



League of Women Voters of Portland

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December 15, 2020

To: Mayor Ted Wheeler, Commissioners Chloe Eudaly, Amanda Fritz,
Jo Ann Hardesty, and Dan Ryan

From: League of Women Voters of Portland
Debbie Kaye, president
Debbie Aiona, Action Committee chair

Re: Portland Police Bureau 2019 Annual Report (Agenda item #1004)

Dear Mayor Wheeler and Commissioners:

The League of Women Voters of Portland has been involved in issues related to police oversight since the 1980s. We regularly attend Citizen Review Committee (CRC) and Portland Committee on Community-Engaged Policing (PCCEP) meetings. On Wednesday, you plan to accept the Portland Police Bureau Annual Report for 2019. The League has concerns and suggestions to share with you about the report's presentation and public participation. The Settlement Agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice, Paragraph 150, requires the following action.

150. Annually, PPB shall issue a publicly available PPB Annual Report, which shall include a summary of its problem-solving and community policing activities. A draft of the Annual Report shall be provided to the PCCEP for review and comment before the report is finalized and released to the public. Once released, PPB shall hold at least one meeting in each precinct area and at a City Council meeting, annually, to present its Annual Report and to educate the community about its efforts in community policing in regard to the use of force, and about PPB's policies and laws governing pedestrian stops, stops and detentions, and biased-free policing, including a civilian's responsibilities and freedoms in such encounters.

Settlement Agreement

It was the League's impression at the time the settlement agreement was finalized that the annual report would provide an opportunity for the police bureau to share an overview of the services it provides, its accomplishments, and the challenges it faces with the community and city council. The required PCCEP review and precinct meetings leading up to the council presentation would allow the public to hear from bureau representatives, ask questions, and offer feedback. The culminating event would be a city council presentation at which the public

To promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government.

could offer testimony intended to give the police commissioner and council a sense of the community's concerns and priorities. Unfortunately, this is not what has happened.

Process concerns

Last year the League objected to the lackluster efforts the bureau made to inform community members of the precinct presentations, likely resulting in the sparse attendance at the meetings. We urged Mayor Wheeler to allow public testimony on reports of public concern, but he only accepted written comments on last year's report. This year, it would have been preferable and would have improved public access if the full PCCEP had first reviewed the draft report, rather than limiting review to a PCCEP subcommittee. Furthermore, it is especially concerning that this year the precinct meetings will take place after the city council presentation.

Recommendations

The outcome of the November police accountability ballot measure is one indication of the high degree of community interest in the Portland Police Bureau. The public should be better informed of the annual report and allowed to offer its input.

Therefore we encourage Mayor Wheeler and Chief Lovell to do the following:

- **Delay presentation of the annual report until after the precinct meetings have occurred.**
- **Reach out through the many advisory bodies associated with the police bureau and utilize their contact lists to inform the public of the precinct meetings schedule. PCCEP, CRC, Training Advisory Council, and the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group, among others, would be good places to start.**
- **Accept public testimony at the annual report presentation at city council. In our experience, council members are much more likely to discuss and respond to community concerns shared in oral testimony than to those submitted in writing.**

Thank you for considering our concerns and suggestions. It had been our hope that the annual reports would be a vehicle for bureau/community dialogue, but that hope has been illusory so far. It is not too late to change course and make the most of this opportunity.