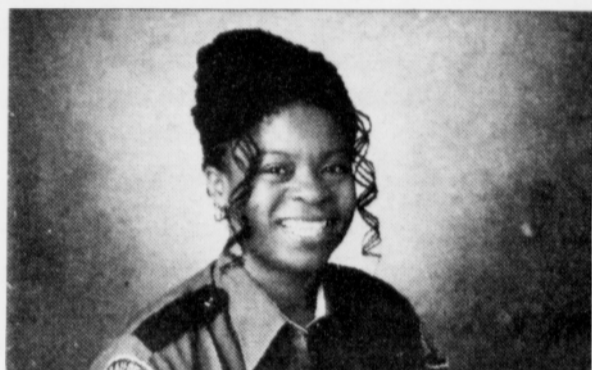


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LOCAL NEWS

Serious Words on Road Rage Incidents

Saltzman tackles issues during cable broadcast

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

City Commissioner Dan Saltzman granted the Portland Observer an interview on Sunday on the inaugural broadcast of "The Portland Observer Hour" on Portland Community Media where he weighed in on the police union, officer road rage, racial profiling and other topics.

Last week, Sgt. Kyle Nice, an officer involved in the 2006 police beating death of James Chasse, a downtown resident suffering from mental health issues, was involved in a road rage incident in Washington County. Another police officer, Sgt. Scott Westerman who heads the police union, also is under investigation for two similar confrontations.

When asked about the road rage incidents, Saltzman had serious words.

"Well, let me say first of all, to me, it's completely unacceptable," he said.

Saltzman had some interesting comments about Westerman's union leadership. Westerman led a massive demonstration of the police union and held a vote of no confidence on Saltzman and Police Chief Rosie Size when Saltzman moved to suspend Christopher Humphreys, another officer that was involved in the Chasse incident. Humphreys was the officer who shot a 12-year-old girl with a beanbag gun during an altercation last fall at a MAX stop. The union withheld the results of the vote after Saltzman backed down.

"Scott Westerman is also being reviewed," Saltzman said.



Dan Saltzman

"He's a little bit different because he's the head of the union right now. We'll see how long that may last."

Saltzman indicated he will consider sanctions against Westerman, pending an internal affairs investigation.

"Well, I think at a minimum, I'm going to have both Sgt. Nice and Sgt. Westerman undergo some anger management counseling," he said. "But that's not really discipline. That's something based on what happened that needs to occur."

When questioned what he would do if the union held another march, Saltzman had this to say:

"But, yeah, I mean they're welcome to march. They've done that before, and that hasn't changed my opinion on things or how I perceive things," he said.

Saltzman also wants the upcoming contract negotiations with the police union to include a provision to agreement with the city that allows for drug testing of officers involved in shootings. He also wants annual perfor-

mance reviews of officers.

"What we may have to bargain for is what do we do with those reviews," he added.

The topic of racial profiling also came up. Saltzman didn't deny it happens, but didn't seem to think it's something officers deliberately do. Instead, he seemed to suggest that everyone takes race into account in their day-to-day lives, whether they intend to or not. When asked if the police union's denial that the phenomenon occurs in Portland was an obstacle, he had this to say:

"We don't bargain over this. This is something we handle through policies and procedures that we have, the chief, I should say, has full ability to take into account," said Saltzman. "I guess what I'm trying to say, is that part of it - biased-based policy, racial profiling- is endemic to everybody. I think that's something we all have to work at overcoming."

He also had this to say about the police union.

"I don't always think the police union speaks for many of the views and opinions of rank and file officers, and I base that on my years of experience, especially in the last year and a half talking to many, many officers," said Saltzman.

He added, "I think there's kind of disconnect. I think the union gets itself too rigid, and I don't think it fully represents the views of all rank and file officers, including on points like whether racial profiling exists or not."

The interview will be re-broadcast on Channel 22 at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 14.

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