

Amy Johnson

From: Deanna Gwyn
Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 4:25 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Fw: Contact City Council
Attachments: Hedquist.docx

Please include this email & letter in the record for the city council meeting tonight.

Deanna Gwyn

City Councilor - Ward 4

Dgwyn@cityofsalem.net

Mobile: 971-374-3659

From: noreply@cityofsalem.net <noreply@cityofsalem.net> on behalf of jwhanlin@co.douglas.or.us
<jwhanlin@co.douglas.or.us>
Sent: Wednesday, December 31, 2025 9:48 AM
To: citycouncil <citycouncil@cityofsalem.net>
Subject: Contact City Council

Your Name	Douglas County Sheriff John W. Hanlin
Your Email	jwhanlin@co.douglas.or.us
Your Phone	541-440-4450
Street	1036 SE Douglas Ave.
City	Roseburg
State	OR
Zip	97471
Message	Please see attached letter

This email was generated by the dynamic web forms contact us form on 12/31/2025.

I have to assume the city council was not adequately informed. If you are fully informed then I must ask, what is wrong with you people? How can you knowingly, consciously make the decision to appoint Kyle Hedquist to a Police Review Board?

Obviously, the Salem City Council had no control over the executive clemency granted to Kyle Hedquist by Governor Brown. That action in itself is extremely irresponsible. A convicted aggravated murderer who receives clemency from a life sentence after 27 years of incarceration resulting in his early release from prison and arguably creating a threat to the community is one thing. But the subsequent appointment by the city council of Kyle Hedquist to the Community Police Review Board is appalling. Kyle Hedquist was convicted of Aggravated Murder, Robbery in the First Degree and 3 Counts of Kidnapping in the Second Degree. He agreed to and was sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole for the execution-style murder of then 19-year-old Nikki Thrasher. The facts surrounding Hedquist's crime were detailed in a letter of opposition to executive clemency by Douglas County DA Rick Wesenberg. [Hedquist Letter From Douglas County DA 22 | PDF](#) Another letter addressing safety concerns and opposition to Hedquist's executive clemency was filed by the Marion County DA and Marion County Sheriff.

I understand the value of appointing law-abiding citizens to a police review board who can bring a variety of perspective to the board. I agree that even having an individual with a past criminal record, or someone with past substance addiction could provide valuable insight and perspective. But to appoint an individual who was convicted of a cold, calculated murder of a 19-year-old girl simply to eliminate the possibility that she "might" tell the police about his involvement in a property crime? An individual who throughout the homicide investigation never showed any remorse for executing her. The appointment of that kind of individual is simply irresponsible, immoral and wrong. If the council members who voted to appoint Hedquist to the Salem Community Police Review Board did so after having been adequately informed of this case, then they are blatantly ignoring their duty, dismissing the best interest of their constituents, and violating their Oath of Office. If they voted without having this information beforehand, then do the right thing, share the information, and bring the matter back before the council for reasonable action.

Our judicial system is not perfect. But in this case, at least initially the system worked, justice was served, and it appropriately delivered a just finding and sentence, holding Hedquist accountable for his heinous crimes. The executive clemency granted to Hedquist by Governor Brown was shocking and irresponsible, but the recent appointments made by the Salem City Council overshadow Governor Brown's bad decision and harshly rejects and diminishes the justice that was so appropriately delivered in the name of Nikki Thrasher, and her family.

Amy Johnson

From: Krizti Margraves <faithful.mustardseed@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 4:45 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Perspective on Kyle Hedquist's Continued Service on the Salem Community Police Board

Mayor and Council members,

My name is Krizti Margraves, and I am a resident of Salem representing Ward 6. I'm writing to you on the upheaval surrounding Kyle Hedquist's reappointment to the Salem Community Police Board, and the response we've witnessed in our city this past month.

First The Crime Must Be Stated Clearly

In 1994, Kyle committed murder.

