

The Oregonian

Bomb threat at Portland City Hall prompts temporary evacuation

*By Everton Bailey and Gordon Friedman
July 2, 2019*

Portland City Hall was evacuated for about an hour Tuesday after someone made several phone calls to the city attorney's office claiming a bomb would explode in the building.

Police responded to City Hall around 12:15 p.m., cleared the building as a precaution and allowed people back in as of 1:13 p.m. when nothing suspicious was found.

Police have the number linked to the calls and an investigation is ongoing, said mayoral spokeswoman Eileen Park.

Kristin Dennis, the mayor's chief of staff, said the city has been receiving thousands of angry emails and phone calls a day since the mayor was criticized for his handling of a protest last weekend.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said in a statement that it's not clear if Tuesday's threat is related and that he's grateful no one was harmed.

"These threats of violence are alarming and create a sense of fear that no one should experience, but unfortunately, this is increasingly becoming a reality in local government," he said.

Wheeler and the city's police force have come under criticism after an attack on a conservative writer and others during downtown Portland demonstrations on Saturday.

The city core filled with hundreds of protesters of all stripes as Proud Boys followers, a #HimToo movement organizer and black-clad supporters of Rose City Antifa, many hiding their faces with dark motorcycle helmets or bandanas, converged.

Police eventually declared "civil disorder" as at least three people were assaulted -- two in bloody brawls videotaped by observers and widely shared on social media. A third person, writer Andy Ngo, was kicked, punched and deluged with milkshakes, in another video that went viral.

Portland's mayor, police chief send messages of support to officers in wake of criticism following Saturday's protests

*By Maxine Bernstein
July 2, 2019*

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and Police Chief Danielle Outlaw on Tuesday sent separate memos to the police force, reassuring officers of their support in the wake of criticism after violence broke out at the latest downtown protest.

Wheeler also responded to a rebuke from the police union president that he has handcuffed officers from taking swift action against brawling demonstrators. Wheeler characterized Officer Daryl Turner's remarks as "misinformation" and "false."

The memos came two days after the city made national news, with video images of a conservative writer and two other men getting attacked during roaming demonstrations Saturday.

Outlaw's memo offered her first detailed comments to Saturday's protests and police response.

"These events are challenging and take a toll on us," Outlaw wrote.

"Our agency and actions are highly scrutinized, and we often hear and see negative headlines during and after these events. If we make arrests, some say they were the wrong individuals or that we are favoring one side. If we use force, some say it is too much, and we are too aggressive. Then we also frequently hear we have not done enough.

"The reality is, a lot of effort and planning goes into these events and you are highly trained professionals."

The chief said the bureau is open to learning and that she'll continue to try to shine light on "the barriers we face during these incidents" to prevent violence.

Outlaw has previously said police can't be everywhere to stop an assault during protests and that officers sometimes aren't sent in to make immediate arrests to avoid inciting a tense crowd.

The expressions of support from Outlaw and Wheeler follow private listening sessions they held with officers in spring after they heard grumblings from many rank-and-file officers who expressed anger at the mayor's swift condemnation of friendly texts between Lt. Jeff Niiya, a crowd control liaison now under internal investigation, and Patriot Prayer founder Joey Gibson. After those sessions, both leaders vowed to show their support for officers going forward.

In his memo, Wheeler thanked officers for their difficult work trying to keep the peace during potentially volatile situations. He denounced the violence that broke out Saturday and said police did their job professionally.

"The recent demonstration brought people into our city bent on clashing, and you remained consummate professionals. You did your job and you served the community well," Wheeler wrote.

The mayor said he condemns violence of all forms and addressed what he called a "perception" that he, as police commissioner, has restricted officers' abilities to enforce the law.

Wheeler didn't identify Turner by name in his memo to officers but said, "My directives to the Chief and to you have always remained the same: ensure public safety and uphold the law. I have not and will not dictate tactics or place so-called 'handcuffs' on you because I rely on the extensive knowledge and experience of our Bureau to do what is needed based on the situation at hand."

But in separate comments on Facebook, Wheeler specifically responded to the union president and accused Turner of "politicizing the Bureau" by spreading false information that "spins up extremists and oversimplifies a very complex, fraught political dynamic in our city."

