

Charlie Hales Interview, 12/20/13  
Mayor's office, City Hall

Q: Year one is in the books. How'd it go?

A: "We picked an obvious list of things to focus on that people told me to focus on. I knocked on 25,000 doors during the course of my campaign. I got plenty of direct instructions from the people I was proposing to work for. They kept bringing up really three (things) that dominated those conversations. One was the relationship with the police bureau. The – 'I love Portland, but I'm not sure that I trust my police bureau.' Hard words to hear, but I heard them a lot. 'I love Portland, but I'm not sure if I'm going to stay in this great old neighborhood and raise my kids here because I'm worried about the schools.' Hard words to hear. And then, 'Portland is great but the roads are going to hell. Would you please do something about that?' Some variation of those three instructions got mentioned on almost every one of those front porch conversations. So it wasn't hard to pick the short list when we arrived here.

Focus on those things. Show real change, show real results. You're not going to get all the streets paved in one year, or even five (years). You're not going to get the police bureau completely to where it needs to be in its relationship with the public in one year. But you can make some progress, and we have. And education funding is a perennial issue, but this last (legislative) session, I and a lot of other people advocated for real improvement and we got it. So if you look back at the year, we're paving 100 miles of street. We rescinded the previous council policy that said we would not maintain neighborhood streets anymore, that the previous administration had passed. I totally disagreed with that. We didn't just change the words. We did change the words. We found that the previous administration had sold the chip sealing equipment used to maintain neighborhood streets. We disagreed with that, and bought new equipment to FOG seal streets. You know those facts. And as a result, there has been a lot of real improvement in the street system this year, but it's a long-term effort.

However, I think I now can make the case to people, I'm serious about this, we're going to stick to it, we're going to eventually ask you for more money to make good on everyone's expectations, but first we're going to show you that we're good managers and that we're taking care of the assets that you own in a responsible way. The schools issue - I was just up in St. Johns a few minutes ago. You know, I think we still have quite a few neighborhoods in the city where, even though there's been improvement in the school system, there's still that worry by young parents 'should I stay here in this neighborhood, raise my kids here? We've made progress. Roosevelt (high school) is a great story of improvement in a public school, but is it good enough that those young couples that have moved there and bought houses and raising a four-year-old, that they're going to stay there and send their child to Roosevelt in 4 years? Those questions are still there."

Q: They'll bear out over time right. So if there were 5 things you accomplished this year that you set out to do, what would those be?

A: "Roads, schools, police. Restoring the sense and reality of the city hall as a public building. Two administrations ago they installed these ridiculous security flippers that didn't provide any security but made people feel like they were being questioned when they were coming into a building they owned. We chased all the retail out of the building long ago. And we had a lot of homeless folks, a lot of people camping around City Hall, and it was in some considerable state of disarray. And we changed that. Obviously to some people that was controversial, I don't think to a very broad majority of the city it was very controversial at all, that you couldn't come to your own City Hall and open the door if you parked or walked into the building with at least being concerned. So that situation, I'm pretty happy about how we turned that around. Late in the year we had this wonderful new possibility opened by Gail (Shibley) going off to Monaco with Vin Lananna and making the case that Portland ought to host the 2016 World Indoor Track and Field Championships. That wasn't on our to-do list. That was one of those opportunities that came along. But we made the most of it and I'm really happy about it."

Q: So that's one of your 5?

A: "I would put that up there because of the possibility that it opens. Winning the competition is nice, just like having the Timbers win this year (The MLS All-Star game) was nice too, but that's momentary. What really matters is that 26 months from now we're going to have 200 countries coming here and that we have the chance to leverage that into long-term benefits for the city, I hope."

Q: You came into office obviously as the experienced guy who knew the building. I'm sure you've learned a lot in this year, what did you learn in terms of what this job entails that you didn't expect?

A: "I think the thing I learned that I just simply didn't get before is the different weight of the office. If you look at the organization chart, the mayor is one of five votes. Each of us manages departments. Some people call this the weak mayor system or the five-mayor system, those who really don't like it. It is those things, but nevertheless when you're the mayor you set the tone, people look to you in a moment of crisis. Like when the power goes out downtown or when someone gets shot. That weight of the office wasn't clear to me till it landed on my shoulders. Now I get that. My phone is by my bedside. It rings some nights. I get that. I understand that goes with the job. There's a light-hearted part of that job too, the Buckman Elementary choir was here yesterday singing in the atrium and they got all excited because the mayor was listening. Well, that's just one more happy person in the crowd listening to the kids, but it's the mayor. So that part of the job. Or walking down the street in a parade, whether it's the St. John's parade or the Macy's parade. People like it when the mayor shows up."

Q: So it'd been a while since you were here, in City Hall. This job and the world have changed considerably. What's that like?

