

1. Legislative Committee Agenda

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[LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE AGENDA 12-19-2016.PDF](#)

2. Legislative Committee Meeting Notes Sept 20, 2016

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**CITY OF PORTLAND
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE**

December 19, 2016

A G E N D A

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Review and approve Sept. 20 minutes
3. Review and discuss City Council legislative priorities (state and federal)
4. Review and discuss Legislative process
5. New business
6. Schedule next meeting and adjourn



CITY OF PORTLAND
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

September 20, 2016

MEETING NOTES

In attendance:

Portland City Councilors: David Brenerman, Justin Costa, Jill Duson, Jon Hinck, Ethan Strimling, Ed Suslovic

City staff: Jon Jennings (City Manager), Julie Sullivan (Senior Advisor to the City Manager), Jason Shedlock (Special Assistant to the Mayor)

School staff: Xavier Botana (Superintendent)

Lobbyist: Kate Knox

Legislative delegation: Justin Alfond, Ben Chipman, Mark Dion, Dick Farnsworth, Anne Haskell, Erik Jorgensen, Matt Moonen, Diane Russell

Guest: Beth Stickney

1. Committee Chairman Justin Costa welcomed everyone and stated that we want to determine the City's priorities before the session, with the goal of getting full Council buy-in well in advance of cloture.
2. Beth Stickney wants the City and the delegation to be aware of the threat to current prohibitions **against asking immigration status** during, for example, a traffic stop or at school registration. Rep. Lockman, at the governor's request, introduced LD 1652 last year, which fortunately did not get assigned to a committee; it is possible he will re-introduce that bill or a similar one.

Beth also mentioned the Maine Business Immigration Coalition which she is convening to provide a business voice against any legislation that is unfavorable to immigrants, because we need to retain and integrate them into our work force.

Lastly, Beth stated that proactive legislation will be introduced to increase funding for adult ed, which would maximize WIOA money for job training.

Jon Jennings updated the group that he and Corp Counsel Danielle West-Chuhta met with Mary Mayhew regarding the implementation of PL 324. The City has budgeted \$250,000 for General Assistance those who are not covered under the State's interpretation.

Beth added that MEJP is looking for plaintiffs, as they do not believe the State is interpreting the statute as it was intended.

3. Jon Jennings walked through the City's **state legislative priorities** spreadsheet:

- a. **Municipal regulation of Transportation Network Companies**, such as Uber and Lyft. Rep. Dion said that he is bringing in Bangor as well on this issue. Councilor Costa said that the City is ready with draft ordinance language and TNC agreements.
- b. **Medicaid expansion**
- c. Protecting the **Fund for Healthy Maine**
- d. **Municipal responsibility regarding General Assistance** – we need a mechanism to seek reimbursement from other municipalities when a resident comes to Portland for shelter.
- e. **Solar** – Mayor Strimling said he expects something to be put forth on this, and Sen. Alford believes Sara Gideon will be introducing.
- f. **School construction funding** – Councilor Suslovic stated the importance of this issue; Supt. Botana said that several Portland schools are up next after Augusta and that the State has announced a new competition for funding; Mayor Strimling believes the debt ceiling needs to be raised; Councilor Costa would like the current list locked in; Strimling said it will be another two years before there's a new list. Rep. Russell said that the marijuana legalization bill should direct revenues for school construction, as Colorado successfully has. Suslovic said we can't ask for the ceiling to be raised for Portland, and that we would need to band together with other towns. Costa said that these are two separate issues – designation of schools on the list and the need to raise the debt ceiling. He also raised the related issue of school security funding and the state definitions/standards of what they would pay for. Lastly, Costa raised the question as to how much planning can we do locally without inadvertently disqualifying ourselves from State funding.
- g. **Sebago Lake watershed protection** – Councilor Hinck would like protections put in place for the entire watershed.
- h. **Local option tax** – Jon Jennings noted that the governor mentioned to him that perhaps this would be allowed in lieu of revenue sharing. Jon estimated revenue sharing to be about \$5 million. He noted that this issue is listed as "explore" if it comes up in the legislature.
- i. **Municipal ability to add fees to property tax bills** – the City has to issue storm water bills separately which is cumbersome and expensive.
- j. **Paper streets** – City has about 400, and a longstanding law is about to lapse, which would require the City to explicitly accept or renounce each one. MMA and other organizations are also involved with this.
- k. **Ferry pre-clearance** – this is a Federal issue; preclearance in Yarmouth, NS would greatly improve our system at the waterfront.
- l. **Other items** – Jon reviewed a few issues which we may follow others on.

- m. Councilor Brenerman asked that we consider adding the issue that the state building code precludes **tiny houses**. The problem seems to be with foundation requirements.
 - n. Sen. Haskell said that the bunkering issue in Casco Bay is of concern now that we've lost the large **oil spill** recovery ship. Additional protections are needed – requiring Coast Guard notification when there is off-shore oil loading.
 - o. **State subdivision law** – Jon Jennings said this can be a simple amendment; Rep. Jorgensen agreed. Councilor Suslovic suggested that Jeff Levine check with the state association of planners to see if there might be unintended consequences elsewhere in the state.
 - p. Rep. Russell asked if there are any **affordable housing** proposals coming from the City's committee; Councilor Duson replied nothing at the State level. Russell asked about bonds, and Councilor Costa said the focus currently is on policy priorities. Suslovic noted that a bill was passed last year to expedite appeals; we should see how that's going and whether the courts have the resources to meet the need. Costa stated this issue needs further discussion.
4. **Federal** priorities – Jon Jennings discussed the need for more robust relationships with our federal delegation, the White House and key agencies. He is planning a trip to Washington next March for councilors and any members of our state delegation.
 5. Legislative **process** – Costa noted that just because an issue is not on the priorities list does not mean the committee does not support or isn't interested in that issue. Should there be a Council workshop on the priorities list? Mayor Strimling suggested it be presented as a communication.
 - a. Costa and Jennings then addressed the need to have the City Manager more involved legislatively in Augusta and to serve as Kate Knox's point of contact. Jennings added that he intends to organize conference calls when key bills are up so that committee members can weigh in without having to take the time to be physically present. Duson agreed and handed out MMA's legislative priorities to the group as well.
 - b. Costa said he will work with the City Manager on a more formal communication to Council and will share with this committee in advance.
 6. **Next meeting** – Jennings said there will be a dinner to include the new members of the delegation in November; Costa and Jennings will consider a meeting in October. Rep. Dion said that the new legislative leadership will be seated on Dec. 5; not sure when cloture is yet but will keep the group updated on that as well as committee assignments as soon as it is known.