

PDXFTL3: The Auditor

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SPEAKERS

Rose, Piper, Josh

- J** Josh 00:03
Friends, neighbors, you're listening to Portland from the Left, my name is Josh I use he him pronouns.
- P** Piper 00:08
My name is Piper, I use she her pronouns. And today we're going to be talking to our friend Rose. Rose, could you introduce yourself?
- R** Rose 00:15
My name is Rose, and I use she her pronouns. And I'm delighted to be here with you two.
- P** Piper 00:19
And today we're going to be talking about the city auditor's office in Portland, Oregon.
- J** Josh 00:23
My first question, when we talk about elected offices in Portland, I know that there's six of them. And I know that five of them are commissioners, or, you know, four commissioners plus one mayor, who's also a city Commissioner, but then there's a separate office of the auditor, can you tell me a little bit about like why we have a separate Auditor's Office what that is what they do.
- R** Rose 00:42

In theory, the separate auditor's office is supposed to ensure independence in the work of auditing. So the point of having an auditor is to make sure that any bureau or office that receives city funding is actually spending that funding on the things that they say they're going to

J

Josh 00:56

that seems like a good thing

R

Rose 00:56

it seems like a good thing you would think that, you know, this would be great. And also if people are found to be in violation of various city rules, the auditor's office is in charge of assessing what kind of penalty or fine they will have to pay in order to make up for their various mistakes, or perhaps intentional bending of the rules, where we run into some issues is that the city auditor's office is not always as independent sort of structurally as we wish that it were. And therefore it's difficult for them to maintain the sort of level of true independence and detachment from the workings of other city bureaus that would be necessary to provide really clear independent oversight of these entities.

P

Piper 01:33

And so what's what's an example of something in Portland the auditor's office has had oversight over and just done the job that they're supposed to do?

R

Rose 01:44

A pretty good example of this is the recent audit of the downtown clean and safe, enhanced service district. So enhance service districts, this is a very kind of loose definition of what they are, I'm sure someone with more expertise could provide better information. But basically, it's kind of a public-private partnership, to make sure that a certain part of the city usually some sort of business district functions as it's supposed to. And the deal is that the businesses in the district kind of put up some of the funding for private security, enhanced trash pickups, extra, the extra little touches that make it look nice flowerbeds, yada, yada. And then in exchange, the city will provide things like designated clerks within the district attorney's office that will handle only cases to do with those businesses, they will have police liaisons that work with the armed security are often armed, that's what these people seem to prefer. So they'll have a police liaison to address, you know, policing incidents that happen in those those areas, any kind of criminal activity is supposed to be kind of handled through this very designated channel. And this is, you know, the kind of problematic for a number of reasons, one would hope that we would live in a place where there would be sort of corporate taxation such that it wouldn't have to be businesses putting up money to get basic services taken care of, because that would just be automatically part of it in taxation, but because this is what it is, we have these intense enhanced service districts. There's one in Lloyd Center, there's the central East Side one, and then there's Downtown Clean and Safe, very spiffy name for this one. And the auditor's office, I want to say mid late 2020 released an audit of Downtown Clean and Safe

where they were looking into Okay, the city has been providing funding for the various functionings of this district. What's it actually being spent on? Are the things functioning as they're supposed to? And one of the big things that this audit revealed is that because there's this kind of weird, I'm not gonna say that they're like private police. But basically, there's private security that are serving the function of police within that district. They're supposed to be liaising with actual police. And crucially, the police commissioner, who at the moment happens to be Ted Wheeler is supposed to review all of the reports that are made by these private security, all of the kind of policing stuff happening within that district.

P

Piper 01:48

So, it's supposed to still fall under the function of policing to some degree.

R

Rose 03:50

Yes, and it's supposed to be supervised through the kind of appropriate policing hierarchy. And specifically the commissioner is supposed to be reviewing all of this to ensure that these security people aren't, you know, behaving in unconstitutional ways even though they are private sector. And it was determined that Ted Wheeler just hadn't done that at all. So this report was released showing that he was supposed to have been conducting these reviews, he was supposed to be very clued in to what was happening. He was supposed to have an awareness of who was operating security, how many people there were, what kinds of things they were doing, what kinds of calls they were answering, and that that information had not reached his awareness.