A: "There are a lot of things that have changed externally. Of course, the personalities of who is on the City Council changes the atmosphere in the building. But actually, I don't think the fundamentals have changed very much at all. Which is -- we tend toward consensus and agreement, we don't like pitched battles. Every now and then we'll have a 3-2 vote or a 4-1 vote, but I'm not sure we had a 4-1 vote. We had a couple 4-1 votes. But those are rare, even rarer than when I was here before. But we move toward agreement rather than looking for opportunities to posture against each other. Such a huge contrast with Congress because of the partisan nature of the institution and the current toxic environment. They're always looking for opportunities to posture against one another. Or at least some of them are. So that's still the same. Another thing that's still the same is the bureaus will go their own way unless you lead them. That's a truism that I think is true for a long time if not all time. So you have to say, 'No we're going this way,' to the bureaus."

Q: Otherwise they go on autopilot.

A: "Yeah, they're big bureaucratic organizations with people that have been around for decades in some cases - seen a lot of mayors and commissioners come and go. And perfectly capable of proceeding under their own direction if you don't give them direction. So that's still true. Have to work with a lot of other governments in a constructive way. We have 8 or 10 local governments here on the spots that we're occupying depending on how you count. You've got to be able to work with those folks. You've got to be able to work with the county and with Metro and with Washington County and with the state and with school districts. That's still true. And I've spent a lot of time actually building those relationships. I think it's already paying off and will pay off more over time."

Q: That shows up on your calendar obviously. But one criticism I've heard talking to people as I report on this story, it's that communication has been a little difficult.

A: "Uh huh."

Q: And people cite the size of your staff.

A: "Yep. I think that's a fair criticism and we're actually going to make some more changes I think, both in how I spend my time and in staff arrangements over the next few months as well. Because we need to do more in terms of external communications. Some of my staff, as able as they are, have gotten really buried in big assignments. Josh Alpert has a lot to do, and he didn't plan on having to deal with relocating Right 2 Dream Too. That wasn't on our to-do list. So that happens. I think we now understand better, that's another aspect of the mayor's job that no matter how good you are at prioritizing, some stuff is going to come flying in the door that you've just got to deal with. And sorry, you're the mayor this one is landing, kaboom, on your table, deal with it. That, I think, was not as clear to me at the beginning of the year as it is now. You've got a staff for that. You've got to be prepared that some crazy stuff is going to come flying in the door and

it's going to be a crisis, and you better allocate some of your time to crisis management because that's part of the job."

Q: What are some issues or crisis that you wish you took yourself instead of delegating to staff.

A: "Hmm..... I can't come up with one. I mean, I work pretty closely with my whole staff. In some cases I've known these folks for years. Josh Alpert worked for me before; I've known Ed (McNamara) for years. Gail and I have known each other a long time, even though we haven't worked together before. So I don't feel like I have to worry if I've got a staff member running some part of my agenda and they'll get me when they need me for my role in the work. So no, I can't come up with anything that 'boy I should've kept my own hands right on the wheel there instead of letting somebody else steer.'"

Q: What do you mean by external communications?

A: "Oh, well both other governments and the general public. I worked for 600,000 people. How often do I get to interact with them? Yeah, there's plenty of random street corner grocery store conversations and yeah, there's communicating through the news media and all the other official channels. But I need to be out of the building in the community more. And that's always a good check on your instincts. I think I got it right, the best way to find that out for sure is to be out there in the community. Like you are in a campaign. You are doing nothing but citizen contact relentless for months and months or more than a year. Then when you're in office, you've got the press of business and this meeting or that person who wants to meet with you and it's easy to get walled in."

Q: What do you wish you would've communicated better to the public this year?

A: "One that we were -- just the seriousness of the budget problem. We dealt with it well, but I don't even think the people who showed up at our budget hearings understood how serious a crisis this was for the city. Plenty of people showed up to say, 'please save my program.' You were there."

Q: No I wasn't. (Laughs)

A: "Oh actually you weren't there."

Q: Next year

A: "Well, and we'll find out if it's any easier to carve up a small surplus than it is to carve down to a smaller base. But lots of people came to those hearings. There was a, it was a success in democracy in that hundreds of people came, many of whom clearly had never been to anything like that before. And that was wonderful. People who's English was just good enough to testify in English, or in some cases people that needed a translator to be able to speak to their City Council, who maybe had never done anything like that before.

That was cool, that was wonderful. Made you proud of Portland. But no one came and said, 'I've got more ideas for how you can cut to solve that \$21.5 million problem.' It was all people who said, 'I know things are tough, but can you please find \$200,000 for this.'"

Q: Right.

A: "So I don't think we as a city, the previous council had had to cut budgets before. So I think there was some battle fatigue in city government. Which, fortunately now has ended. Now we see an improved budget for next year. Only slightly, nevertheless going in the right direction and the forecast is that that's going to be the norm for a while. And that we'll be able to make choices about improvements rather than reductions."

Q: Right. So on taking all the bureaus. You said you were going to do it...

A: "Oh yeah, I'm glad I did that. Now that cost us, because that table in there (points to conference room) was covered with budgets. We were trying to manage the whole organization with a very small staff. In cities where the mayor runs the whole city, they have staffs of 4-5 times that size. And so were managing the whole city with a very small staff and dealing with this very bad budget in the same six months."

