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CITY COUNCIL WATCH

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City OKs \$1.2 million for children's programs
The City Council voted 5-0 on Wednesday to approve up to \$1.2 million in spending recommended by the *Portland Children's Investment Fund* allocation committee for five programs targeting child abuse and neglect.

BACKGROUND

The investment fund is in its first year of operation after city voters approved a five-year children's levy in 2002.

The taxpayer money is going toward three program categories: early childhood; child-abuse and neglect; and after-school and mentoring. About \$4 million for early childhood programs was approved last year. Proposals for after-school and mentoring programs are due April 16.

The recommendations approved Wednesday by the council for this round of child abuse and neglect programs still await contract negotiations with recipients. But the proposals and the maximum amounts each program can receive are as follows:

* Tualatin Valley Centers, \$213,804 to expand a program aimed at preventing problems with families at high risk of abuse or neglect; and another \$184,356 to expand existing adolescent day treatment for children at risk of abuse or with a history of abuse.

* Janus Youth Programs, \$364,136 as the lead agency for a project to expand services for homeless children who have left home to escape abuse or have been abandoned.

* Big Brothers Big Sisters, \$148,500 for a program matching mentors with youths ages 10-18 in the foster care system.

* The Native American Rehabilitation Association, \$289,000 to include child abuse prevention and intervention in some of its existing programs, and to start new prevention programs for the highest-risk groups.

Thirty-two programs submitted proposals totaling \$8.6 million for the 18-month funding period.

The council's approval of the \$1.2 million came after Commissioner Randy Leonard pressed to ensure the *Portland* money going to regional agencies went to programs within city limits, and is not used to allow agencies to divert money outside *Portland*. Mayor Vera Katz urged fund officials to focus on demonstrating proven results that voters can see when deciding whether to renew the levy.

QUOTABLE

"These are investments in children that are going to make a difference."
-- Commissioner Dan Saltzman

OTHER ACTION

* The council voted unanimously to appoint Linda Meng as City Attorney Jeff Rogers' replacement. The appointment takes effect Feb. 26 when Rogers retires after 19 years in the job. Meng, whose annual salary will be \$126,818, has been sharing the job with Rogers since September while Rogers worked at an internship as part of his master's degree work in counseling psychology.

Meng has been with the city attorney's office for 13 years after a career that included a partnership at Lindsay, Hart, Neil & Weigler as well as being a clerk and staff attorney for the Oregon Court of Appeals. The city attorney's office provides legal services and advice to *Portland's* bureaus and elected officials.

-- Henry Stern

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