

The Oregonian

Portland Commissioner Nick Fish to resign

By *Everton Bailey Jr.*

December 31, 2019

Updated at 6:47 p.m.

Nick Fish, the current longest tenured member of the Portland City Council, announced Tuesday that he plans to resign in 2020 to continue to focus on his health while battling stomach cancer.

The announcement comes after Fish said earlier in December that he would be taking the month off from city-related duties because his illness had become more complicated. He was diagnosed with cancer in 2017.

Fish said his resignation will be effective once a successor has been elected and that he'll continue to work with his team at city hall and Mayor Ted Wheeler to prepare for the transition.

"Serving on the council has been the great honor of my life. Based on the demands of my illness, however, I no longer believe that I can do this work at the high level our community deserves and I expect of myself," Fish said in a statement. "I cannot escape the very sad fact that I will be unable to serve out the remainder of my term."

Fish was first elected to the Portland City Council and took office in 2008.

Fish was last reelected in 2018 and his current term expires at the end of 2022. Fish's office currently oversees the Bureau of Environmental Services and Portland Parks & Recreation.

Fish has also previously been the commissioner in charge of the Portland Fire Bureau and Water Bureau, and helped create the Portland Housing Bureau in 2009.

Fish's departure means there will be at least two new faces on the Portland City Council in 2020. Commissioner Amanda Fritz plans to retire and will not run for reelection in May's primary. Wheeler and Commissioner Chloe Eudaly are both seeking reelection.

The remaining members of the city council will have to decide when to hold a special election to complete the remainder of Fish's term, said Deborah Scroggin, the city's election officer. They could decide to have it at the same time as the May 19 primary election.

The Portland City Council is next scheduled to meet Jan. 8.

The Portland City Charter calls for a special election within 90 days of a city council vacancy unless there is a suitable reason to delay it, Scroggin said. A runoff election would also have to be scheduled if no candidates receive the majority of votes cast in the special election.

Fish won the last city special election that was held in 2008, completing the term of former commissioner Erik Sten, who resigned mid-way through his fourth term.

Fritz, who first took office in 2009, said Tuesday she has enjoyed working with Fish over the last decade, that she'll miss his presence on the council but is glad he will continue to fight his illness and spend more time with his family.

"In the last two years, he hasn't slowed down at all," Fritz said. "He is really dedicated to the people of Portland and I think it's important that people know he has really given Portland the very best that he and his family has to offer. I've always appreciated that."

Hardesty said she wishes Fish well as he continues to focus on his health and family.

“During this transition, I am comforted by remembering that during times of leadership change, it’s the community who continually moves our city ahead,” she said.

Wheeler said he considers Fish a great colleague and friend. The mayor said city officials will continue to support Fish and his team.

“During his tenure at City Hall, he has done much to improve the lives of Portlanders,” Wheeler said of Fish. “His leadership has been essential.”

A native New Yorker who moved to Portland in the 1990s with his wife, Patricia Schechter, and their daughter, Fish had a 20-year career as a lawyer representing health care workers and labor unions before joining the city council. He has also served on the Housing Authority of Portland, Multnomah County Task Force on Vital Aging and other advisory boards.

Fish’s father, Hamilton, served in Congress for more than 20 years.

In his statement announcing his resignation, Fish mentions championing efforts supporting affordable housing and ending homelessness in the city. He cited Bud Clark Commons, Gray’s Landing and the Riverplace Parcel as some specific achievements.

Among his office’s accomplishments over the years, Fish touted bringing down water rate increases, adding 1,000 new community garden plots and currently helping the Parks bureau create a new funding model.

He said the city is ahead of schedule with goals to build 2,000 new units of housing linked to services that address chronic homelessness, that he hopes a new memorial is built to honor fallen firefighters, that the city continues to address climate change, and embrace collaboration and inclusivity.

Fish said he has been grateful for all the support he and his family have received since his cancer diagnosis and called it a privilege to have been elected to the city council.

“Thank you for allowing me this honor, and for all that you do to make Portland special,” he said. “The future is bright.”

Read Commissioner Nick Fish’s full letter to Portland

December 31, 2019

Portland Commissioner Nick Fish announced Tuesday that he plans to resign due to his ongoing battle with stomach cancer.

Fish was first elected in 2008 and his current term ends in 2022. He announced earlier this month that his illness had become more complicated after being diagnosed more than two years ago and that he would be taking the rest of December off. He said his resignation will be effective once a successor has been elected.

Here is Commissioner Fish’s statement in full:

Last month, I shared that my illness had become more complicated and that I would be taking a few weeks over the holidays to be with my family and to learn more about what changes in my health mean for my public service.

Since then, I have been talking to my team of care providers and adjusting to my new reality.

I have always brought energy and enthusiasm to my job as Commissioner. Serving on the Council has been the great honor of my life. Based on the demands of my illness, however, I no longer believe that I can do this work at the high level our community deserves and I expect of myself.

I cannot escape the very sad fact that I will be unable to serve out the remainder of my term. I trust my Council colleagues to determine the most appropriate date for an election to select my successor, minimizing disruption and cost to the City. My resignation will become effective upon the election of my successor as Commissioner #2.

Over the next few months, I will be working with Mayor Wheeler and my City Hall team to prepare for a transition. Such a transition has precedent; in fact, it's the way I myself got the chance to run and get elected to the Council in 2008.

We will continue to steward the work of building a sustainable future for Portland Parks & Recreation. We will continue to lead the clean-up of the Willamette River Superfund site. My team will remain responsive to constituents and stay engaged with our everyday responsibilities as well as prepare to set the next Council member up for success.

Portlanders have inspired me every day since I was sworn in in June of 2008, and I am so proud of what we've accomplished together.

