

A working person's guide to the Portland mayor's race

By **DON MCINTOSH**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

In the May 2012 primary, all three leading candidates for Portland mayor have some labor union backing, reflecting the diversity of the union movement — and the differing strengths of each candidate.

To help union readers make an informed choice, the Labor Press interviewed each candidate, talked to union political coordinators about the reasons for their endorsements, and reviewed candidates' answers to a questionnaire from the Northwest Oregon Labor Council (NOLC). [NOLC interviewed the candidates, but didn't endorse because no one candidate had support from the necessary two-thirds of delegates.]

Portland's City government provides police, fire, water, sewer service, as well as roads, parks, 911 service, and zoning, planning, and permitting development. Under its unusual commission form of government, the mayor and the other four members of City Council are put in charge of certain city bureaus. The mayor chairs council meetings, proposes the overall budget, and decides which bureaus go to which commissioner.

Ballots in the non-partisan race are due May 15, and it's likely the top two vote-getters will face off in the Novem-

ber election. To win outright, a candidate has to receive a majority vote (50 percent plus one).

The names of 23 candidates will appear on the ballot, but only three contenders have union backing: Eileen Brady, Charlie Hales, and Jefferson Smith.

Businesswoman Eileen Brady is endorsed by the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council, and by Bricklayers Local 1, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48, Operating Engineers Local 701, and Sheet Metal Workers Local 16.

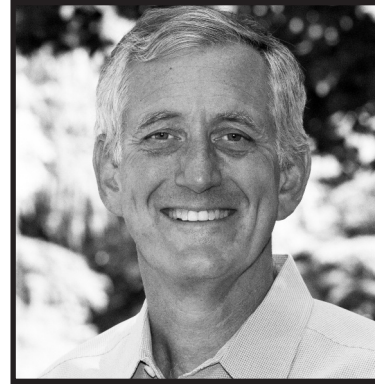
Of the three leading candidates, she's the most ardent supporter of the Columbia River Crossing — the proposed two-state transportation project that includes a new I-5 bridge and light rail between Portland and Vancouver, plus upgrades to six nearby highway interchanges. And more than other candidates, she has pledged as mayor to focus on private sector job growth.

"The biggest problem we face right now is the need for jobs," says Local 48 political coordinator Joe Esmonde. "Portland needs to attract business, and she can speak the same language as the business people."

Brady is best known for her association with New Seasons grocery chain, though there's been some dispute about the extent to which she was a "co-



EILEEN BRADY



CHARLIE HALES



JEFFERSON SMITH

founder" alongside her husband Brian Rohter and two other investors. Brady says she's proud that New Seasons provides health insurance to even part-time workers and their families. In 2007 and 2008, Brady served as vice chair of the Oregon Health Fund Board — which met to work out details of a proposed health insurance reform. She's currently board chair of Chinook Book.

Former Portland City Commissioner Charlie Hales has the endorsement of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, Teamsters Joint Council 37, and United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555. They like the fact that he's been in City Council before, and has a working knowledge of city transportation and land use policy.

"He has a better grasp of the policies of the city as it relates to urban planning," says Local 555 Secretary-Treasurer Jeff Anderson. That's important to Local 555 because it represents grocery workers whose jobs are under threat from expansion plans by nonunion Walmart. Hales also has been a big proponent of light rail and street cars, and had a hand in major urban renewal developments during his time on City Council from 1993 to 2002. Hales resigned half-way through his third term on City Council to take a job with an engineering firm promoting street car development in other cities.

Oregon State Rep. Jefferson Smith is endorsed by AFSCME Local 189 and 328, as well as Oregon AFSCME

Council 75, Communications Workers of America Local 7901, Portland Association of Teachers, Portland Fire Fighters, and the Portland Police Association. They credit his solid pro-union record during two two-year terms in the Oregon Legislature. He's also founder of the Oregon Bus Project, which gets young people involved helping to elect progressive candidates to the Legislature.

"Smith actually understands workers' issues," says Local 189 PAC Chair Mark Gipson. "We speak the same language."

UFCW asked Brady to support a commitment to card check neutrality at New Seasons. She demurred, saying she is no longer associated with the company and has no say.

None of the three candidates has ever been a union member. Brady had a role developing HR policies at non-union New Seasons. Hales put himself through college working nonunion as a framer on apartment construction in Virginia; he later owned a nonunion construction business. Smith briefly practiced law before going to work full time directing the Bus Project. But all three say they support workers' rights to unionize without interference or coercion from employers, and they pledge to publicly challenge employers who interfere with workers rights to unionize.

Other areas of agreement:

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