

The Oregonian

Mayor Ted Wheeler, without plan in hand, rejects Portland protest violence

By Gordon Friedman

July 8, 2019

Protests that devolve into bloody street brawls have no place in Portland and are a black mark against the city's reputation, Mayor Ted Wheeler said on Monday, denouncing the actions of left- and right-wing demonstrators who clashed on June 29.

Wheeler offered no policy proposals, however, and would not take a position on two options given by the police chief, Danielle Outlaw. She called for new city rules barring people from wearing masks during protest and empowering officers to videotape demonstrations.

Wheeler said he plans to discuss ways to better control future protests with police, business, community and civil rights leaders. He gave no timetable for when he would land on a solution.

"I think everything should be on the table," Wheeler told reporters in City Hall, with his wife and young daughter sitting nearby, during his first day back to work after an overseas vacation.

The mayor's remarks evinced the complex no-wins world in which his administration attempts to control large protests that have at times attracted the world's attention and its invective.

Wheeler brings a hands-off approach to his role as police commissioner but is the target of relentless public criticism whenever the Police Bureau is seen to over- or under-police a demonstration. His attempts to bolster police powers to control protests have been stymied by the City Council, where Wheeler is a co-equal member. And police officers themselves have pushed back against the mayor via their union president, Daryl Turner, who has accused Wheeler of hampering officers and unfairly rushing to criticize them when politically expedient.

On Monday, Wheeler repeated familiar refrains, condemning protesters whom he said had "coopted" free speech protections to turn to violence on Portland streets.

That violence is "alarming," the mayor said, pledging to explore "ways to reduce these acts of violence in our community." At the same time, however, he maintained that Portland is neither unsafe nor lawless, despite injuries to eight people, including bloody head wounds, during the most recent dueling protests.

Wheeler did not detail what steps he might take to reduce or end such violence, saying he would be "evaluating a variety of options" and was "reluctant to get into a laundry list" of ideas. He declined to take a position on Outlaws' proposals regarding masks and police videotaping.

Wheeler did say he was considering having other city bureaus - such as the city transportation and fire bureaus - step in and play a role in preparing for such unpermitted protests to help police keep separate dueling demonstrators. He also said the city may have to reconsider its historic lax enforcement of unpermitted protests.

The mayor said he met Monday morning with U.S Attorney Billy J. Williams, Oregon's top federal law enforcement official, to brainstorm legal and tactical strategies in the wake of the violent brawls.

Williams said later Monday that he appreciated the opportunity “to discuss a path forward to support law enforcement and put an end to unchecked political violence” and said he was “deeply troubled” by the violent protests.

“Portland has a rich history of civic engagement and lawful expression as protected by the First Amendment,” Williams said. “The vast majority of Portlanders recognize this and rightfully demand an immediate end to the criminal acts of a violent few whose only goal is to show up and fight with their perceived enemies. These criminals must be held accountable.”

Addressing the beating of conservative opinion writer Andy Ngo by black-clad Antifa members during the June 29 demonstration, Wheeler said the assault on Ngo “was 100 percent wrong.” The beating was caught on camera and generated outrage among politicians and members of the news media who questioned why police officers did not intervene to stop the assault.

Wheeler said the June 29 protest was “a highly evolving situation” during which at least three separate demonstrations converged, complicating the police response.

“The fact that there wasn’t more violence I think is a testament to the hard-working men and women of the Portland Police Bureau,” the mayor said.

Still, he called the violence that did unfold against Ngo and another man who was beaten by baton-wielding Antifa members “alarming,” “disturbing” and “completely unacceptable.”

Wheeler acknowledged the widespread public backlash after footage of the assault on Ngo went public, saying the “global shellacking” harms Portland’s reputation. U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, was among those who took to social media to criticize the city’s hands-off treatment of protesters who injured their opponents.

Wheeler repeatedly stated that many of the people who incite or commit violence at rallies aren’t from Portland. That is sometimes the case, as with Joey Gibson who lives in Washington as do many of his followers.