Turner had urged the mayor, who also serves as the city's police commissioner, to boldly proclaim that city won't tolerate any violence from "both Antifa and Proud Boys" and "remove the handcuffs" that are restraining police from stopping violence "through strong and swift enforcement." Turner said police need to be able to cite, detain or arrest anyone violating the law during unpermitted protests. Otherwise, he said, demonstrators "feel empowered to attack others."

Wheeler, in turn, accused Turner of "ginning up anger without offering any real solutions impedes progress."

Some commenters responded on the mayor's Facebook page with support for Wheeler, encouraging him to "stay the course." Others suggested Wheeler "suit up alongside" officers at protests or claimed his "liberal policies are ruining Portland."

"It's violence and has continued is the point. WHY? Because you see it coming and do nothing," wrote another commenter.

Conservative writer Andy Ngo details attack at Portland protest

By Christina Morales

July 2, 2019

A clash with demonstrators Saturday left conservative writer Andy Ngo with a brain hemorrhage, he wrote in an opinion piece in the Wall Street Journal on Tuesday.

Ngo — who described himself as a gay journalist of color — said he could have up to six months of memory loss from the hemorrhage, after he was beaten at an event for antifa, a left-leaning militant group. He said he also suffered a ripped earlobe.

He described being punched and kicked by about a dozen people dressed all in black, which he said was typical clothing for members of antifa.

Three people were arrested Saturday as protesters from the left and right held separate demonstrations and then converged at Pioneer Courthouse Square, which led to some instances of violence. None of the arrests were connected to the attack on Ngo.

Portland police and city Mayor Ted Wheeler have received national criticism of how the demonstrations were handled after videos and photos of Ngo being attacked went viral.

Ngo wrote that he was threatened, cursed at, blocked from walking around and followed by left-wing protesters. He said police didn't intervene.

When milkshakes were dumped on Ngo, he said, he immediately reported it to police. In the first incident, he said, officers told him they wouldn't approach the suspect, who was still in sight, because it could incite the crowd.

Ngo said a mob hit him in the face and the back of his head until he let go of his camera, which someone took. More "milkshakes, eggs, rocks, silly string and possibly pepper spray" were dumped on him.

Portland police Lt. Tina Jones, bureau spokeswoman, said police were "actively looking into that incident."

Jones said she doesn't know where officers were at the time Ngo was assaulted.

Officers during Saturday's protest were dealing with rapidly changing, dynamic demonstrations from at least three different groups and were intent on keeping the groups separated, while "doing what they could to facilitate free speech, she said.

When problems occur, "we respond as quickly as we can," Jones said.

Speaking generally and not specific to Ngo's complaints, Jones added, "We don't have the resources to be individual bodyguards."

If Ngo has specific complaints that police are not following their policies, Jones said she'd encourage him to file a complaint with the city's police oversight division called the Independent Police Review.

The Portland Tribune

Milkshake protest stirs up controversy across U.S.

*By Zane Sparling
July 1, 2019*

Ted Wheeler's adviser offers support to Andy Ngo, but says no 'physical evidence' of quick-drying cement

In the wake of a violent, Saturday, June 29 political rally that provoked nationwide attention, the Portland Police Bureau and Mayor Ted Wheeler found themselves, once again, playing defense.

Everyone from a U.S. senator to the president of the local GOP piled on criticism, with many wondering how only three people could be arrested during the sprawling, six-hour-long duel between conservative Proud Boys and the black-clad anti-fascists fighters known as Antifa.

Daryl Turner, president of the Portland Police Association union, called on the mayor to kick both sides out of the city and "remove the handcuffs from our officers."

"If this violence had been directed at Antifa, there would have been an immediate call for an independent, outside investigation," Turner said of the downtown protests.

The disagreement even touched on, of all things, milkshakes.

The authorities' claim of "quick-drying cement" in protesters' concoctions quickly became the proverbial tweet heard round the world, with more than 14,000 retweets that largely appeared to take the information as Gospel.

Several local reporters were more skeptical, with one photojournalist noting that "its consistency doesn't jive with my experience" with tilework. The Tribune witnessed dozens of people drinking the vegan milkshakes that were distributed for free by protest organizers, seemingly to no ill effect.

In an interview with reporters, Wheeler's senior adviser on public safety said the tweet was issued around 4 p.m. by command post staff after a police lieutenant on the scene witnessed a man with "irritation" around the skin and eyes after being struck by a milkshake.

