

## The Oregonian

# Firefighters' calendar featuring Portland homeless camps draws rebuke from fire chief and commissioner

*By Maxine Bernstein*

*January 22, 2020*

A calendar hanging in a fire station in East Portland featured photos of homeless camps around the city and now the city's fire chief and fire commissioner have admonished firefighters for its insensitivity and disrespect.

Fire Chief Sara Boone said the action undermines the Fire Bureau's integrity and that she expects firefighters to not only adhere to city, state and federal laws but act with professionalism.

"To be clear, it is the expectation of this administration that all employees who work at Portland Fire & Rescue will conduct themselves in a manner that does not undermine the efficiency of our operations, the good of the order, and the integrity of our service to the public," Boone said Monday in a letter sent to all firefighters. "This integrity is undermined when we fail to show respect to those we serve, regardless of their circumstance."

Fire officials haven't identified the firefighter who made the calendar. It surfaced at Portland Fire Station No. 7, one of the city's busiest stations in the Mill Park neighborhood at 1500 S.E. 122nd Ave., and firefighters from other stations apparently expressed interest in having one of their own, according to Fire Bureau members. Twenty-four firefighters are assigned to Station 7.

City Commissioner JoAnn Hardesty called the actions a "great community harm" that needs to be rectified and said she's disappointed that a member of the Fire Bureau would create a calendar that's "disparaging the houseless community."

"I know in my heart that this calendar is not in alignment with the great people I know all of you to be," Hardesty wrote in a memo to all firefighters Tuesday. Hardesty oversees the Fire Bureau in her role as city commissioner.

"I support Chief Boone and her management team completely in ensuring that something like this does not happen in the future," Hardesty wrote. "This is simply not a culture we can allow to be permitted in any way, shape, or form."

Hardesty noted that she lives in East Portland. "It breaks my heart to see my own neighborhood shown in this manner by the very people we depend on to save us when something wrong happens," she said in the memo.

The memo was sent to Fire Bureau members on Tues., Jan. 21, 2020.

The bureau's professional standards deputy chief is investigating to learn who made the calendar.

Fire Lt. Rich Chatman, a bureau spokesman, declined to discuss the inquiry. "Because it's an active investigation, we can't comment on it at this time," he said.

Alan Ferschweiler, president of the Portland Fire Fighters Association, said the calendar, while insensitive, highlights greater problems that aren't getting enough attention from city leaders: "the friction between firefighters and the houseless population" and an "overstressed work force."

Firefighters, he said, usually are sent to deal with low-level medical calls at homeless camps or to put out fires at the camps. Because Portland police aren't responding as often to these calls,

firefighters often feel unsafe or face aggression from people who are abusing drugs or alcohol, Ferschweiler said.

“Those negative interactions have a resounding effect on our members,” he said. “Police have responded less and less and less to those calls with us. That’s part of the situation too. I feel there’s calls where I wish the cops were here.”

The calendar is a way of using “dark humor” as a coping mechanism, Ferschweiler said, even if it’s “not the best way.”

“Let’s have some talk about the problem we’re having,” he said.

A stranger’s stabbing Saturday night of an off-duty fire lieutenant who was at a Portland bar celebrating his wedding anniversary further highlights the problem, the union president said.

A 30-year-old man with a history of threatening strangers with knives was arrested Tuesday night, accused of assault and unlawful use of a weapon in the attack against Lt. Paul Komanecky at Kingston’s Sports Bar & Grill at 2021 S.W. Morrison St.

“We want to have a better solution to the problem,” Ferschweiler said. “We want people like Paul to be able to come downtown, have a good time with his wife and be able to go home safely.”

## **The Portland Mercury**

### **City Auditor Won’t Enforce Voter-Approved Campaign Finance Limits Because They’re Tied Up In Court**

*By Blair Stenvick  
January 22, 2020*

Mayor Ted Wheeler and other Portland political candidates were the target of a recent campaign finance complaint for accepting large donations. But the Portland City Auditor’s Office says it will drop the complaint, because it is based on local campaign finance policy that is currently being sorted out in the courts.

Last month, Portlander Ronald Buel filed complaints against Wheeler, mayoral candidate Ozzie Gonzalez, and Portland City Council candidate Jack Kerfoot, arguing that their willingness to accept individual campaign contributions above \$500 went against a campaign finance ballot measure approved by Portland voters in 2018.

That measure, Measure 26-200, faced a legal challenge from business interest groups soon after it passed. Those groups, including the Portland Business Alliance and the Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors, argued that the measure’s strict donation limits infringed on Oregonians’ right to freedom of speech and expression. The measure was found unconstitutional in a lower court, but currently sits before the Oregon Supreme Court. That court heard arguments about that measure and a nearly identical Multnomah County measure in November 2019, and is expected to issue a ruling sometime this year.