For the past 11 years in office, I've worn many hats. I was honored to serve initially as Commissioner of one of the city's oldest bureaus, Portland Fire & Rescue and, with Mayor Adams, I helped create and lead a brand new one in 2009, the Portland Housing Bureau. Then I led our two utilities, Water and Environmental Services, and Portland Parks & Recreation – twice.

I ran on a platform in support of affordable housing and ending homelessness. In my years as Housing Commissioner, we focused on serving our most vulnerable neighbors – the poorest people in our community. Even during the worst recession of my lifetime, we made important progress. At times, the only construction cranes in the air were the ones building affordable housing. We built new homes, saved hundreds of affordable apartments for older adults and people with disabilities, and helped hundreds of homeless veterans find stable, affordable homes. We worked closely with our partners at Multnomah County, in the non-profit community, and at the State to align our dollars and our priorities – and we made a lasting difference. Bud Clark Commons, Gray's Landing, and the new Riverplace Parcel are testament to what Portland can do when we work in partnership.

Supportive housing is a proven, efficient tool to serve our most vulnerable citizens and I have worked hard to ensure that Council has maintained this priority. I threw myself into the recent bond measures sponsored by the city and by Metro that are now bringing hundreds of affordable new homes to our community. Later this year, I hope our region passes a new measure to fund the services that allow people to remain successfully housed. And I am gratified that we are ahead of schedule on our goal to add 2,000 new units of supportive housing – affordable homes with wraparound services – by 2028. We must never lose sight of the neediest in our community, those whose voice is often lost in policy debates.

Back in 2013, Mayor Hales assigned me the two city utilities – the Bureau of Environmental Services and Portland Water Bureau. At the time, the bureaus were a source of frustration to citizens due to rate increases and accountability issues. I was excited by the opportunity to restore public trust, increase transparency, and improve the alignment of priorities. Five years of patient listening and rebuilding paid off. We brought rate increases down and sharpened our

focus on mission-critical work, like water quality. We also won a major lawsuit challenging City spending of utility dollars. We did it together.

My time leading the women and men of the Fire Bureau was brief, but my respect for their service is deep and enduring. Every day, firefighters do whatever it takes to keep their fellow Portlanders safe. At times, they make the ultimate sacrifice. It is my fervent hope that our community will rally to build a new memorial to fallen firefighters. The planned David Campbell Memorial, named for an early Fire Chief whose service cost him his life, will provide a peaceful refuge that commemorates those we have lost and honors those who serve today.

Portlanders love their parks and so do I. Last year, almost everyone in our community visited a park or natural area. These green places draw new residents and visitors to Portland, and time and again citizens name parks as a top priority. I served as Parks Commissioner from 2009 through mid-2013, and again since November of 2018. Both eras brought unique challenges. In 2009, when the recession limited City resources, we focused on meaningful investments that would matter to Portlanders. Public-private partnerships brought us innovations like Harper's Playground and the Summer Free-For-All program, gems of inclusivity, beauty, and fun. We added 1,000 new community garden plots to our city-wide inventory. We passed new protections for our urban tree canopy. And we laid plans for new park development, so that when resources became available we'd be ready to move forward with fresh ideas.

A decade later, Parks faces a different challenge. A structural problem in the way Parks is funded has meant that the bureau continually loses ground. Equipment, facilities, and fields deteriorate because we can't maintain them. The old fee-driven business model cannot sustain the system we have, much less improve it. Without new funding, Portland will never be able to conserve and develop a healthy, safe parks system or to close the inequities around access. Our parks must serve all Portlanders. The bureau has begun the hard work of crafting a more efficient, equitable funding model, exploring what a better, more sustainable future will look like. We cherish our green and open places and by working together, we can responsibly steward them for future generations.

Care and stewardship of the environment are global as well as local issues. We are in a climate crisis and Portland must remain a leader and innovator. In my time on the Council, the city has begun to decisively reduce our impact on the environment. A raft of new initiatives are moving us in the right direction: limits on single-use plastics, shifting our automotive fleet off gas fuel, composting food waste, converting methane at our sewage treatment plant to renewable natural gas, and maximizing our use of nature rather than pipes to manage Portland's plentiful rainwater. These initiatives provide momentum that must grow. Cities will continue to be laboratories for innovation in climate protection, and I know that Portland can continue to be a leader.

I have always believed that government can be society's greatest force for good, and that together we can do amazing things. As a member of the Council, I have insisted that the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts, and I have focused on partnership, collaboration, and shared success.

Across the country, the last decade has seen a stark decline in civility. Portland has not been immune to the national weakening of civil discourse. And, as we grapple with the future of our country and our planet, we are becoming a big city, with our own growing pains. We can rise to this occasion and embrace inclusivity, sustainability, and shared prosperity for all. We must unite around these values and make them real through collective effort. City Council can do its part by fostering diverse rather than divergent priorities. It is our obligation to find the common ground

in order to advance the common good. I have seen the power of partnership, and I trust our community's leaders to see that the people of Portland deserve our best.

I am grateful for the support and love my family and I have felt over the last two and a half years that I have fought against cancer. And I am privileged to have had the opportunity to serve the community I love for the past decade.

Thank you for allowing me this honor, and for all that you do to make Portland special. The future is bright.

The Portland Tribune

Commissioner Nick Fish to resign from City Council

By Jim Redden

December 31, 2019

Complications of cancer will prompt a special election to choose the replacement for the longest-serving council member

Portland Commissioner Nick Fish will resign from the City Council because of complications with his stomach cancer treatment.

Fish released a statement on Dec. 31 saying he will resign when his replacement is chosen in a special election to be set by the council.

"I have always brought energy and enthusiasm to my job as Commissioner. Serving on the Council has been the great honor of my life. Based on the demands of my illness, however, I no longer believe that I can do this work at the high level our community deserves and I expect of myself," Fish said in a statement released Tuesday, Dec. 31.