"There was a powdery substance," said Robert King, the adviser. "There was also an odor."

Mayor Wheeler, who oversees the police bureau, tweeted out a condemnation of political violence. King, a retired Portland police commander and former union president, said PPB would write and release to the public a report on the milkshake incident.

Asked if PPB had physical evidence of a weaponized milkshake, King said: "At this point I'm not aware of any, but there may in fact be physical evidence that exists."

King also extended his sympathies to Andy Ngo, a prominent conservative voice who became a cause célèbre after he was beaten and drenched in liquids while live-streaming marchers near the Multnomah County Justice Center.

A third-party fundraiser netted \$150,000 for Ngo's recovery efforts in less than two days, while his Twitter account apparently grew by more than 50,000 new followers.

"On behalf of Mr. Ngo, we will do everything we can to support him and others that were injured in the demonstration," King said.

"Our investigators have been very successful in identifying people," he continued. "I suspect that arrests will be made."

Your City Hall: Civic Life bureau rewriting its rules for operations

*By Jim Redden
July 02, 2019*

The goal is to increase community engagement, but some neighborhood activists fear they are being cut out of the process

WHAT IS HAPPENING? The Office of Community & Civic Life, the Portland bureau formerly known as the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, is rewriting the section of the City Code that governs its operations for City Council approval. The final proposal will be released soon and the council is expected to hold at least one hearing and vote on it in July or August, but no date has yet been announced.

WHAT IS THE GOAL? The office operates under Chapter 3.96 of the code. The council passed a resolution last summer changing its name and requesting the rewrite to better reflect its responsibilities helping all communities engage with city government. A citizen advisory committee was appointed to work on the rewrite, which acknowledges that Portland is becoming a more diverse city, with different needs and challenges than in the past.

"This chapter creates the Office of Community & Civic Life and sets out its functions, duties, and responsibilities to serve, respond, and adapt to the needs, aspirations, and opportunities of its evolving communities. This chapter outlines the basis for the role of civic engagement in creating an inclusive city in which each of us can contribute and belong. The Office serves people who live, play, worship, and/or work in the City of Portland as individuals and through all forms of groups (including but not limited to affinity-, business-, community-, issue-, and neighborhood-based groups) and across generations," reads the "purpose" section of the proposed replacement chapter.

IS THERE ANY CONTROVERSY? Yes, the process has raised concerns among some neighborhood association and neighborhood coalition members that the rewrite will eliminate the traditional public involvement process that grew out of the grassroots fight to stop the proposed Mount Hood Freeway project in the 1960s. Portland has long been known for its neighborhood system, which has land use review and other responsibilities in the City Charter.

"The unusual thing about this process to date is that in writing the new code, CAC (citizen advisory committee) members were asked to consider eliminating the reference to neighborhood associations and neighbors," wrote Leslie Hammond, president of the board of Southwest Neighborhoods Inc., in the coalition's July newsletter. "The neighborhoods should be prepared to send letters and to testify on the new language at the hearing in late summer."

WHAT CAN I DO? You can learn more about the Chapter 3.96 rewrite at the office's website at <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/civic>. It will include the proposal to the council when it is finalized.

You also can express your opinions on the issue to the council members, and testify at the hearing when it is scheduled. Their contact information is on the city's website at <http://www.portlandoregon.gov>.

Portland City Hall re-opened after police sweep building

July 02, 2019

Portland Police Bureau respond to City Hall at S.W. 4th Avenue shortly after noon on Tuesday.

UPDATE: Police announced at 1:13 p.m. on Monday, July 2, that Portland City Hall had been re-opened to the public.

Security personnel swept the area and found nothing suspicious.

"At this time, it has been determined there is not a credible threat," officers said. "City Hall is back open for regular operations."

Portland City Hall has been evacuated after authorities responded to a "bomb threat call" at the government building.

Central Precinct officers said the call arrived around 12:15 p.m. on Tuesday, July 2. The decision to evacuate City Hall, 1221 S.W. 4th Ave., was made due to "an abundance of caution," officers said.

"The Portland Police Bureau is investigating the matter to determine the credibility of the threat," according to a news release. "Please avoid the area while investigators look into the circumstances."

Willamette Week

City Hall Bomb Threat Prompts Brief Evacuation

By Hannah Chinn

July 2, 2019

"We learned that a person called several times expressing that a bomb was going to go off within the building," said Mayor Ted Wheeler.

