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Portland Observer
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City Council Election Focus

Activists push
debate on housing
and equity

See story, page 5

Do Not Resist

Documentary
on policing in
America

See Metro, page 9



The Portland Observer 46

'City of Roses'



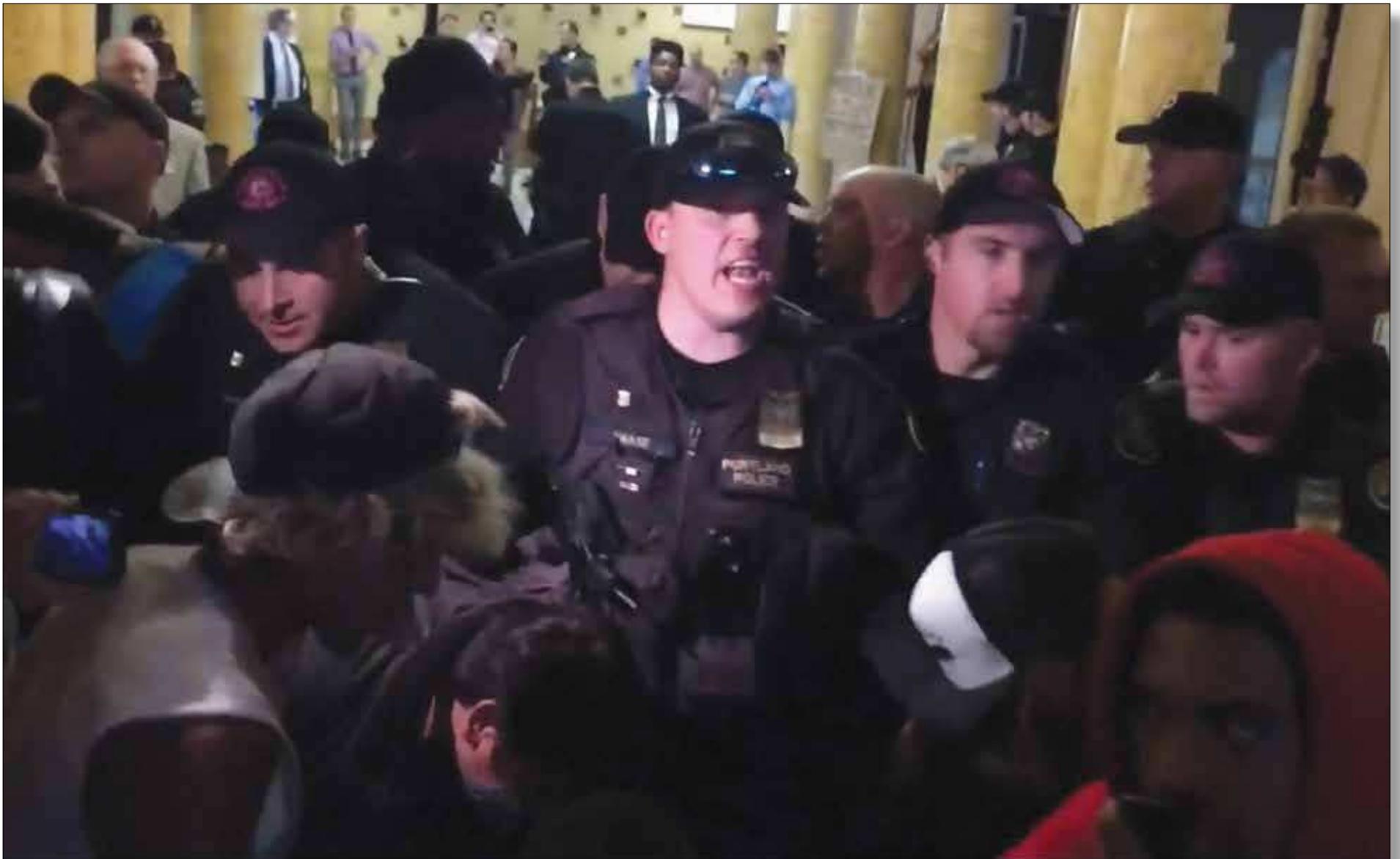
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Police officers push activists out of Portland City Hall in a violent confrontation captured in a public Youtube video from Oregonlive.com. The protesters were upset about a closed-door City Council session in which a new police union contract was ratified, a labor agreement that the racial justice activists say let police off the hook over demands for more accountability.

Battle Lines Grow No let down in fight for police reforms

BY CERVANTE POPE
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Racial justice activists calling for more police accountability and trust between law enforcement and the community are not letting up on a series of protests after losing a battle with the Mayor and a vote before the City Council on the passage of a new police union labor contract.

When police were ordered to remove protesters from City Hall last Wednesday, a violent encounter ensued with officers deploying pepper spray and pushing a large group of activists out of the building. Police blamed protesters for throwing projectiles at them and 10 arrests were made.

Over 70 activists then took their concerns directly to Mayor Charlie Hales'

southeast Portland residence over the weekend by pitching tents on the planting strip in front of his Eastmoreland home and pledging to stay on the property until he resigns.

"I have no interest in continuing to meet with Charlie Hales," says Don't Shoot PDX spokesman Greg McKelvey. "After what I saw him do last week I have lost all respect for his morals."

In the clash at City Hall some of the protesters, many of them women, can be seen being thrust to the ground by officers, as other activists try to assist them amid the chaos.

The situation got much worse when officers started pepper spraying patrons but it was the lack of ambulance assistance and

interference from Hales that McKelvey feels was the worst outcome of all.

"We looked up at City Hall and there was Mayor Hales watching down with no emotion on his face. Someone waved at him and he waved back," says McKelvey. "We need politicians who will run outside of City Hall and help the injured get to safety, not ones who direct a militarized police force to beat women and children."

The activists do have allies inside city government from City Auditor Mary Hull Caballero and the director of Portland's Independent Police Review Board, Constantin Severe, who say that ratifying the police union contract was a lost opportunity to address issues relating to police accountability in Portland, independent police reviews

and drafting a body-worn camera policy.

Hales won the support of City Commissioner Nick Fish and Amanda Fritz to pass the police union contract, in part because of his urgency to hire new police officers to fill positions left vacant by retirements and departures to higher paying jobs. The new contract promises a nine percent pay raise for current officers and higher starting rate for new officers. It also gets rid of a controversial 48-hour restriction on interviewing officers in police use of force incidents and other administrative investigations.

As McKelvey and others from the Don't Shoot PDX and local Black Lives Matter movement see it, not only should

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4