Q: Something has to give there.

A: "And what gave was communication. Whether it was even having the time to walk downstairs and talk to a colleague, much less go to the Rotary Club in Gateway or the St. John's boosters and explain what was going on. That went. So we were closeted in this building doing crisis management for a long time."

Q: If you did it again, would you assign bureaus quicker? Not hold them as long?

A: "I'm not sure. I paid that price in terms of 'Charlie seems to be out of touch.'"

Q: Right.

A: "I paid the price in terms of that criticism, but we had that budget problem to solve. It did a lot of good for me to take all the bureaus. And then for me to hand them out in a different configuration than they were before. Now I also had some friction with my council colleagues when I did that, because not everyone was happy then or maybe not even now, with the bureau assignments that they got. But I'm really glad I did it, because it was a creative disruption. It also is a direct prescription for the sickness that occasionally grips Portland city government. Which is the commissioner stops having any objectivity about his or her bureau. And the longer you have a bureau, the more you are invested with that bureau, and you're their champion and you don't see their warts and misdeeds anymore. So you have to break it up every now and then and force people to dance with new partners, because otherwise those habits are really engrained. And I paid the price for that too, but I'm really glad I did it. Most people I talk to who are citizens who watch the city say that was a good move."

Q: I'd agree a lot of people give you credit for that inside and outside of the building. Maybe not as happy at the time. But now it's settling in. So one of your colleagues in the building posed this question and I think it's pretty pertinent. Now is the time for Charlie to show why he wanted to be mayor, right?

A: "Yeah. Because it wasn't for managing a budget crisis."

Q: How do you answer that question then?

A: "The job is starting to look like more fun now. Not just because we have a little more money in the till. But because I've always been very interested in the growth of the city and have really forced myself to not be a planner for the last year. I had to be a manager first of all. And a police reformer. That's what people elected me to do, and I'm going to make good on that promise. I am a police reformer and we're making real progress (knocks on wood table). We have not had an incident yet in 2013, where a Portland police officer used deadly force in a way that anyone would criticize. We have a few more days left in the year, but I hope we can say that in a year, and five years from now. You couldn't say that in 2012, or 2011, or 2010 or go back as far as you want.

And we've had, as you know, a couple deadly force incidents where police officers shot and killed someone, and in both cases it was a terrible thing, but it was suicide by cop. It wasn't in any way questionable why those police officers had to fire their weapons. That's real change, and I see real change in little small reports everyday in my email about police officers going to a situation and deescalating it or walking away or talking somebody out of suicide or violence rather than intervening physically. So I see lots of indications that the Portland police bureau is making positive change. And the biggest indication of all is that weapons have stayed in their holster unless they had to come out. That's pretty impressive."

Q: So they're hearing the message?

A: "Yeah I think so. People said, 'No matter what you're good at Charlie, maybe you're good at planning and transportation and growing the parks system those are fine ideas, but what we need from our mayor right now is fill the pot holes, put city hall in order, and make sure the police bureau has the trust of the community.' So we've tried to be very disciplined, and in my own case, work against type a bit. Because I'm a pretty good manager, but that's not how people would describe me."

A: Right you're the planner.

Q: "Right, but Fred Miller. Fred Miller (interim Chief Administrative Officer) is a consummate manager. I bet nobody has come to you and said, 'Charlie Hales is a consummate manager.' You know, like Mayor (Richard) Daley the younger. There was da boss and da manager. Nobody would say that about me. They'd say the guy is a planner he thinks about the growth of cities; he's a new urbanist. Where'd that guy go? Well, I'm

still here. But I had some stuff that was more critical on the to-do list that I did focus on. Again, not completely done. You know that.

But now there's enough bandwidth to say, well what is the future of PDC? And why aren't we doing some catalytic projects? Look at the corner of 92<sup>nd</sup> and Foster? Why aren't we growing the neighborhood right there? (Hits table). Look at downtown St John's, where I just was. What's the big opportunity there? Yeah there's some development happening. How do we take 122<sup>nd</sup> and Division and really grow some jobs there? Not just another strip mall. So that stuff excites me, interests me, is what I spent the last 10 years doing in the private sector. I just went off to visit one of my former projects. Went to Salt Lake City for the Sugar House Streetcar, and at the end of the line there's this explosion of great transit oriented mixed-used development. The very kind of thing that we've done some of here, but actually they're doing a little better at the moment."

Q: It's funny that you brought up SLC. I talked to Mayor Ralph Becker, and he says you know Charlie has a plan. He was very articulate about his plan?

A: (Laughs)

Q: We had drinks and talked about his plan.

A: "Yeah."

Q: So what's the plan? You got excited there. Anything in particular we can look forward to?