J

Josh 04:30

Using this as an example of an audit where the auditor's office performed an audit on Clean and Safe and found that it was not doing the things that had been agreed upon. In this case, the police commissioner wasn't doing the things he agreed to do in relationship to the contract. Is there any like result or is it just another one of these kind of reports that hits the news and it is what it is?

R

Rose 04:54

You know, I am not completely sure what the result was supposed to have been. I know that there was supposed to be a fine assessed I think that the fine that wound up being assessed was considerably lower than there's kind of legal precedent for it being. The Portland Business Association was found guilty of having performed lobbying violations

P

Piper 05:12

Ah, that were they were Sam Adams right? they were talking to Sam a lot?

R Rose 05:15
They were texting Sam a lot they were specifically texting you know maybe sometimes on his work phone sometimes on his personal -

J Josh 05:21
Sexual harasser Sam Adams?

R Rose 05:22
Sexual harasser Sam Adams, yeah, whose unprofessional behavior is why myself and many other Portland voters declined to vote for him in the primary, which is why it's really bizarre that supposedly respector of the democratic process, Ted Wheeler nevertheless created a position for him so vague, but the job description on the Portland website does not actually mention any tasks that he is supposed to do.

J Josh 05:43
Are you saying that director of strategic innovation is not a specific title for a specific role with a specific expertise?

R Rose 05:51
There's no definition of what actually constitutes a strategic innovation, what actual duties go into innovating strategically, what is being innovated about?

J Josh 06:02
Rose, I feel like you're suggesting that people in power may not know what they're doing.

R Rose 06:06
I'm just saying that if they do know what they're doing, there's no way for the public to access that knowledge. When for most people within city government, their job descriptions are quite clearly listed under their name on the website for whichever bureau employs them.

J Josh 06:20
Fair point. Fair point.

R Rose 06:21

P

Piper 06:21

So kind of getting back to this audit. One of the things he was doing was talking to the Portland Business Association a lot.

R

Rose 06:28

Yes, they were having extremely chummy friendly conversations about I don't know, negronis. I don't know what these people are interested in. But in addition to, you know, choices in menswear, and cocktail apparel, attire, whatever, there was also quite a bit of, I'm just assuming, I don't know what kinds of things occupy the mind of Sam Adams that he wouldn't be wanting to text people -

P

Piper 06:49

We know, unfortunately, a little too much.

J

Josh 06:52

[Something about what Sam is involved with]

R

Rose 06:54

Anyway, so Sam Adams was texting with these people quite a bit. And it turned out that a lot of the texts wound up topics of conversation wound up being related to various I'm trying to think of a specific instance, it was something like, I think this was around the time that Ted Wheeler decided to create a job position called the downtown retail advocate.

P

Piper 07:15

And they were doing they were talking about salaries of that position, I believe,

R

Rose 07:18

yes. And so the original salary was going to be that it was you know, very part time it was maybe only going to be something like a like an honorarium of \$2,000. And then it was boosted to know this is going to be an actual part time role with a salary of \$20,000, which, you know, not a living wage, who's going to be taking that hard to say, but that is definitely a tenfold increase over what was originally being discussed. I could have some of those numbers wrong. I'm not super clear on that. But basically, what it amounted to is that these conversations were having direct impact on policy, and that therefore they could be classified as lobbying. And there is kind of a historically known about fine for lobbying. And if you added up that fine times, number of undisclosed lobbying incidents, the fine if that would have amounted to \$75,000, which, you know, we're at a time when city government is very stretched very thin, they're having to make all kinds of cuts all over the place. Funding for various things that used to be

available is not so much it would be really nice if the people who do have money, were able to put it where it is supposed to be. But the current city auditor who ran unopposed at her last election, she declined to assess the full amount of the fine, and instead gave them a gentle little wrist slap of I think, like \$450,

P Piper 08:30

something along that line.

