

Moore-Love, Karla

From: Portland Copwatch <copwatch@portlandcopwatch.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 11, 2018 3:52 PM
To: Commissioner Saltzman; Commissioner Fritz; Commissioner Fish; Commissioner Eudaly; Wheeler, Mayor; Hull Caballero, Mary
Cc: Council Clerk – Testimony; News Media
Subject: COMMENTS on Auditor's Police Bureau Training report (Item 962)

COMMENTS on Auditor's report on Portland Police Training

Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners Eudaly, Fish, Fritz and Saltzman, and Auditor Hull Caballero:

Because (once again) an important community issue is coming to City Council in the form of a Report and thus we are likely to not be given a chance to testify, Portland Copwatch is sending these comments about the audit of Portland Police training.

The June 2018 report is a follow up to a report from 2015, and like many statements coming from various parts of City Hall and the Bureau, seems to imply that the PPB is doing just great and is almost done with the US Department of Justice Settlement Agreement. This is an arguable point as it has been documented previously how many people who have been subjected to deadly force by the PPB since the DOJ came to town were in mental health crisis. The underlying issues of racial profiling (including force used against African Americans) has not changed, nor has any notable progress been made on collecting or analyzing stop data as required by the Agreement.

The Auditor's report on the Training Division is, like other analyses, soft on the Bureau.

One truly alarming fact: The Bureau is reluctant to use real-life Portland scenarios as the basis for learning because "they do not want to embarrass the officer involved, who might be present at the training." This is an outrageous statement if the Bureau is truly committed to learning from its mistakes. If the person who was involved recognizes they could have handled a situation better, there should be no embarrassment. This is not second grade, these are people we are trusting with guns, Tasers, batons, pepper spray, flash-bangs and a number of other weapons and tactics that cause considerable harm and trauma in our community.

In describing the "Learning Management System" installed to track officers' training, it is mentioned that "some challenges remain because the software... was not designed for police agencies and is not easy to customize. The Bureau is still working to keep track of officers' qualifications.... [and to] record training approvals or search the contents of lesson plans." It reports that the Training Division is "developing work-arounds for issues that cannot be resolved."

In its analysis of the "needs assessment" process where the Bureau decides what kind of training is needed based on various factors, there is no mention of public input. This includes the Training Advisory Council, which is specifically tasked in the DOJ Agreement with helping to develop this assessment.

The report says that officers are not consistently told to avoid "profanity, demeaning language and demeaning labels." There is training for new recruits in the Advanced Academy but little in annual In-Service training. The Bureau claimed they weave the concept into other training and plan to do more

about procedural justice and implicit bias in the future. This shows that the Bureau has plans, but has not made progress.

It's also of interest that the Auditor drops an earlier recommendation which was meant to avoid the error caused when an officer loaded his "less lethal" shotgun with lethal rounds, since shotguns are no longer being used for less lethal ammunition. The Audit-- which to be fair came out weeks before the PPB hit several people with flashbangs-- does not address the need to carefully train around the use of the new weapons.

Since such weapons were put into circulation between the two reports, there should be scrutiny on this issue.

One final note about process: the Auditor's office also oversees the "Independent" Police Review, which put out its annual report at about the same time that this audit was published. Yet the Auditor has not put the IPR's report before City Council in many years. The IPR report contains a lot of information that the Council should hear. It was not presented to IPR's Citizen Review Committee, so there has been no public forum for the community to hear or give feedback on the state of police oversight.

We understand that the Council rules allow the presiding officer to decide whether to take public testimony on Reports. We urge the other members of Council to weigh in when they think testimony should be heard, and to allow such testimony when they take on the role of Council President when the Mayor is absent.

We further urge the Auditor to request there be public testimony when reports are put forward from her office, particularly around police issues. The Auditor told PCW member Dan Handelman "you testify in front of Council more than anyone I know." Even if that is true, that does not mean these important items should be heard in a vacuum, nor does it mean that others' voices should be shut out if our elected officials are tired of hearing Portland Copwatch's opinions.

Thank you
dan handelman

-- Portland Copwatch
(a project of Peace and Justice Works)
PO Box 42456
Portland, OR 97242
503-236-3065 (office)
503-321-5120 (incident report line)
copwatch@portlandcopwatch.org
<http://www.portlandcopwatch.org>