as race, sex and familial status don’t go far enough, Eudaly said. Red flags used by the rental housing industry to weed out problem tenants aren’t an accurate predictor of whether the renters would miss payments or violate their lease, she said.

“Research and data have laid a solid foundation for the decisions we made,” she said.

Fritz, the lone dissenter on the council, said she agreed with the goals of ending the disparate treatment of non-white renters revealed in years of fair housing audits conducted by the city.

But she went on to raise concerns about the lack of exemptions for violent crimes. And she said the policy as written would push landlords to sell their properties and developers to build outside of the city, ultimately pushing rents higher.

“Many people can no longer afford to rent in Portland,” she said before casting her vote. “This policy not only doesn’t solve for this problem, it may exacerbate it.”

The ordinance sets “low-barrier” screening criteria for landlords to use when they evaluate a renter’s application. It would limit checks to felony convictions within the past seven years and misdemeanors within the last three years. Renters wouldn’t be rejected for credit scores below 500, a court eviction order older than three years or insufficient credit history.

Landlords also can use their own criteria, but they must then provide written justification for denying a rental application.

Landlords have said few would choose the low-barrier screening criteria because it could put their property or other tenants at risk. But the alternative — providing written justification — will add to their administrative costs and push some landlords out of the business, they said.

In all cases, the policy would require landlords to advertise vacancies 72 hours before they begin accepting applications and to evaluate applications in the order they’re received.

And they can't require tenants to earn more than two-and-a-half times the monthly rent in income. Many landlords today require renters to make three times the monthly rent.

The official rules for the policy will be drafted by the Portland Housing Bureau, which will also provide an annual report on whether the rules are working as expected. Council members who supported the policy said the city would put on a robust effort to inform landlords and tenants alike of the new rules before they take effect.

The new rules add to a litany of renter protections and housing regulations put in place by the city and the state government in recent years.

Portland in 2016 mandated that developers of new apartments include rent-restricted units. In 2017 it began to require landlords to pay thousands of dollars to renters who move because of big rent increases or evictions without cause, a policy that remains the subject of a legal challenge.

This year, the state capped rent increases at 7 percent plus the rate of inflation and it banned landlords from evicting tenants without stated cause. In the cases where tenants can be evicted without violating their lease — to remodel or sell the home, for example — the landlord would have to pay the tenant one month's rent to offset the cost of moving.

Citing safety concerns, City Council imposes longer penalties for park violations

By Diana Kruzman

June 19, 2019

The Portland City Council voted Wednesday to broaden park rangers' authority to exclude people from city parks and facilities for committing serious violations such as bias crimes or child abuse.

The amendment to the current code, which passed unanimously, lengthened the amount of time someone could be excluded from a park for violating park rules or engaging in "disruptive behavior" and lengthened to three years the period of time during which a repeat violation would elicit an enhanced exclusion.

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty was not present for the vote.

"Both visitors and staff have reported isolated examples of concerning behavior" at city parks and facilities, Parks Security and Emergency Manager Vicente Harrison said at a June 12 City Council meeting to consider the proposal. "Today's update helps rangers and other staff keep everyone safe."

Some members of the public expressed concerns that the stricter rules could be used to target mentally ill or homeless individuals by labeling them "disruptive" or banning them from parks without providing social services.

Portland Parks & Recreation currently uses two methods to maintain order in city parks and facilities: ejections, which remove someone from a park for the rest of the day, and exclusions, which bar that person from returning to the park from which they were ejected for at least 30 days. People who have been excluded from parks once before in the last two years face a 90-day exclusion and those who have been excluded twice or more are given a 180-day penalty.

Wednesday's vote aimed to impose stricter penalties for people who "cause harm to vulnerable persons" – such as children, mentally ill or disabled individuals or the elderly – commit bias crimes or act in a way that could cause "bodily injury or serious property damage." Park violations falling into these categories will be extended to 60 days for the first offense, 120 days for the second and 270 days for the third.

While park exclusions apply just to the park where the violation was committed, under the new amendment people excluded from the most highly developed park facilities – such as community centers, swimming pools and golf courses – can be banned from multiple locations.

The goal, according to Harrison, was to protect parks employees – particularly teenage lifeguards who work at the city's public swimming pools – from potential threats from serial violators.

The new regulation directs park officers to "attempt" to give an oral warning before issuing an exclusion but does not require that such a warning happen. It also provides for an appeals process that people who have been excluded can follow.

Public commenter Edith Gillis said at the June 12 meeting that rangers should receive more training to be prepared to deal with vulnerable populations in city parks.

"I want us to be much more aware of class and of ability and of culture and of language and bias of those who are perceiving, labeling and responding to different behaviors," Gillis said.

Some city commissioners echoed these concerns.

"We have a lot of policies that have very good intentions, but at the end of the day they actually have a very negative impact on the most vulnerable in our community," Hardesty said at the June 12 hearing.

Portland police chief relaxes education standard for new recruits, allowing no college; may also allow tattoos above collar, beards

*By Maxine Bernstein
June 19, 2019*

Facing a critical staffing shortage, Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw next month is relaxing hiring standards for the bureau: A high school diploma or GED certificate now will be sufficient.

And there's more: Tattoos above the collar and beards might also be allowed.

The change in the education requirement take effect July 1, the chief announced Wednesday.

The bureau has 128 officer vacancies and hasn't been able to fill them as fast as veterans are retiring, with another large wave of retirements expected in August 2020.

"We will revisit the effectiveness of these changes after two years to determine if our hiring numbers have increased," Outlaw said in a statement.

