

**Legislative/Nominating
Committee Meeting (with
Portland Delegation) Agenda**
September 27, 2022



MEMBERS
Councilor April Fournier, Chair
Mayor Kate Snyder
Councilor Pious Ali

REMOTE ACCESS INFORMATION:

This meeting will be conducted remotely via Zoom pursuant to the Remote Meeting Policy adopted by the Portland City Council. Allow your computer to install the free Zoom app to get the best meeting experience. If you are not able to attend live either in person or via Zoom, a recording will be available in the [Agenda Center](#) following the meeting.

For public comment via Zoom, you will need to use the "raise your hand" feature. To raise your hand via the telephone, please hit *9. You will be unmuted by the host when it is time for public comment.

To join the meeting via Zoom, please visit <https://portlandmaine-gov.zoom.us/j/87377216395>

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of meeting minutes

- a. Minutes from the meeting of September 20, 2022

III. Discussion: Legislative Priorities

- a. Committee/Staff Priorities
- b. Portland Delegation Priorities
- c. Other Business

IV. Meeting Schedule

V. Adjournment

**Legislative/Nominating
Committee Minutes**
September 20, 2022



MEMBERS
Councilor April Fournier, Chair
Mayor Kate Snyder
Councilor Pious Ali

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I. Call to Order

Chair April Fournier called the meeting to order at 8:07 PM.

Councilor April Fournier (Chair), Mayor Kate Snyder, Danielle West (Interim City Manager), Dena Libner (Chief of Staff), Ashley Rand (City Clerk), Sheba Brown (Executive Office Manager), Kate Knox (Bernstein Shur), Alysia Melnick (Bernstein Shur), Chris Feeney (Bernstein Shur) were present. Councilor Pious Ali was not present.

II. Approval of Meeting minutes

a. September 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)

This item was taken out of order. Mayor Kate Snyder made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2022 meeting, seconded by Councilor April Fournier, vote (2-0)

III. Discussion: Legislative Priorities

a. Staff Priorities (City Staff)

Dena Libner discussed staff priorities for the upcoming legislative session with input from City Manager West. They specifically brought up ways in which the General Assistance program could be improved to better support both Portland and other municipalities supporting large populations in need, specifically calling out a need to increase State funding for General Assistance and creating a centralized policy for the program. There was also a discussion regarding funding to support dredging.

b. Committee Priorities

The Committee echoed the staff priorities, and highlighted an interest in pursuing improvements to General Assistance in coordination with the State Delegation.

IV. Adjournment

Mayor Kate Snyder made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilor April Fournier, vote (2-0)

City of Portland | Executive Department
Danielle West, *Interim City Manager*



To: Legislative/Nominating Committee
From: Dena Libner, Chief of Staff
Date: September 26, 2022
Re: 2022 Legislative Priorities

The following recommendations were developed by staff, and reviewed by the Council's Legislative/Nominating Committee on September 20, 2022. The items on this list represent the shared priorities of both staff and Committee members.

As always, the Legislative/Nominating Committee and City staff intend to provide regular feedback on proposed legislation during the session, once it is released by the Office of the Revisor of Statutes.

- **Local Option Sales Tax**

Approximately 38 states allow for the collection of local sales taxes. Arguments in favor of this – other than creating alternative sources of revenue to support a growing demand for municipal services and oversight – include the relative transparency of retail sales taxes to members of the public.

In 2019, the Legislature considered LD 1110, which sought to allow “a municipality to impose a local option sales tax if approved by referendum of the voters in that municipality.” This proposal died in the Committee on Taxation.

- **General Assistance**

- **Amending General Assistance Statute to Clarify Municipality of Responsibility**

There is staff interest in addressing the requirements surrounding “municipality of responsibility.” We recommend a thorough review of the statute in order to better balance responsibility among municipalities and make support more regional in nature.

- **Establish Department of Refugee/Asylum-Seeker/Resettlement Services**

We recommend that this Department be charged with strategically connecting this population to services and housing, as well as the administration of any programs that serve the purpose of GA for this specific population. We also believe this

Department would be a natural home for a centralized GA application process (see below).

The creation of a centralized administrator is key to moving forward on these issues. The services required by this population are unique, and cannot be accomplished effectively within the current shelter system.

- **Establish Centralized GA Application Intake Process**

The current process contributes to a dysfunctional system that leaves individuals underserved, and some municipalities overburdened. Centralizing the GA application intake and review process may help ensure the program is administered more fairly across the state.

- **Increasing the General Assistance Reimbursement Rate**

Staff recognize legislators' hard work in pursuing increases to the reimbursement rate for general assistance costs. In 2021/2022, Rep. Brennan sponsored LD 910, which originally sought a 90% reimbursement rate for municipal GA costs; the chaptered law included a one-time expenditure of \$10 million toward unanticipated fiscal and operational costs, distributed proportionally to municipalities.

Staff strongly support the reconsideration of the original language of LD 910. In the absence of any additional funding, Portland faces a \$10 million annual budget gap.

- **Funding for the Portland Harbor Dredge Project**

Rep. Michael Brennan has been a committed advocate for this project, and we are grateful for his leadership in securing \$10 million toward its completion. Given the economic importance of this project to the City, region, and State, staff feel it is important to continue to advocate for the additional funding needed to undertake this project. (Currently, there is an \$8 million gap in funding.)