But the two people charged with the most serious crimes after the June 29 rally — one of whom is alleged to have beaten a man over the head with a baton, the other is alleged to have thrown a water bottle in the face of a person videotaping the protest — both live in Portland. Police reports indicate both appear to be affiliated with Antifa.

Wheeler also pushed back against Turner, the police union president, who issued a statement saying Wheeler prevented officers from adequately responding. Wheeler insisted Monday that statement was false and said Turner “crossed a line” by making it.

Turner’s statement fueled criticisms of Wheeler, and the mayor said he, his family and his property had been threatened. A bomb threat last week also caused City Hall to evacuate.

The tense protests and lingering fallout had brought Portland to “a pivotal moment,” Wheeler said, as “the politics of our nation have become more divisive.”

“In recent years things have taken a dark turn,” he said.

Another test for Wheeler and his administration is around the corner. Right-wing demonstrators, angered by the assaults last month, already are planning to return to downtown Portland in August, circulating ads on social media for an “End Domestic Terrorism Rally” or “End antifa.com – Better Dead than Red.”

Man accused of sending Instagram threats to burn down Portland mayor's home pleads guilty

By Maxine Bernstein

July 3, 2019

A 40-year-old man pleaded guilty Wednesday to sending threats via Instagram to burn down the house of Mayor Ted Wheeler if he didn't fire a Portland police sergeant involved in a fatal shooting.

Kermit Tyler Poulson said he was drunk and not on his medication at the time and didn't intend to cause any harm.

"I'm taking responsibility and accountability for a bad decision that I made," Poulson told U.S. District Judge Michael H. Simon. "Yes, it happened but it was not my intent to have any animosity towards the mayor."

Poulson told the judge that he was attending a protest in the wake of the police fatal shooting of Patrick Kimmons in downtown Portland last fall and other protesters threatened to break his jaw and hurt him if he didn't send the message to the mayor to prove that he wasn't a police officer himself.

"Well, text the mayor and prove you are not a cop," Poulson said he was told. "It was a dumb mistake. I regret doing it."

The judge asked Poulson if he considered going to trial and arguing as a defense that he was under duress. Poulson said yes but said he chose to plead guilty.

"I have to take accountability for who I am," he said. "I'm guilty."

His guilty plea to one count of transmitting threatening communications with intent to extort could bring a maximum sentence of two years in prison. Poulson's lawyer Bear Wilner-Nugent said he'll argue for probation when Poulson is sentenced on Oct. 2. By then, Poulson already will have spent 10 months behind bars, his lawyer noted.

Prosecutors have said Wheeler's wife first noticed the comments from Poulson's Instagram profile, "riot_cop_7," on Wheeler's Instagram account.

Poulson threatened to burn down the mayor's house if he didn't fire Portland police Sgt. Garry Britt, one of two officers involved in the fatal police shooting of Kimmons last September, Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle Kerin said.

Britt and Officer Jeffrey Livingston shot Kimmons when they confronted him in a parking lot in downtown Portland after they heard gunfire. Kimmons had shot and wounded two other men and ran toward the officers with a gun, according to police and video evidence. As he cut in between two parked cars, the sergeant and officer continued firing at Kimmons, who died at OHSU Hospital. A grand jury found no criminal wrongdoing by the police.

On Oct. 9, Poulson urged the mayor to fire Britt in multiple posts to Wheeler's Instagram account, Kerin said.

The account shows these messages from Poulson's Instagram profile:

"What are you doing about Patrick Kimmons?"

"We want Britt fired. Or your becoming a Defendant."

“Ever had a Molotov cocktail thrown threw (sic) your bedroom window at 4 a.m.?”

“Or your office building?”

“The cops can’t protect you.”

“What are you going to do? Fire Britt. No Molotov.”

“Keep Britt. House on fire.”

“You like your bricks? We can remove them from the house and throw them through a window.”

When questioned by Portland police and members of the FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Force, Poulson at first denied writing those messages and suggested someone may have used his account. Later, he admitted to posting them, according to prosecutors.

While Poulson agrees with the elements of the crime that prosecutors summarized for the judge, he doesn’t agree “with every single thing,” his lawyer said.

