

The Oregonian

Portland police discovered nearly 100 reports still contain gang designations, despite pledge to purge them in 2017

By Maxine Bernstein

March 6, 2020

Portland police have discovered nearly 100 reports that still contain alleged gang designations of people in its records system, despite its pledge in the fall of 2017 to purge such records.

The discovery resulted from a private citizen's recent public records request, according to police Lt. Tina Jones, bureau spokeswoman.

A further check by the records division turned up 99 reports that contained alleged gang designations for different individuals. The 99 are among more than 4.9 million report entries in the Police Bureau's electronic records system and have been removed, according to police.

"It appears an error was made several years ago, which was just recently realized," Police Chief Jami Resch said in a statement. "There have been publicly expressed concerns around gang designations, which is why it was important for me to be transparent about this error and the steps immediately taken to remedy it."

A records division employee found the problem in response to the citizen's public records request. The Police Bureau then did an internal search of all its reports. The bureau also has requested an outside agency to review its records management system, which is known as RegJin, to make sure there's nothing in the police database that continues to contain such gang designations.

The gang designations that remained in the records system were found in what's called "street check reports," which are field contact reports that don't necessarily result in an arrest or any law enforcement action taken, Jones said. They were also discovered in what's called snapshot forms, essentially a photocopy of a report that officers fill out on their mobile computers, intended to be a backup to the report..

In September 2017, the Police Bureau announced it would end its more than 20-year-old practice of designating people as gang members or gang associates in response to strong community concerns about the labels that have disproportionately affected minorities.

The Police Bureau's then-Capt. Andy Shearer, now an assistant chief, said the bureau recognized that such labels have led to "unintended consequences" and served as lifelong barriers for those who have shunned the gang lifestyle and tried to get jobs.

A 2016 review by Oregonian/OregonLive reporter Carli Brosseau had found that of the 359 "criminal gang affiliates" flagged in Portland's database, 81 percent were part of a racial or ethnic minority. She obtained the list, names removed, only after appealing the city's attempt to keep it from public view.

In March 2018, a city audit, though, discovered that the Police Bureau still kept an informal list of active gang members despite purging a more formal directory of "designated" gang members.

Auditors set out to analyze the Gang Enforcement Team's investigations and patrol operations and discovered that the team had still kept a list of "Active Portland Gang Members & Associates" since 2015 – but without accountability or transparency.

In the 2018 audit, City Auditor Mary Hull Caballero called for the bureau to have tighter controls, especially given that a federal judge in 1994 prohibited Portland police from designating gang members without due process.

Facing criticism, city of Portland withdraws negligence claim against Quanice Hayes' mother

By Maxine Bernstein

March 6, 2020

The city of Portland on Thursday withdrew its allegation in court that Quanice Hayes' mother was negligent and at fault for her 17-year-old's fatal shooting by police.

The move followed criticism by candidates for city council and a hearing last week when lawyers for Hayes' family urged U.S. Magistrate Judge John V. Acosta to strike the city's defense.

Last week, in a joint letter addressed to city council, mayoral candidate Sarah Iannarone and city commissioner candidates Carmen Rubio, Loretta Smith and Sam Adams called the city's defense against a wrongful death lawsuit filed by Hayes' family "disgusting" and "oppressive." They said the city's defense strategy deepens rifts between the city and vulnerable communities it serves.

In a brief court filing, senior deputy city attorney William Manlove notified the court Thursday that the city was withdrawing its defense accusing Hayes' mother Venus Hayes of negligence, based on the arguments made at last week's hearing and upon "further consideration of the facts" in the case.

In court last week, Ashlee J. Albies, an attorney for the Hayes family, had called it "objectionable and offensive" that the city would argue the teenager's mother, Venus Hayes, was at fault for not being able to control her son.

Albies and her co-counsel, Jesse Merrithew, said the city's arguments would detract from the central question in the case, which they frame as: What happened in the moments before Officer Andrew Hearst "shot an unarmed Black teen in the head while (the teen was) on his knees from 15 feet away."

The civil rights suit accuses Hearst of using excessive force when he shot Quanice Hayes three times with an AR-15 rifle on Feb. 9, 2017, as police confronted Hayes outside a Northeast Portland home. Hayes wasn't a threat when he was killed, the suit alleges.