J Josh 08:31

It's really it seems pretty similar to when she failed to provide a significant fine to Ted Wheeler for loaning himself money over and above what was allowed, seems really related actually.

P Piper 08:43

I feel like I do recall that during the 2020 election year, there were actually a lot of campaign finance strangeness happening throughout the election. So do you do know what what she actually did in relation to that in any of these instances,

R Rose 09:02

I do know that the reason that Ted Wheeler had to loan himself \$150,000 is that actually he had been dinged with fines, quite a few fines for contributions above the limit. And that what was special about the loan to himself is that it was him putting in his own money. But he had been dinged for getting larger donations from other people or from I think it was anonymous donations above the limit for what can be anonymous.

P Piper 09:26

Okay

J Josh 09:27

I wasn't directly involved with this part of Sarah Iannarone's mayoral campaign, but my understanding was she had quite a few friends who were lawyers or significant sticklers for rules and were good at like finding where Ted was making mistakes. And so that would have been my like, guess on what was going on that they were like really jabbing at him trying to make sure that he, you know, paid every fine that was possible, trying to use that as a method to, you know, attack his campaign, which I support.

R Rose 09:54

Yeah, absolutely.

J Josh 09:55

I think I mean, I wasn't involved in so I just want to mention that.

R Rose 09:57

Yeah, I mean, I think you know, the rules exist for a reason.

P Piper 10:01

We all voted for them.

R Rose 10:01

We all voted for them. People who are seeking to hold political office ought to abide by the law. If you're if you're going to get into a position where you're supposed to be upholding and making laws, then you ought to abide by all of them.

P Piper 10:16

That seems like a reasonable standard to hold someone to Rose.

R Rose 10:18

I think so.

P Piper 10:19

So so the auditor's office was assessing fines then throughout the campaign.

R Rose 10:23

Yes.

P Piper 10:23

So then we get to we're really at the wire here. We're near the end of the campaign. I believe Ted's campaign manager, left

R Rose 10:31
Ted's campaign manager left to take a position with the Portland Business Association.

J Josh 10:35
The Portland Business Association, you mean, this same Portland Business Association, which is effectively Portland's like, what do they call them in other places

R Rose 10:42
Chamber of Commerce

J Josh 10:43
Chamber of Commerce, that we were just talking about didn't get fees associated or assessed to it for other problems. I mean, of course, we're talking about a timeline is kind of all over the place happening over the last year and a half. But consistently, we've got people in power, not paying for their mistakes, and working together to secure more power for themselves.

R Rose 11:02
It's also interesting to note that, in terms of were local news coverage around all of this is that one of the owners of the Oregonian is also I think, the current president of the Portland Business Association. And so every time that there's an opinion piece, or an article that is insufficiently well reported about the Portland business association's, activities, there really ought to be a disclaimer printed saying that actually, the Oregonian is not independent from this.

P Piper 11:25
Yes.

R Rose 11:26
This is not to knock The O as a whole. I do think that there are some really excellent reporters who work there. But I do you think that some of their conflicts of interest editorial policies ought to be more forcefully disclosed in order to maintain a standard of independent journalism.

P Piper 11:40
And you know, there's certain things they do that it is their editors that are making the choices

And you know, there's certain things they do that it is their editors that are making the choices like things like endorsing a candidate, that's the editors

R Rose 11:47

exactly

P Piper 11:47

making that choice. And you know, the Oregonian endorsed Ted Wheeler, the Oregonian, has members in the PBA. So Ted Wheeler's endorsed, and then he's out of money, because you were talking about all these small lawsuits for him breaking smaller rules were adding up. We know that Ted Wheeler had trouble fundraising, from smaller donors that he didn't get as many donations like numerically as other candidates. So then, he loans this money and then what happens because I've heard a lot of people talk about this in a really weird way. They say like, actually, he didn't break the law, bla bla bla bla, what actually happened here Rose, like, how do - what did the auditor do?