Times have changed and "what we look for in today's police officer has evolved," Outlaw said.

"Access to post-secondary education isn't the same for everyone, as we know," she said in an email to The Oregonian/OregonLive. "Removing any potential barriers for entry allows us to increase our selection pool and also allows us to become more competitive as an employer."

Mayor Ted Wheeler, who also serves as the city's police commissioner, supports the chief's decision, said spokeswoman Eileen Park.

Past Portland police chiefs have grappled with the education standard for officers.

In 2001, former Chief Mark Kroeker lowered Portland's four-year college degree requirement to the current standard: an associate degree or a minimum of 60 college credits, two years of active U.S. military duty, four years in the military reserves or two years of law enforcement experience at another agency. Former Chief Charles Moose set the four-year degree standard in 1996, arguing that the complexities of the job demanded more education.

When former Chief Rosie Sizer considered lowering the standard to a high school diploma or equivalency degree in 2007, she faced pushback from community members who attended her Chief's Forum.

Then, some residents questioned the wisdom of lowering standards when the job demanded so many varied skills. And others didn't like the suggestion that lowering the standards might improve diversity in hiring. But several supporters said life skills and street smarts are more important than a college education.

Outlaw said she's choosing to align the bureau with state law enforcement standards for police certification.

The bureau will provide incentive pay to officers who pursue higher education and earn degrees. And as of July 1, applicants who hold college degrees or have experience at other police agencies will no longer have to take a National Testing Network exam. All others will have to pass the test within 60 days of being placed on the bureau's hiring eligibility list.

Officer Daryl Turner, president of the Portland Police Association, isn't too sure that lowering the educational standard will help the bureau, considering what he calls anti-police sentiment among some city commissioners and outspoken community members that he believes drives applicants away.

"Right now, with our catastrophic staffing issues, I don't know if the changes in the hiring standards will help with recruits," he said. "People who want to come here want to be able to do the job. Right now, in the city of Portland, our hands are tied. We can't enforce some rules, but we can enforce others."

Turner said the bureau needs applicants who are "well-qualified" and able to pass the bureau's background checks, keep a cool head and think quickly on their feet.

Lt. Craig Morgan, president of the Portland Police Commanding Officers Association, said, "On its face, the GED requirement is concerning, because we really value education. With that said, we recognize the troubles with hiring and appreciate the Bureau had to try something different."

In 2007, when Sizer floated the idea of requiring only a high school diploma or equivalency degree, then-police union president Robert King -- who is now the mayor's public safety adviser -- was adamantly opposed and noted studies that showed a correlation between education and officers' professionalism. At the time, King said, "Any time you step away from education as a criteria, you put the organizational effectiveness at risk."

King said Wednesday the bureau is facing a staffing crisis that he couldn't have imagined back then and that the bureau is "taking proactive steps to increase the applicant pool to address the risks we face due to officers shortages."

“This adjustment is consistent with standards all across our state,” King said. The bureau “will fill the vacant positions with excellent police officer candidates,” he said.

Turner said he’s also unsure about allowing tattoos on the neck and face.

“The Police Bureau should mirror the community it serves. Would someone with tattoos above the collar be hired by Nike or Columbia or other big corporations?” Turner asked. “When police have someone come to their front door, especially in their time of need, what do they expect to see? They might wonder if they’re getting the service they need.”

It’s not right to judge people based on their appearances, he said, but it’s impossible to get around “first impressions.”

Morgan said he had fewer concerns about the proposed tattoo policy. “Gotta change as social norms do,” he said.

Officers currently can have tattoos below the collar, but they’re examined to ensure there’s nothing sexually explicit, racially or sexually biased or could be viewed as discriminatory, according to the bureau. The same reviews would apply to tattoos above the collar.

Allowing beards isn’t as controversial. The main constraint: Beards wouldn’t be able to interfere with the proper fit of any police equipment or gear.

The beard and tattoo policies are in review and will be sent out for public comment. The bureau gave no estimated date for when the policies might change.

Portland’s housing bond off to strong start but risks not serving veterans, seniors as promised, audit finds

*By Elliot Njus
June 19, 2019*

Portland’s independent auditors found encouraging early results from the city’s \$258 million housing bond, though they raised concerns that some groups targeted for help could fall through the cracks.

The report from Auditor Mary Hull Caballero’s office said the city has used clear, consistent criteria in choosing its first five housing projects. (The city has since announced a sixth.) Each of the projects, the audit says, appears to advance the city’s goals for the bond.

The audit warned, however, that seniors, veterans and people with disabilities — three groups identified as priorities in the bond’s ballot language — might not get the attention voters were promised when they approved the bond in 2016.

The framework approved by the Portland City Council for evaluating buildings for purchase with housing bond funds included seniors and people with disabilities only as subgroups and it left out veterans altogether.

And a list of community groups that get advance notice when low-income units become available doesn’t include any groups that focus on veterans, seniors or people with disabilities.

“By not not focusing more precisely on the populations described in the ballot measure, (the Portland Housing Bureau) risks losing the trust of voters who may have expected each population to be prioritized for housing,” the auditor’s office wrote.

Mayor Ted Wheeler and Housing Bureau Director Shannon Callahan responded to the audit, saying the city would work harder to make it clear that projects should serve those priority groups.

Most housing bond projects are still under development and only two are already serving residents: the Ellington apartments, a nearly 70-year-old complex that was already occupied when it was bought by the city, and a new apartment building at Southeast 105th Avenue and East Burnside Street, which the city bought from a developer as it neared completion.