A: "Yeah here's one. The Portland development commission under Mayor (Sam) Adams focused exclusively on jobs. Jobs are important, but so is the physical growth and change of the city. And nobody but PDC can be that catalyst. Only PDC can be that kind of place maker and change agent. There's a lot of places in Portland where people want that, where people want to see positive change in their neighborhood. I mentioned a few here just a minute ago. And then we've got a great parks system but it's anemic and incomplete. Well let's get on with that. We proved, when I was in city government before, that the voters of Portland will support investing in their parks system. Doesn't have to be a bond measure again. But let's do something. It 's an improving economy, just like it was in 94, an improving economy, let's go to the people who love their parks and say how about this for the next 10 years or the next 20 or whatever the formula is. And then let's go to our partners, who ought to be able to help us grow that park system, whether it's Metro, or the private sector or philanthropists, and say how about it Portland Parks Foundation? Could you step up and finally build that wonderful pedestrian bridge over Burnside that we've talked about for 25 years, so that the Wildwood Trail doesn't have to cross the street where we're going to kill people by a car when they're on a walk with their family? There's all kinds of cool stuff that will make Portland even more like Portland that I want to build or shape or lead, that now with a better economy, a stable city budget and a lot of good relationships built, I think we're going to do."

Q: Some Central eastside, what needs to happen there?

A: “Well one, the plan has to reflect the possibilities for that place and right now it doesn’t. It’s a mishmash of industrial and auto-oriented zoning on the south end where we’re building two light rail stations. But let’s get real specific; look at the corner of 12<sup>th</sup> and Powell. The city owns four acres there. There’s a fire truck maintenance facility and a storage building where we keep our earthquake supplies that’s not seismically safe. Is that the highest and best use for that property? And meanwhile we’ve been wondering where we should build a Southeast community center. Hmm. It seems to me there’s some possibilities there.”

Q: Because the streetcar will run through.

A: “The light rail. Light rail will have a stop right there. So now in our complicated system of government, if you’ve got a project that involves, OMF, Facilities, Fire, Parks, Planning, Transportation, the mayor has to call that meeting to order and say are we all together on this? And I’m going to do that. Let’s make something wonderful here. It doesn’t have to be a community center. But come on -we own the land, it’s on the light rail station, the light rail opens in 18 months, let’s make something wonderful happen there. That’s our job. And those are the types of specific opportunities that we’re going to be able to now use the partnerships I’ve built, a stable checkbook and a good set of working relationships in this building. I don’t think it’s going to be a hard sell for me to walk down the hall to Commissioner (Amanda) Fritz and say, ‘So what are the possibilities for park maintenance and construction if you don’t like that bond measure? What else can we do? She’s going to be game for that conversation, and just as Commissioner (Steve) Novick obviously is on transportation funding. The ground work we’ve laid we can now build on.”

Q: How’s your relationship with Commissioner Fritz?

A: “It’s good. We spent some of late yesterday after the council session on the tree code. We were talking about the latest developments with R2D2 and collaborating. So there’ve been some moments of tension, there’ve been some moments I think when she felt left out because, again, we haven’t always been the best communicators here in our office. We get that. So I need to attend to that in terms of what my colleagues need from me as their leader, and I take that seriously. I am good at taking criticism too. I think one of the things that’s healthy about me, I hope, as a leader is somebody can come in and say, ‘You can do better on this, and you’re screwing up on that.’ And I don’t look for 14 reasons why they’re wrong. I try to take it in and sleep on it and do something about it.”

Q: I was looking at old interview from your tenure... and we asked about your temper and you said ‘I love when people grab me by the lapels and scream at me.’ Have you had those moments this year?



A: “Yeah, I do. People are too deferential when you’re mayor. I think they’re more likely to do that when you’re a commissioner. And I really have to encourage bureau managers or even my own staff, ‘It’s OK to argue with me. You will not be punished for disagreement, in fact you will be rewarded for it. But you have to tell people that multiple times before they know it’s real, then they may have to try it out a time or two. But I’m a Socratic learner. I believe in the debate and dialogue gets you to a better understanding. And unless the other person is willing to debate then you’re not having much of one.’”(Laughs)

Q: What is it about maps?

A: “I do love maps.”

Q: I heard people say, ‘don’t bring a map to a meeting because Charlie will get too distracted by it.’

A: “That’s true. That’s fair. I do love maps, and you do have to draw me a picture I guess. But when you draw a picture, it does focus my interests. And so you know I’m a backpacker and a sailor, so maps are my element. And I’m a city planner by nature, so I’m a sucker for a diagram that shows me what the place could be. My dad was a structural engineer, so I said, I used to be a remodeler earlier in my career. So that’s just natural, show me the plan. Words are fine, but if you show me the diagram of what you want to accomplish then I gravitate to that.”

Q: Gail said on the China trip she was sending back photos and you were looking at maps in all or most of them.

A: “Laughs. Or a model of Shanghai. Yeah. No, that’s definitely rooted in in me, that’s not going to change.”

Q: A lot of people said that after the budget process in the summer you became a little distracted by whatever the latest story was, maybe that’s our fault I don’t know.