Yes — *he did it.*

And yes — *it was horrendous.*

A life was lost. Families were changed forever. The harm caused can never be erased, undone, or rewritten. And Kyle has never asked anyone to pretend otherwise. He pled guilty then, he took responsibility without excuse, and he carries that truth to this day.

But the crime itself, while permanent, is not the only evidence of a man's life.

And no person should be defined solely by the worst decision they ever made, even when the consequences were catastrophic.

Kyle was sentenced to life in prison, believing he would never rejoin a community again. But even in that place, he knew others *would* return home and he believed deeply that they needed to return better than they came in. For the last 30 years, he has lived out accountability through action:

- He became a leader in the University of Oregon's Prison Education Program, advocating for expanded access to higher education for incarcerated men.
- He served as President of the Lifers Club, helping guide long-term accountability and service initiatives inside.
- He volunteered as a hospice worker, offering care to men in their final days.
- He raised money for playgrounds, helping fund safe spaces for children in visiting areas. (The very ones my children get to play on with their father as they enjoy visits)
- He hosted and facilitated domestic violence prevention seminars, anger management groups, parenting classes, and educational programs, not for personal gain, but to help others return home safer, wiser, and healed.
- He served on the Board of Oregon CURE, advocating for families affected by incarceration and supporting policy conversations.

And since his release:

- He has continued legislative advocacy as a policy and legislative outreach coordinator with OJRC, speaking to gaps in systems that impact Salem families and justice-affected individuals.
- He has facilitated national support groups for families with incarcerated loved ones, using his voice to strengthen communities, not fracture them.
- He has worked in warming shelters, alongside me showing deep compassion to Salem's unhoused neighbors in some of the gravest mental health conditions.
- He has participated in community violence prevention discussions, policy feedback forums, and civic conversations about strengthening public safety.

This board exists for one specific purpose:

To review a community member's complaint when they feel unsatisfied with how the police department handled their concern and then bring one collective advisory recommendation from 7 board members to the Police Chief or City Manager.

It is not authority.

It is not management.

It is not enforcement.

It is voice, perspective, and civic participation.

The six community members who serve along side Kyle, none have come forth to the Police Chief or City Manager regarding Kyles integrity or character. Nor concerned by his recommendations or opinions. And in the two years Kyle has served, the board reviewed one complaint total. One.

Why so few?

Not because Salem doesn't care but because we have had a Police Chief of outstanding character who has spent the last 5 years training, educating, and elevating our department to a high standard. He leads with integrity, he holds his team accountable, and Salem is better for it.

And I will say it proudly:

I am proud of our Salem Police Department.

I am proud of their training.

I am proud of their professionalism.

I am proud of their leadership.

Section 201 of the board's Code of Conduct calls members to refrain from slander and hostile speech. Yet some of the loudest voices in our community demanding his removal wouldn't be able to serve on this very board due to their displayed behavior those bylaws prohibit.

We cannot demand standards while excusing the violation of them.

We cannot claim to value civic passion while rejecting a neighbor who has proven his by decades of service.

Salem is rich in people whose lived experiences strengthen our systems:

Like Josh Lair and Eric Rasor, both with criminal histories, who served as LADPC Chair and Vice-Chair, giving recommendations to Health and Human Services administrators and the Board of Commissioners. We say they served Marion County well and we mean it, because they showed up with passion, accountability, and a drive to improve our community.

We champion their voices because they stepped into the gaps.

Kyle has done the same.

So I Say This with Conviction:

Supporting Kyle is not erasing 1994.

It is acknowledging that transformation can be real, accountability can be lived out, and service can continue long after harm was answered for.

He does not hold the pen to sign policy.

He is not in the seat to enforce it.

But he has earned the right to speak into it with others.

We should champion rehabilitation.

We should invite voices like his to the table.

We should be delighted when neighbors want to join in making Salem great not just louder, not just angrier, but better.