The audit comes as the city is preparing to revamp how it uses housing bond money.

Voters in November approved an amendment to the state Constitution that allows the city to contribute bond money to affordable housing projects from private and nonprofit developers. The hope is that the money will go farther because it can be combined with other funding sources, such as federal tax credits, that generally aren't available for publicly owned housing.

That means the city will have less control over the populations being served, and the city will need to carefully monitor the projects it funds to ensure it's keeping the promises it made to voters, the audit said.

Portland police Lt. Jeff Niiya shared doubts about Joey Gibson's promises to be peaceful at protests, emails show

*By Maxine Bernstein
June 20, 2019*

The Portland police lieutenant under investigation for his friendly text and email exchanges with right-wing protest leader Joey Gibson at one point told his supervisors that he had started to doubt Gibson's promises to remain peaceful.

Lt. Jeff Niiya shared his concerns as the Police Bureau was preparing for competing rallies planned for Dec. 23, 2017 -- Gibson's March for Jesus event and Direct Action Alliance's community feed and clothing drive.

"I am losing stock in Joey's word as he get (sic) wrapped up in the crowd mentality and also cannot control those who attend," Niiya wrote to supervisors in a memo six days before the two events.

Niiya told his supervisors that Gibson billed the march as a family-friendly gathering and asked if police could notify him when anti-fascist counter-demonstrators were about to arrive so Gibson's Patriot Prayer group could try to avoid them.

The memo was included in about 500 pages of emails released late Wednesday by the Police Bureau in response to a public records request made in February seeking Niiya's communications as the bureau's crowd control liaison.

The emails show Niiya contributing to police security plans for a wide range of events -- from a visit by U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions to a protest of federal lawmakers' net neutrality vote to the mayor's concerns about demonstrators showing up on the doorstep of his home. The emails also reveal how closely police monitor what law enforcement agencies outside Oregon experience in their cities.

Niiya now holds a different job in the Police Bureau while an internal investigation continues into his lengthy exchanges with Gibson and an outside firm looks into whether the bureau's handling of city protests has favored one group above another.

In February, the public disclosure of an earlier cache of hundreds of emails and text messages between Gibson and Niiya from 2017 and 2018, ignited a firestorm, with critics decrying them as evidence of their long-standing fears that police have colluded with ultra-conservative demonstrators and targeted leftist opponents.

The hundreds of pages of emails released Wednesday night reveal Niiya's and police supervisors' planning steps and intelligence gathering for city demonstrations in 2017.

For the dueling events on Dec. 23, 2017, Niiya concluded his memo by reminding supervisors that "history tells us these two groups have the propensity to become violent and aggressive with each other."

He recommended two potential police responses: Don't staff the events, but if a confrontation occurs and police are called, patrol officers can respond. Or have some Rapid Response Teams available that day to respond. The bureau decided to have two Rapid Response Teams on standby that day.

On that day, Niiya did end up texting Gibson that counter-protesters were moving toward his group, writing, "Heads up just told 4-5 black Bloch heading your way. One carrying a flag. We will have officers nearby but you may want think about moving soon if more come."

In other emails, Niiya expressed concerns about the safety of a left-wing protester, June Davies, who was outed by other activists for sharing information with Niiya. Some accused Davies, known as "Gia," of being an informant for the police.

Their text exchanges spanned months, often discussing police presence at protests, how activists might respond and Davies inquiring if certain people had been arrested during marches, with Niiya providing what information he could.

In October 2017, police received an email from "traitoramongus@riseup.net," which said, "RCA and PNWAFWC are aware you have had conversations with Tan/June they are likely to socially, economically or physically hurt her in retaliation. Would Portland Police like to know who are the top people of Rose City Antifa and Pacific Northwest Anti-Fascist Workers Collective? What could Portland Police do with that kind of information? It is the leadership that calls shots and often sits back from the frontlines making decisions and telling younger activists who you arrest what to do and getting them into trouble they might not have done on their own and without the peer pressure."

In response, Niiya wrote:

From: Niiya, Jeffrey

Subject: RE: Tan/June

To: traitoramongus@riseup.net

Sent: October 21, 2017 5:58 PM

I apologize for taking so long to respond back as I have been trying to process

what has occurred. I am very concerned for June's welfare after learning some in the community have taken offense to our communications. I hope people can see in the messages

she tried helping those protesting be safe by making requests of us and gathering information from me as well.

My role as a liaison to multiple people and groups has the intentions to allow people to have their first amendment rights while be considerate of everyone's safety.

In response to your questions, we are always interested if individuals are committing crimes, asking others to commit crimes, or placing people's safety into question. In the case of June, if she is in danger because someone has asked others to harm her we would like to know this and understand why.

If you have any information on June's well-being I would like to know she is ok. I would hate to see someone get hurt or self-harm over some protests or these political issues.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

The correspondences released late Wednesday also revealed that Niiya fielded emails from different interest groups, including a business owner getting harassed online because she asked for more police presence in Northwest Portland to a rabbi offering police ways to help "change the narrative of police collusion" with white nationalist groups.

Shared among police working on crowd control was a redacted "ANTIFA Tactics" memo, from the San Francisco Fusion Center and sent to Portland police by the Oregon Department of Justice. Police also distributed an advisory bulletin from the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center titled "Violent Tactics Showcased at Berkeley Riots Likely To Be Used at Future Demonstrations."

In preparation for Nov. 4, 2017, protests marking the one-year anniversary of the presidential election and a "Refuse Fascism" event, a Portland officer wrote an email to Niiya and other police supervisors that Mayor Ted Wheeler was concerned about protesters coming to his home.

