



League of Women Voters® of Portland Oregon

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DATE: January 28, 2026

TO: Portland City Council
Jamie Dunphy, President

FROM: League of Women Voters of Portland
Debbie Aiona, Action Committee Chair
James Ofsink, Justice Interest Group Chair

Re: OIR Group 9th Report: Officer-Involved Shootings and Critical Incidents

The League of Women Voters of Portland has been involved in issues related to police oversight since the 1980s. The OIR Group's periodic reports and recommendations on police shootings and in-custody deaths are valuable not only for the Portland Police Bureau, but also for the public. In addition to the analysis and recommendations, they shed light on the most serious police/community interactions and provide information the public would not otherwise know. We would like to thank the OIR Group for the report and Independent Police Review (IPR) for facilitating this work.

As regular readers of these reports, we found it troubling to see some of the same recommendations from prior reports repeated yet again. ***The League urges the City to contract with the OIR Group to undertake a thorough accounting of past recommendations and their current implementation status.*** With a clearer picture of what has been accomplished and what still needs to be addressed, we likely will see more effective implementation, fewer repeat recommendations in future OIR Group reports, and training and policy changes that result in improved officer behavior. We further urge the city to continue to engage the OIR Group or other similar experts to review these critical incidents and make recommendations.

The most significant recurring recommendation relates to the importance of analyzing pre-shooting tactical decision-making. In this report (p. 29) and in a number of prior reports the OIR Group has recommended that the deadly force review process require those conducting the review (Internal Affairs, Police Review Board, and the Chief) to evaluate the officers' decisions and actions leading up to the point where they felt that deadly force was necessary. Correcting out-of-policy actions that occurred well in advance of the decision to fire a weapon has the potential to save lives by avoiding the use of deadly force altogether. Carefully evaluating pre-shooting actions also opens the door for a comprehensive analysis of related policies and training that may result in needed modifications. ***The League urges the Bureau to implement Recommendation 1 immediately and report back to City Council once it has begun following the recommended practice.***

League of Women Voters of Portland:

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

Recommendation 1: The Bureau should modify its deliberative protocols so that the review of every officer-involved shooting includes an explicit review of pre-shooting tactical decision making, and express findings from the Commander and Police Review Board on whether officers' tactical performance was consistent with training and policy.

In addition to the two priority recommendations listed above, we also encourage the City to adopt Recommendation 7. It would eliminate delays in the outside review of critical cases because of pending litigation. When IPR was located in the Auditor's office, reviews were conducted at the close of investigations. It is essential that the Bureau learn from these critical events as soon as possible. Waiting for litigation to conclude is unwarranted and results in long delays. The two cases withheld from this OIR Group review involved individuals in mental health crises, the very issue that brought the U.S. DOJ to Portland in the first place.

Although the OIR Group did not repeat its concerns about the 48-hour rule that allows involved officers to delay administrative interviews, the practice continues to be part of the police union contract. As the OIR Group points out in its 2016 report (p. 115), this provision prevents the Bureau from obtaining contemporaneous statements and is inconsistent with best investigative practices. The City is currently holding bargaining sessions with the union and the 48-hour rule is one of the many provisions of interest to the public. ***The City should hold public listening sessions as it did in 2019 and solicit community input on this and other aspects of the contract.***

The League would like to thank IPR and the City for engaging the OIR Group in conducting this critical analysis. Taking an individual's life is one of the most consequential actions a governmental body can take. The City should do all it can to improve policies and practices related to police officers' interactions with vulnerable and challenging individuals, in order to save lives and protect the victims, involved officers, and the community from the resulting trauma.