Because Salem is not a city that runs from hard conversations. We are a city that rises to them. Just as our police have risen to a higher standard under honorable leadership, I believe our city can too. Kyle has proven he wants to be part of the solution, the standard, and the community, and he continues to give back, not because he has to, but because he believes Salem is worth showing up for. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Krizti Margraves

CAUTION! This email came from outside the City of Salem. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender. For guidance on identifying legitimate senders/emails, please review the IT Intranet Cyber Security Page.

Amy Johnson

From: Deanna Gwyn
Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 4:26 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Fw: Reappointment of Hedquest, a Convicted of Murderer of a Witness, Robber and Kidnapper, to Community Police Review Boar

Please include this email in the record for the city council meeting tonight.

Deanna Gwyn
City Councilor - Ward 4
Dgwyn@cityofsalem.net
Mobile: 971-374-3659

From: diana papagni <dianapapagni@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, December 30, 2025 1:33 PM
To: Deanna Gwyn <DGwyn@cityofsalem.net>; Micki Varney <MVarney@cityofsalem.net>
Cc: Julie Hoy <JHoy@cityofsalem.net>
Subject: Re: Reappointment of Hedquest, a Convicted of Murderer of a Witness, Robber and Kidnapper, to Community Police Review Boar

Councilor Gwyn,

Thank you for prompt and informative response. While I not yet reviewed the videos you supplied me, from what I know of your reputation from our builder, realtor and your responsiveness to our neighborhood traffic concerns on Devon Ave, I accept your explanation and assurance. Having worked with state and federal elected officials and agencies for more than forty years, until proven wrong, I too relied on their recommendations when making prosecutorial decisions affecting citizens' lives. I also attempted to rectify mistakes of my own making. As apparently Mayor Hoy and you have.

As made clear to Councilor Varney, my disagreement does not impute disrespect. I assume the councilors who voted to reappoint Mr. Hedquist did so in good faith and conscience. For the reasons previously stated, I believe it was wrong to do so.

Frank R. Papagni Jr.
Salem, OR 97306

On 12/30/2025 12:42 PM PST Deanna Gwyn <dgwyn@cityofsalem.net> wrote:

Hello Mr. Papagni,

I am going to include links to some meetings for your review. If you have time to watch these videos, I believe you will gather some critical insight.

The Boards & Commissions Appointment Committee (consisting of Mayor Chris Hoy, Virginia Stapleton, Vanessa Nordyke & Linda Nishioka), met on April 16, 2024. There is not a video recording of that meeting, I have attached the written meeting minutes.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/l13jeou4sig?si=ALI2sotRmYeomviG> - This is the link to the **city council meeting of May 13, 2024**, where Mr. Hedquist was initially appointed to the CRPB. At 2:41:55, we discussed appointments to boards and commissions. At that meeting we did not discuss his application. While I did vote to approve the recommended appointments, we were not made aware of Mr. Hedquist's criminal history. I can assure you, I would not have voted in favor of appointing him if I had known his background.

Boards & Commissions Appointment Committee Members beginning in 2025 - Mayor Julie Hoy, Shane Matthews, Deanna Gwyn & Vanessa Nordyke

<https://www.youtube.com/live/wlwiJgrg9Bk?si=XiPe0V98sBZHcEyw> - This is the link to the **Boards & Commissions Appointment Committee Meeting, October 6, 2025**. This is the first time the Board was made aware of Mr. Hedquist's criminal history.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/MkmuDNWZX2w?si=g0eBf82IVLEGjgCN> - This link is to the **Boards & Commissions Appointment Committee Meeting, November 5, 2025**. At this meeting we discussed immediate removal of Mr. Hedquist, at the beginning of the meeting. His term was set to expire on December 31, 2025.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/4H9Ja7kOh6E?si=PVP6ncX6kNEY6r8g> - This is the link to the **Boards & Commissions Appointment Committee Meeting, December 3, 2025**. The discussion about Mr. Hedquist's re-appointment to the CRPB begins at approximately 8 minutes, 30 seconds. At this meeting, the committee voted to leave Kyle Hedquist's position vacant and NOT re-appoint him to the CRPB.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/0noUk97U8dM?si=Jly3Rp7VkJMAzoHK> - This is the link to the **City Council Meeting December 8, 2025**. At this meeting Council Vang made the motion to re-appoint Kyle Hedgquist to the CPRB.

