

**CITY OF PORTLAND
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

AGENDA – January 30, 2015 MINUTES

8:30 a.m.

Portland City Hall, 389 Congress Street, Room 209, Portland, Maine

- A.** Attendance:
Rep. Dick Farnsworth, Re. Peter Stuckey, Sen. Justin Alford, Tony Donovan, Kate Knox, Rep. Erik Jorgensen, Superintendent Manny Caulk, Councilor Ed Suslovic, Rep. Ben Chipman, Corporation Counsel Danielle West-Chuhta, Chamber President Chris Hall, Mayor Michael Brennan, Marcia Hart, VP Marketing, Portland Chamber, Councilor Brenerman, Director of Health and Human Services Dawn Stiles, Acting Public Health Division Director Toho Soma, Public Health Division Program Manager Bethany Sanborn
- B.** Introductions and Discussion of Agenda items.
- C. Schools: Teacher retirement contribution:** At present requires the school has to pay \$1.2 to \$1.5 million for retirement contributions, moving this cost fully to the school; this shift would cause a major problem with the budget and a potential large mill rate increase (FY15 rate is \$20.00)
- D. Charter School** – Sponsor Rep. McCabe, Skowhegan, has submitted two bill titles request; unsure of content as of now.
- E. Higher Education**
a. Sen. Alford has two bills for higher education: 1. \$20 Million for R&D; 2. \$2 million for USM
b. LR1516 “An Act To Increase Accountability and Efficiency at the University of Maine System” Sponsor Rep. Chipman, Portland, to require the University to fund 40% for the classroom instruction re: campuses/location; he supports increasing funding to the University, and is trying to make more funding go to instruction; specifically, 40% of funding (which is national average) go to classroom funding
- F. Electronic Cigarettes:** This issue is also on the Public Safety Committee Agenda for March 2015, to make sure the City cigarette ban applies uniformly to these cigarettes.
Need to make sure there is legislation that will address minors. Attorney General interpretation, however, is that it is illegal for minors to possess, sell, etc. electronic cigarettes under existing state laws.
- G. METRO:** Do we need a Legislative fix to see if the Portland City Schools get reimbursed for the use of METRO Bus Services. There seems to be Legislation already in to address this issue.

H. Bonds:

- a. Rep. Farnsworth has a \$28 million bond for an intermodal transportation center at Thompson's Point
- b. Gas Tax: how many states have this requirement (i.e. that only this \$ can be spent on bridges and roads?)

I. State Budget. Mayor's Coalition = focus on revenue sharing.

- Silence on the budget: people may not really understand what has been proposed yet.
- Reduction would be around \$6 million in General Assistance funding lost under the state budget proposal from the Governor's office.
- City of Portland needs to understand and pull together an analysis/response re: how the Governor's budget will impact it.
- City needs to educate the public about what General Assistance is, the audits we have undergone already; etc. with a bullet list of audits conducted and results.

*Mayor handed out two newspaper articles.

I. \$25 million bond bill in re: railroad transportation plus other bills: see Tony Donovan memo.

J. The next meeting of the Legislative Committee and Legislative Delegation will be February 13, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. in Room 209 of Portland City Hall.