

**CITY OF PORTLAND
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE AND
PORTLAND LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION MEETING MINUTES**

September 4, 2018 Meeting started at 12:00 p.m.

Merrill Rehearsal Hall, Merrill Auditorium, Myrtle Street, Portland, Maine

A. Attendance/Introductions:

Councilor Pious Ali, Chair, Councilor Jill Duson, Councilor Kim Cook, Mayor Ethan Strimling, Sen. Ben Chipman, Rep. Richard Farnsworth, Rep. Rachel Talbot-Ross, Rep. Erik C. Jorgensen, Rep. Heather Sanborn, Rep. Matthew Moonen, Rep. Benjamin T. Collings

B. Discussion Items – Chair Ali asked for comments on how best to communicate between the Legislative Committee and the Delegation:

1. Rep. Chipman: Meetings should go over council goals and what the delegation plans to sponsor
2. Rep. Sanborn: We need early assertiveness on policy issues, for instance, not aware of Superintendent Botana's opposition to Proficiency-based diploma bill till texted to ask on date of vote. We need to know the consensus positions in advance.
3. Rep. Farnsworth: Last session communication between committee and delegation was scattered, and we need a way to talk about issues.
4. Rep. Jorgensen: Tracking the issues with the lobbyist is good, but the Delegation needs to know the City better and know how it works. Requested copy of new councilor orientation be emailed to the delegation.
5. Councilor Duson: The delegation can use the City Manager's Office as a resource for information, but it is a problem how to integrate the School Department's position.
6. Councilor Cook: The City has work to do to identify issues and convey that; we need to design a process to create an effective relationship.
7. Rep. Collings: More meetings starting after the election will help delegation know the City better, and discuss issues under state jurisdiction.
8. Rep. Moonen: Communication should be improved over last year.
9. Rep. Talbot-Ross: The lobbyist works for the City, not for the delegation. Frustrated that the City doesn't communicate with her about issues that directly affect her district, like the homeless shelter move, and asks that the City inform her and other state legislators in advance about local actions in their districts. The relationship is a two-way street and the City needs to respect the service provided by the Legislators. Concerned because left in a vacuum, with some legislators more privileged than others in receiving information from the City. It would be best for the Chair of the Portland Delegation and the Chair of the Legislative Committee to be in regular communication, as was done with Sen. Alfond and Mayor Strimling.
10. Mayor Strimling: Bring bills to the Committee and we can work on getting information. What do you need from us to accomplish goals? We can work on getting testimony.
11. Councilor Duson: In the upcoming first year of the Session we will see bills submitted and can categorize by subject.

C. The Lobbyist, Kate Knox, and the Tracking List: what is on it, how does it get on it?

1. Rep. Talbot-Ross: I am supposed to come up with everything Portland needs. It would be helpful to know about [City projects like the homeless shelter move] in advance. The tracking list lacked my bills. How do we get bills on that list?
2. Rep. Sanborn: City itself can give Kate Knox marching orders if it supports a bill, to have Kate Knox's help. In the Maine Brewers' Guild, we review all legislation, vote on what to support and respond rapidly.
3. Councilor Cook: Any bills brought to Legislative Committee are voted on. Wants a document that's more helpful to us, and will give Kate Knox guidance.
4. Rep. Talbot-Ross: Bills move quickly; how can the City be responsive?
5. Councilor Dusen: Lobbyist should be the person to interact between both the delegation and the committee, both to give priorities to the City and when needed in Augusta. The lobbyist is the most effective point person in Augusta and implements the decisions of the committee (though she is hired by the City Manager).
6. Mayor Strimling: From time to time the City and the delegation will not be able to be supportive.
7. Councilor Cook: When things move fast in Augusta, we meet weekly which can be too slow. The committee should decide who can testify after we decide priorities.
8. Councilor Dusen: There have been many City representatives in Augusta.
9. Rep. Talbot-Ross: I never saw them. Wants to know when city representatives are testifying before committees and wants memos they provide.
10. Rep. Sanborn: The answer is to communicate more. Inclined to go to Kate Knox but it would be better to go to city representatives directly. Encourages the committee to figure out how to take positions in 24 hours. Legislature can notice conference calls and discuss issues as long as public access is allowed.

C. The next agenda and how to get new information on issues in the district

1. Rep. Collings: We need more meetings before cloture, before the session, starting right after the election. Review major issues like revenue sharing, education, housing, ESL, health and human services and infrastructure and decide what we want to accomplish.
2. Mayor Strimling: Delegation should be invited on tour of the islands.
3. Rep. Farnsworth: Between the election and the beginning of the session, we should decide priorities. The legislators will share bills.
4. Councilor Cook: Maine Municipal Legislative Committee has a good process. I am hoping we can adopt that process so the whole council discusses these priorities.
5. Rep. Talbot-Ross: Wants an orientation to the City. The next meeting should have an agenda and there should also be a call-in number for anyone unable to attend. The lobbyist and the superintendent of schools should be invited.
6. Mayor Strimling: Can share City Council Goals from last year, and top priorities of the Mayor's Coalition.
7. Councilor Ali: How do you deal with City opposition?

D. Next meeting will be November 15, 2018

The Legislative Committee and Portland Delegation meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.