Officers discovered Hayes, a suspect in an armed robbery and attempted carjacking earlier that morning, in an alcove in front of the home and ordered him to keep his hands up but crawl toward officers on the driveway and then lie down with his hands to his side, according to grand jury testimony.

When Hayes appeared to reach toward his waistband, Hearst fired, police said. Hayes died at the scene from one gunshot above his forehead on the right side of his head, one near the bottom of his left rib cage and one to his torso, according to an autopsy.

The suit alleges Hearst and fellow Officer Robert Wullbrandt were shouting contradictory commands at Hayes just before he was shot. Hearst testified that he never saw Hayes with a gun, but believed Hayes was the suspect in the earlier holdup of a man in his car. The man described

his assailant as holding a tan pistol. Officers found a black and tan airsoft pistol in a flower bed about 2 feet from Hayes' body, they said.

The city has defended Hearst's fatal shots as "objectively reasonable under the totality of the circumstances," saying Hayes' conduct created an immediate threat of death or serious injury to Hearst and fellow officers.

The fact that Hayes had held a man at gunpoint earlier in the day and was confronted by police when emerging from a home that he had broken into "contributed to how police responded," Manlove had argued in court.

Portland plans to give \$2.1 million for new SE Portland treatment center where it would control 10 beds

*By Everton Bailey Jr.
March 5, 2020*

A Portland-based drug and alcohol addiction treatment center will receive more than \$2.1 million from the city to help build a new facility. The city in turn would be able to determine the use of 10 inpatient beds for 60 years.

DePaul Treatment Center plans to build a two-story 55,000-square-foot facility at Southeast 102nd Avenue and Cherry Blossom Drive that would replace its current 46,000-square-foot downtown Portland building, which has 84 beds. The nonprofit's new building is planned to have around 70 beds for long-term adult treatment and a day treatment space expected to serve up to another 80 people at a time and more than 900 outpatients a year, DePaul officials say.

The new building will be built on a 3.4-acre property and is planned to open sometime in 2021. A groundbreaking ceremony will be held April 23.

The Portland City Council voted 4-0 Wednesday to send the organization up to \$2,177,000 for the estimated \$29.1 million building that will have dining and other amenity spaces for residents.

The 10 city-controlled beds would be regulated by the Portland Housing Bureau and meant for people with incomes at or below 60% of the median family income. For a single person in the Portland area, that would be \$36,960 and below, city data shows.

Mayor Ted Wheeler, who oversees the housing bureau, said the city pushed for this model so public dollars would go toward ensuring some of the treatment beds remained affordable.

"Our contribution is a relatively small portion of the overall contribution to this project, but I think it's a very important contribution because it opens up access for people who might not otherwise have access to these treatment opportunities," he said.

DePaul currently has its main facility downtown that includes a 24-hour residential treatment center at 1312 S.W. Washington St. and a youth and family center at 4310 N.E. Killingsworth St. It also operates an outpatient center in Hillsboro.

City and county records show DePaul sold the downtown building for nearly \$7.4 million in November to an out-of-state owner. Sandy Parkin, a DePaul spokesperson, said Thursday that it isn't immediately clear when the downtown Portland building will close.

Molly Rogers, Portland Housing Bureau deputy director, said Wednesday that DePaul planned to raise \$10.7 million for its new building and draw the remaining \$16.2 million from other sources that include tax credits.

Maree Wacker, DePaul's chief executive officer, said her organization is still trying to raise \$1.4 million of the planned \$10.7 million. She told the city council that her organization serves around 5,000 people for addiction treatment and mental health services and a third of their patients are homeless when they arrive and around 28% of them are people of color.

She said the group aids people in finding housing once they complete DePaul's program and have paid first month's rent for some of them.

Opinion: Police reform must go beyond 'substantial compliance'

*By Elliot Young
March 8, 2020*

Young is a member of the Portland Committee on Community-Engaged Policing and a professor of history at Lewis & Clark College.

More than seven years after the city of Portland committed to enacting dozens of police reforms in a settlement agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice, the city still has work to do to satisfy the federal judge overseeing the case.

Last month, U.S. District Judge Michael H. Simon refused to approve amendments to the agreement, citing the inadequacy of the new Portland Committee on Community-Engaged Policing, which is intended to provide community oversight of police. As a member of the committee, I have to agree with Judge Simon that there is a long way to go. But the issue is less failings with the committee than the fact that the agreement does not mandate any specific outcomes.