The judge told Poulson that it doesn’t matter that Poulson may not have intended to harm the mayor, that the threat alone was enough to cause distress.

At the time of the Instagram posts, Poulson was homeless, living with an acquaintance in Portland, according to his initial lawyer, assistant federal public defender Susan Russell. He was diagnosed in the past as suffering from bipolar disorder, she said.

Poulson also is partially paralyzed after being hit by a car as a pedestrian in 2004, Wilner-Nugent said. He asked the judge to send Poulson to the federal prison in Sheridan pending his sentencing so he could obtain better access to pain medication and a wheelchair.

The Portland Tribune

PBOT using marijuana tax money for Vision Zero project

By Zane Sparling

July 05, 2019

Portland Bureau of Transportation will install hardened centerlines for traffic safety pilot program.

A slice of the proceeds for Portland's pot tax are popping up as Vision Zero traffic safety improvements.

The Portland Bureau of Transportation will install hardened centerlines at 29 intersections during the new pilot program, which has been budgeted at \$100,000 from the city's 3% cannabis sales tax fund.

PBOT says the rows of flexible posts fencing in left turn lanes will prevent rushed motorists from "cutting" the corner — ensuring slower speeds and more time to see pedestrians in crosswalks.

"It's one of the trickiest driving maneuvers out there," said Hannah Schafer, a bureau spokeswoman. "These small infrastructure improvements make it harder for someone to make a lackadaisical left turn."

So far, the bureau has installed six of the left-turn calming devices, with construction work expected to continue through the summer. Costs range from about \$2,000 to \$3,000 per intersection, so labor and materials will total about \$63,000. The spare money will be used to add the controls at another 11 intersections in the future.

Schafer says PBOT was inspired to begin the project after taking advice from other communities that joined the network of Vision Zero cities, such as New York, that are working to eliminate all traffic and pedestrian deaths.

"We're able to learn things from other cities that are innovating and trying to make things safer in the right of way," Schafer said.

The roadways targeted for improvements include East and West Burnside Street, Southeast Stark, Southeast Foster, Southeast Division, Southeast 122nd Avenue, Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Southwest Capitol Highway.

Some intersections will add rubber speed bumps with wedges rather than posts. PBOT will determine whether the pilot succeeded in 2020.

Survey Says

The Portland Bureau of Transportation is seeking input from East Portlanders regarding their "transportation experiences and investment preferences" along major streets in that oft-neglected portion of the city.

The East Portland Arterial Streets Strategy involves eleven roadways — nine of which are considered high-crash corridors — with four or more traffic lanes that are located east of 82nd Avenue. The goal of the EPASS plan is to reduce risk for all road users.

"In addition to changes to driving, the team will also look at how changes to the street could make walking, using transit, or riding a bicycle safer and more convenient for those traveling in East Portland," the bureau reports.

The survey, which is available online here, closes to respondents on July 15.

Wheeler hires veteran reporter as PIO

By Jim Redden

July 07, 2019

Tim Becker becomes the most recent spokesman for the mayor on Monday, July 8, according to Wheeler

Mayor Ted Wheeler has hired former KOIN News 6 reporter and TriMet spokesman Tim Becker as his new public information officer.

"We are very pleased to welcome Tim Becker to the team. With more than three decades of experience in media communications, his experience, skills and insights will be invaluable to my administration," Wheeler said.

"I am grateful to Mayor Wheeler for this opportunity," Becker said. "I've been following his administration closely for years and consider it a privilege to join a team deeply invested in improving the lives of all Portlanders and tackling some of the biggest challenges of our time with conviction and a sense of purpose."

Becker will start on Monday, July 8th.

Report: Permitting, campaign finance programs technically challenged

By Jim Redden

July 07, 2019

The report to be presented to the City Council on Wednesday says progress is being made to overcome problems

Two high profile Portland projects face technological challenges, according to a report to be presented to the City Council on Wednesday, July 10.

According to the Quarterly Technology Oversight Committee Report to be presented to the council, they are the project to computerize the current construction permit process and the upcoming public campaign financing program. The report says a deadline for the Bureau of Development Service's computerization project has been delayed, and that contingency planning and funding must soon be finalized for the campaign financing program.