A: “To an extent. Not your fault, but to an extent, that’s true. The criticism of Jack Graham caused us to spend more time than we planned on the questions about OMF. We knew there were opportunities for improvement. Now we’re all over them. But it wasn’t done on the schedule that we’d planned. The Right 2 Dream Too issue wasn’t on our list, it became a priority or it became an urgency, anyway. The situation with lawlessness on the street and a lot of people camping and a very large summertime homeless population, that became a big management problem for us. And we put a lot of time into it. Compared to the focus on those big three issues - police, and streets, and schools and then the overriding issue of the budget for the first half or 2/3 of the year, once the budget was done, I think we were a little more scattered into the more urgent, maybe less important more urgent, issues. But they nevertheless required our attention.”

Q: Was that staff related?

A: "I think more staff could help with that, yeah. But again, we're going to evaluate that question of can we really get by with this small staff for the long run? And do we need some folks who really are project managers, who bear down and work on a project? I think we're working better with our bureaus now; they're staffing the work, which we expect of them. That's a change for them from the Adams administration where the work was managed out of this office, and the bureaus were not necessarily empowered to do the work. So we're retraining people that that's what we expect from you as our bureau. And that's, I think, taken a little while to sink in."

Q: Is it true nobody had asked for 'give me a 10 percent reduction across the board and bureaus' scenario before?

A: "Apparently not. Yeah apparently."

Q: Was that a shock and did you get pushback on that?

A: "I got some clenched jaws and wide eyes when I told the bureau managers that's what we expected them to do. And yes, I got some pushback that that's not really possible. But I said, go ahead and do it please, because everybody else is going to be required to do this too. And we'll make hard choices. I think, again, I give the bureau directors a lot of credit. They did that, by and large, in a thoughtful and compliant way rather than looking for any way to undermine it. There wasn't a lot of maliciousness, of 'Yeah I got your 10 percent right here.' There were some that were clearly more popular than others. We also asked the bureau managers to clamp down spending, and they over-performed and we ended up with a bigger surplus later in the year. So I loved that."

Q: Free cash to spend right.

A: "Yeah, I praised that at every opportunity. That was consistent good management across a whole bunch of bureaus."

Q: You talked about carrying that discipline forward.

A: "Yeah, and I think people right now are doing a good job of managing their budgets. So you don't hear us having to fight with our bureaus about overtime right now, and I think that's because the police bureau and the fire bureau are doing a good job."

Q: You talked in the campaign and early on in the year about Multnomah County and who does what. Then the Cogen thing happened.

A: "Oh yeah, that totally interrupted that work. But that work actually has picked up again. We're working directly with Chair (Marissa) Madrigal on a series of budget issues where the two of us are going to try to come forward with a coherent, combined list. This is what the city is going to do, this is what the county's going to do. This is how much that program is going to cost, oh, and there's one government that's responsible for

making sure that program is working. And we're going to try and make sure that list is long enough, and detailed enough, that it really makes a difference. Not like we'll finish this work in six months while Chair Madrigal is chair. But, when the new chair comes to office, we will have already demonstrated that it's possible to start rearranging the crazy quilt of what the city of Portland and Multnomah County do. We won't be finished. We're not going to take on police patrols, and sheriff patrols, and we're not going to take on the bridges in the first six months. But we are going to take on housing and homelessness and alcohol and drug treatment and mental health services and try to sort some of that out.

Because if you'd been at the budget hearings you would've been mystified. Well, is this is a city program? A county program? Why are these people here advocating? Oh it's because the city, in some past year, had done a one-time expenditure for needle exchanges, so we were putting \$65,000 a year into needle exchanges, even though it's fundamentally a public health program, should've been performed by the county all along. The city, if it had a conception of what its role was, should've said go across the river and talked to them. But we, in a moment of good-hearted weakness, said, "OK, we'll fund that."

Q: Please help clarify this for me and other reporters going forward.

A: "Yeah it was all ad hococracy, and it was in a good hearted adhocracy. The county is having a tough year, the city should step up and help. Or, this is a really vital program, and what the county provides isn't enough, or what the city provides isn't enough. This worked both ways. And you know, no malice here. But you can't blame advocates for making grant requests to more than one government. If more than one government looks like it might say yes." (Laughs)

Q: Yeah why not. That's just smart.

A: "You'd be not doing your job if you didn't ask the city and the county to fund your programs."

Q: So we should stay tuned?

A: Yeah, by early in the budget process Marissa and I intend to have that to the point that we can say, OK, here's...this is going to show up in the chair's proposed budget, and in the mayor's proposed budget, and it's going to start to make a little more sense to people. People come to the hearing and do a great job of advocating, but it's got to be pretty hard for citizens who aren't government wonks to know enough to be able to advocate precisely for what they'd like to see. Democracy works better if it's actually accessible to a broad majority, not if it's just the insiders and the hard core activists."

Q: Everyone always talks about how present and aware you are in meetings and prepared.

A: “Well that’s good. I feel that way most of the time. I do, I am in my 8 or 10 meetings a, sometimes it feels like I’m in a batting machine, but, you know most of the time I feel like I’m present and prepared, so thank you.”

Q: How do you... don’t you get exhausted?