We can check off every paragraph of the agreement and conclude the city is in "substantial compliance," yet policing on the street still seems as questionable as ever. The agreement is focused on having the city and the Portland Police Bureau do trainings and set up procedures for oversight. But there is not one paragraph that dictates benchmarks for the city to meet. In fact, Dennis Rosenbaum, the compliance officer overseeing the agreement for Portland, admitted at a public forum in September that outcomes were not part of his analysis.

The record on outcomes is mixed at best. The DOJ points to a 24% decrease in use-of-force incidents as evidence of success. However, Portland Police Bureau's own data suggests no such thing. Since consistent data began being reported in September 2017 through September 2019, "applications of force" — which can be several strikes on the same person — have risen and declined, but there has been no significant reduction in the average over these two years.

The demographics of the people who have been subject to that force are disproportionately black, homeless and those in a mental health crisis. For the past two years, half of use-of-force incidents involved people who are homeless, even though they make up just 3% of the populace. People suffering from mental illness were subject to 15%, and black people accounted for 28% of such encounters with the police, again wildly disproportionate to their representation in the city. Over the past two years use-of-force against homeless people has spiked and fallen, but again there is no clear downward trendline.

It is important to remember that the settlement was created because Portland's policing of people with mental illness was found by the DOJ to be unconstitutional. The fact that 60% of the people killed by police in Portland in 2019 were in a mental health crisis suggests that while the Portland Police Bureau has implemented training programs, it continues to kill a disproportionate number of people with mental illness.

The story from Portland police's traffic stops data is equally disturbing. The latest data shows that black drivers and pedestrians are stopped by Portland Police officers at three times their rate in the general population. The disproportionate targeting of black people by police can be seen in every report issued since 2013.

The recent revelations about the involvement by Portland police with the unconstitutional racist harassment of Michael Fesser in West Linn suggests that the problem is much deeper than we may have been led to believe. If the police are supposed to have mechanisms in place for oversight and accountability, why did it take two years, and only after a successful civil lawsuit, for the Portland police to investigate this incident?

At the hearing in front of Judge Simon, Rev. LeRoy Haynes from the Albina Ministerial Alliance said it best: "We have made some substantial quantitative progress, but we are far from achieving the intent of the settlement agreement." In our own statement to the court, the community-oversight committee concluded "there is still a long way to go to fulfill the spirit of the agreement."

To achieve real change in policing in the city, the DOJ and the city should establish benchmarks for substantive outcomes. Portlanders want nondiscriminatory policing and fewer violent interactions with the public, not just more trainings and public meetings.

The Portland Tribune

Here are 3 big takeaways from Portland's mayoral debate

*By Zane Sparling
March 09, 2020*

Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler defends his crown, while Sarah Iannarone feels the heat from Ozzie González, and more.

Portland's mayoral race got its largest public airing to date, and the cheers and jeers show that it is still anyone's ball game.

Youth climate activist group Sunrise Movement PDX and others hosted incumbent Mayor Ted Wheeler and challengers Sarah Iannarone, Ozzie González, Teressa Raiford and Piper Crowell in front of a sold-out crowd at Revolution Hall in Southeast Portland on Sunday, March 8.

Here's what you need to know ahead of the May 19 primary:

Target on her back:

Wheeler walked into the room knowing he faced four contenders for the crown and a largely hostile audience. After all, Sunrise PDX went so far as to hold a sit-in inside the mayor's office last year, and the organization has tangled publicly with his comms staff on more than one occasion.

But Iannarone may not have expected to feel the heat from González — who called her version of the Green New Deal "weak sauce" and wondered aloud why she hadn't mentioned her proposed moratorium on sweeps of homeless camps.

During the debate, Iannarone's campaign tweeted: "All arrows are focused on the front runner tonight. Nevertheless she persisted."

Enviro matters:

While Portland's new limitations on single use plastics went by with almost no mention, plenty of airtime was dedicated to Zenith's oil terminal in Northwest Portland.

Wheeler highlighted how a bureau under his control rejected a Zenith permit last year, but said the global firm has since submitted new apps and is likely laying groundwork for a lawsuit.

Iannarone said a climate change emergency declaration should have been passed on Wheeler's first day in office, saying that the mayor has to be dragged along even when he eventually does do what activists want. "We need to be far less risk averse to being sued in the short term," she said.