The report was prepared by the Technology Oversight Committee that advises the Office of Management and Finance. The report says that despite the concerns, progress has been made on both projects in recent months.

About the Portland Online Permitting System project, the reports says, "TOC (Technology Oversight Committee) respects BDS's (Bureau of Development Service) transparency about risks and the team's focus on making sure implementation is successful."

Concerning the Open and Accountable Elections program, the report says, "TOC has always believed the timeline for this project was ambitious, but as long as contingency planning is finalized within the next couple of weeks and funding for any necessary manual entries is identified TOC believes this project can be implemented by the Sept 1 deadline."

The five-member oversight committee was created in 2011 to monitor and advise on the progress of technology projects. The quarterly report tracks activities from April through June 2019.

[You can read the report here.](#)

Willamette Week

Carmen Rubio, Executive Director of Latino Network, Is Running for Portland City Council

By Rachel Monahan

July 9, 2019

Rubio's name surfaced as soon as Commissioner Amanda Fritz announced her resignation. Now she's made it official.

Carmen Rubio, the executive director of the nonprofit Latino Network, has officially entered the race to replace Portland City Commissioner Amanda Fritz.

Rubio filed to form a political action committee on Monday.

Rubio, who previously served as policy director under former Mayor Tom Potter and then with City Commissioner Nick Fish, has longed been considered a possible contender for a city

commissioner. She has served as executive director of Latino Network since 2009. City Hall insiders mentioned her name as a possible candidate the day Fritz announced her retirement.

Rubio cites her experiences growing up in a low-income migrant family in Hillsboro "who came to this country seeking opportunities and better lives" as informing her choice to seek public office.

"I experienced several barriers that families in our community still experience today," Rubio says. "I'm running for City Council because I want to ensure families like mine have opportunities to have a good job and life in this city. I know that with good leadership, our city can do more to support working families and vulnerable communities."

She has 70 endorsements lined up, including from County Chair Deborah Kafoury, City Commissioner Nick Fish, state Rep. Diego Hernandez (D-Portland) and County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal, as well as the nonprofit leaders Joe McFerrin and Kali Ladd, she tells WW.

The endorsements and her broad community support that's reflected in those endorsements suggest she has a strong early advantage in the race. (No other candidates have so far filed political-action committees to make a run for the seat.)

Portland Mayor Says Police Union President “Crossed a Line” by Claiming Cops Were Hamstrung

*By Abbey McDonald
July 8, 2019*

Mayor Ted Wheeler says police union president Daryl Turner contributed to a "global frenzy" of misinformation.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said this afternoon that the city's police union president "crossed a line" by accusing him of keeping officers from restraining antifascist demonstrators who assaulted a conservative journalist.

In a press conference today, Wheeler said Portland Police Association President Daryl Turner's Facebook post contributed to a "global frenzy" of right-wing criticism that cascaded on the mayor's office and Portland police officers.

"By his releasing that statement, he contributed to the misinformation and the noise," Wheeler said. "I don't think he did the Police Bureau any favors. I don't think he did the men and women who serve in the Police Bureau any favors, and he certainly didn't do me any favors."

Turner is the president of the Portland Police Association and a regular critic of Wheeler, who he says keeps police from cracking down on antifascists and Proud Boys who brawl in Portland streets. On July 1, Turner revived that criticism, after conservative journalist Andy Ngo was kicked, punched and pelted with vegan milkshakes by masked antifascists.

"It's time for our Mayor to do two things," Turner wrote, "tell both ANTIFA and Proud Boys that our City will not accept violence in our City and remove the handcuffs from our officers and let them stop the violence through strong and swift enforcement action. Enough is enough."

Conservative outlets, including Fox News and Breitbart, reported that Wheeler had prevented police from intervening. U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) called for a federal investigation of the mayor.

"This became a global phenomenon," Wheeler said today. "They came back to his message as proof that I had, in fact, handcuffed the police during the June 29 demonstration."

Wheeler previously denied Turner's post on Facebook and Twitter, and Police Chief Danielle Outlaw backed him up in a press conference. But today the mayor, who had been traveling overseas, added to those comments with a press conference.