Portland election officials say the council needs to decide whether to schedule the election to replace Fish during the 2020 primary election at their Jan. 8 meeting to meeting election deadlines. The council also needs to decide when a run-off election would be held if no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote.

After the announcement, Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury said, "That Nick Fish would prove to become a strong and vocal leader on issues related to affordable housing and homelessness was never a surprise. Those issues are etched into his heart and soul, and define him as a true public servant. It's what makes Nick more than just an able legislator or an administrator with the steadiest of hands. His unwavering desire to do the right thing, even when it wasn't easy, should be the gold standard for current and future elected officials because Nick Fish has never taken a shortcut. A bureau in trouble? Give it to Nick. Controversial issue? Give it to Nick. Time and time again he proved he could take care of it."

A lawyer, Fish first ran for the council in 2004, losing to future Mayor Sam Adams. He ran again in 2008, winning in a special election for the unexpired term of resigned Commissioner Erik Sten. He was re-elected to a full four-year term in 2010, in 2014, and again in 2018.

Fish previously announced he would take December off after his treatment grew more complicated.

Fish released the following statement Tuesday afternoon:

Last month, I shared that my illness had become more complicated and that I would be taking a few weeks over the holidays to be with my family and to learn more about what changes in my health mean for my public service.

Since then, I have been talking to my team of care providers and adjusting to my new reality.

I have always brought energy and enthusiasm to my job as Commissioner. Serving on the Council has been the great honor of my life. Based on the demands of my illness, however, I no longer believe that I can do this work at the high level our community deserves and I expect of myself.

I cannot escape the very sad fact that I will be unable to serve out the remainder of my term. I trust my Council colleagues to determine the most appropriate date for an election to select my successor, minimizing disruption and cost to the City. My resignation will become effective upon the election of my successor as Commissioner #2.

Over the next few months, I will be working with Mayor Wheeler and my City Hall team to prepare for a transition. Such a transition has precedent; in fact, it's the way I myself got the chance to run and get elected to the Council in 2008.

We will continue to steward the work of building a sustainable future for Portland Parks & Recreation. We will continue to lead the clean-up of the Willamette River Superfund site. My team will remain responsive to constituents and stay engaged with our everyday responsibilities as well as prepare to set the next Council member up for success.

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I ran on a platform in support of affordable housing and ending homelessness. In my years as Housing Commissioner, we focused on serving our most vulnerable neighbors — the poorest people in our community. Even during the worst recession of my lifetime, we made important progress. At times, the only construction cranes in the air were the ones building affordable housing. We built new homes, saved hundreds of affordable apartments for older adults and people with disabilities, and helped hundreds of homeless veterans find stable, affordable homes. We worked closely with our partners at Multnomah County, in the non-profit community, and at the State to align our dollars and our priorities — and we made a lasting difference. Bud Clark Commons, Gray's Landing, and the new Riverplace Parcel are testament to what Portland can do when we work in partnership.

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Across the country, the last decade has seen a stark decline in civility. Portland has not been immune to the national weakening of civil discourse. And, as we grapple with the future of our

country and our planet, we are becoming a big city, with our own growing pains. We can rise to this occasion and embrace inclusivity, sustainability, and shared prosperity for all. We must unite around these values and make them real through collective effort. City Council can do its part by fostering diverse rather than divergent priorities. It is our obligation to find the common ground in order to advance the common good. I have seen the power of partnership, and I trust our community's leaders to see that the people of Portland deserve our best.

I am grateful for the support and love my family and I have felt over the last two and a half years that I have fought against cancer. And I am privileged to have had the opportunity to serve the community I love for the past decade.

Thank you for allowing me this honor, and for all that you do to make Portland special. The future is bright.

Nick

Four of five City Council seats up for election

By Jim Redden

December 31, 2019

Commissioner Nick Fish's decision to resign triggers fourth council election in 2020

Four of the five Portland City Council seats are likely to be up for election at the May 2020 primary.

Commissioner Nick Fish announced on Tuesday that he will resign because of complications with his ongoing cancer treatment. The Dec. 31 statement means the council could decide as early as Jan. 8 to schedule a replacement election in May.

Already on the ballot are the positions of mayor and two commissioners. Mayor Ted Wheeler and Commissioner Chloe Eudaly have announced for reelection. Commissioner Amanda Fritz is retiring.

Having four of five council seats up for election at the same time is probably unprecedented, although complete city records are limited.

Under the City Charter, any candidate that receives more than 50% of the vote in the first election wins. If no candidate receives more than 50%, the top two vote-getters face office in a run-off at the November general election.

But in the case of the election for Fish's seat, the council could set an earlier run-off election date.

Willamette Week

Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish Announces He Will Resign For Health Reasons in the New Year

*By Nigel Jaquiss
December 31, 2019*

After battling stomach cancer for more than two years, Fish will step down from the seat he's held since 2008.

City Commissioner Nick Fish today announced that the cancer he's been battling since 2017 will force him to resign in 2020.

"Last month, I shared that my illness had become more complicated and that I would be taking a few weeks over the holidays to be with my family and to learn more about what changes in my health mean for my public service," Fish said in a statement Dec. 31.

"Since then, I have been talking to my team of care providers and adjusting to my new reality. I have always brought energy and enthusiasm to my job as Commissioner. Serving on the Council has been the great honor of my life. Based on the demands of my illness, however, I no longer believe that I can do this work at the high level our community deserves and I expect of myself."

Fish, 61, who worked as a lawyer before joining the council, has taken delight in his job in a way that few others have, relishing the minutiae of city code, the endless council sessions and even the rubber chicken banquets that many politicians dread.

"I cannot escape the very sad fact that I will be unable to serve out the remainder of my term," Fish said today. "I trust my Council colleagues to determine the most appropriate date for an election to select my successor, minimizing disruption and cost to the City. My resignation will become effective upon the election of my successor as Commissioner #2."