González touted his degree in environmental science, and labeled himself a "climate scientist." He also rebuked Iannarone's plan to replace Interstate 5 with high speed rail, saying "We're not ready for that."

Talk back

There was plenty of booing — and applause — to be heard, albeit from an audience that skewed young.

Wheeler got a taste of the crowd's disapproval when he said the Oregon Department of Transportation's I-5 Rose Quarter expansion project didn't necessarily need to be canceled. His office did push back on the project recently, calling to attention its impacts on the Eastbank Esplanade.

Hecklers suggested that Crowell should be pushing to tax her employer, Nike, which is actually based in Beaverton. The executive, who has lived in the city for less than three years, received her loudest applause of the night when she yielded her time to Raiford.

In turn, the well-known activist shone in the crowd's appraisal when she vowed never to permit rallies from far right-wingers if elected. "Free speech does not include hate speech," Raiford said. "We're not afraid of white supremacists. They're afraid of us."

González, Iannarone spar over extra credit in mayor race

*By Zane Sparling
March 08, 2020*

Mayoral candidates cross swords after Portland Public Schools students offered CRLE credit to meet with Iannarone.

Who would have thought extra credit would turn into a campaign issue?

Extracurricular activities have indeed become a sore spot in the 14-way race for Portland mayor that goes to ballot in May.

As the Tribune reported in late January, incumbent Mayor Ted Wheeler went so far as to cry cyberbullying after the campaign manager for two-time challenger Sarah Iannarone issued a sardonic tweet about the political science students helping Wheeler canvass for votes.

Since then, another candidate has cried foul over pupils getting involved in politics — with the allegations targeting Iannarone coming from mayoral candidate Ozzie González.

González's campaign says it learned that students at Lincoln High School were offered an opportunity to earn a career-related learning experience credit by attending a "community conversation" campaign event with Iannarone.

Students must earn two CRLE credits to graduate. González has a child currently attending Lincoln.

The invitation — which described Iannarone as "Mayor Ted Wheeler's only competition for mayor" — was posted to the school's student activities app, the digital equivalent of a bulletin board.

"Offering high schoolers course credit under such an obviously false premise is an abuse of the electoral and the educational systems," González told the Tribune. "What other sort of abuses can we expect from a candidate so willing to blatantly misinform youth in this way?"

After the Tribune inquired into the matter, Portland Public Schools admin reported to the campaign that the wording in question was written by a student.

"Once Lincoln leadership was made aware of the post, they had it removed," says PPS spokeswoman Karen Werstein.

As for Iannarone, campaign manager Gregory McKelvey confirms that an event was jointly planned by a local student and their parents. "For all of our house party hosts, they promote it through whatever means they feel is appropriate," McKelvey said.

Infill plan returns to City Council on Thursday

By Jim Redden

March 08, 2020

A proposed amendment to allow up to six housing units on single-family lots is already controversial

The City Council will take up several proposed amendment to the Residential Infill Plan on Thursday, March 12.

The most controversial one will likely be the Deeper Affordability Bonus Amendment. It would allow up to six units on lots in single-family zones if half of them were affordable to households earning 60% or less of the area median family income.

The amendment would also offer size bonuses for qualifying structures, allowing them to be up to 6,000 square feet. The median house in Portland is 1,500 square feet.

The amendment was proposed by nonprofit affordable housing providers, including Habitat for Humanity. They argue it would help them produce more housing that lower-income families can afford in desirable parts of Portland.

The amendment is opposed by some neighborhood activist and preservationists. They say it will change the character of the city by encouraging the demolition and replacement of existing lower-cost homes with housing that is out of scale with the surrounding neighborhoods.

The plan would essentially rezone all single-family neighborhoods in Portland to encourage more and different kinds of housing for the 100,000 additional households expected to be here by 2035. As currently proposed, it allows more density than required by HB 2001, which was approved by the 2019 Oregon Legislature. That bill allows duplexes on most lots and up to four units on portions of existing single-family neighborhoods.

The plan has been in the works for four years and has undergone numerous changes. It is unclear whether the council will hold any additional hearings on it before the final vote.

You can learn more about the plan at beta.portland.gov/bps/rip.