A: “Yes. I find at my advanced age of 57, if I don’t get to the gym at least three days a week I’m drinking too much coffee, and struggling to understand what’s being said, the complicated details at 4 o’clock in the afternoon. If I get to the gym at least three days a week and get a good workout then, I find that mind-body connection that everybody talks about. It’s true when you’re 35, but I’ll tell you it’s true when you’re 55. And I find that really matters. I find that Nancy and I have, I think, done a good job of making sure that we have a life. We have to schedule a date night, but we do them. We do schedule date nights and have them. And just have a couple, go to a performance like we did on Saturday, go to the Oregon Repertory Singers. Go to a nice dinner. And so, we try to make sure that we have that part of our life. And then get away. Yes I have my cell phone, yes I have to check it a couple of times a day, but get away, go sailing, go backpacking. Get away, something I’ve believed in every job I’ve had.

I was just talking to the two people I went over to this meeting with, that when I was at HDR, I saw the saw pattern that is typical even in government, which is we’re all plugged in all the time. We all work hard, and in the private sector people are thinking of ‘Let’s be even more profitable next year and work really hard.’ And in a consulting firm, you’re also thinking about billable hours. So I have to get all my hours in this month. But I have to tell my own team members, take time off. And no, I don’t want to hear anybody make that call where it starts with, ‘I know you’re on vacation but.’ No. You have to have a work life balance. Now in this work, you’re not going to have a 40 hours workweek. We schedule, our scheduling system is based on me working about 60-65 hours. A week. That’s normal for a mayor. But you still need to have time away. I find that if I have, on a personal level, time with my wife, time in the gym and time on the boat every year, I’m a healthy guy. And I love the work. I think the variety and challenge of public life is stimulating. It’s, there’s no two days alike. There are things that make me want to pound my head against the wall, and there are things that make me smile and bring tears to my eyes. There’s some aspects of this job that are just simply wonderful. And there’s enough of that that I’m happy to come to work.”

Q: What keeps you up at night?

A: “Personnel decisions. Those are always hard.”

Q: Why?

A: “If you have to let somebody go it’s hard. It’s hard, when you’re in the role of being the boss.”

Q: Did you have to do that at HDR?

A: "Oh yeah. There were times there, and occasions when I was in city government before. (Other things that keep him up) The death toll on the streets, which has been mostly traffic deaths."

Q: Right you talked to Brad bout this.

A: "There were two in the last few days, both women walking across the street in east Portland. Just got mowed down by somebody driving down the street ... apparently, I don't know all the details, but apparently just driving down the street. Oh, those just wound me when I hear them. And of course, we've had almost the same amount of gang-related incidents as we had the previous year. And there's been a spike. In fact I just saw that graph, from the gang force task force this morning. Fortunately, this is going to sound a little flippant. But maybe our gang members this year, their accuracy has fallen. Because there's been a lot of bullets fired, including a house that got shot up with 30 rounds last night."

Q: Yeah, lived down the street from that place.

A: "Nobody got hurt, but you cannot count on that and we have had a number of deaths from gang related violence. So stuff does keep me up at night. But, and, there's plenty of things to worry about. Like are we prepared for an earthquake? I'm not, by nature, a worrier. My wife is. I have to coach her about that. But I'm not a worrier. There are things that reach my heart, but I'm usually able to compartmentalize and say I cannot make Portland safe for an earthquake tonight. Get a good night sleep, show up for work tomorrow and try to do some more. And I'm pretty good at that compartmentalization. Too good at it sometimes, because people said again this year, where's the vision on the planning stuff. That's what Charlie liked!"

Q: Maybe you can talk about the comp plan. I'm sure that's something you're involved in and interested in

A: "Oh yeah we're starting to spend more and more time with Susan talking about the comp plan, because that's a big opportunity. That sets the stage for the next phase of Portland's history, and I want to get that right, and I don't want to fall short. That's not the right phrase. I don't want to pull our punches and not go ahead and do the important things in that plan, even though some of them were very controversial. Yes Central Eastside there's going to be new development there at those station areas. Or, conversely, it's a bad bargain that we've starting seeing, you know little infill projects in the middle of great neighborhoods in ways that make you wince architecturally but only add a couple units. That's a bad bargain."

Q: Drive by demolitions?

A: "Yeah skinny houses and demolitions in the existing neighborhoods. You're only getting a few housing units. That isn't going to save the urban growth boundary but it's

going to tick off a whole lot of people who otherwise believe in the whole Oregon plan of urban containment and farmland preservation. So what are we getting here for that again? Not much. We had to tune the issue of how much very high-density apartment construction is bearable on streets like Division and Alberta and Fremont. I think we got that right, but we need to revisit those issues. So there's a whole host of issues in the plan that set the stage for the next chapter of Portland. And it's another growth chapter. We're growing fast. 70 percent of the population growth in the state in the 18-64 year old range is here in the city. And 30,000 new jobs in Multnomah County, 20,000 new jobs in Washington County and that's three-quarters of the job growth in the state. You saw that report. That was pretty eye-opening stuff. We almost have to apologize to the rest of the state because it's happening here and not happening there."

Q: How do you make sure that people, families, can still live in Portland?