Jason Kafoury, one of the architects of both measures, recently told the Mercury that candidates are currently in a “legal limbo land” concerning the measure’s enforceability, but that Wheeler and other candidates were “taking a big risk by taking big money in this [2020] campaign.”

But the Portland City Auditor's Office is choosing to drop the complaints against Wheeler, Gonzalez, and Kerfoot. As the Oregonian reported Tuesday, City Elections Officer Deborah Scroggin told the three candidates in a letter that "we will not be enforcing, investigating, or acting on complaints regarding provisions of the charter that are currently being litigated and have been held unconstitutional."

This means that local candidates will be free to accept high-dollar donations during the 2020 elections cycle. Wheeler is using a self-imposed limit of \$5,000 per individual donation, ten times as high as the limit approved by 87 percent of Portland voters in 2018.

Buel also filed a campaign finance complaint against Multnomah County Commissioner Lori Stegmann last year. According to the Oregonian, the county elections director also declined to follow-up on the claim.

## **Loretta Smith Enters Race for City Council, Agrees to Donation Limits**

*By Alex Zielinski  
January 23, 2020*

Former Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith has traditionally leaned on wealthy donors and powerful political action committees to fuel her campaigns. But for her latest run to fill the Portland City Council seat vacated by Commissioner Nick Fish, she's trying a new strategy.

"I could just call up a few people who I know could write me big checks," Smith told the Mercury. "But I want to give every candidate a fair chance—and I want to reintroduce myself to the community."

Smith, who formally entered the race last week, intends on participating in Portland's Open and Accountable Elections (OAE) program, a new system that offers public financing to candidates who pledge to only accept individual donations \$50 and below. It's a distinct contrast to Smith's 2018 run for City Council, where she lost to Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty even after out-fundraising her by an almost two-to-one margin.

While this recent loss might contribute to her change of heart, Smith's new financial limitations also fall in line with her new campaign messaging.

"This is a different race than last time," she said. "This campaign will be about poverty and helping minimized communities. This is about service. This is about saying, 'Poverty is not a crime.'"

While on the Multnomah County Commission, Smith was a vocal supporter of turning the defunct Wapato Jail facility into a homeless service shelter—despite the county's own study finding the plan far more costly than improving and expanding shelters already in operation. Smith said she's no longer calling for public investment in Wapato.

The county and city governments "need to be supporting each other and working towards the same goal to address homelessness," said Smith. "I want to do whatever I can to help make that happen."

Smith said she's particularly interested in expanding the city's commitment to permanent supportive housing, a term for programs that combine affordable housing with social services

that help stabilize tenants at risk of homelessness. She's in favor of the burgeoning Here Together campaign, backed by Multnomah County and the City of Portland, that's hoping to get a plan to finance supportive housing services before voters in November.

Smith said she wasn't considering a 2020 run until Fish announced he was planning to resign late last year. Fish died two days after making that announcement.

"2018 was a tough race. It took me 14 months to reflect on it and emotionally be able to enter a grueling campaign," she said. "But I feel prepared now to step back into leadership. My passion is real."

Smith is one of at least ten candidates who've announced their run for the Commissioner 2 seat, including Metro Councilor Sam Chase, tenant advocate Margot Black, immigrant advocate Ronault "Polo" Catalani, and progressive activist Julia DeGraw. As of now, Smith is one of four who have already signaled their intent to participate in city's OAE program.

## **The Portland Business Journal**

### **Pearl District Hyatt Place moves forward with Portland Design Commission blessing**

*By Jonathan Bach  
January 21, 2020*

The Portland Design Commission has OK'd a 23-story high-rise in Portland's Pearl District.

The building is an evolution of the 11-story Hyatt Place Hotel proposed in 2018. The building, which will offer some 160 hotel rooms, is expected to open in 2022.

Spread across 10,000 square feet, the Hyatt Place and Lawson Residences will include a mix of hotel rooms, as well as affordable and market-rate housing, according to Otak Inc., a design and architecture firm. The design commission approved the project, located on Northwest 12th Avenue, Jan. 16.

The growth in size came about because of Portland's Central City 2035 plan, a policy document for the city's urban core.

"The development team altered course so that they could contribute to the addition of housing by adding the apartment program," Casey McKenna, mixed-use studio leader with Otak, said by email.

The ratio of affordable to market-rate units has yet to be finalized, McKenna said. As it stands, the second through 11th floors are expected to be dedicated to the hotel, with residential units occupying the 12th through 23rd floors.

The Hyatt Place will add to the city's robust hotel room stock. The Portland area added more than 4,000 hotel rooms between 2010 and 2020, according to recent estimates by commercial real estate company Cushman & Wakefield.