I would be happy to discuss this further, if you would like to call or meet. I truly appreciate your inquiry.

Deanna Gwyn

City Councilor - Ward 4

Dgwyn@cityofsalem.net

Mobile: 971-374-3659

From: diana papagni <dianapapagni@comcast.net>

Sent: Tuesday, December 30, 2025 8:15 AM

To: Micki Varney <MVarney@cityofsalem.net>

Cc: Julie Hoy <JHoy@cityofsalem.net>; Deanna Gwyn <DGwyn@cityofsalem.net>

Subject: Re: Reappointment of Hedquest, a Convicted of Murderer of a Witness, Robber and Kidnapper, to Community Police Review Board

Councilor Varney,

Thank you for your response. Having moved into our new Salem home in July 2024, I was unaware Councilor Gwyn and Mayor Hoy voted to appoint Mr Hedquest and their reasons. I am "cc" the Mayor and Councilor my response to you, and requesting their responses.

Did the Board and Comission Appointment Committee oppose Mr. Hedquest's appointment in April 2024? I was unaware the police union members waited 18 months to react and why. And also uninformed if you voted for or against Mr. Hedquest's appointment in April 2024 and the rationale for your decision.

What I now know is a majority of Salem City Councilors reappointed a convicted murderer, kidnapper, robber who jurors and Oregon's judiciary affirmed should serve life imprisoned to represent Salem community values on the Community Police Review Board. What concerns me is the message it sent to past and more importantly future victims of a violent crime?

Again thank you for your reply. My disagreement is not meant to be disrespectfully. I am hopefully of receiving responses from Mayor Hoy and my Councilor Gwyn and will share their responses.

Frank R. Papagni, Jr.
Salem, OR 97306

On 12/30/2025 12:50 AM PST Micki Varney <mvarney@cityofsalem.net> wrote:

Have you asked Councilor Gwyn and Mayor Julie Hoy why they voted to appoint Mr. Hedquest to the Community Police Review Board in April 2024? The same information on his background was available on his application back then as is available now. Any idea why the police union members have waited 18 months to bring this up?

Regards,

Micki Varney
City Councilor - Ward 8
Salem, Oregon
[503-399-7908](tel:503-399-7908)

Note: All communications are public records subject to disclosure.

From: diana papagni <dianapapagni@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, December 22, 2025 8:46 AM

To: Deanna Gwyn <DGwyn@cityofsalem.net>
Cc: Julie Hoy <JHoy@cityofsalem.net>; Paul Tigan <ptigan@cityofsalem.net>; inishioka@cityofsalem.net <inishioka@cityofsalem.net>; Shane Matthews <smatthews@cityofsalem.net>; Dr. Irvin M Brown <ibrown@cityofsalem.net>; Mai Vang <mvang@cityofsalem.net>; Vanessa Nordyke <VNordyke@cityofsalem.net>; Micki Varney <MVarney@cityofsalem.net>
Subject: Reappointment of Hedquest, a Convicted of Murderer of a Witness, Robber and Kidnapper, to Community Police Review Boar

Counselor Gwyn,

Thank you for voting against reappointing murderer, robber and kidnapper Kyle Hedquest to the Community Police Review Board along with Mayor Hoy, Councilor Matthews and Councilor Tigan.