That decision makes it likely, although not certain, that Fish's seat will be on the ballot in May 2020, when Commissioner Chloe Eudaly is up for re-election and a handful of candidates will compete to replace Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who is retiring.

"Over the next few months, I will be working with Mayor Wheeler and my City Hall team to prepare for a transition," Fish said. "Such a transition has precedent; in fact, it's the way I myself got the chance to run and get elected to the Council in 2008."

In that instance, former City Commissioner Erik Sten stepped down mid-term. Fish, who had come up short in two previous runs for council, easily won Sten's seat and has served without serious opposition ever since.

"I am grateful for the support and love my family and I have felt over the last two and a half years that I have fought against cancer," Fish concluded. "And I am privileged to have had the opportunity to serve the community I love for the past decade. Thank you for allowing me this honor, and for all that you do to make Portland special. The future is bright—Nick."

The Portland Mercury

Portland Has a New Police Chief. How Did That Happen So Quickly?

*By Alex Zielinski
December 31, 2019*

Yesterday, Mayor Ted Wheeler announced Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw's unexpected resignation at the same time he named Deputy Chief Jami Resch as her permanent successor. Resch, 45, was sworn into office at noon today.

To outsiders, this decision appeared abrupt and hurried—especially in contrast to the months-long search Wheeler conducted before appointing Outlaw to head the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) in 2017.

They're not entirely wrong: Wheeler only learned Outlaw had accepted a job as Philadelphia's police commissioner on Thursday, Dec. 26. Wheeler was told the City of Philadelphia was going to announce this news before the end of 2019. In the course of four days, Wheeler decided to promote Resch—not as an interim, temporary chief, but as the bureau's permanent leader for the foreseeable future.

“It's difficult for me to trust his snap judgment in this instance,” wrote mayoral candidate Sarah Iannarone in a statement sent to OPB, echoing the concerns of other Portland advocates for police reform. “In the hiring of the last chief, Wheeler promised Portlanders a transparent process which we did not get; it’s not clear to me how this is an improvement over that.”

Wheeler's chief of staff Kristin Dennis told the Mercury that the decision didn't call for an intensive search, partially due to the work Wheeler put into a national search for a new PPB chief two years ago.

Wheeler began that search shortly after he entered the mayor's office in January 2017. While then-police chief Mike Marshman (a favorite among rank-and-file officers, but distrusted by police reform advocates) was a finalist for the position, Wheeler ultimately selected Outlaw, a 19-year veteran of the Oakland Police Department.

"When we were searching for a new chief in 2017, we knew we needed someone to come in and shake up the bureau," said Dennis. "But this time is different—we're happy with the trajectory we're on."

Dennis said that Outlaw was able to create a strong leadership team, something that PPB didn't have before. One of those leaders was Resch, a 20-year veteran of PPB who Outlaw promoted to deputy chief in May 2019. Dennis said that Outlaw regularly delegated responsibilities to Resch as her second-in-command.

"She knows how to do the job and she understands what the mayor wants to accomplish," said Dennis. "She already has the respect of people in the bureau, she's trusted, she gets it."

There's also a fear in City Hall that another outside chief could bring the same uncertainty that accompanied Outlaw's hire. From the start, locals suspected that Outlaw was simply using the position as a stepping stone between Oakland and a career as police chief of a larger metropolitan city. Those suspicions were confirmed yesterday.

Resch, a University of Portland graduate whose spent decades in Portland, doesn't come with those liabilities.

"At this time, it's incredibly important that the bureau be led by someone who understands the bureau, the city, and the community," said Dennis. "There is a huge benefit today in being able to appoint a police chief with deep roots in Portland."

There were other factors that steered Wheeler away from kicking off an intensive search for an outside police chief. One of them is the simple fact Wheeler's up for reelection in 2020, adding a level of uncertainty to his future in City Hall.

"It's incredibly difficult to recruit new bureau leadership in an election year," Dennis said. "Highly qualified candidates might pass on the opportunity given the natural uncertainty created by an election. It's a huge risk for someone to leave their current position for a new position when they can't be certain who they would be reporting to beyond the first few months."

Perhaps more importantly, Dennis underscored the need for stable police leadership as the city enters contract negotiations with PPB's rank-and-file union—the Portland Police Association (PPA)—a historically contentious process that will begin in a few weeks. Portland City Council's also scheduled to begin the year by holding work sessions on the efficacy and purpose of major police bureau programs, like the Gun Violence Reduction Team, the use of PPB officers in public schools, police body cameras, and PPB's traffic division.

"Stability at this time allows us to help develop and implement progressive policies as we continue our forward momentum with the support of the council," Dennis said. "That said, this is also a time for recalibration."

According to Dennis, the city is planning on hosting a series of "inclusive community meetings" with Resch in the new year, where Portlanders can share their thoughts and recommendations on the future of PPB under a new chief.

Commissioner Fish Will Resign in 2020

*By Alex Zielinski
December 31, 2020*

Commissioner Nick Fish, who was diagnosed with cancer in 2017, has decided to step down from Portland City Council in 2020 to focus on his progressing illness.

"I have always brought energy and enthusiasm to my job as commissioner," wrote Fish in a Tuesday press statement. "Serving on the council has been the great honor of my life. Based on the demands of my illness, however, I no longer believe that I can do this work at the high level our community deserves and I expect of myself. I cannot escape the very sad fact that I will be unable to serve out the remainder of my term."

Fish was first diagnosed with stomach cancer in August 2017, and has been undergoing regular chemotherapy treatments since. The illness did not stop Fish from running—and winning—a reelection campaign in 2018. That term is set to expire in 2022.

In a lengthy statement, Fish said he'd let Mayor Ted Wheeler and his fellow commissioners pick when to schedule an election to select his successor in the coming year.

"Over the next few months, I will be working with Mayor Wheeler and my City Hall team to prepare for a transition," he wrote.