"I recommended that the mayor's family go to the vacation home for that weekend so that we do not have to deal with that variable. They agreed ... but the mayor will most likely stay in pdx," Officer Darke Hull wrote on Sept., 26, 2017.

Wednesday's release of documents represents just a part of the requested correspondences. The bureau is expected to release additional material in the future.

The Portland Tribune

Homeless organization unveils mobile shower, laundry trucks

*By Jim Redden
June 19, 2019*

The two large trucks sponsored by Oregon Harbor of Hope will travel to locations near homeless camps throughout the region

After two years of planning, fundraising and work, Oregon Harbor of Hope unveiled two large box trucks modified to help the homeless on Wednesday, June 19.

One truck holds showers, a dog wash and a sink. The other holds four washers, four dryers, two chairs for haircuts and laundry supplies. The OHOH Mobile Assistance Program will serve

multiple locations on a rotating schedule, staying for one day at each site and then moving to the next location in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties.

"We have worked tirelessly with our community, donors and partner organizations to find solutions for the homeless crisis in Portland. Today, we are officially activating our trucks around the city. We're experiencing some of the hottest weather we've seen all year, and it feels gratifying to offer people a safe place to take a refreshing shower and receive clean clothes," OHOH Deputy Director and Operations Manager Lisa Marandas said when the trucks were displayed at the west end of the Springwater Corridor Trail in Southeast Portland, one of their planned frequent stops.

OHOH is a nonprofit organization founded by developer Homer Williams. It is also preparing to open the region's first homeless navigation center and homeless shelter near the west end of the Broadway Bridge.

According to OHOH Director Don Mazziotti, the cost of buying and converting the two trucks is around \$400,000, with some costs contributed by supporters, including George Moreland Plumbing Supply, which donated the internal plumbing.

"While we know that no single organization nor strategy can rectify our region's homeless crisis and housing shortage, this program is a step in the right direction towards real, positive progress," sa said Williams. "None of this would be possible without the generosity of our donors and partners. Together, we're working hard to create positive change for homeless adults and children in our community."

Anyone interested in supporting the project or OHOH can go to www.oregonharborofhope.org to donate directly.

"We are asking the community to partner with us in this initiative and help spread the word about this program," said Marandas

ODOT's anti-camping tactics split opinions in Goose Hollow

By Zane Sparling

June 20, 2019

The Oregon Department of Transportation studded a slope near Interstate 405 with boulders in Portland.

The rosebuds planted on the slope of a bustling on-ramp have blossomed into boulders. The large rocks are an anti-camping tactic that has divided opinions in Portland's tony Goose Hollow neighborhood.

Beginning in mid-June, the Oregon Department of Transportation studded the wooded area near Southwest 14th Avenue and Montgomery Street with rocks, which borders an entrance to Interstate 405.

ODOT says the "disincentive landscaping" and several similar projects will cost around \$1 million, though the agency expects to save money over time.

"There's an awful lot of money spent to clean up these parcels," said ODOT's Don Hamilton. "It's a very, very effective technique for keeping people out of harm's way."

ODOT will pay Portland up to \$2 million annually to clean up state property along interstates 405, 205, 84 and 5 and near state highways. The hand-off begins July 1.

Before the boulders landed at Gander Ridge, campers were accused of committing home invasions, using and selling drugs, having sex in public, making threats while carrying weapons, car break-ins, burglaries and bicycle theft. There have been propane tank fires as well.

"Boulders were not favored by the neighbors at first, but they acquiesced when they saw that the roses they planted weren't working," according to Tracy Prince, president of the Goose Hollow Foothills League neighborhood association.

It was Tiffany Hammer's idea to plant the rose bushes.

The mother of three and local property owner paid about \$700 for the 80 thorny plants, but campers returned and tore up much of it. "We all shared that helpless feeling of being a victim," she said.

Other residents think the boulders are no more than a Band-Aid. Michael Mehaffy, an internationally known urbanist and architectural theorist who lives in Goose Hollow, said Portland has failed to deal with the root causes of homelessness.

"We're making these places unpleasant for human beings," Mehaffy said. "That really isn't a solution. It's a sorry state to be."

ODOT says it's stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Complaints regarding property owned by ODOT — a state agency — often end up misdirected to Portland City Hall. The state agency historically has followed a set rotation for cleanups, rather than putting priority on hot spots. It doesn't provide campers with connections to shelters, outreach or other resources.

"ODOT is not a social services agency," said Hamilton, the spokesman. "We are not a police agency. We are a property owner in this world of illegal campers."

Hard rock display

In the past year, ODOT has expended roughly \$1 million on hostile architecture on its property to deter camping. Here's where:

- Southwest 14th Avenue at Montgomery Street
- Northwest Couch Street at Interstate 405
- Southwest Terwillger Boulevard at Interstate 5
- Between Southwest Market and Clay street at 13th Avenue
- Boulders also were placed along Foster Road near I-205 several years ago.

City Council passes rental screening reforms

*By KOIN 6 News
June 20, 2019*

The Fair Access in Renting regulations are supported by many renters but opposed by many landlords

Portland City Council passed a sweeping set of regulations intended to reduce housing discrimination and improve access to rental housing on Wednesday, June 19.

The Fair Access in Renting regulations — or FAIR — sponsored by Commissioner Chloe Eudaly passed 3 to 1. Voting with Eudaly were Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioner Nick Fish. Voting no was Commissioner Amanda Fritz. Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty was absent.