A retired District of Oregon federal prosecutor and a former Lane County deputy district attorney, few murders are more cold blooded than the killing of a witness to cover up a crime. Generally committed by members of gangs and organized crime, the sanctions vary between the death and life imprisonment without parole. Indeed, the later was the sentence imposed on Kyle Hedquist for aggravated murder -- execution style with a bullet to the head -- of a teenage foster child. Such sentence was further warranted for his committing the crimes of armed robbery and three kidnappings in the second degree. He was serving these sentences, until former Governor Kate Brown commuted them.

In May 2022, according to the Morning Consult polling firm, then Governor Brown received the dubious honor of being "the most unpopular governor in the country." Well-deserved since, according to KOIN News, Governor Brown did not even notify the murdered victim's mother of her intent to commute Hedquist's sentences, nor apparently the robbery, kidnap victims. What would their reactions be to councilors appointing Hedquest to be on committees to advocate for "criminal justice reform?"

A graduate of the University of Oregon and School of Law, my wife and I recently moved from Eugene to Salem, so I am unaware if those same councilors voted or nominated to have a person whose family member was murdered, robbed or kidnapped be on the Community Police Review Board to advocate on behalf of crime victims. I am a resident of your district but decline to provide my address given my career involved prosecutions of violent persons and as advised by the U.S. Marshal service.

Councilor Vang and the four other council members voted to reappoint Hedquist to a committee representing the public because of his "positive work in the community, not his past (murder, robbery, kidnappings)." Lawyers such as Councilor Vang and myself give great weight to precedent. Given this precedent, what basis now exists for the Council members to deny convicted, released, rehabilitated and positive

community active child molesters, rapists, kidnappers, armed robbers from also being appointed to committees representing community values?

As any other person, Mr. Hedquist can advocate his "diverse" perspective to committee boards. A person with his past resume does not and should not be on committee boards representing the public. A position supported by the Boards and Commissions Appointment Committee's opposition to Hedquist's reappointment. "Good behavior" in prison can reduce a sentence and community service work once released should facilitate a person's reintegration into society. It can justify rehabilitated drug dealers/addicts and those convicted of property crimes being placed in positions on community committees to help those similarly situated return to society. Those whose crime victims are dead, permanently injured physically or mentally should not. The rationale is obvious. If not, one needs to ask their living victims.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Frank R. Papagni, Jr.
Salem, OR 97306

Amy Johnson

From: Deanna Gwyn
Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2026 4:26 PM
To: CityRecorder
Subject: Fw: Hedquist Civic Appointments

Please include this email in the record for the city council meeting tonight.

Deanna Gwyn

City Councilor - Ward 4

Dgwyn@cityofsalem.net

Mobile: 971-374-3659

From: K S <justice4nikkiranee@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 30, 2025 9:43 AM
To: Deanna Gwyn <DGwyn@cityofsalem.net>
Subject: Re: Hedquist Civic Appointments

Thank you so much, Councilwoman Gwyn. I very much appreciate your reply. I wish the best for the Council in the new year and hope they all can come to the same agreement.

Sincerely,
KS

On Tue, Dec 30, 2025 at 6:30 AM Deanna Gwyn <DGwyn@cityofsalem.net> wrote:

KS

Thank you so much for writing. My heart aches for you, Nikki and her family.

I agree with you 100%.

Deanna Gwyn

City Councilor - Ward 4

City of Salem | Mayor/City Manager's Office

555 Liberty Street SE, Room 220

Salem, Oregon 97301

Dgwyn@cityofsalem.net

Mobile: 971-374-3659

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#) | [CityofSalem.net](#)

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: K S <justice4nikkiranee@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 29, 2025 10:30:18 PM

To: Julie Hoy <JHoy@cityofsalem.net>; Paul Tigan <ptigan@cityofsalem.net>; Linda Nishioka <LNishioka@cityofsalem.net>; Shane Matthews <smatthews@cityofsalem.net>; Deanna Gwyn <DGwyn@cityofsalem.net>; Dr. Irvin M Brown <ibrown@cityofsalem.net>; Mai Vang <mvang@cityofsalem.net>; Vanessa Nordyke <VNordyke@cityofsalem.net>; Micki Varney <MVarney@cityofsalem.net>
Subject: Hedquist Civic Appointments

To the Honorable Members of the Salem City Council and Mayor Hoy,

This is **Nikki Raneen Thrasher**.



