

Lawsuit cont'd from pg 1

officers and the public, Officer Ajir then tripped on a curb and fired four shots at Terrell Johnson, hitting him twice in the back, fatally wounding him.

Officer Samson Ajir left PPB for a position with another law enforcement agency.

Terrell Johnson's moth-

“He didn’t deserve to be shot in the back that day

er Alicia Johnson filed a wrongful death suit against the City in 2019, represented by Oregon Justice Resource Center (OJRC) attorneys. During today’s City Council meeting, Johnson’s aunt, Lorene Arias, spoke about the family’s loss.

“When I think of Terrell, I think of a beautiful and kind soul who I loved from the moment he was born,” said Arias. “He didn’t deserve to be shot in the back that day or to lose his life because he was afraid of the police.”

Also speaking at City Council today was the family’s attorney, Juan Chavez.

“Terrell Johnson would still be alive today if Portland cared as much for its citizens with mental health issues as it does for the feelings of the people it pays to patrol its streets,” said Chavez. “We need to realize that the conditions that lead to Terrell’s death haven’t changed. Officers still exonerate themselves. The City still defends these assaults on the community. And people still needlessly die in crisis.”

PPS cont'd from pg 1

“My whole goal as a board chair is going to be trying to get the board itself coalesced around these ideas, first to come out and say we are working towards becoming an antiracist board and be very explicit about it as a goal,” DePass told *The Skanner*. “And then line us up with activities or strategies to meet that goal.”

She added, “I don’t expect any of my White colleagues to be versed or even have the language for this. They’re nice people, but nice people that need to be trained up in the language of anti-racism, and they don’t know what they don’t know about racism, because they’ve never had to know. And that’s fine. So I want to do a lot of internal work. I want to lead us through a way of evaluating the superintendent.”

As a School Board Partners fellow, DePass plans to take advantage of the organization’s offer to fund her certification

in educational budget finance through Georgetown University.

“Budgets are always finite resources, and you actually are going to have to put money – even if it’s unpopular – where

“They don’t know what they don’t know about racism, because they’ve never had to know

there’s more need,” DePass, the community engagement and policy coordinator for the director of the Portland Housing Bureau, said. “We haven’t done that in the past. The budget is a moral document, and our values absolutely need to be

reflected in the budget, and I don’t know how to do that level of analysis on a \$2 billion budget to make sure that we’re actually putting more money where there’s more need.”

She said that while she’s been able to lean on colleague and recently elected vice chair Andrew Scott, the deputy chief operating officer at Metro and former director of the Portland City Budget Office, she sees the importance of being able to review a budget through her own lens.

“I think Michelle’s lived experience as a person of color in Portland is going to be so valuable to us as a board and for us as a district to have her chairing,” Scott told *The Skanner*. “There’s a lot of back and forth; I will bring a very sort of logical, sort of White dominant approach to an issue, and Michelle will say, ‘Well that’s great, and let’s think about it a different way.’”

Both DePass and Scott are graduates of Portland Public Schools, and both were elected

to the school board in 2019.

“I’ve been in government and public service for 25 years doing public policy, and hopefully bring some of that budget and finance and sort of that expertise, but also I ran because I’m a product of Portland public schools and it served me really well, but I recognize that’s not true across the board,” Scott said.

Looking ahead at a year that is slated to be fully in-classroom, DePass said she is excited to support PPS Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero in the district’s “audacious strategic plan” that is yet to be unveiled.

“It’s bold,” she said. “I’m from Portland, so I can say this: We’re very polite, and don’t want to have difficult conversations. And addressing racism, you need to be able to say with a straight face, ‘I am a White person showing up to this space. I don’t know anything. But I’m here to learn.’ You need to kind of own who you are and be a student in this

room. So I’m hoping to lead us through the conversations. We had a lot of belly button-starting this past year, and we had a lot of quarterly retreats where we evaluated ourselves, and that’s useful. Not super successful process-wise and outcomes-wise, but I think that we can coalesce around wanting to become antiracist, and it will just make us better in the work we have ahead of us. And we are going to need everybody on that board – they don’t have to agree, but they have to get the language down.”

Inequitable Outcomes

The current Portland school board is among the most diverse in the district’s history. Both DePass and Scott pointed out that while the pandemic stopped in-person classes, “learning loss” is a concern among parents and educators nationwide – but one that has existed for students of color all along.

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Rent cont'd from pg 1

Chair Deborah Kafoury said during the July 8 regular session. “Together with our partners at the city of Portland and our nonprofit service providers, we now have almost \$100 million to dis-

“Those extra 30 days really helps give us some additional time to work through those applications

tribute in a short amount of time.”

She added, “For Multnomah County, where the need is estimated to be twice as high as all other Oregon counties combined, many of our providers will likely need more than 60 days to completely work through every application for assistance.”

Commissioners heard that the grace

period should be regarded as a “floating timeline” that can be triggered by a request for rental assistance at any point between now through March of next year. In other words, tenants who are able to make rent this month, but unable to do so in September, can still benefit from the 90-day extension.

Human Resources

Peggy Samolinski, director of Youth and Family Services for Multnomah County, stated that there are currently 10,000 applications in Allita, the Oregon Emergency Rental Assistance Program’s online system.

“The challenge is volume,” Samolinski said. “We know the work and we’re good at it and we can process those applications, so I think those extra 30 days really helps give us some additional time to work through those applications.”

The additional time would also be a boon to the community-based rental as-

sistance network comprised of 43 local organizations, she said.

“It’s a person-centered work. It relies largely on human beings on our end and on the client end and the tenant end to complete that work. Time is critical.”

Liam Frost, senior policy advisor for Kafoury, said the state had provided 10 full-time staff members who will identify incomplete applications for rental assistance, then reach out to those tenants to help them complete the filing process.

An additional four full-time staff will be hired to field calls at 211, a resource hotline that connects Oregonians to social and health services. Even those who receive an eviction notice can contact 211 for guidance on securing rapid-payment assistance.

“We are trying to intervene from the moment when someone believes they cannot pay their rent all the way up to a court date,” Frost said.

“We are trying to provide interven-



Rep. Alma Adams Talks HBCUs

On Monday, July 12, U.S. Department of Education Secretary Miguel Cardona travelled to Charlotte, North Carolina to discuss the Biden Administration’s plans to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and make long-term investments in students. He was hosted at three different locations in Charlotte by Alma Adams (D-NC). Cardona and Adams discussed the Build Back Better agenda, that includes \$45 billion in investments for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), as well as the IGNITE HBCU Excellence Act, a landmark infrastructure bill to create jobs through repairing, restoring and investing in HBCUs.



Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal

tions at every stage. One of the main points will be 211, because in the eviction notices, as set by SB 278, landlords must include 211 as a resource in those notices.”

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