On Tuesday, just after noon, Portland City Hall was closed and evacuated for about an hour.

At 12:15 p.m., Portland police responded to a bomb threat call at City Hall in downtown. They closed the building, called for an evacuation, and asked that visitors avoid the area while they determined the credibility of the threat.

At 1:13 p.m., the Portland Police Bureau said in a statement that security personnel had searched the building and did not find anything suspicious on the premises.

City Hall is now open for regular operations.

"We learned that a person called several times expressing that a bomb was going to go off within the building," Mayor Ted Wheeler in a statement. "City Hall Security, as well as the Portland Police Bureau, responded swiftly and checked the building thoroughly....At this point, we don't know if the threat was in response to the protests over the weekend."

Wheeler also said this fit into a pattern.

"These threats of violence are alarming and create a sense of fear that no one should experience, but unfortunately, this is increasingly becoming a reality in local government," Wheeler said.

On July 1, the mayor's chief-of-staff Kristin Dennis received a different emailed threat.

The sender, who parrots far-right talking points about leftist demonstrators, threatened "Antifa, and all who have enabled them," suggesting he was motivated by national and local news headlines about violent protests in Portland on June 29.

Mayor Ted Wheeler's Email Address Shut Down After Being Flooded With Emails

*By Katie Shepherd and Rachel Monahan
July 2, 2019*

The mayor's office says they received so many "spam" emails the mayor's inbox has crashed.

The city shut down Mayor Ted Wheeler's official email address after receiving a flood of emails following national headlines that put Portland in the spotlight for a violent clash between far-right provocateurs and antifascist demonstrators.

"Because of the thousands and thousands of emails and it crashing the inbox, [the Bureau of Technology Services] had to temporarily pause incoming emails," says Wheeler spokeswoman Eileen Park, who said many of the emails are from out of state and "they have perpetuating the same false narratives" found on right-wing media outlets such as Breitbart.

Park also estimated they have received at least a couple thousand telephone calls.

Again, antifascists and far-right supporters affiliated with the Proud Boys, Patriot Prayer, Portland's Liberation and the HimToo movement clashed in Portland's streets on June 29.

Some exchanged blows with batons and sprayed pepper spray. A group of masked protesters kicked, punched and threw milkshakes at conservative blogger Andy Ngo, who has frequently raised the hackles of antifascists and demonized leftist protesters in the national media.

In October, a video Ngo provided to Fox News sparked another flood of antagonistic messages from right-wing callers to city officials, after he suggested, misleadingly, that antifascists had seized control over Portland's streets.

Saturday's attack on Ngo drew widespread criticisms from right-wing media, conservative politicians and far-right figures.

Allegations that some protesters mixed quick-drying cement with milkshakes also spread widely on social media and in headlines because of a Portland Police Bureau Tweet, but officials say they do not have physical evidence to back up the claim.

City Hall shut down briefly July 2 before a bomb threat, but city officials did not identify a possible motive for that call.

Portland Police Made a Dubious Claim About Protesters' Milkshakes on Twitter. What's the Evidence?

By Katie Shepherd

July 2, 2019

Portland officials do not have physical evidence to backup the milkshake claim.

Antifascist protesters filed into downtown Portland on June 29 and handed out vegan coconut milkshakes during a counterprotest against far-right provocateurs.

After a few short skirmishes involving batons and pepper spray—and after masked protesters punched, kicked and threw milkshakes at conservative videographer and blogger Andy Ngo—the event fizzled. Then, Portland police tweeted.

"Police have received information that some of the milkshakes thrown today during the demonstration contained quick-drying cement," the official tweet says. "We are encouraging anyone hit with a substance today to report it to police."

National media outlets NBC News, CBS News and others promoted the claim that leftist protesters had mixed milkshakes with quick-drying cement before throwing the sludge at their political opponents. Right-wing media spread it even more enthusiastically.

Antifascist organizers have publicly called the allegation "a misinformation campaign blatantly manufactured by the Portland police to disrupt a thriving antifascist movement."

And WW has learned the Portland Police Bureau has little evidence to back up the tweet. In response to WW's inquiries, the bureau initially said one lieutenant had observed a cement-like powder on a single milkshake cup in the field. Also, after police tweeted the allegation, an anonymous tipster emailed a "recipe" for cement milkshakes to the bureau—but its authenticity has not been verified.