R Rose 12:23

So the auditor's conclusion about all of this was like, Yes, the law was voted for there was some kind of slightly hinky thing about the timing of it being actually enacted versus just voted on. And then she also felt Okay, yes, this law exists. However, there is precedent in other jurisdictions for people suing and going to court. And then the court finding that the law was flawed somehow, and and so rather than kind of allowing that process to happen, and leaving that in the hands of a judge, she decided to preempt that whole process and decided, you know, if Ted Wheeler were to subsequently sue the city over are enforcing the campaign limit, that would be a big problem. We don't want to deal with all of that. Therefore, we will just let this one slide.

P Piper 13:04

Instead, we'll let a would be broke campaign. Do something that's on paper illegal,

R Rose 13:10

correct

P Piper 13:10

potentially changing the outcome of an election?

R Rose 13:12

Correct. sidebar, I just want to say that Ted wheelers, campaign signs were some of the most strikingly ugly campaign signage I've ever seen

J Josh 13:22
deeply ugly

R Rose 13:23
The combination of colors alone, I just don't understand what associations he was trying to conjure with this kind of dark bluish gray, like a sort of house flipper gray, this dark brown

P Piper 13:33
[laughing] house flipper grey?

J Josh 13:34
[laughing] House flipper grey, thats a nice name for it.

R Rose 13:36
It was and the combination of fonts it was just like you... You know, perhaps because at that point, his campaign was low at running low on money. He couldn't actually afford like a decent design firm.

J Josh 13:46
I like to imagine him himself like home on Canva on his phone. It's like pushing stuff around like this will work. This will be fine.

R Rose 13:53
There was the amazing Portland billboard that Sam Adams tweeted out that was not actually a billboard in Portland, Oregon. He had just googled Portland Billboard and pulled up

P Piper 14:03
I forgot about that

R Rose 14:04
a stock image of Portland stone in England, and then photoshopped in one of the here for Portland signs.

P Piper 14:12
There's definitely some rogue design work going on in the mayor's office.

R Rose 14:16
I mean, it just kind of if you think about sort of the, well Sam Adams likes to sort of present himself as the arts mayor, it is interesting how people with kind of real deep knowledge of the arts are not necessarily being employed by this administration.

P Piper 14:32
That is interesting. Especially considering his like portlandia you know, put a bird on it kind of

R Rose 14:38
Oh portlandia is a whole other thing. Yeah.

P Piper 14:41
So now the auditor is up for election correct. Um, she has run run unopposed, at least in the most recent potentially and all the time she's run

J Josh 14:48
I think so. I'm not positive. I've been trying to read about this well, but I'm not positive. I think she won election in 2018. I think before that, she she says she won election in 2015. But I can't really understand what kind of election was I think the office change, vote, give them more autonomy. Yeah, there was about a ballot measure. So we're a little underprepared on this. But the idea is that she has more autonomy. And now we vote specifically for the auditor's office, I think before there was like a separate special election vote held every six years or something. But just assume we're kind of full of shit on that part. But now,

P Piper 14:50
We can talk about just the most recent election

J

Josh 15:18

We're just talking about the most recent election, we're talking about Mary Hull Caballero, who is the current person that holds the office, and she again, was elected in 2018, and is up for reelection in 2022.

P

Piper 15:35

I also remember, there was some controversy with her. So that was one of the only times this office made it into like my purview was when the ballot measure was being formulated for the citizen oversight of police that most recent one that we passed, which is yet to be implemented. I remember she was very strongly opposed to it,

R

Rose 15:54

she was very strongly opposed to it, for reasons that I find somewhat opaque. I think part of it is that the current civilian police oversight board is under her control. I believe that some of those things are kind of, you know, community volunteer positions, some of them are I want to say maybe paid staff positions, and she was really concerned about kind of, especially in a time of a pandemic, losing income streams for her employees, by having their work replaced by some other body.

P

Piper 16:21

That seems a little weak.