Fight erupts over Metro homeless services measure

By Jim Redden

March 06, 2020

The Alliance for an Affordable Metro opposes the 1% personal and business income tax, but is only questioning the ballot title for now

represent statewide businesses has filed a legal challenge to the \$250 million homeless service measure referred by Metro to the May 19 primary election ballot.

The Alliance for an Affordable Metro is challenging the wording of the ballot title in Multnomah County Circuit Court, as allowed by state election law.

The organization actually opposes the personal and business income taxes that would be created by the measure, according to a press release it issued on Friday, March 6.

"We cannot consider these new personal and business taxes in a vacuum. Any new tax must be considered based on the cumulative effect of taxation on the same dollar," said co-petitioner Shaun Jillions, executive director of Oregon Manufacturers and Commerce.

Measure supporters criticized the opposition.

"All they are announcing today is that they proudly have the ability to hire a lawyer and don't prioritize solving homelessness in Portland the way thousands of local businesses of all sizes do," said campaign manager Angela Martin. "We are in no way concerned with their challenge and hope their lawyers get paid well for their trouble."

The other co-petitioner is Joe Gilliam, president of the Northwest Grocery Association. In the release, Gilliam said that the Portland Business Alliance, which participated in negotiations over the measure, does not speak for all Portland or Oregon businesses.

"Unfortunately, the downtown Portland business interests at the negotiating table didn't consider the cumulative impact of the exponentially growing number of state and local taxes that are borne by everyday Oregonians and business owners," said Gilliam.

Measure supporters said many other Portland businesses were involved, including those represented by Business for a Better Portland.

"This challenge is cynically attempting to do one thing: derail the effort to provide solutions to our region's homelessness crisis, despite the fact that it is voters number one priority and there is broad coalition supporting the measure," said Martin.

No other businesses were identified as participating in the organization in the release.

If approved by Metro voters, the measure would impose a 1% tax on the incomes of wealthier people and larger businesses within the boundaries of the elected regional government. The funds are intended to reduce homelessness by doing such things as helping households at risk of eviction pay their rent and provide services to the chronically homeless, such as mental health and addiction treatment.

Jillions and Gilliam said the taxes would add to an increasing tax burden that is making it difficult to do business in the greater Portland area. Existing taxes cited in the release include:

- State of Oregon corporate income tax
- State of Oregon personal income tax
- State of Oregon commercial activities tax
- City of Portland Business License Tax
- Multnomah County Business Income Tax
- The City of Portland 1% Gross Receipts Tax (Clean Energy Surcharge)
- The nearly \$1 billion in affordable housing bonds the Metro area voters have approved since 2016

The release also cited the following tax measures expected to be on the May and November 3 general election ballots in the region:

- \$16 million City of Portland gas tax renewal
- 3.9% personal income tax increase to fund universal preschool
- Multnomah County business income tax increase
- \$3 billion Metro transportation tax package
- \$1.4 billion Portland Public Schools bond
- \$405 million Multnomah County library bond

This measure will increase the costs of basic needs including groceries, housing and utility bills," said Gilliam.

Portland withdraws part of negligence defense in police shooting case

*By Jim Redden
March 06, 2020*

The withdrawal follows a letter by four City Council candidates objecting to the argument in the death of Quanice Hayes

Facing criticism, the Portland City Attorney's Office has withdrawn part of its negligence defense argument in the federal lawsuit over the police shooting death of Quanice Hayes.

Hayes, a 17-year-old African-American killed by police in February 2017. After the family filed a federal lawsuit, the city responded in part by saying negligent acts by Hayes and his mother contributed to his death. Hayes was not living at home and was the suspect in an armed robbery investigation with he was killed.

City attorneys withdrew the negligence defense against Hayes' mother on Thursday, March 5, as first reported by the Portland Mercury that day.

The withdrawal follows a letter to the City Council by four council candidates criticizing the defense.

"The ugly history of state-sponsored racism, discrimination, and violence against communities of color in this city can't be erased, but we can start doing better today," reads the Feb. 27 letter signed by mayoral candidate Sarah Iannarone and city commissioner candidates Carmen Rubio, Loretta Smith and Sam Adams.

"The City Attorney was not elected by the voters of Portland — you were. You all are empowered to stop this attack on a mother who is still, and always will be, mourning the tragic loss of her son," the letter continued.