Fish, a civil rights lawyer, began his council career in 2008.

"I am privileged to have had the opportunity to serve the community I love for the past decade," he wrote.

His departure broadens an already wide 2020 City Council race. Commissioner Chloe Eudaly and Wheeler are up for re-election, and Commissioner Amanda Fritz is retiring, leaving an open seat. That leaves Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty as the only current commissioner guaranteed to still be sitting on Portland City Council in 2021.

Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury responded to Fish's announcement in an afternoon press statement.

"It has been painful to watch my friend fight a deadly disease, but the way in which he continued his public service—with grace and determination—has been nothing short of astonishing," said Kafoury. "Nick is a hero to many people, me included."

The Portland Business Journal

Commissioner Nick Fish to resign from Portland City Council

*By Christopher BJORKE
December 31, 2019*

Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish announced Tuesday that will step down in light of a changing prognosis for his cancer treatment.

Fish was diagnosed with abdominal cancer in 2017. He said this month that the disease had become "more complicated" and he would have to take off time over the holidays to learn what it would mean for his role on the City Council.

"Since then, I have been talking to my team of care providers and adjusting to my new reality," he wrote in a four-page letter. "I cannot escape the very sad fact that I will be unable to serve out the remainder of my term. I trust my council colleagues to determine the most appropriate date for an election to select my successor."

Fish, who was elected in 2008, wrote that he will stay on the council until a new member is elected.

"I have always brought energy and enthusiasm to my job as commissioner. Serving on the council has been the great honor of my life. Based on the demands of my illness, however, I no longer believe that I can do this work at the high level our community deserves and I expect of myself," he wrote.

"Over the next few months, I will be working with Mayor (Ted) Wheeler and my City Hall team to prepare for a transition," he wrote.

Fish's letter thanked the community for its support since his diagnosis and covered his accomplishments and priorities while in office, including reducing homelessness, building affordable housing, investing in parks and protecting the environment.

"I have always believed that government can be society's greatest force for good, and that together we can do amazing things," he wrote. "I have focused on partnership, collaboration and shared success."

Fish also noted a "stark decline in civility" and that "Portland has not been immune to the national weakening of civil discourse" but urged Portlanders to "embrace inclusivity, sustainability and shared prosperity for all."

"We must unite around these values and make them real through collective effort," he wrote. "It is our obligation to find the common ground in order to advance our common good."

The Skanner

Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw Departs

December 31, 2019

Mayor Ted Wheeler announced today that Portland Police Chief Danielle Outlaw has accepted a new position as the Police Commissioner for the City of Philadelphia. She will become the first Black woman to hold that job. The opportunity will put Chief Outlaw in position to lead the fourth largest police department in the nation, with more than 6,500 sworn and 800 civilian members.

"I'd like to congratulate Chief Outlaw for landing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Mayor Wheeler said. "We thank her for her service to the City of Portland and the Portland Police Bureau (PPB), where she helped make a positive difference. She came to Portland exceedingly qualified for the position of police chief, and leaves more prepared than ever for her new position in Philadelphia."

"Over the last two years I have appreciated the opportunity to work with Danielle Outlaw while she served as Portland's Police Chief," said Portland City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty in a statement. "Her job was not an easy one, but it is a vital one for our city. As an outsider, being asked to change the culture of the Portland Police Bureau required a herculean effort as well as a support team which I fear she never found. Chief Outlaw came to Portland because she was a visionary leader and I truly wish her well in her next role.

"While I appreciate the work done by Chief Outlaw, the fact remains that Chiefs will come and go – but it is the culture they leave behind that matters most to our community.

"There is still much work to be done to make PPB the organization we need it to be," said Hardesty, "and I look forward to working with Chief Resch as she takes on this charge."

Working closely with the Mayor's office during her tenure in Portland, Chief Outlaw helped build community trust and public confidence in the PPB, and exceeded all expectations of her as police chief. Under her leadership, the PPB formalized the use of the Incident Command System model for critical incidents and crowd management, and implemented crime strategies tailored to each precinct that have effectively reduced crimes against persons, property and society.

"Mayor Wheeler placed his confidence in me to be the Police Chief after conducting a meticulous selection process," said Chief Danielle Outlaw. "I am profoundly grateful for his continued support and acknowledgement of how challenging the work of law enforcement can be for all of us. He has been a PPB advocate since day one; championing the Bureau's needs for additional resources and understanding that one can be supportive of police and supportive of police accountability at the same time.

"For police chiefs, I don't think there is ever an ideal time to transition on to our next role in life. However, I am making this transition on good terms, knowing the Bureau will be left in the

hands of a strong leadership team, led by Chief Jami Resch. And while there will always be work to be done toward improvement, that does not take away from the fact that the members of the Bureau are not only extremely talented, compassionate and professional, they are also resilient and accountable to themselves, each other, and to the community. We have accomplished a lot during my tenure and it would not have been possible without them.

“I leave knowing the Bureau will remain committed to community safety while building trust. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as Portland’s Police Chief, serving alongside the members of the Bureau and partnering with countless, remarkable individuals within Portland’s community. I will forever be appreciative of my experience here.”

Chief Outlaw’s last day with the City of Portland will be Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2019. At 4 p.m. that same day, Deputy Chief of Police Jami Resch will be sworn in as Portland’s next Police Chief.

“We have considered all the options for what the next police chief should bring to the Bureau and after thoughtful, in-depth discussions, Jami Resch meets or exceeds all of the Bureau’s current leadership needs. Having served as the Deputy Chief of Police, I have complete confidence that Chief Resch will excel as our next police chief. She has my complete trust and a thorough understanding of my agenda. She is the right person at the right time for the job,” Mayor Wheeler said. “Having steadily risen through the ranks within the PPB for more than 20 years, she is well-known, well-respected and trusted bureau-wide, and gives us the internal continuity we must have to keep moving in a positive direction. Chief Resch is also highly engaged within the community, serving as an active member of Police Bureau’s Muslim Council, Slavic Advisory Council and Refugee Integration Program. She has also volunteered her time with Camp Rosenbaum, Shop with a Cop and acted as a mentor for the Zman Scholarship Foundation. I am proud of the leadership team that has been established at PPB and we are fortunate to have a leader like Chief Resch ready to be our next police chief.”