FAIR will change the criteria used to screen potential tenants and regulate the security deposit process. It changes the screening criteria, limiting the use of credit and criminal histories, changing income requirements and doing away with the need for a government ID.

Eudaly has been pushing for this ordinance for two years, gaining the support of many local renters and tenant advocacy groups. Many landlords opposed the regulations, however.

"It is no secret that Portland has a long history of overtly racist housing laws — the effects of which still shape our City today. What we fail to acknowledge more readily is that many of our current laws continue to uphold discriminatory practices," Eudaly said.

Although Wheeler voted in favor, he said one problem with the new policy is there is no budget for its implementation. Wheeler said he will not support taking funding from public safety.

Fritz cited a potential adverse effect on affordable housing for her opposition.

"Many people can not afford rent in Portland," Fritz said. "This policy not only doesn't solve the problem, it may exasperate it. One way is through loss of rental stock. Landlords are just not threatening to sell their rental stocks because of this policy — they already have."

The new rules go into effect next March if funding is implemented.

KOIN News 6 is a news partner of the Portland Tribune.

Portland police to relax educational and grooming requirements

By Nick Budnick

June 19, 2019

Battling a staff shortage and hiring crisis, Chief Danielle Outlaw wants to boost recruiting

Neck and face tattoos, facial hair or education of only a GED will no longer block would-be cops from joining the Portland Police Bureau.

The Portland Police's difficulties in hiring have gotten so bad that Chief Danielle Outlaw is removing the city's long-standing requirement that new recruits must have either two years of military or law enforcement experience or a two-year college associate's degree.

"To remain competitive, PPB will place emphasis on transferable skills, relevant life experience, and bureau-specific standards that can lead to qualified individuals," Outlaw wrote in an email to officers on Friday, June 14. "There will always be recruitment challenges, but I am confident by broadening our candidate options, it will expose the PPB in ways that will make us stronger."

Previously, people with a GED could become Portland police, but they would have to have spent two years either in the military, as a cop elsewhere, or as a probation or corrections officer.

Outlaw is proposing the Portland-only standards be dropped in order to better compete for new recruits. Other agencies in Oregon require only a high school degree or a GED degree, which is considered equivalent to high school.

The move to relax educational requirements, which was first reported by the Portland Tribune, has sparked grumbling among some longtime Portland officers. After the Tribune published an article, the police bureau issued a press release with a prepared statement by Outlaw.

"These changes to policies were made after careful review of our hiring process in the attempt to identify potential barriers to entry," said Chief Danielle Outlaw. "We will revisit the effectiveness of these changes after two years to determine if our hiring numbers have increased."

The release added that "the Bureau will continue to provide incentive pay to officers who pursue higher education and earn degrees. PPB will also continue to develop training and learning opportunities to ensure all officers receive necessary education and tools to develop and advance."

But critics of lowering educational standards say it will reduce the life-experience and worldliness of new cops.

"The job is getting more complicated, more difficult," said T.J. Browning, a longtime citizen activist who used to sit on the advisory council to the police civilian oversight office. "We need more training, not less ... Think of those other poor police officers who work so hard out there — now they have to worry about this? I know you don't learn everything in college, but it certainly forces you into more experiential opportunities than a G.E.D."

Zakir Khan of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Oregon chapter, pointed out that some research has indicated police use force less often when they have more education.

The ban on facial tattoos and facial hair dates back to April 2000, when Portland's then-new chief, Mark Kroeker instituted a military-style grooming policy that sparked loud criticism from his own officers. He also pushed for lowering Portland's educational requirements from a four-year degree to two years.

In 2007, then-chief Rosie Sizer proposed eliminating the two-year degree requirement only to be met with criticism, including from the then-president of the Portland Police Association, Robert King.

"Any time you step away from education as a criteria, you put the organizational effectiveness at risk," King told The Oregonian/Oregonlive at the time, adding that research showed a correlation between professionalism and education.

King is now Mayor Ted Wheeler's liaison with the police bureau, and the Portland Police Association could not be reached for comment. Chief Outlaw did not respond to a request for comment. A Portland Police Bureau spokeswoman, Lt. Kristina Jones, said she was working on it and then did not respond. Instead, the bureau issued a press release nearly four hours after being contacted by the Tribune.

Despite passage of a generous police contract under Mayor Charlie Hales, hiring has not kept pace with vacancies at the Portland Police Bureau. The agency has been running 100 officers short, and bureau insiders say police response time have suffered. The shortage is expected to worsen by August 2020, when a large number of retirements are expected to hit.

Outlaw, in her letter, also said the bureau will hire an outside marketing firm to assist the bureau. Outlaw likened it to an officer calling for backup, saying, "Basically, the PPB is calling for cover."

The full text of the letter follows:

Good Afternoon,

As we continue to talk about the difficulties in hiring police officers and the projection of retirements in the coming years, it is time to step back and take a breath. From this perspective, we have evaluated all processes around recruitment, including the application process.

Beginning July 1st, PPB will match with Oregon state law enforcement hiring standards. This will affect our Portland-specific education requirement. State of Oregon requires a high school diploma or GED to be hired as a police officer. PPB will follow this model moving forward. The bureau will continue to honor officers who pursue higher education and earn degrees—with incentive pay. We will also continue to develop training and learning opportunities to ensure all officers receive necessary education and tools to develop and advance. Many Washington, California, and surrounding Portland metro area law enforcement agencies have the same basic qualifications. To remain competitive, PPB will place emphasis on transferable skills, relevant life experience, and bureau-specific standards that can lead to qualified individuals.