Mayor Ted Wheeler's Office responded to the criticism on Feb. 28. "We cannot comment on pending litigation. Our office will follow up with the city attorney to learn more about the circumstances mentioned in the letter," spokesman Tim Becker told the Portland Tribune.

A Multnomah County grand jury ruled the shooting justified. The family sued the city and officer who killed Hayes in February 2018. Lawyers representing Hayes' family also asked the federal judge overseeing the lawsuit to strike negligence arguments from its defense.

Powell neighbors resist apartment homes for mentally ill

*By Teresa Carson
March 05, 2020*

Cascadia Behavioral Health plans 71 affordable units from studios to 2 bedrooms in Centennial area

Dozens of residents vented their frustration at executives of Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare at a meeting Tuesday over an affordable apartment building Cascadia is constructing in their Centennial neighborhood.

Cascadia will begin construction in the summer on the 71 affordable rental units called Centennial Place apartments. The nonprofit also plans a health clinic on the site to be constructed after the apartments are finished.

Neighbors sounded off about the lack of parking, added traffic, perception that property values would fall, the sheer size of the three-story building and an impression that residents of the building will be disruptive and dangerous to the neighborhood, among other issues.

Despite the attempts of Cascadia executives to calm fears, one woman shouted in frustration: "You don't live there."

One woman told the Cascadia staff at the Tuesday night March 3, meeting, "I would like it if you all cared."

Only a few people at the meeting expressed support for the project and a willingness to work with Cascadia to make the project an asset to the neighborhood.

The apartment building will be at 3800 S.E. 164th Ave., at Powell Boulevard, on the site of the former Pinbusterz bowling alley.

Centennial Place Apartments will have 15 studio homes, 32 one-bedroom units and 24 two-bedrooms.

Cascadia serves people living with mental illness and addictions and 18 of the homes will be set aside for people with a mental health issue. Those units will be sprinkled among the other homes so the residents are integrated into the apartment community.

Multiple people expressed concern about the prospect of people with mental illness living in their community.

"Will these folks with mental health issues be monitored? Will they have access to the neighborhood?" asked one man.

The Cascadia executives tried to reassure people by noting that mental illness includes things such as anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder and that people with these types of conditions likely already live in the neighborhood.

Cascadia executives said "we operate like any other apartment building" and that tenants would have to follow the rules and laws applicable to any Portland apartment building as would the management of Centennial Place. There will be a manager living on site.

The building will have 33 parking places for the 71 units.

"What keeps them from parking in front of my house? That does not make me feel safe," declared one woman.

Although the building will have a little less than three dozen parking spots, the city of Portland does not require any on-site parking, said Jim Hlava, vice president for housing at the nonprofit Cascadia Behavioral Healthcare.

"We have parking we are not required to have," Hlava said.

The 53 units not set aside for folks living with mental illness will be affordable housing for households with incomes below 60% of the area median income, which is \$52,740 for a family of four. Renters will pay no more than 30% of their income.

Households with students enrolled in the Centennial School District, whose families are identified as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, will get a preference for these homes.

Construction is estimated to take about 14 months, so folks won't be moving in until late 2021 or early 2022.

Another affordable housing project also is planned on the other side of town, on Northeast 162nd Avenue between Glisan and Halsey streets. The nonprofit group Albertina Kerr has proposed building a 150-unit apartment complex on its campus there.

The new Centennial Place apartments and future 25,000 to 30,000 square foot health clinic are modeled after Cascadia's first integrated housing and healthcare center, the Garlington Health Center & Garlington Place Apartments in northeast Portland. Garlington is smaller than the proposed Centennial Place, with 52 homes.

Hlava offered to take the Centennial Place neighbors to other similar Cascadia properties, such as Garlington, for tours.

"We're glad to take any of you on a tour of our other buildings to see the quality of the buildings and services we have," he said.

Despite the Cascadia executives attempts to ease the fears of local residents, one concluded the meeting with: "I do not see this as a positive for the neighborhood."

Willamette Week

City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty's PAC Weighs in on Council Races

*By Nigel Jaquiss
March 8, 2020*

Elected officials often stay out of contested primaries. Not Hardesty.

Many elected officials refrain from endorsing candidates in contested primaries if they are going to work closely with the eventual winner.

City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty, who won election in 2018, is less cautious. Last year, Hardesty announced she'd formed a political action committee, and with a slate of community advisers, would put her name behind candidates in the 2020 elections.

