

City Makes Progress on Police Reforms

But first assessment has many issues remaining

BY OLIVIA OLIVIA
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER



T. Allen Bethel

The city of Portland has its first report card on how it's doing in making progress on police reforms in light of last year's settlement of a lawsuit over the way police deal with people with mental illness and others, including people of color.

The Department of Justice met with the Albina Ministerial Coalition for Justice and Police Reform, as well as Mayor Charlie Hales, Commissioner Amanda Fritz, Auditor Mary Hull Caballero, and Police Chief Larry O'Dea last week to discuss the report, which will be presented at the October meeting of the Community Oversight Advisory Board.

"The Portland Police Bureau has been working hard

to implement the provisions outlined in the Settlement Agreement," Chief O'Dea said. "This report now gives us the first feedback from all of our efforts so far. I am pleased that we are partially compliant for a large part of their recommendations."

The Albina Ministerial Coalition had a separate response, noting that so many issues remain.

"The city has made progress, but the community needs to see more on some key issues of accountability and oversight," said Dr. T. Allen Bethel, co-chair of the Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition.

The report notes that the city has not yet acted on the

"48 hour rule," a provision in the Portland Police Association's Collective Bargaining Agreement that provides for 48-hour advance notice before an officer is interviewed in an investigation that could lead to disciplinary action.

The justice group points out how this practice departs from national best policing practices by not requiring statements from officers in a timely fashion. Another point of contention is the reporting on when police use deadly force.

"The recent case involving the tasing and beating of teenager Thai Gurule demonstrates that this did not happen," a statement from the coalition said. "The community awaits accountability regarding that case, specifically whether any officers will be held accountable for their conduct."

The full Justice Department report can be read at justice.gov/usao-or/pr/us-v-city-portland-compliance-assessment-report.

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Portland Renter Protections Proposed

Portland City Commissioner Dan Saltzman has responded to last week's protest over skyrocketing rents and an onslaught of no-cause evictions this summer by proposing some renter protections.

Saltzman wants to require landlords to provide tenants with a 90-day notice on no-fault evictions, instead of the

current 30-day requirement, and also a 90 day notice for rent hikes of over 10 percent. His proposal drew the support of Mayor Charlie Hales.

"Our city is experiencing record low vacancy rates coupled with record high rents, creating the perfect storm of housing uncertainty for many Portland families," Saltzman said.

The proposal fell short from what the Community Alliance of Tenants demanded: A one-year moratorium on all evictions and a 12-month notice for rent hikes over 5 percent.

According to commercial broker Marcus & Millichap, the average Portland apartment is now renting at a record-breaking \$1,100 per month.

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