

Opinion articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Portland Observer. We welcome reader essays, photos and story ideas. Submit to news@portlandobserver.com.

OPINION

Yes on Police Accountability

Measure 26-217 is a move towards justice

BY REV. DR. LEROY HAYNES

Since 2003 with the killing of a Black unarmed female by a Portland police officer and the attempt to cover up vital evidence by the Portland Police Bureau, the Albina Ministerial Alliance, one of the oldest active ministerial alliances in the city of Portland and its community extension, the Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform, made up of 25 community organizations, has led the fight and advocacy for police reform in Portland.

The AMA coalition was the key leader in bringing the U.S. Department of Justice in to investigate and do a federal audit of the patterns and practices of the Portland Police Bureau. This audit produced the fact-finding statement that the Portland Bureau was practicing “excessive and deadly force against persons with mental illness or perceived mental illness.”

Subsequently, a legal suit



was filed against the city and the AMA was given unprecedented legal status in the case to represent the various communities impacted, giving it a legal platform to advocate for police reforms.

In 2013 and 2014, this suit produced a “Settlement Agreement” calling for police reform efforts in all areas of the Portland Police Bureau. It is important to have this historical context to fully understand that the reform efforts to produce transformative change in the Portland Bureau is an ongoing process that is unfinished in order to stop the killing of Black and Brown and mentally-ill persons by police officers in Portland, as well as other unjust practices.

Since 2003, the AMA Coalition for Justice and Reform and its parent body the Albina Ministerial Alliance demanded an Independent Citizen Review Board to do oversight of the Portland Police Bureau with the power to compel testimony from police officers as a means to hold officers accountable for their use of excessive and deadly force.

The Justice Department in

its fact-finding audit called the current oversight system in Portland a “Byzantine system” in other words a 5th century complex system, one that the average Citizen in no way could understand. I submit that the characterization still holds true.

We have the Police Review (PR), an internal review by police officers themselves with one community person meeting behind closed doors – never using the officer’s name. It has never recommended disciplining an officer for using deadly force. We have the Independent Police Review that has made some improvement through the Settlement Agreement AMA Coalition fought for – but was never designed to hold police officers accountable.

The current Independent Police Review panel does not have the power and authority to compel officer’s testimony – it must have a police officer commander to tell officers to answer questions in investigations. It also cannot handle deadly force cases against citizens – it can only review them after one year and make recommendations. IPR members can only set in on Police Review Meetings. They do not have the authority and power

to discipline officers. They can only make recommendations.

Now, remember that the greatest cry for police reform is the use deadly force against Black and Brown citizens, mentally ill and then the use of excessive force.

Next, we have the Citizen Review Committee. Who primarily deal with citizen complaints in public hearings. This is the only time that citizens can speak publicly. But it even has less authority and power than IPR. It cannot always get information on cases. It can only make recommendations to the Chief of Police and the Mayor.

Finally, we have a new body which is called Portland Community Engagement, whose primary job is getting community participation with the goal of building community trust for Portland police. It too can make recommendations to the

Mayor and Chief.

In conclusion, we are in the midst of a social justice revolution in our city and the nation. Theologically, we are in a Kairos moment when the hand of God is moving in history like the 1960s when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led the Civil Rights Movement.

Today’s social justice revolution will not go away in its demand for “police accountability” and for the ending of the killing of Black, Brown and mentally ill people. The proposed new Independent Citizen Oversight Board to be voted on in the Nov. 3 General Election is a leap in police oversight to help get us there. Vote yes for police accountability.

Dr. LeRoy Haynes is the senior pastor of Allen Temple Church in northeast Portland and a member of the Albina Ministerial Alliance for Justice and Police Reform.

CLASSIFIEDS/BIDS

SUB-BIDS REQUESTED

**New Road Ahead Project
Oregon Humane Society
Portland, OR**

Bids Due: November 17th, 2020 at 2:00 PM PST

Lease Crutcher Lewis, LLC, serving as the General Contractor for the Oregon Humane Society’s New Road Ahead Project, is soliciting proposals from qualified bidders.

The project is a campus expansion to Oregon Humane Society’s Existing Shelter on Columbia Blvd on the adjacent property. The project includes site development, and construction of two new buildings (Community Hospital and Behavioral Rehabilitation and Rescue Center) and light remodel of an existing third building (1411 Building).

Contract Documents and the Invitation to Bid may be reviewed at the following locations:

Online

The entire Bid Package (including all project documents attached as exhibits) can be viewed via Lewis’ website and Building Connected Software at: www.lewisbuilds.com

Click on “Bid Opportunities” under Portland.

**LEASE CRUTCHER
Lewis**

**550 SW 12th Ave, Portland, OR 97205
Dan.Callahan@lewisbuilds.com**

Lease Crutcher Lewis, LLC is committed to taking affirmative action to encourage and facilitate the participation of minority, women and emerging small business enterprises (M/W/ESBE) and encourages subcontractors to provide similar opportunities to their subcontractors/vendors.

