

Hot Seat at City Hall

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week with Mayor Sam Adams and Police Commissioner Dan Saltzman. He also spoke at Maranatha Church in northeast Portland telling over 1,000 people that if the officer involved in the shooting returned to work the next day as scheduled, they should march on City Hall at high noon.

And they did just that, marching from the Justice Center all the way to the mayor's office.

Over the last several years, Portland has fallen into a familiar pattern after someone dies during a police encounter: Marches are held and forceful denunciations are made; the Police Bureau promises to review the incident and make changes; the outrage boils off, but leaves a stinging residue of resentment on the public.

The officer involved in the Jan. 29 shooting of Campbell was found to have acted within the law by a grand jury earlier this month, which prompted the AMA to hold a rally on the steps of the Justice Center calling for four specific demands.

The AMA called for the establishment of a public inquiry into the



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Rev. Jesse Jackson (right) with Portland pastor, Rev. LeRoy Haynes Jr., holds a news conference at Maranatha Church in northeast Portland to support a call to action by the Albina Ministerial Alliance and other civil rights activists to protest the shooting death Aaron Campbell, an unarmed black man killed by police during a mental health disturbance.

incident, the appointment of a special prosecutor for police violence, a thorough review of bureau's training and policy on excessive and

deadly force, more oversight of the bureau, and a revision of state law governing the use of deadly force by police officers.

So far, the call for a special prosecutor hasn't been acted upon—although city officials have asked for the U.S. Justice Department to investigate—and with the Legislature wrapping up its current session the chances of it reviewing the state's use of force laws seem nil.

But other two of the other priorities by local activists seem to be gaining traction.

At a press conference on Friday, Police Commissioner Dan Saltzman said he was going to initiate a "top-to-bottom" review of the police bureau, which is currently reviewing the incident.

Commissioner Randy Leonard, who has had a contentious relationship with the bureau, is drafting an ordinance for more independent oversight of the police that could take flight given the current climate.

In 2001, the city formed the Independent Police Review Division to receive citizen complaints of officer misconduct.

The director of the IPR has only an advisory role on key boards in the Police Bureau that reviews officer misconduct. The IPR can't propose or enforce discipline on officers, and has few ways to compel the Police Bureau to cooperate in its investigations.

Leonard's ordinance would penalize the bureau for not cooperating in an investigation. It would also allow the IPR to propose and challenge discipline for officers, broaden its ability to initiate investigations, and make its director an integral part of key review boards in the police bureau.

"As a general matter, it's meant to

add teeth to the current IPR function," said Ty Kovatch, Leonard's chief of staff of the ordinance, which he expects to be brought before City Council in coming weeks.

Portland Copwatch spokesperson Dan Handelman, who's never seen the bureau under so much scrutiny, applauds this move. He also hopes that the city will use the upcoming negotiations with the police union to revisit how officers are protected after using force. The city wants the negotiations to be public.

In December, the union flexed its muscles after Saltzman suspended a controversial officer who shot a 12-year-old girl with a beanbag gun on a MAX platform. The union held a massive rally and threatened to release results of a no confidence vote on him and Police Chief Rosie Sizer, until he backed down.

The city will begin negotiations this spring with representatives of the union over its contract, which expires in June.

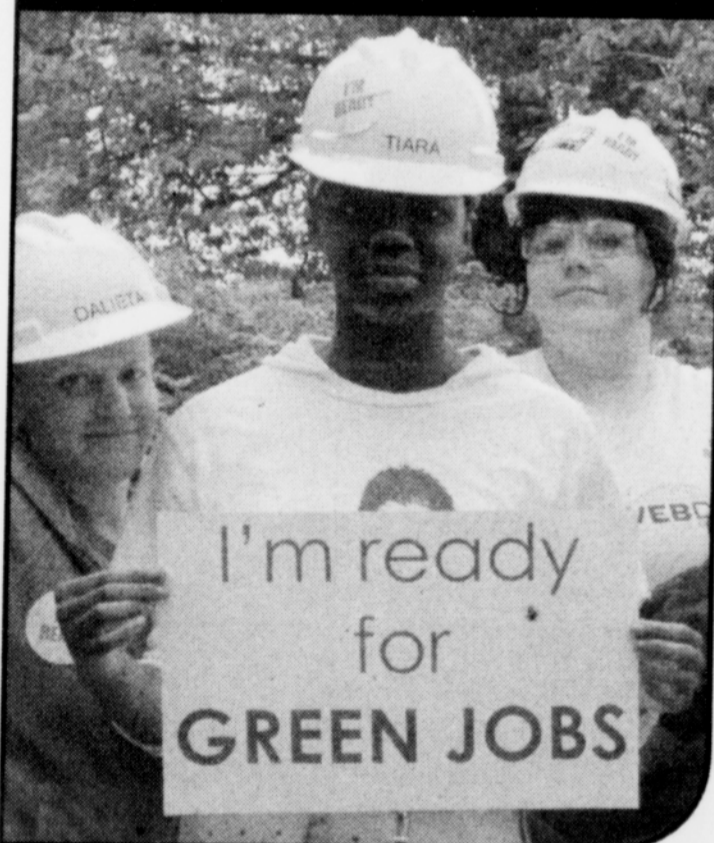
"For me, it's about the contract," said Ann Bowman, who sees the negotiations as an opportunity to reassert control over the union, which some worry is undermining civilian control of the police.

The current contract mandates that the city not discipline officers publicly, a provision Bowman wants out, so the public can determine "who's good and who's bad."

But Bowman stresses that public pressure on the city needs to be sustained if real change will happen.

"So we got a window to make that change happen now, and if we don't do it now we'll be stuck with it," she said.

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