

EDITORIAL

City should swallow the pill of additional court oversight

Portland City Council recently voted to appeal U.S. District Judge Michael Simon's order requiring hearings with the judge, advocates and the city on the progress in maintaining the police reforms settlement with the Department of Justice (DOJ).

In voting to appeal Judge Simon's ruling — Mayor Charlie Hales and the City Council are more or less telling the community, "We've got this."

The agreement between the DOJ, advocates and the city requires that the Portland Police Bureau change its policies around training, crisis intervention, officer accountability, community engagement and oversight, to name a few. The agreement also

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recommends creating a mental health center for people experiencing crisis.

We commend the city and police who have already begun to implement many of

these requirements. In some cases, it has resulted in programs that we support, such as the walking beat patrols in downtown Portland and along Hawthorne Boulevard.

But we must not collectively forget why the settlement was needed in the first place: a pattern and practice of excessive force against people experiencing mental health problems, followed by the requisite lip service from City Hall.

The reality is that the police reform the community seeks will actually never materialize without the DOJ and the courts mandating the city to do so, and providing the court the power to enforce those change is part and parcel with change itself.

When James Chasse, an unarmed mentally ill man was beaten to death at the hands of the Portland Police, then-Mayor Tom Potter called for reforms. It was then-Mayor Sam Adams' turn at the helm. Now Mayor Charlie Hales says he's the man. The reality is the police union is stronger than any one mayor or elected official in the city.

More so, Mayor Charlie Hales and City Council should simply pay Multnomah County outright for a mental health crisis center. The city can't yell fire for transportation costs and then balk at the idea of creating revenue for a mental health center. There's really no excuse.

If city officials were serious about making sure the reforms outlined in the settlement are cemented into city policy, they must own up to where they have failed in the past and swallow the pill of additional oversight.

Without a third-party watchdog we fear we're simply just moving policy to policy, chief to chief and mayor to mayor.

We're almost there! Let's do this together!

Street Roots is thrilled to announce that we will be going from a biweekly to a weekly publication schedule on Friday, Jan. 2. Your support this winter is vital in helping Street Roots set sail.



DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Israel Bayer

Israel Bayer is the executive director of Street Roots. You can reach him at israel@streetroots.org or follow him on Twitter @israelbayer.

The goal of going weekly, first and foremost, is to support the many vendors selling the newspaper throughout the Portland region. Currently, around 70 percent of newspaper sales happen in the first week of each edition. By going weekly, Street Roots is giving vendors experiencing homelessness and poverty a hand up through the sales of the newspaper. In short, going weekly means giving vendors entrepreneurial opportunities to be more self-sufficient.

"Street Roots and my customers keep me going. I wish they knew how much I appreciate them. They're my foundation right now," says Street Roots vendor Lori Lematta.

It also means offering more breaking and relevant independent news about issues and perspectives readers are unlikely to find anywhere else. We take great pride in providing readers with quality journalism along with insights and commentary that matters most Portlanders.

We're unafraid to speak truth to power and to investigate and discuss real causes behind many of our social ills. It means being a strong voice on advocacy efforts and solutions for people experiencing poverty. We can't thank you enough for your support over the past year and look forward to continuing to partner with you through this transition to give vendors a hand up in the community.

"Street Roots means hope. It means being a part of something bigger than myself. Helping us go weekly would mean helping vendors be self-sufficient. It would mean everything," says Marlon Crump, the 2014 Vendor of the Year.

Let's do this.

Your support is vital in making Street Roots weekly in January

- Giving a hand up for Street Roots vendors by providing an increase in sales, income and stability, with most vendors' incomes doubling
- Connecting with readers in a timely manner on social justice issues with award-winning journalism and voices from the community
- Facilitating strong relationships between vendors and readers, giving people experiencing extreme poverty social capital to build their lives through self-worth

Readers can support our weekly efforts by giving a donation online through the Willamette Week Give!Guide at www.giveguide.org or at www.streetroots.org. You can also give through the mail at 211 NW Davis St., Portland, OR. 97209. You'll find a donation envelope in this edition of Street Roots.

Thank you.



PHOTO BY MELISSA TOLEDO

Our mission

Street Roots creates income opportunities for people experiencing homelessness and poverty by producing a newspaper and other media that are catalysts for individual and social change.

Street Roots publishes every two weeks, launching on Fridays, and is available exclusively through our street vendors or by subscription. We are a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

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Street Roots Rose City Resource

Street Roots publishes the Rose City Resource, a comprehensive booklet of services for people experiencing homelessness and poverty. To inquire about getting guides, call 503-228-5657. Resources are online at www.rosecityresource.org.

Vendors

Street Roots vendors buy the newspapers for 25 cents each and sell them for \$1, keeping the 75 cents in profit for themselves. In order to keep the cost low to our vendors, we receive additional support from donations and in-kind contributions.



75¢
goes directly to the vendor who sold you the paper

25¢
goes toward printing costs

Vendor orientations are at 1 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at the Street Roots office.