J

Josh 16:22

And for the record sheet, she has about 60 employees. So she's like, you know, part of her role, of course, is being an auditor and auditing things and planning what to audit and stuff, but she also has employees she needs to make sure that they have a funding or whatever so like you know, that's taken care of workers is good.

P

Piper 16:36

It's just doesn't seem like a good reason.

J

Josh 16:38

Yeah, she seems full of shit

P

Piper 16:39

— since we were talking about her protecting her budget, and her being independent from the council, like how independent is she from the council, including, in this particular case, the city Commissioner.

R Rose 16:52

So I mean, something that we had been talking about prior to recording is that I guess the auditor's office used to be sort of a sub part of the city attorney's office, the city attorney's office has its own weird, weird history. The city attorney's office, similar to kind of like HR at a large corporation, or, you know, attorneys, legal advisors to whatever kind of large company, they exist to protect the city from risk of lawsuits

P Piper 17:16

Gotcha

R Rose 17:16

And often this winds up being the case that okay, if you don't break the law, then you won't get a lawsuit. But it will also sometimes, you know, often, especially in terms of, you know, dealings with the police union, any kind of organized labor contract specifically with police officers, this will wind up being the decision to decline to bring a suit against an officer who has been, you know, shown to be behaving poorly. This often also often means I think there was a case that I was researching where somebody's house had been destroyed when the or parts of it I guess, the door and some other parts had suffered serious damage when police were looking for somebody in the house who was, I don't know if they had a warrant, something like that. And the homeowners thought it would be very straightforward to write to the city and say, You destroyed my door, I would like a new one, please.

P Piper 18:06

that seems like a pretty reasonable ask.

J Josh 18:08

Like if the city destroyed my door, I would expect them to replace it.

R Rose 18:10

Right? And the city determined well, because there was criminal activity going on in your property, even though it was in no way associated with you or your property. It's not really our responsibility. It's the reason for the doors destruction is the person who was committing the crimes, so perhaps you should hit them up first.

J Josh 18:27
Luckily, capitalism is all about finding who's at fault and making sure it's the person with the least amount of money so they can't fight back.

R Rose 18:32
Yeah. So they do things like that. I'm trying to think of things that they've done that are good. I'm sure there have been some of them. They're just not coming to mind.

P Piper 18:42
Maybe if we think of any we can plop em in.

R Rose 18:45
Well, I mean, I don't know they also did things like when a young man was fatally shot by police, they tried to argue that it was his mother's fault for not giving him adequate sleeping quarters. And then he was behaving erratically because he had not slept well.

J Josh 18:58
Was that Quanice Hayes or was that somebody else?

R Rose 18:59
That was Quanice Hayes, yes.

P Piper 19:01
So it makes sense that people wanted to get that the auditor's function out of

R Rose 19:06
out from under there? Yes, it is based on because you know, the end the attorney's office is also like, they're they're not they're explicitly not an independent bureau. They are they they exist to

J Josh 19:17
have a side

have a side

R

Rose 19:17

have a side to to take the side of the city of Portland, even if the City of Portland is wrong,

J

Josh 19:23

Right. Yeah.

R

Rose 19:24

So there was a move made to make the auditor's office kind of more independent from that, however, because the auditor's office is still funded by the city. And this is where it's it's interesting thinking about, like what an alternative actually could be. Because it is partly up to the rest of the city city council to decide how much funding they get. And this means that you know, as much as they would like to be providing completely independent reviews, there's still going to kind of hesitation of you know, if I come down really hard on these city bureaus for misbehaving, are, is their vote going to have any impact on how much funding that we have to continue doing our work?

P

Piper 19:59

Yeah, I I mean, that's, that's serious because you can't do anything if you don't have any resources. I was thinking about that for the the Ted Wheeler issue because right when that was happening, it was really close to the election was also when they were doing their fall budget. So you really have like, a month time period. Will this guy be in office or not? Do I want him mad at me when he's deciding how much my office gets, and though the whole council does vote on the budget, but the mayor usually proposes a budget first and then it's altered from there. So the mayor probably has a little bit more weight in that. He also assigns the Bureau's so he's got a little bit of a hammer to try to get people in line on the council, but it is the whole council that gets in the budget. Right. Those are the main cases I want to talk about about the auditor, what else what else comes up for you, Rose? I know you've been looking into it.