We will also match the State guidelines in who is required to take the Frontline Test through the National Testing Network (NTN). We currently ask all applicants to take this test; moving forward candidates with bachelor's degrees and lateral experience will not be required to take the exam and all others will be required to pass the test within 60 days of being placed on the eligible list.

Another change will be in the absolute exclusion of neck/facial tattoos and/or facial hair. We will move to an exceptions process for approval of existing tattoos and facial hair must allow for a mask to fit appropriately over the face for protection.

It is also important we take a moment and think about retention, how PPB can offer supportive life balance strategies through part-time employment opportunities for sworn and non-sworn employees. We are still working out some of the details of this offering and more details will follow in the coming weeks.

I know we have been through some difficult times, and I understand the frustrations expressed. The work of a police officer is difficult, and can be extremely challenging in our city. I value each one of you and the hard work you do every single day. I know you all do a lot of unseen little things that make big differences in the lives of many. Keep doing it. There will always be recruitment challenges, but I am confident by broadening our candidate options, it will expose the PPB in ways that will make us stronger.

We have also begun work with a marketing firm to increase police presence on a different level. In an effort to tell our own story, put forth a message of service and inclusivity, and draw interest from potential candidates, we are glad to have the help on this one. Basically, the PPB is calling for cover.

Thank you for the work you do.

Chief Outlaw

Willamette Week

Portland City Council Passes New Tenant Protections Aimed at Helping People With Criminal Histories

*By Rachel Monahan
June 19, 2019*

By a vote of 3-1, Portland City Council moves forward with screening policies and security deposit protections.

City Commissioner Chloe Eudaly has successfully championed tenant protections designed to offer people with criminal histories a better chance at securing apartments.

The June 19 vote by Portland City Council to approve those protections represents a significant political victory for Eudaly, who worked toward passing the policy for the last two years. She says the final policy came from working and being pushed to understand how black Portlanders and others continue to face discrimination in the housing market.

"It is no secret that Portland has a long history of overtly racist housing laws—the effects of which still shape our city today," Eudaly said before casting her vote in support. "What we fail to acknowledge more readily is that many of our current laws continue to uphold discriminatory practices. While the language may be less explicit now, the effect is just as clear: we continue to see communities of color, and especially black residents, pushed to the margins of our city and beyond at an alarming rate."

She continued: "The heart of the Fair Access in Renting policies is about addressing the criteria that continue to be used in as a proxy for race, which includes criminal records, income requirements, and credit scores which leads to discrimination and disparate outcomes."

The ordinance requires landlords to consider applications on a first-come, first-served basis after providing 72 hours of notice for available apartments.

Landlords must not turn down a potential tenant for making less than 2.5 times the rent. The policy pushes them to use criteria that include accepting tenants who has a felony from more than seven years ago—or putting in writing their own reasons for a rejection.

The security-deposit ordinance limits security deposits in most cases to no more than one month's rent and restricts when a landlord has the right to take that money.

"We built the most comprehensive screening criteria reform policy in the country, and I am proud of how we did it and why," Eudaly added today.

Eudaly was elected in 2016 on a platform of addressing Portland's housing crisis. A month into office, in 2017, Eudaly quickly passed a "relocation ordinance," which requires landlords to cover moving costs in the event of a no-cause eviction or a rent increase of upwards of 9.9 percent. (The Oregon Legislature this session passed a landmark rent cap statewide, in a bill that heavily restricts no-cause evictions.)

That policy had the support of Mayor Ted Wheeler, who had similarly campaigned on the issue. But on this policy the mayor was a reluctant supporter.

The successful vote had been expected since at least last month, when Commissioner Nick Fish signaled his support, providing the third vote. Today, Eudaly, Fish and Wheeler voted yes. (The

vote was ultimately 3-to-1, with Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, who also publicly supported the ordinance, absent.)

City Commissioner Amanda Fritz voted no. In her remarks today, she warned the new criteria would decrease investment in Portland's housing market and ultimately harm renters. (Fritz is also a skeptic of supply-side solutions to the housing shortage, including opposing some upzonings as well as residential infill project, which she has argued can increase displacement in some neighborhoods.)

Fritz also cited the lack of exceptions in the screening criteria for “violent crimes, even rape and murder” for landlords who want to use the city-created “low-barrier screening criteria,” rather than coming up with their own system to meet the city’s policy.

“On the day of release from prison, every landlord in Portland would be required to accept that application if they use the low-barrier screening criteria,” Fritz said before voting against the ordinance.

The plans for the policy, first reported by WW last year, evolved over the two years, as Eudaly's office hashed out the details of the policy with stakeholders, tenant advocates and landlords.

After criticisms from affordable housing developers, Eudaly's office went back for another round of revisions and proof that the policies would work.

Besides the practical need to assuage affordable housing developers, who provide critical low-cost housing to people Eudaly was seeking to support, that round of revisions was viewed as a political necessity for winning the votes of Fish and Wheeler.

Eudaly's office has already set its eye on the next big policy change with its own potentially heavy political lift: a system of bus-only lanes throughout the city.

The Portland Mercury

Portland Police Lower Officer Hiring Standards to Address Poor Recruitment Rates

*By Alex Zielinski
June 19, 2019*

Facing a concerning decline in officer recruitment and retention rates, the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) has chosen to roll back some of its new hire requirements.

Starting July 1, PPB will no longer demand incoming officers have a degree from a two-year college or university. Instead, applicants will only need a high school diploma or GED to become a certified officer—the minimum state standard for law enforcement officials.