On July 1, Robert King, the mayor's senior adviser on public safety and former president of the police union, continued to give oxygen to the cement milkshake story. He said someone who had been hit with a milkshake reported irritation to his skin and eyes "that wouldn't be consistent with ice cream." He released more information about the lieutenant's observations, saying the officer thought the milkshake had a texture and odor similar to cement. Neither the bureau nor the mayor's office is aware of any actual physical evidence that supports the allegation.

No journalists covering the protest in Portland published photos or witness reports of protesters mixing cement into milkshakes.

Throwing milkshakes gained popularity as a protest tactic earlier this year when demonstrators in the U.K. began dumping dairy treats on far-right politicians. The tactic also mocks American white supremacists who use milk as a symbol in memes that promote their fringe beliefs.

"[The tweet] seems to play into the hands of the far-right provocateurs who have been trying to present a resistance to their activities as more dangerous than they are," says Michael German, a former FBI agent and New York University professor who studies law enforcement efforts to combat terrorism.

German says the Police Bureau's tweet should have either made clear the allegation was a rumor being broadcast in an attempt to keep people safe or backed up by clear evidence.

"In a normal situation, it would be a poorly worded and hyperbolic tweet," German says, "but given the context, where there's a history of aggressive action [by police] against those resisting the far right coming into Portland, it seems to suggest there's a continuing problem."

The Portland Mercury

UPDATE: Bomb Threat Evacuates Portland City Hall

By Alex Zielinski

July 2, 2019

Update, 4:45 pm:

Mayor Ted Wheeler responded to the threat with this press statement:

Today, City Hall was evacuated because of a bomb threat.

We learned that a person called several times expressing that a bomb was going to go off within the building.

City Hall Security, as well as the Portland Police Bureau, responded swiftly and checked the building thoroughly. Thankfully, they found no alarming devices or packages.

At this point, we don't know if the threat was in response to the protests over the weekend.

These threats of violence are alarming and create a sense of fear that no one should experience, but unfortunately, this is increasingly becoming a reality in local government.

I'm grateful that nothing happened. I'm grateful for the swift action of our security and our officers.

We will let you know when we get more information.

Update, 1:15 pm:

The police bureau has allowed city staff back in the building, after officers deemed there was no "credible threat."

Original Story:

City staff have evacuated Portland City Hall after receiving a bomb threat over the phone, according to the Portland Police Bureau (PPB). The threat came in around 12:15 pm.

"The Portland Police Bureau is investigating the matter to determine the credibility of the threat," said PPB spokesperson Tina Jones in a brief press release.

According to Marshall Runkel, chief of staff for Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, the call came in through the City Attorney's office. "We are fine," wrote Runkel in an email to the Mercury.

Sonia Schmanski, chief of staff for Commissioner Nick Fish, told the Mercury that the call came from an out-of-state phone number.

We'll update this blog when more information becomes available.

The Portland Observer

Police call for public's help after mayhem

July 2, 2019

The Portland Police Bureau asked for the public's help Monday in investigating violent assaults from competing demonstrations that spilled into the streets of downtown Portland on Saturday, with fights breaking out in places as marchers clashed.

At least three groups had planned rallies or demonstrations at different sites in the city, including members of the right wing Proud Boys and left wing anti-fascist groups that include "antifa." The fights occurred when participants of the opposing groups met.

The Portland Police Bureau said three people were arrested Saturday on assault and harassment charges in connection with the protests. Police said medics treated eight people, including three police officers, at the scene. Three people were taken to hospitals after they were attacked, police said.

Andy Ngo, who describes himself as an editor at the conservative website Quillette," said on his Twitter feed that he was attacked by anti-fascist protesters and had to be taken to the hospital to treat injuries to his face and head. Ngo also said the attackers took his camera equipment.

Protesters also clashed with police, throwing water bottles and eggs at officers. Police responded with the use of pepper spray. In separate social media posts, police declared the situation to be a civil disturbance and warned participants faced arrest.

The bureau also said that it has received reports that milkshakes that were thrown by protesters contained quick-drying cement, an observance one officer claimed from seeing a shake with what looked like and smelled of powder added, along with a recipe that was shared on social media for making a toxic shake, but no physical evidence was offered.