R

Rose 20:49

I've been looking into it some I have to confess that the auditor's office is one that I get very confused about, it's hard for me to see, you know, what could what could be done differently about this? It is interesting that she's run unopposed. And it makes me kind of wonder, like, what kind of person could run against her? What sort of skills that person would need

J

Josh 21:06

Think more about that

R Rose 21:08

Yeah, I would like to, I would like to encourage our listeners to think more about that, you know, do we know any? Do we know any CPAs with good politics? Who would be interested in potentially running an opposition campaign? That could be really interesting.

J Josh 21:17

I know a CPA with good politics that could run for this office.

P Piper 21:20

You do?

J Josh 21:20

I do.

P Piper 21:21

Are you gonna throw them under the bus on the pod?

J Josh 21:22

No, I'm not gonna say their name out loud, god no. But I'm gonna text them when we're done

R Rose 21:26

Yeah,

P Piper 21:27

it does seem that Mary is maybe conservative, not conservative in the Big C sense. But the small c conservative that potentially, and maybe it has to do with how it used to report through the city's office, I don't know. But she does seem like unwilling to challenge power in some instances that have been pretty important. Which seems like that could be, we could elect someone who's more willing to challenge power.

J Josh 21:47

She's much more comfortable challenging power when it's Le Ann Hardesty, just to note that

she's much more comfortable challenging power when it's Jo Ann Hardesty, just to note that

P

Piper 21:52

that is worth noting.

R

Rose 21:53

It is definitely worth noting. And I think it's also interesting that it's this weird way that people and I would say that this is this is certainly a problem and kind of the larger National Democratic Party, this kind of like fetishization of the rules. And the sort of like, Well, you know, sometimes these rules don't necessarily make sense, but there is precedent for them, and we must do our best to abide by them even if they are. And, you know, I mean, I was the one who was saying that if people are running for elected office, they ought to follow the law. And so I think that absolutely, if something is illegal, but then the thing is that when voters stand up to say, okay, the rules as they currently exist, if they are followed perfectly, do not lead to just or equitable results. Therefore, we are voting, we have a ballot measure, we are following the described policy for changing things. We would like 82% of us would like this new police review system, then she's somehow standing up and saying, oh, but that we can't have that that's too much of a deviation from the rules, even when it's, you know, that is being proposed as the lawful workaround for the current mess that we're in.

P

Piper 22:56

It does seem kind of interesting that that the two times that she really noticeably has stood up against a rule were times that over 80% of Portlanders wanted it.

R

Rose 23:06

Yes. And that is very striking. The campaign finance limited something that was hugely popular

P

Piper 23:10

Like 87 percent or something

J

Josh 23:12

Yeah, I was kind of I was deferring to her a little bit when she was trying to get budget for her office, because like, I fought for budgets before I get that like it, the logistics of what you're actually trying to do as an organization don't really matter, because you're just trying to make sure your employees are paid. Not that she's a good person. But in these two other instances, she's not defending her budget. She's not protecting anybody. She's just not following the rules in order to defer to people who already have power and wealth, for no good reason. Yeah, that

P Piper 23:38
in the PBA instance, as well

J Josh 23:40
to fine Ted Wheeler would be a moral good, no matter what he has done. Fining him just for fun would be good. So her not doing it like is, I think, a clear indication that she's not interested in challenging power in this in ways that maybe the people on this podcast or people listening might be interested in

P Piper 24:00
or even even if you go by voting record the people of Portland

J Josh 24:04
Yeah, there you go. People of Portland said we want these campaign finance limits. And she says no, and then people will say we want to Independent Police, whatever the news, obviously, on this podcast, a little suspicious amount of Independent Police review of reform, blah, blah, blah, but that's what Portlanders wanted, we voted for it. And Mary says no.