Commissioner Fish Announces Intent to Resign

December 31, 2019

A Message to the Community from Commissioner Nick Fish:

Last month, I shared that my illness had become more complicated and that I would be taking a few weeks over the holidays to be with my family and to learn more about what changes in my health mean for my public service.

Since then, I have been talking to my team of care providers and adjusting to my new reality.

I have always brought energy and enthusiasm to my job as Commissioner. Serving on the Council has been the great honor of my life. Based on the demands of my illness, however, I no longer believe that I can do this work at the high level our community deserves and I expect of myself.

I cannot escape the very sad fact that I will be unable to serve out the remainder of my term. I trust my Council colleagues to determine the most appropriate date for an election to select my successor, minimizing disruption and cost to the City. My resignation will become effective upon the election of my successor as Commissioner #2.

Over the next few months, I will be working with Mayor Wheeler and my City Hall team to prepare for a transition. Such a transition has precedent; in fact, it’s the way I myself got the chance to run and get elected to the Council in 2008.

We will continue to steward the work of building a sustainable future for Portland Parks & Recreation. We will continue to lead the clean-up of the Willamette River Superfund site. My team will remain responsive to constituents and stay engaged with our everyday responsibilities as well as prepare to set the next Council member up for success.

Portlanders have inspired me every day since I was sworn in in June of 2008, and I am so proud of what we've accomplished together.

For the past 11 years in office, I've worn many hats. I was honored to serve initially as Commissioner of one of the city's oldest bureaus, Portland Fire & Rescue and, with Mayor Adams, I helped create and lead a brand new one in 2009, the Portland Housing Bureau. Then I led our two utilities, Water and Environmental Services, and Portland Parks & Recreation – twice.

I ran on a platform in support of affordable housing and ending homelessness. In my years as Housing Commissioner, we focused on serving our most vulnerable neighbors – the poorest people in our community. Even during the worst recession of my lifetime, we made important progress. At times, the only construction cranes in the air were the ones building affordable housing. We built new homes, saved hundreds of affordable apartments for older adults and people with disabilities, and helped hundreds of homeless veterans find stable, affordable homes. We worked closely with our partners at Multnomah County, in the non-profit community, and at the State to align our dollars and our priorities – and we made a lasting difference. Bud Clark Commons, Gray's Landing, and the new Riverplace Parcel are testament to what Portland can do when we work in partnership.

Supportive housing is a proven, efficient tool to serve our most vulnerable citizens and I have worked hard to ensure that Council has maintained this priority. I threw myself into the recent bond measures sponsored by the city and by Metro that are now bringing hundreds of affordable new homes to our community. Later this year, I hope our region passes a new measure to fund the services that allow people to remain successfully housed. And I am gratified that we are ahead of schedule on our goal to add 2,000 new units of supportive housing – affordable homes with wraparound services – by 2028. We must never lose sight of the neediest in our community, those whose voice is often lost in policy debates.

Back in 2013, Mayor Hales assigned me the two city utilities – the Bureau of Environmental Services and Portland Water Bureau. At the time, the bureaus were a source of frustration to citizens due to rate increases and accountability issues. I was excited by the opportunity to restore public trust, increase transparency, and improve the alignment of priorities. Five years of patient listening and rebuilding paid off. We brought rate increases down and sharpened our focus on mission-critical work, like water quality. We also won a major lawsuit challenging City spending of utility dollars. We did it together.

My time leading the women and men of the Fire Bureau was brief, but my respect for their service is deep and enduring. Every day, firefighters do whatever it takes to keep their fellow Portlanders safe. At times, they make the ultimate sacrifice. It is my fervent hope that our community will rally to build a new memorial to fallen firefighters. The planned David Campbell Memorial, named for an early Fire Chief whose service cost him his life, will provide a peaceful refuge that commemorates those we have lost and honors those who serve today.

Portlanders love their parks and so do I. Last year, almost everyone in our community visited a park or natural area. These green places draw new residents and visitors to Portland, and time and again citizens name parks as a top priority. I served as Parks Commissioner from 2009 through mid-2013, and again since November of 2018. Both eras brought unique challenges. In

2009, when the recession limited City resources, we focused on meaningful investments that would matter to Portlanders. Public-private partnerships brought us innovations like Harper's Playground and the Summer Free-For-All program, gems of inclusivity, beauty, and fun. We added 1,000 new community garden plots to our city-wide inventory. We passed new protections for our urban tree canopy. And we laid plans for new park development, so that when resources became available we'd be ready to move forward with fresh ideas.

A decade later, Parks faces a different challenge. A structural problem in the way Parks is funded has meant that the bureau continually loses ground. Equipment, facilities, and fields deteriorate because we can't maintain them. The old fee-driven business model cannot sustain the system we have, much less improve it. Without new funding, Portland will never be able to conserve and develop a healthy, safe parks system or to close the inequities around access. Our parks must serve all Portlanders. The bureau has begun the hard work of crafting a more efficient, equitable funding model, exploring what a better, more sustainable future will look like. We cherish our green and open places and by working together, we can responsibly steward them for future generations.

Care and stewardship of the environment are global as well as local issues. We are in a climate crisis and Portland must remain a leader and innovator. In my time on the Council, the city has begun to decisively reduce our impact on the environment. A raft of new initiatives are moving us in the right direction: limits on single-use plastics, shifting our automotive fleet off gas fuel, composting food waste, converting methane at our sewage treatment plant to renewable natural gas, and maximizing our use of nature rather than pipes to manage Portland's plentiful rainwater. These initiatives provide momentum that must grow. Cities will continue to be laboratories for innovation in climate protection, and I know that Portland can continue to be a leader.