Hardesty, a former legislator, NAACP leader and longtime activist against police violence, put together a strong coalition in 2018 to defeat a better-funded opponent, then-Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith. Hardesty's campaign worked closely with the campaign that overwhelmingly passed the Portland Clean Energy Fund that year, which means she's got a powerful email and social media following that could be helpful to candidates this year.

Last week, Hardesty's PAC, Rise Together, announced its choices: Mayor Ted Wheeler; Commissioner Chloe Eudaly; Carmen Rubio; and in the 17-strong field to replace the late Commissioner Nick Fish, Julia DeGraw.

The least surprising pick is Rubio, the executive director of the Latino Network and the leading candidate to replace Commissioner Amanda Fritz, who is retiring. Two other candidates in that race, Candace Avalos and Timothy DuBois, have qualified for public financing but Rubio is mopping up key endorsements.

In the mayoral race, progressive challenger Sarah Iannarone would have benefited from Hardesty's support, but Hardesty and Wheeler have become strong allies on the implementation of the Clean Energy Fund and attempting to rework public safety budgeting, so it's not a great surprise that Hardesty stuck with the incumbent.

Hardesty's endorsement of Eudaly was less of a sure thing. They are aligned on tenant protections, skepticism of the Police Bureau and a variety of other issues but have clashed at times, and Eudaly faces stiff competition from former Mayor Sam Adams and newcomer Mingus Mapps. (He's the preferred candidate of the neighborhood associations, many of which were aggrieved with Eudaly over her bureau, the Office of Civic and Community Life, to revamp the role of neighborhood associations.)

Julia DeGraw, who ran against Fish in 2018, getting 33 percent of the vote, might be the biggest beneficiary of Hardesty's endorsement. In a crowded field with three current or former elected officials (Metro Councilor Sam Chase; Smith, the former Multnomah County commissioner and Dan Ryan, a former Portland School Board member) and a onetime chief of staff to Mayor Charlie Hales, Tera Hurst, who has racked up key endorsements, DeGraw needed something to distinguish her from the field.

"I firmly believe these candidates will rise to Portland's biggest challenges and will work together to solve our crises surrounding access to government, housing and homelessness, public safety, transportation, climate, and economic justice, which is why I am very proud to stand with them in their election," Hardesty said in a statement.

Her PAC will introduce her picks to the public on March 11 at 6:30 pm at the Lucky Lab at 915 Southeast Hawthorne Blvd.

Mayor Ted Wheeler Gives Columbia Pool, Set For Closure, A One-Year Reprieve

*By Nigel Jaquiss
March 6, 2020*

The aging North Portland natatorium is a financial drain on Portland Parks & Recreation's over-strapped budget.

It's budget season at City Hall and, as is the case nearly every year, there are high-profile city assets whose future is in doubt because expenses continue to rise faster than revenues.

Mayor Ted Wheeler today preemptively took one sure source of controversy off the table when he announced he and his council colleagues will fund Columbia Pool, located at 7701 N Chautauqua Boulevard in Columbia Park, for another year.

"Columbia Pool is treasured by the North Portland community for swim lessons, water fitness, and as a neighborhood gathering place," Wheeler said in a statement. "I'm pleased that we're able to keep the pool open for another year and I appreciate the passion of the community, the work of Portland Parks & Recreation, and the partnership of my council colleagues."

Unlike the city's other indoor pools which are parts of community centers which generate revenue from a variety of sources, Columbia is a stand-alone facility. The city says it costs \$800,000 to operate but only generates about \$310,000 from users. In addition, the building needs a new roof and HVAC system, which will cost about \$5 million.

That distressing financial picture led the Parks Bureau a year ago to recommend closing the pool as part of an effort to address the bureau's budget crisis.

After an outpouring of community support for saving the pool, City Council last year agreed to keep it open but only until June 2020. That decision came in a budget cycle dominated by discussion of the Parks budget, an experience Wheeler and his colleagues appear eager to avoid this year, as they tackle other issues, including what's billed as a three-year effort to consolidate some public safety support functions.

"Council is committed to putting Portland Parks & Recreation on solid financial footing," Wheeler said. "While work to secure new revenue continues, I'm glad that this pool will keep serving swimmers year-round in North Portland."