R Rose 24:24
And I felt Yeah, I did find that very surprising. And I think I also did find the the argument that the IPR was functioning properly to be quite surprising.

J Josh 24:32
It's really embarrassing. If you go back and watch that video. She's like talking about the IPR as though they've ever done anything good. And I have seen meetings of the IPR It is not good. They only defend cops.

P Piper 24:42
I really don't think that anyone can say that with a straight face, but it's paid attention to it at all even people that are solid reformists

J Josh 24:49
Well IPR is not even PCCEP. PCCEP also is kind of like doesn't have any teeth doesn't really get anything done has bad people on it. But at least PCEEP is kind of aimed in the right direction.
IPR is not even that

IFR IS NOT EVEN THAT

R Rose 24:58
PCCEP has made recommendations that seems solid to me. The problem is that that's all they have the power to do.

J Josh 25:03
Right, and thats not their fault.

R Rose 25:05
That's it's not their fault. But yeah, they can make a recommendation, the city can say thank you for your feedback. Put it in a box.

J Josh 25:11
Really appreciate that.

R Rose 25:13
Great to hear from you.

P Piper 25:14
I think that we're going to need to do an episode on the different police accountability, things that have been tried in Portland.

R Rose 25:22
Yeah. And it's something I mean, this, presumably listeners of this podcast would agree with the stance, but it is kind of this interesting thing, where if, if anyone kind of within the police apparatus, were actually meaningfully interested in reform or actually meaningfully interested in building a policing apparatus, that would work and that would gain the trust of the public, then, in theory, they would be on board with firing cops who put on reinforced gloves to beat innocent people in the back of the head, or, you know, police, they would be on board with a vaccine mandate for officers who are going to be out in the field interacting with vulnerable people who are among the least likely to have access to the vaccine themselves.

J Josh 26:00
.....

We're not talking about ACAB, we're not talking about abolish the police. We're just talking about getting rid of the worst,

P Piper 26:04

right? We're talking about the new office, like the major difference that to me is actually meaningful is it would have the power to fire officers. Which, previously, it had to be forced through arbitration. And there were rule changes that had to happen at the state level. But if this board actually gets implemented, the idea is yes, it can directly fire officer, That's the new police oversight board, not the auditor's office,

R Rose 26:27

right. Yeah, correct. Yeah.

P Piper 26:28

And that's the one that's the one that Mary's fighting.

R Rose 26:30

Yes. And I mean, it's remarkable because it's, it's been astounding, talking to even the most kind of milquetoast moderate people who genuinely believe that homeless people are trying to steal their cars or whatever, like, they still believe that if a cop kills someone, they should lose their job.

P Piper 26:45

And, and clearly we have seen that is not the case

R Rose 26:48

That does not happen at all. I mean, again, you know, if we're talking about kind of like police, police personnel, who are whose sworn duty is to observe or is to, you know, defend the law, breaking the laws themselves, and facing no consequences for it, that one of the highest paid officers in ppb history when he retired last year Captain on the vice squad you know, in his spare time decided to vandalize public property to make shrines to fallen off the officers.

J Josh 27:15

Just Google Captain Mark Kruger, you'll find out all you need to know about him

R Rose 27:18
horrifying person.

P Piper 27:20
Yeah, not only was he a Nazi, he was a vandal.

R Rose 27:24
Yeah.

J Josh 27:25
Well, as podcast has very varying positions of vandalism, depending on the method and means the handling, but we will continue about that later.

R Rose 27:35
point to make about vandalism is that you know, for ordinary people, whatever. For people whose actual job it is to uphold the law, if you are breaking the law that you are supposed to uphold, that is a dereliction of your job duty, for which you should face professional consequences.

