

PAY CLAIM OF JAMES CHASSE ESTATE

IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, PRINT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

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THE SETTLEMENT

While we are disappointed that the settlement means we will never hear the involved parties explain themselves in a public courtroom, we are pleased to see that there's an agreement to modify the "gag order" that prevented the lawyers from sharing certain documents with the public. It's unfortunate that the release of public documents had to be negotiated in a state that prides itself on sunshine laws.

Needless to say, this one incident has cost the City and County taxpayers a lot of money. While Portland's insurance carrier will be paying more than half of the \$1.6 million record sum, over \$750,000 comes from the City's self-insurance fund. One reason it would have been important to hold the involved officers, and the supervisors at the Transit Division, more accountable would be to send the message that beating a man to death is not acceptable police practice. I'm sure that everyone is hoping there will be no more shootings and deaths this coming year for many reasons: We don't want to lose another life, we don't want more traumatized police acting out through Road Rage (both Sergeants Nice and Westerman were involved in shooting incidents, and of course Nice helped pummel Chasse), and the City doesn't want any more money to be paid out. The Council document is clear that this money comes from the current fiscal year's budget—implying that one reason the vote today was delayed from May was to pass into the 2010-2011 budget cycle.

As with the OIR description of the incident, which we will discuss in depth this evening, the Risk Management summary of what happened carefully states that the officers "believed" Chasse was urinating on the street, knocked him to the ground, and that he died while being transported to the hospital. It is important to say now and we'll repeat again: There is no mention in the settlement of the way in which Mr. Chasse's battered body was carried like a sack of potatoes, which the Medical Examiner say may have ~~pushed~~ splintered the bones into his ribs, and neither document addresses the kicks to the head observed by several witnesses, which in theory could have been fatal.

I have heard that Council will be hearing revised versions of the Tri-Met agreements posted to a previous agenda. It's interesting that those agreements are a major focus in the OIR report, and point out the administrative fallacy in trying to have the Portland Police command officers from 14 different agencies. Perhaps it is time to look again at some kind of police force just for Tri-Met which has a strong, working accountability system.