I have always believed that government can be society's greatest force for good, and that together we can do amazing things. As a member of the Council, I have insisted that the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts, and I have focused on partnership, collaboration, and shared success.

Across the country, the last decade has seen a stark decline in civility. Portland has not been immune to the national weakening of civil discourse. And, as we grapple with the future of our country and our planet, we are becoming a big city, with our own growing pains. We can rise to this occasion and embrace inclusivity, sustainability, and shared prosperity for all. We must unite around these values and make them real through collective effort. City Council can do its part by fostering diverse rather than divergent priorities. It is our obligation to find the common ground in order to advance the common good. I have seen the power of partnership, and I trust our community's leaders to see that the people of Portland deserve our best.

I am grateful for the support and love my family and I have felt over the last two and a half years that I have fought against cancer. And I am privileged to have had the opportunity to serve the community I love for the past decade.

Thank you for allowing me this honor, and for all that you do to make Portland special. The future is bright.

The Portland Observer

Chief Outlaw Leaving; Deputy Promoted

December 30, 2019

Year begins with police bureau shakeup

Danielle Outlaw, the first African American woman to lead the Portland Police Bureau, has accepted a new job to lead the Philadelphia police department, and Jami Resch, Outlaw's recently named deputy police chief, will be promoted to become Portland's next permanent police chief.

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler announced Outlaw's departure and Resch's hiring on Monday.

Outlaw came to Portland two years ago from the Oakland Police Department in California. During her tenure here, she challenged the city and law enforcement to address racial inequities and now becomes the police chief of the fourth largest police department in the nation, with more than 6,500 sworn and 800 civilian members.

"I'd like to congratulate Chief Outlaw for landing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Mayor Wheeler said Monday in a news release. "We thank her for her service to the city of Portland and the Portland Police Bureau where she helped make a positive difference. She came to Portland exceedingly qualified for the position of police chief, and leaves more prepared than ever for her new position in Philadelphia."

Wheeler credited Outlaw for helping build community trust and public confidence in the Portland Police Bureau. He said under her leadership, the bureau formalized the use of the Incident Command System model for critical incidents and crowd management, and implemented crime strategies tailored to each precinct that have effectively reduced crimes against persons, property and society.

Outlaw praised Mayor Wheeler for placing his confidence in her during the two years she served in Portland.

"For police chiefs, I don't think there is ever an ideal time to transition on to our next role in life. However, I am making this transition on good terms, knowing the bureau will be left in the hands of a strong leadership team, led by Chief Jami Resch. And while there will always be work to be done toward improvement, that does not take away from the fact that the members of the bureau are not only extremely talented, compassionate and professional, they are also resilient and accountable to themselves, each other and to the community," Outlaw said.

"I leave knowing the Bureau will remain committed to community safety while building trust. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as Portland's Police Chief, serving alongside the members of the Bureau and partnering with countless, remarkable individuals within Portland's community. I will forever be appreciative of my experience here," she added.

Portland City Commission Jo Ann Hardesty, the first black female member of the Portland City Council and a longtime advocate for police reforms, said Outlaw came to Portland as a visionary leader and wished her well in her next role.

"While I appreciate the work done by Chief Outlaw, the fact remains that chiefs will come and go, but it is the culture they leave behind that matters most to our community. There is still much work to be done to make the Portland Police Bureau the organization we need it to be, and I look forward to working with Chief Resch as she takes on this charge."

Wheeler said the new incoming chief meets or exceeds all of the police bureau's current leadership needs, citing her 20 years of experience with the Portland Police Bureau coming up the ranks, and being highly engaged within the community, citing her service as an active member of Police Bureau's Muslim Council, Slavic Advisory Council and Refugee Integration Program, for examples.

"I have complete confidence that Chief Resch will excel as our next police chief. She has my complete trust and a thorough understanding of my agenda. She is the right person at the right time for the job," Wheeler said.

Resch will be the fourth woman to oversee the Portland Police Bureau in city history.

OPB

New Portland Police Chief Sworn In Amid Stir Over Outlaw's Departure

*By Rebecca Ellis
December 31, 2019*

Jami Resch has seen her promotions come in quick succession over the last few years.

In 2016, she was promoted from lieutenant to captain. Two years later, she became the assistant chief of the investigations branch. This May, she was named deputy chief.

Now there's nowhere higher to climb within Portland's ranks.

In a private ceremony at noon on New Year's Eve, Resch was sworn in as the city's new chief of police. The event came just after a day after the news dropped that outgoing Chief Danielle Outlaw would be leaving her post to take the top job in Philadelphia's police force.

Outlaw told Mayor Ted Wheeler, who oversees the police bureau, about her decision last Thursday. By Sunday afternoon, he had picked her successor.

It was a stark contrast from the more than two-months-long, nationwide search Wheeler spearheaded two years ago to find Outlaw. That time, Wheeler walked the public through the process, sending out press releases with timelines for candidate interviews and seeking input on language for the job posting. He created "community panels" to help narrow down the pool of 33 candidates to just one.

The national search, Wheeler said at the time, gave the city "the chance to address fundamental questions about the direction of policing in Portland."

Many of the questions swirling during that period — concerning the bureau's use of force, treatment of individuals with mental illnesses, police accountability — still surround the force, leaving some wondering why Wheeler opted for a quicker, closed-door process this time around.

In a statement, mayoral candidate Sarah Iannarone called Wheeler's decision a "snap judgement."

"As we wrap up the deadliest year from police use of force in nearly a decade, I'm certain we need to take a great deal of care selecting a chief committed to reforming the Portland Police," she wrote.