Nikki was my childhood best friend. We were the kind of best friends young “tween” girls are before the world teaches caution. We had matching jackets. We wore a heart necklace broken in half that said “*Best Friends*.” She wore one half, and I wore the other. It was a promise made in innocence—that we would grow up together.

Nikki was beautiful—not just in appearance, but in the way she moved through the world. She was intelligent, responsible, and always striving to do the right thing. She was extremely proud of her South Korean heritage and humorously introduced me to kimchi. She was faithful, compassionate, and deeply kind. She was the kind of student whom teachers loved. Always doing her best. She was the person people trusted. The person who believed in others and gave them grace. Nikki would have made the **real** difference in this world.

Nikki did not get to fall in love, marry, have children or see her professional goals come true. Her life ended in violent tragedy at the hands of Kyle Hedquist.

If you are not familiar with Mr. Hedquist’s actions, allow me to quote from Douglas County District Attorney, Richard Wesenberg’s letter to Governor Kate Brown opposing Hedquist’s executive clemency. The following crime details are from this letter. “Hedquist lied and told Ms. Thrasher that one of her friends had left a message wanting to meet her on a hill to the west of the Melrose area. Hedquist then offered to drive Ms. Thrasher out to the meeting place. When they arrived at the bottom of a mountain road near the location Hedquist pulled out a pistol and told Ms. Thrasher that he was going to kill her. Hedquist then forced Ms. Thrasher to walk up the dirt road so he could find the most appropriate place to kill her. After walking, some distance Ms. Thrasher began hyperventilating and Hedquist, frustrated with Ms. Thrasher’s inability to continue walking, raised his pistol and shot Ms. Thrasher in the back of the head. Hedquist then grabbed Ms. Thrasher’s lifeless body and dumped it in a less

conspicuous place on the roadside.” My beautiful friend was led into the woods, shot in the back of the head, and her body left in a ditch, like trash. Her only comfort, her Savior, who led her to her eternal home.

These facts matter.

While I recognize that the criminal justice system allows for release, clemency, and rehabilitation, release from prison is not the same as restoration of moral authority. Clemency does not undo the act, nor does it return what was taken.

I am 50 years old now. Nikki should have been able to celebrate her 50th birthday on March 17, 2025, surrounded by her loved ones, maybe even her grandbabies. Instead, she remains forever frozen in time—forever young, forever absent, forever without a voice.

The day Nikki was murdered was also the day the innocence of youth was shattered. A sheltered teenage understanding of the world was opened abruptly and permanently to its darkest evils. That loss does not fade with time. It simply becomes something you carry.

Positions of authority are not merely about competence or redemption narratives. They carry moral weight. When we give someone power or public standing, we are making a choice about whose story matters. Nikki’s story matters! It should not be pushed out of the conversation so the offender’s future can move forward without fully facing what was taken.

Every opportunity Mr. Hedquist has today exists only because Nikki is dead.

Nikki’s life was not a chapter in someone else’s redemption arc. She was a full human being—one who mattered deeply and deserved the future that was taken from her.

As you consider whom you elevate and commend, I urge you to remember her, Nikki Ranee Thrasher. To remember that some losses are permanent. To remember that acknowledging rehabilitation does not require granting power, nor does it require erasing the dead. Kyle Hedquist should not be a free man, let alone be granted civic appointments of any kind.

Nikki never got a second chance.

Please do not ask those of us who loved her to accept a world in which her life must fade so that someone else’s future can be celebrated.

Respectfully,

K S

Maintaining anonymity due to the heinous nature of Hedquist’s crimes.