P Piper 27:53
You know, we've been talking a lot kind of around about the auditor, I think she's done things that others can do conflicts of interest, kind of what is your take overall, just if you were to sum it up on Mary and - Mary Hall Caballero, and the job she's doing as Portland city auditor,

R Rose 28:06
I would say that her work as city auditor has been extremely patchy, I think that a lot of what she does a great job at is identifying and pointing out problems. But when it comes to actually meting out any kind of consequences for those problems happening, such as in Wheeler's failure of oversight for the security forces within the enhanced service districts, or the undisclosed lobbying of the Portland Business Association, both of those things are violations that should have come with consequences that there should have been some sort of actual measure to to to deter them from happening in the future. And the fact that she opted not to enforce fines or or any kind of, you know, discipline in either of those cases, I think is a dereliction of duty on her part. Yeah. And I think because this is, you know, the city auditor does not sound like a particularly glamorous or notable job title, it seems like it would mostly be a lot of fairly dull number crunching, it's difficult to see how much power such an office can actually have. But I think what we've been learning over the past year or so is year and a half is

how much how much this office actually can do. And you know, the consequences of this office being held by someone who doesn't seem to follow through on their findings. Yeah, and you know, that that is why I think it would be and but you know, because it doesn't sound like a glamorous job, but because it requires a particular skill set that's very kind of technical and financial. I think that it's it's much easier to find someone who's willing to, I don't know leap from like a nonprofit background into running for city council or even leap from being just an ordinary person. I mean, someone I know from the music scene ran for mayor a while ago, he also makes chainmail in his basement. You couldn't see someone with kind of like that less specialized skill set wanting to get really pumped about running for a job where you're going to have to look at more spreadsheets than God Himself ever intended there to be. Which is why I think these races do tend to get overlooked a little bit and it doesn't seem like an exciting thing to run for. And so people who are kind of career politicians career bureaucrats feel very secure, that they can kind of do, enact to their personal agenda without facing much electoral consequences for that.

P

Piper 30:16

And I would like to add to that and like just to emphasize a point you made is while it may seem like kind of a boring by the books position, we've seen just in the past couple years time - instances that came up, where there was really a lever there were, if there was a different person in that role, they could have really fought for Portlanders against powerful people who are a minority in Portland and in some cases aren't even really Portlanders, sometimes it's outside corporate interests - that really, she could have stood up to them and she didn't. So it was with the mayor trying to buy his way into office, which he has done before, before we had these campaign finance rules. It was with the PBA and it's with the police accountability measures. And these are times that there's really powerful interest that having the right person in that role, they could really wedge something in there and move something around at least a little bit. And she chose not to.

J

Josh 31:10

I think our pitch with the city auditor's office is that we got an independent office inside the city government that's one of six elected positions, right. So we only have so many elected positions that we can even offer help or try to get somebody elected into. And it's a office that has roughly \$10 million budget with around 60 full time staff. So like a significant resource, right? And they're focused on and their whole role is to audit things. Like literally what we are doing on this podcast right now and saying, how is this person? Do they suck? It seems kind of like they suck, maybe we should figure something else out.

P

Piper 31:45

And they actually have tools in that office as well.

J

Josh 31:46

They have tools. I mean, they have professional people that are it seemed perfectly capable at running reports and telling us what's wrong, as we saw with the Clean and Safe audit. The fact

running reports and telling us what's wrong, as we saw with the Clean and Safe audit. The fact that it hasn't resulted in action, I don't think is necessarily something I can even know whether or not it's because of what's going on with the auditor's office and their limits right now because the person in office doesn't seem committed to challenging power. So we really would love for people listening to this if you're a CPA if you know a CPA in Portland, someone that's a leftist or has progressive politics, literally email us portlandfromtheleft@gmail.com. We will, I will - Josh will do whatever he can to try to help get someone on the right track to get elected and talking to the right people. You know, we don't believe that electoralism is going to get us socialism we don't think we're gonna inspire revolution. We're just trying to get fewer people to die. So if you know a CPA with good politics in Portland, reach out portlandfromtheleft@gmail.com, and we'll do what we can to help them connect with people that can help them figure out how to run a campaign because neither of us know how to do that. I assume you don't Rose?



Rose 32:51

No way.