The mayor pledged a more aggressive approach to political street brawls after more than two years of assaults and growing public dismay. He provided few specifics—but reiterated his approach to policing, which is to remain hands-off and let the professionals take the lead:

"The public needs to hear that the Police Bureau law enforcement professionals were in charge, not the mayor," he said.

He also extended an olive branch to Turner.

"Darryl and I have a relationship, we do communicate, we will continue to meet," Wheeler said. "He and my team have a relationship and, as I say, we both want the same things. We're just going to have to find a way to work well together going forward."

The Portland Mercury

Mayor Wheeler Defends Portland Police Bureau's False "Cement Milkshake" Tweet

*By Blair Stenvick
July 8, 2019*

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler offered few tangible insights during a press conference on Monday—his first since alt-right and left-wing protestors violently clashed at a June 29 protest in downtown Portland. But Wheeler, fresh from an international vacation that started before June 29, did defend a controversial tweet sent out by the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) during the rallies.

The left-wing faction present at the protest handed out vegan milkshakes to its participants, some of whom chose to throw their drinks at alt-right demonstrators. Midway through the day, PPB tweeted that some of these milkshakes reportedly contained quick-drying cement.

PPB later revealed that the tweet was based off of a lone officer's observation that a milkshake looked like it might contain cement, and no further evidence has surfaced to support the claim. But the false statement was retweeted 14,000 times and referenced in national and international news reports—becoming part of the official narrative of the protest, despite no proof of its veracity.

"Ah, the milkshake again," Wheeler said, when asked by the Mercury whether he thought PPB acted responsibly by posting the tweet.

"The police were trying to give real-time information to the public," said Wheeler, who also serves as Portland's police commissioner. "In retrospect, they would probably agree that the word 'may' or 'possibly' probably should have been included in that tweet, but their intention, I believe, was to give the public more real-time information in the interest of transparency."

Wheeler's response echoed a statement made to reporters last week by Robert King, Wheeler's police liaison. King defended the tweet, and said it was sent in an effort to share "as much information as possible."

Organizers with left-wing group Population Mobilization (also known as PopMob), which provided the milkshakes, told reporters they received death threats after PPB sent out the tweet.

Wheeler did, however, take issue with recent words from Daryl Turner, the president of Portland's police union. In an online statement last week, Turner called on Wheeler to "remove the handcuffs from our officers and let them stop the violence through strong and swift enforcement action."

Wheeler called Turner's statement—and its implication that Wheeler prevents the PPB from doing its job—"misinformation," and characterized Turner's post as tinder for the national right-wing outrage currently facing the city.

"At the end of the day, Daryl Turner and I want the same thing," Wheeler said. "But he crossed a line when he publicly stated in a Facebook message that I was not allowing police to enforce the law."

Wheeler used the press conference as an opportunity to generally condemn violence in Portland, and told reporters he was looking into new ideas to prevent future protests from becoming violent. He did not say whether he supports Police Chief Danielle Outlaw's suggestion to bring an anti-masking law to Portland. Some cities use anti-mask laws to discourage anonymous violence, but there are questions as to how they can be enforced constitutionally.

Wheeler said he wasn't yet in a position to name specific ideas for how to deal with future protests, but noted that he would not be re-submitting last year's failed protest safety ordinance to the Portland City Council.

When asked for a timeline of when he would announce new protest strategies, Wheeler wouldn't name dates, but did say there is "a sense of urgency that I have about this."

OPB

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler 'Not Ready' To Support Police Chief's Proposal For Mask Ban

*By Amelia Templeton
July 8, 2019*

Extremist groups have co-opted Portland's well-known culture of street activism and free speech and are hiding behind it to commit acts of violence, Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler said Monday.

The comments at a City Hall press conference marked Wheeler's first major public remarks since assaults and injuries at a June 29 protest led conservatives to call for a federal investigation into his handling of the street fights between opposing groups in Portland.