PPB currently requires all applicants take a test administered by the National Testing Network (NTN). According to NTN's website, the test "focuses on using good judgment in enforcement, public relations and teamwork." Starting July 1, applicants with a four-year college degree will not have to take this test.

Along with these education level tweaks, PPB will let all new and current officers have tattoos that can be seen above their collar (as long as they aren't "sexually explicit, racially and/or sexually biased or could be viewed as discriminatory"). Plus! Officers can now grow beards.

While PPB's new officer requirements have lowered, their entry-level salaries remain the same. In the past five years, a new PPB officer's annual salary has risen from \$47,000 to \$64,400.

PPB's troubles with attracting—and retaining—new officers bubbled to the surface in March, during city conversations around the PPB budget. At the time, PPB had a total of 75 open officer positions. That number has since risen to 128, according to a Wednesday press release sent by PPB.

Both PPB Chief Danielle Outlaw and Daryl Turner, president of the Portland Police Association, blamed this downturn on the national perception of Portland law enforcement.

"Working here in Portland is unique, and it's been recognized all over the country," Outlaw said at a council meeting. "We deal with demonstrations, protests, crowd management things... We catch a lot of headlines. And, quite frankly, folks would rather go to other agencies and make similar or more money for less scrutiny."

Turner, as always, put it more bluntly.

"The reason the Police Bureau is experiencing catastrophic staffing shortages, drastically declining recruiting success, and the inability to retain officers is due to one core issue: The intense anti-police sentiment in our city that City Council seems to share," wrote Turner in April.

Outlaw explained her decision to change hiring requirements in an email to PPB staff, which was obtained by the Portland Tribune.

"There will always be recruitment challenges," Outlaw wrote, "but I am confident by broadening our candidate options, it will expose the PPB in ways that will make us stronger."

She also said that PPB has hired a marketing firm to improve the public's perception of the police department.

"In an effort to tell our own story, put forth a message of service and inclusivity, and draw interest from potential candidates, we are glad to have the help on this one," she wrote.

"Basically, the PPB is calling for cover."

In Wednesday's press release sent to media, Outlaw said the department decided to change the hiring standards in an "attempt to identify potential barriers to entry."

"We will revisit the effectiveness of these changes after two years," she added, "to determine if our hiring numbers have increased."

The Portland Observer

Renovation Falls Short

June 19, 2019

Renovation of the Portland Building is over budget by \$19 million, has not complied with equity goals, and the work needs greater public transparency, an audit released last week by the City Auditor found. Mayor Ted Wheeler disagreed with many of the findings, but pledged that the yet-to-be spent \$1 million set aside for equity grants, "though delayed, will be realized."

Promoted to Fire Chief

June 19, 2019

Sara Boone rises from the ranks

The first female African American firefighter in Portland history has been promoted to become Fire Chief for Portland Fire and Rescue, another glass ceiling shattered.

Fire Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty appointed Division Chief Sara Boone as Fire Chief of Portland Fire and Rescue last week. She has been with the department for 24 years, rising through the ranks from entry-level firefighter.

Boone spent the majority of her career in emergency operations before transitioning into assignments as the Bureau's Safety Chief, Logistics Deputy Chief, and currently, the Division Chief of Medical Services and Training.

"Chief Boone impressed our interview panels with her commitment to community, her technical knowledge, her passion for the fire service, and her leadership style," said Commissioner Hardesty. "Chief Boone is well-respected throughout the bureau and we have a great collaborative relationship. I know that she has the vision and experience to lead the bureau as it takes on new challenges. I am confident that she will make sure our city is safe and cared for under her watch."

In 1995, Chief Boone became the first African-American female firefighter to enter the ranks of Portland Fire & Rescue since its inception in 1883 and will become the first African-American Fire Chief for the city.

Chief Boone was raised in northeast Portland and still calls Portland her home. She attended Lincoln High School and excelled as an athlete, earning all-state and all-American honors in track and field. She earned an athletic scholarship to Boise State University, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in secondary education. While completing her student teaching at Marshall High School, she had a chance encounter with a fire inspector who encouraged her to test for Portland Fire & Rescue's first firefighter apprenticeship program.

"I am deeply honored to be the next Fire Chief of Portland Fire & Rescue, a bureau I hold in high esteem because of the men and women who serve with honor, integrity, and sacrifice." says Chief Boone. "My mission has always been caring for the city where I was raised. I am committed to ensuring that our responsiveness and our professionalism live up to the highest ideals of service, integrity, and equity."

When Commissioner Hardesty first took office in January, she planned to execute a national search for the fire bureau's next chief. After receiving feedback from the members of the bureau and meeting department personnel, she decided to start with an internal search.

"It was clear that there were many talented leaders within Portland Fire & Rescue already and I wanted to put my focus there," Hardesty said.

A swearing in ceremony for Chief Boone is planned for the beginning of August.

OPB

Portland Requires Landlords To Use First-Come-First-Served System To Choose Tenants

By Amelia Templeton

June 19, 2019

In a 3-1 vote, the Portland City Council adopted a sweeping package of regulations Wednesday addressing how landlords screen their prospective tenants.

Passage of the ordinance marks a major accomplishment for Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who has made renters' rights her signature issue and spent close to two years working on the policy.

What's called the "Fair Access In Renting" ordinance creates a first-come-first-served system for rental applications, prioritizes accessible units for people with disabilities, caps the income-to-rent ratio landlords can require of their tenants, and places some limits on the use of credit and criminal histories as criteria for denying a person's rental application.

Casting her vote, Eudaly said for too long those criteria have been used as a proxy for race, permitting a legal form of discrimination.