A: "Well the schools are a piece of it, affordability, of course is the other. Things that allow for affordable home ownership, like I love this little program that Wells Fargo just put together and I was out there at the home ownership fair that they had last weekend, just to pat them on the back, because here's a couple hundred families able to buy houses that wouldn't be able to thanks to those home ownership grants. That's a nice piece of private philanthropy that helped the cause. Again in our zoning code, are we creating opportunity for affordable home ownership, not just high density. How do we do that? We can do some of that with planning. We have to do some of it with public policy and money, like the 30 percent housing set aside. One of the problems that we want to address with PDC and the Housing Bureau is the Housing Bureau is putting almost all of its money into very affordable/low income projects, 30 percent to 60 percent MFI. But what about the young family that can't afford to buy their first house in Portland because the average house costs, what \$220,000 now? I bought my first house, we were, how old were we? It was 1980, so 24-years-old, cost \$60,000, and we made \$12,000 a year. The numbers have changed, but is it still possible for somebody in their first real job with a good paycheck to buy a house in Portland and start a family? Hmm.. It isn't easy anymore. And there's certainly a bunch of neighborhoods where it's not possible anymore."

Q: How do you keep them here?

A: "Part of it is public goods. We can do what we can through zoning and programs to try to keep housing affordable. But think of the public goods that come from being in a successful city. I can get to work without my car. That saves me a ton of money. I can generate power off my garage roof with solar panels. That saves me money, because the city had a cool program that helped me get my house solarized. There's a great park down the street, so you know that gives me wonderful benefits. Oh there's a community garden, I can grow some of my own food. And there's a great public school down the street, I don't have to worry about trying to pay for private school for my child. You add that all up, and it's tens of thousands of dollars of a social premium that I get because I was smart enough to live in Portland. And we have to deliver on that set of goods, that set of public goods, for everybody in the city. And we're not there yet. Not every school has that level

of confidence from the parents in the neighborhoods. Not every neighborhood has a community park or a garden. The transit system doesn't get everywhere it needs to go, but if we reach that ideal where every neighborhood is a complete community in those very specific ways, then all of a sudden we hear these complaints, particularly from the Portland Business Alliance, oh the average salary in Portland is \$20,000 less than it is in Seattle or some other cities. Well, I'm not unconcerned about that, but if it's true that you can live a really great life in Portland making \$20,000 less than living in Houston then we win! So I'll take those numbers." (Laughs)

Q: So it's certainly been a busy year.

A: "Yeah a busy year. A good year. Again a lot of things that mayor, that just pain a mayor to deal with. We are fortunate to say, we haven't had that problem in Portland this year. We haven't had a police shooting that roiled the community. We haven't had a natural disaster. We had a power failure downtown which inconvenienced a few people and hurt no one. It's been a year of rebuilding in city government, but also of recovery in those kind of ways as well. That's a blessing."

Q: Are you having a staff retreat?

A: "Yeah we are. Actually the first week of January. To sort of map out the next part of the year."

Q: Do you talk about what went right/wrong/etc?

A: "Yeah. We do that everyday. But we also are going to have a full day together for that. We've had some partial days already toward the end of the year. And then the other thing I'm going to do over the holidays, there are some people that I rely on a lot, that are friends and longtime supporters and just say 'How am I doing.' I did that with Zari Santner today at lunch. Zari was the parks director and worked really hard on my campaign, and I've always thought...she was my capital projects campaign manager, and we built all the parks projects... I got together with her and asked how am I doing? Give me the good, the bad and the ugly. And she gave me some of each. But I'm going to do some more of that over the holidays as well.

And then again, the other thing that I'm going to do occasionally, I do it sometimes in my own neighborhood business district, but I'm going to do some other places in the city, is just walk down the street. People do stop you on the street. That 's the other thing about being mayor. People come up to me on the street and say, 'Hey you've got to deal with this.' Or you're doing a good job thank you, or somewhere in between. So I want to go and foster more of that as well. Because that's good to get that direct feedback. The polls are nice. The polls that I've seen, is that most people say the city is moving in the right direction and they're OK with me. But that's aggregate, and it's much better to get that in person from your barber or the person in the grocery store or somebody down the street."

Q: What can you do about economic development? You talked about the Schnitzer property in South Waterfront being one of the best sites in the nation earlier this year?

A: “Well it is. And actually I think, regardless of whether I do anything or not, the rest of the world is discovering Portland. We’re dealing with more and more inquiries from national companies who say, ‘We’d like to come here.’ Through no effort of our own. Then, obviously we try to take the conversation from there to a happy ending...Where else in the country can you ride light rail from a great neighborhood, to a world class medical institution, check into your laboratory with a view of Mt. Hood, and have the best cancer researchers in the world at your elbow?....

You look around and what’s happening at the shipyards with the new dry dock and with Daimler expanding, our traditional manufacturing blue-collar Portland base is getting stronger too. I think we’re going to see some really significant economic growth. Not just population growth. People are moving here without jobs. That’s always been true, will continue to be true. Even during the recession. But I think now we’re going to be meeting them with jobs a lot more often. Does the city have some work to do on that front? Sure. That’s our job, too, along with a lot of other people. But quality of place is our trump card. And it’s our trump card now more than ever. And I think we’ll see more people come here and build businesses here, or keep their businesses here, if that trump card is as strong as I think it is.”