On Monday, three years into his term, Wheeler sounded as if he was still in brainstorming mode and has not settled on strategy for curbing the street violence – or the hyper-political news coverage and pillorying of the Portland Police Bureau that tend to follow.

"I'll be evaluating a whole variety of options," he said.

Wheeler pointedly condemned last month's violence, singling out the assault on conservative writer Andy Ngo that has fueled much of the national outrage.

"What happened to him was 100 percent wrong," Wheeler said. "It was unacceptable, and it was abhorrent."

But the mayor did not mention by name Antifa, an anti-fascist group that has engaged in violence, that Ngo has accused of his assault.

Wheeler said he has to take personal responsibility for some of the "global shellacking in terms of perception" that Portland has suffered. Last week, the Mayor's office was inundated with thousands of irate emails and the city's information and non-emergency line were deluged with calls from out of state.

Wheeler said he can do more to condemn politically motivated violence and to make it clear that the police will enforce the city's laws.

At the same time, Wheeler noted that most of the 200 or so protests that have taken place in the city this year have unfolded without major violence.

And he said much of the narrative about Portland and his administration that has spread throughout the media – particularly in conservative outlets – is false and fueled by misinformation.

One result of that misinformation, Wheeler said, has been a deluge of threats against him, his family and the city's employees.

He placed much of the blame for the periodic street fights at the feet of groups like Patriot Prayer and the Proud Boys — groups that attracts white supremacists and who are also prone to violence. Wheeler said they come from out of state and cynically target Portland for their own political gain.

"They know that if they come to Portland, it will elicit a reaction," he said. "That's why they're here."

Wheeler also criticized Daryl Turner, president of the police officers' union, for comments that contributed to the national backlash against Portland.

A post Turner made on Facebook asking Wheeler to "remove the handcuffs from our officers" was read by some reporters and commentators as evidence Wheeler had directed officers to take a hands-off approach to Antifa protesters during the June 29 incident. ^[1]_[SEP]

"He crossed a line when he publicly stated in a Facebook message that I was not allowing the police to enforce the law," Wheeler said Monday. "He contributed to the misinformation and the noise."

Police Chief Danielle Outlaw has flatly denied that the Mayor directed the bureau to take a hands-off approach.

Wheeler said orders to the police bureau regarding protests have been consistent since he took office: He wants officers to minimize vandalism and violence and prevent protesters from blocking Portland's bridges and transit lines.

The protests have placed a mayor who views himself as a technocrat and a political moderate squarely in the middle of one of the most polarizing conflicts between the left and right – the question of who's responsible when groups clash in the streets, and how to protect political speech while preventing violence.

On Monday, Wheeler declined to take a position on two of the specific proposals Outlaw mentioned at her own press conference last week as tools that would help her officers prevent and investigate the violence.

Wheeler said he is not yet ready to endorse the idea of a ban on face masks used to hide a person's identity while committing crimes— which critics say Antifa members have used to avoid criminal prosecution.

Wheeler also didn't take a position on Chief Outlaw's proposal that officers be allowed to record continuous video of protests to make it easier to identify and prosecute bad actors during protests. The mayor said he'd discussed the idea with Outlaw, but had questions about whether it would be possible given the Oregon Constitution's robust free speech protections.

One of the chief's suggestions is clearly not up for consideration: Wheeler said he has no plans to make a second attempt to pass an ordinance that would allow the mayor to restrict the time and location of protests involving groups with a history of violence. The city council voted against that idea 3-2 last November, with the mayor in the minority.

"The majority of my colleagues on the council opposed the protest safety ordinance," Wheeler said. "I don't think they're going to change their minds on that."

The mayor's plan for handling future protests remains unclear.

At one point Monday, he said he plans to ask city commissioners to commit more resources from the Portland Fire Bureau and the Portland Bureau of Transportation to help police separate groups that are seeking to fight.

Later, in response to a reporter's question, he acknowledged that the city could likely do more to enforce existing rules that require protesters to obtain permits. The three protests that devolved into fighting on June 29 were unpermitted.

"That is certainly one of the issues that should be on the table for conversation," Wheeler said. "I don't believe we can stick with the same game plan and expect to have a different outcome than we had on June 29."