"It is no secret that Portland has a long history of overtly racist housing laws," Eudaly said casting her vote. "What we fail to acknowledge more readily is that many of our current laws continue to uphold discriminatory practices.

"While the language may be less explicit now, the effect is just as clear: We continue to see communities of color, and especially Black residents, pushed to the margins of our city and beyond at an alarming rate."

Commissioner Nick Fish and Mayor Ted Wheeler joined Eudaly in voting "yes" — and thanked her for her leadership and for seeking compromise.

The ordinance is set to take effect on March 1, 2020. The delay is intended to give the Housing Bureau more time to complete rule-making for the policy and to educate landlords on how to comply.

The mayor, casting his yes vote, noted that many uncertainties remain as to how the policy will be rolled out and enforced — and there is no plan yet for how to fund its implementation by the Portland Housing Bureau.

"I will not support the funding of these proposals coming at the expense of public safety or affordable housing production," he said.

Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty was absent for the vote.

Commissioner Amanda Fritz voted against it.

Fritz said she remains concerned that the ordinance will have unintended consequences — and could hurt the renters it is intended to help by driving up costs, discouraging new housing development, and prompting units that are currently rented to convert to owner-occupied housing.

"Many people can no longer afford rent in Portland; this policy not only does not solve for this problem, it may exacerbate it," she said. "I've heard this directly from landlords as well as from realtors."

Fritz said she also strongly objects to a screening process, which the ordinance encourages but does not require landlords to use. The ordinance's "low-barrier screening process" offers landlords a standard set of criteria, which allows rental candidates who have gone at least three years without a misdemeanor and seven years without a felony to be considered.

"Perhaps the most troubling in this policy is the lack of exceptions for people convicted of violent crimes, even rape and murder, in the low barrier screening process," she said. "Will any landlords choose to use the low-barrier process with that in mind?"

Landlords have vehemently opposed the ordinance and expressed dismay at its passage.

"If the average Portland voter knew what their City Council just did they would be outraged," said Deb Imse, Director of Multifamily Northwest, the lobbying and trade group representing landlords.

The Council also voted 3-1 to adopt new regulations to the security deposits that landlords charge, with Fritz again casting the lone no vote.

Key Points In The "Fair Access In Renting" Ordinance

First Come, First Served: Landlords must use a first-come-first-served application system for open units. They are required to give 72 hours' notice before they begin accepting applications for a unit. People with disabilities get priority for accessible units

Identification for Applicants: Applicants do not have to provide proof of citizenship or government-issued photo ID, if they have other forms of photo ID that can be reasonably used to verify their identity.

Income-To-Rent Ratios: Landlords can require applicants to have income that is 2.5 times the rent for less expensive units with monthly rents affordable (as determined by HUD) to those making at or below 80% of the Portland area's median family income.

For more expensive units, with monthly rents above that affordability standard, landlords can require applicants to have income at most 2 times the rent.

Criminal Background Checks: Landlords are encouraged to use a standard set of screening criteria. According to those criteria, applicants sentenced for a felony conviction more than seven years prior or sentenced for a misdemeanor more than three years prior would not be denied. Participation in a diversion program, expunged convictions and juvenile justice system proceedings would also not be reasons for denial.

Court-mandated prohibitions that prevent an applicant from living at a particular property would still apply.

Landlords could apply more stringent screening criteria, but if they do, they must give applicants an individual assessment and the opportunity to file an appeal.

Credit History Checks: Landlords would not reject an application with a credit score of 500 or higher.

Screening For Other Adults Living In A Unit: Only the applicant can be screened for their financial history. Other adults who will be living in the unit can be screened for their factors related to health, safety and property maintenance (i.e. a person's criminal background).

Exemptions:

- Owner-occupied duplexes, or landlords renting out an ADU on a property where they occupy the primary home, would be exempt from the screening policy.

- Landlords working directly with nonprofit service providers to house low-income or vulnerable tenants.
- Units not advertised for rental to the general public, or in which the landlord lives in part of the unit.
- If state, local or federal funding or loan requirements for tenant screening conflict with the policy, the loan requirements would take precedence.

Facing Officer Shortage, Portland Proposes New Standards For Beards, Tattoos - And Education

By Amelia Templeton

June 19, 2019

Portland Police officers may soon be allowed to grow beards, as long the facial hair doesn't interfere with their job performance, or "does not interfere with the proper fit of protective equipment," according to a police bureau statement.

The proposed beard policy was announced Wednesday, among a package of changes the bureau is making to deal with a critical shortage of officers and recruiting challenges.

The bureau is also proposing a relaxation of its standards for tattoos. Tattoos above the neck may be permitted, but police officials will review them to ensure they aren't sexually explicit, racially biased or discriminatory.

The Portland Police initially said the new approach to beards and tattoos would go into effect in a matter of weeks, but a revised statement Wednesday evening said those rules would instead "be updated and sent out for public review and comment prior to being accepted."

Also Wednesday, the bureau announced plans to lower its education requirement for new officers. It will now take candidates with a GED or high school diploma, rather than requiring more extensive education or relevant experience to qualify.

Candidates with bachelor's degrees or comparable work experience in law enforcement won't have to take a qualifying exam.

The bureau says its new, lower standards align with state law enforcement criteria for officer certification.

"These changes to policies were made after careful review of our hiring process in the attempt to identify potential barriers to entry," said Chief Danielle Outlaw. "We will revisit the effectiveness of these changes after two years to determine if our hiring numbers have increased."

The Bureau says it is trying to fill 128 officer vacancies and is anticipating more retirements next year.