Q: I think you talked about 5 things you want to accomplish this year, but could you reiterate?

A: “PDC it’s direction and future, and make sure PDC is seriously back in the place making business. That’s one. Getting the state of Oregon to make a major commitment to mental health funding, so that we start dealing with the upstream problems of mental health, rather than the downstream problems on the streets where the police officer is the first responder. Getting the city’s transportation system funded to do its job. The same thing with the park system. And then, probably also on that top five list, would be this work with the county to sort out what the city does and what the county does. Not try to do it all in the first six months but not stop after the first 6 months either. That’s enough to keep us busy. Might need a larger staff.” (laughs)

Q: And then whatever else happens too.

A: “Yeah whatever else we haven’t thought about. I think we’ve gotten a lot better at crisis management. Some of the quote unquote smaller things on my to do list but they’re not small at all... Steve Novick is very serious about emergency preparedness and this little power failure demonstrated how important that is. We had a hard time getting in touch with our own employees. Oh, we’ve got to keep that list in order. Pretty basic, but we hadn’t done it. So that little practice emergency if you will, woke us up about how important that is.”

Q: New emergency building coming online soon.



A: "New building, I was just out there yesterday. OK, let's get out there and do some exercises because if we don't it's just a pretty building."

Q: It's a shiny building.

A: "Yeah it's a nice building, but let's make sure we know exactly how to use it so we're trained and ready. You know I'm a sailor and I've never had a serious crisis."

Q: At sea?

A: "At sea. But I'm prepared for it. I know exactly where the life raft is, I know how to inflate it, I know where the fire extinguisher is, I know where the knife is to cut the line if somebody got there foot tangled in it. And I've drilled and practiced those things. And we've been out sailing on beautiful summer days on the Columbia River, and I've thrown a life cushion over the side and said, 'Man overboard.' And we all did the drill. Well, that's just what we do for fun. We need to do those kinds of drills and practices for what matters even more. Which is what happens if we have a big one here."

Q: I was talking to Carmen Merlo about that and she said she exhales every time she crosses the river. And any bridge. Comforting.

A: "Laughs. Yeah I know. I bet she doesn't use the Sellwood Bridge at all."

Q: So are you going to see the Robert Redford movie?

A: "I haven't. I have friends who've seen it. I won't let my wife see it because she's more of a cautious sailor than I am. She won't want to see it. But yeah, I'll go see it just to remind myself that you need to be prepared. I go sailing, not racing and I go backpacking, not rock climbing. I don't need the adrenaline, please. I'm out there on the trail or on the river to relax. And the way you make sure you are able to do that, is that you're prepared for when something goes wrong. The same thing is true for the city. So having seen this little incident and how this went down, and being out there at that emergency center, one of the other items on our to do list for January is ok it opens on February 15, when's our practice session? February 16?"

Q: Anything else you'd want to add?

A: "A little bit about Nancy, because I can't help but bring that up. You know we've never had a first lady. Or at least, looking back to the point of when we had a budget that bad. As far as we can tell we've never had a budget that bad. And we've never had a first lady. We've not had a mayor's who's spouse was willing to be a public person, not be a political person in advancing a contentious agenda, but advance some aspect of who Portland is. And Nancy does that with great style, and heart, and I appreciate it very much. And I think if I have a secret weapon, it's not my staff or the smart idea I have in a

file on my desk. It's her, and that she, if you talk to people in the fashion industry in Portland, they might remember who I am, but they'll sure talk about Nancy.

You talk to people about the little boxes campaign and she was the one who was out there promoting local retailers. Again, there's not a political bone in the woman's body. She was not into this because of politics, she's into this because she's a supportive Portland and she loves Portland. She's an import to Portland. She moved here from Stevenson, Washington. So it's all a little strange and new for her to become a Portlander, but she's done it with a lot of enthusiasm. She's great."

Q: Actually you talked about this a little bit in some of your projects... and I talked to Gail about this...but East Portland. She said talk to us in 3 years about progress.

A: "Yeah because here's what ought to be different in east Portland in three years. The state of Oregon should be systematically transferring state highways to the city of Portland. Like Powell. Like 82<sup>nd</sup>. We should have a long-term program that everybody knows about that's systematically building the streets there. And we should have a long-term program that everybody knows about that's systematically building the parks that aren't there. In three years we ought to be able to say that all three of those things are underway. Will they be done? No. Not in three years. But maybe not in 13 years."

Q: Roads, it's the road fee.....

A: "Yeah."

Q: But parks you talk about designing and building a park, that takes time. Years

A: "Yeah, we can get some things started in three years. We did 110 park projects in about six years when we passed a bond measure."

Q: So stepping on the gas a bit.

A: "Yep."

Q: Thanks for your time.

A: "Thank you."