Fellow mayoral candidate Teressa Raiford joined Iannarone in taking aim at the fast-tracked process: “I believe that the fact that [Wheeler] didn’t apply an interim [chief of police] to give more public access to the process ... shows that he hasn’t been listening to Portlanders,” Raiford said.

“People want to feel assured that we have a police force that’s engaged with our community,” she added.

But the mayor’s office has countered that this time was different — for a few reasons, which were laid out in an email Tuesday afternoon by the mayor’s chief of staff, Kristin Dennis.

“In 2017, we knew we needed someone to come in and shake up the bureau. But this time is different — we’re happy with the trajectory we’re on and we need to continue making the improvements the Bureau has been working toward,” she wrote.

Secondly, Dennis wrote, this is an election year. This means the city won’t be able to attract top-tier candidates, who will be naturally wary of a job where their future boss could be out of office by November.

Lastly, she wrote, the bureau needs to prioritize stability right now. There are big policy decisions on the horizon including contract negotiations, budget discussions and upcoming work sessions with City Council. This means the position needed to be filled promptly by “someone who understands the Bureau, the City, and the Community,” Dennis wrote.

Portland Commissioner Nick Fish Will Resign

December 31, 2019

Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish is resigning to focus on his health.

Fish announced Tuesday that he feels he can no longer “do this work at the high level our community deserves and I expect of myself.” His City Council colleagues will set a date for a special election to fill his seat, a contest likely to occur on the same day as the May 2020 primary. Fish plans to resign once voters elect his successor.

Fish, 61, was first elected to the City Council in 2008. He’s championed new efforts to combat homelessness and keep people in their homes, and expansion and renovation of Portland parks. Fish later oversaw the city’s water and sewer bureaus, and in 2014 helped beat back an attempt to snatch them away from city control.

He was diagnosed with stomach cancer two and a half years ago, but continued to work — and win reelection — while receiving treatment. Earlier this month, he announced his disease had become “more complicated” and that he was taking most of December off to spend with his family and focus on his health.

In his written announcement Tuesday, Fish said the cancer and treatment make continuing to serve impossible.

“I cannot escape the very sad fact that I will be unable to serve out the remainder of my term,” Fish wrote.

A New York native, Fish descends from political royalty. His great-great-grandfather was U.S. secretary of state, and his father and grandfather both served in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Fish, an employment lawyer by trade, began his own career in public service working for U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, a Massachusetts Democrat. Fish and his wife, Patricia Schechter, moved to Oregon so she could take a teaching position at Portland State University.

Fish was elected to City Hall in a special race to replace Commissioner Erik Sten, who had resigned, in 2008. Fish was then elected to a full term in 2010 and reelected in 2014 and 2018.

Reflecting on more than a decade working alongside Fish, Commissioner Amanda Fritz said the skill and enthusiasm with which Fish managed the two utility bureaus stands out. Both the Water Bureau and Bureau of Environmental Services were assigned to him in 2013 by Mayor Charlie Hales.

“It’s not an assignment that gets you a lot of attention or opportunities to cut ribbons or make flowery speeches,” Fritz said. “They’re very much utilities, and he restored public trust in them. He made sure that they worked together.”

Fritz said Fish always kept an eye out for low-income ratepayers. Last year, under Fish’s direction, the utility bureaus began providing rebates on bills for families at risk of eviction.

Fritz said she’ll remember not just what Fish accomplished over the last decade but what he turned down. Years ago, she said, she was driving in the car with Fish when he let slip that the Obama administration had asked him to come work in its housing department. He turned it down.

“He described it to me as his dream job,” she said. “And yet he decided to stay in Portland because he felt that he had signed up for a job and he wanted to do that job.”

“I hope that people — over the past couple of years, especially — have been recognizing that Nick again has chosen to stay in his job for as long as he possibly could to do the right thing by the people of Portland,” she added.

Zari Santner worked with the Portland Parks Bureau for three decades but served as director under Fish for only a few. Still, reached by phone on New Year’s Eve, she easily rattled off memories of her old boss.

Santner remembers Fish as energetic, eloquent and a highly persuasive advocate for the Parks Bureau in front of his colleagues.

“Oh my gosh, after briefing him with information and facts, he could make a case far better than the bureau could do,” she said. “... It has to come from his lawyerly background.”

Santner said she was struck by Fish’s sense of obligation to serve less-fortunate Portlanders. He insisted on parks remaining open during the summertime so that children could be fed when they weren’t in school, for example, and that city community gardens donate excess food to food pantries.

“He’s a very compassionate man; in everything that he does, the compassion shows,” she said. “Sometimes during budget cuts when elderly people, especially elderly women, would come and plead to council not to cut some programs for seniors, I could see tears in his eyes.”

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum celebrated Fish in a tweet as “a dedicated public servant and a strong champion for our most vulnerable.”

Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury wrote that he was “more than just an able legislator or an administrator with the steadiest hands.

“His unwavering desire to do the right thing, even when it wasn’t easy, should be the gold standard for current and future elected officials,” she wrote. “A bureau in trouble? Give it to Nick. Controversial issue? Give it to Nick. Time and time again he proved he could take care of it.”

City officials have begun planning a contest to name Fish’s replacement.

According to city elections officer Deborah Scroggin, the election is almost certain to occur in May, on the same date as the 2020 primary — a move which avoids the additional costs of a special election.

That May race would lead to a runoff election between the top two vote-getters if no single candidate can achieve more than 50% of the vote. The eventual winner would serve out the remainder of Fish’s term, which expires at the end of 2022.

The city’s charter says that an election must occur within 90 days of a vacancy on the City Council, “unless council finds reasonable use to delay beyond 90 days,” Scroggin said. In his announcement Tuesday, Fish said he will resign only once a successor is elected.

“Thank you for allowing me this honor, and for all that you do to make Portland special,” he wrote. “The future is bright.”