



Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee Minutes

Tuesday, October 11, 5:30pm, Remote Meeting

Committee Attendance: Tae Chong, Chair (District 3), Mark Dion (District 5), & Victoria Pelletier (District 2). Anna Trevorow (District 1)

Councilors in Attendance: Mayor Kate Snyder

City Staff:

Kristen Dow, Director of HHS; Tina Pettingill, Deputy Director of HHS; Adam Harr, Executive Assistant for Social Services; Heath Gorham, Interim Police Chief; Keith Gautreau, Fire Chief; Aaron Townsend, PPS Deputy Superintendent; Terry Young, PPS Chief Operating Officer; Aaron Geyer, Director of Social Services; Mary Beth Daigneault, Barron Center Administrator; Dr. Alfredo Vergara, Director of Public Health.

Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM.

Announcements and Approval of Minutes

- Mary Beth Daigneault is the new Barron Center Administrator.
 - Former Executive Director of a long term care facility in RI.
- Dr. Alfredo Vergara is the new Director of Public Health.
 - 20 Years Public Health experience including working for the CDC.
- Councilor Trevorow moved to approve the minutes and Councilor Pelletier seconded and the motion passed 3 – 0

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School Safety

- Asked Portland Public Schools to talk about safety in light of recent current events.
- School Resource officers were removed from our schools, prompting increased communication between Police and the schools.
 - Shared emergency plans.
 - Going through scenarios next week on a table top exercise.
 - School tours for all beat officers near schools.
 - Officers have an understanding of layouts and where mass gathering places and classrooms are located.
- PD has shared vital information with the schools, including social media threats.
- PPS audited police staff training on mass shooting to gain PD perspective.
- PD has access to updated floor plans.
- School Safety measures taken since Columbine.
 - Locked doors with buzzing in.
 - ID badges.
 - Drills
 - 7 fire drills
 - 2 lockdown drills
 - 1 drill where students move to another location.

Committee questions and discussion.

- Councilor Dion hoped there is intentionality from the school side to make sure the decisions adopted from PPS and PD filter down to the teachers and parents.
- Chief Gorham said this is an ongoing learning process.
 - Shared the Uvalde report with the school department and showed what went wrong.
- Deputy Superintendent Townsend appreciates the comment on parents and will boost parent university events around school safety.
- Director Daigneault said that long term care facilities also have emergency plan requirements and would like to connect with Fire and PD.
- Councilor Dion would like to see a strategy on post incident trauma response.
- Councilor Chong asked if the schools have talked to students about gun violence in the neighbors where shootings have taken place?
 - There is a fine line from highlighting violence and exacerbating anxiety.
 - Focused these conversations around the family affected by the shooting in Riverton Park.
 - Building on communication to middle and high school students.

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- Councilor Chong said that our SOPs are great but Uvalde showed us that communication and trauma are areas of need.
 - Increased mental health resources and looking at what will come out of the table top exercises.
- Councilor Chong asked if beat officers are quizzed on school layout.
 - No, they are made familiar but are not quizzed.
- Councilor Chong asked if there is communication between educators, or is that only when there is an incident.
 - Adopted KLGE policy with tiers of engaging with law enforcement.
 - Call 911 for an immediate threat.
 - Non-immediate issues consult PD.
 - Can share with the committee.
- Councilor Dion would like the PPS and PD consider paths for connection between police officers and students.
- Councilor Trevorrow said that one aspect of prevention is investing in guidance counselors and mental health as a holistic approach to preventing violence. We brought this to the committee to ease our anxiety that we can prevent and respond to mass shootings to the best of our ability.

HHS Update

- The nightly census has been growing at the Oxford Street Shelter due to an increase in single asylum seekers. We had an average nightly census of 149 in August, up 20 from last month and were averaging 65 last year. The contract hotel nightly census is 137.
 - 75% at the hotel are asylum seeking singles.
 - 45% at OSS are asylum seeking singles.
 - Working with the Resettlement Coordinator.
 - Many benefits and resources used at OSS are not available to asylum seekers.
- FS numbers are down from moving families to a contract hotel in Saco; it is about 50% full. Catholic Charities is staffing up to finish the move.
- Prevention and Diversion program is up and running.
 - In 3 months, 138 intakes from 4 full time staff.
 - 80 stayed at the shelter.
 - Of those 80, 29 stayed less than one week at the shelter.
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- - Resources diverted to are not hotels; they are keeping people housed, connecting to family, and other community resources.
- Needle Exchange
 - 647 exchanges.
 - 165 Outreach
 - 482 Onsite
 - 74,706 collected
 - 74,048 distributed
 - 1,140 Doses of Narcan distributed in 570 kits.
 - 1,029 Community Sharps collected
 - 471 in community in sharps boxes.
- Annual HHS Impact Statements
 - Over \$5 million non general fund revenue.
 - Over \$3.7 million generated in Public Health.
 - 43,836 bed nights for 136 unique patients in the Barron Center.
 - Over 17,000 program hours in office of Elder Affairs for 62 Adult Day Program clients.
 - 94 residents received snow shoveling services.
 - 922 families and 816 singles served through General Assistance.
 - Provided emergency shelter to 690 families.
 - OSS had 76, 316 bed nights provided to 1,391 individuals.
 - Reached 3,991 children in early childcare centers and 1,842 children in school through health heating programs and HEAL including the 5210 Let's Go program.
 - 1,260 Maternal Child Healthcare visits in Public Health.
 - 1,004 individuals connected to care through the Health Equity Program (previously known as the Minority Health Program)
 - 544 patients provided primary care at the Portland Community Free Clinic.
 - 787 patients provided STI screening and treatment.
 - 566,082 syringes were collected.
 - 6,107 exchanges.
 - Passed 26 comprehensive tobacco free policies across Cumberland County by the Tobacco Prevention Program.
- Overdoses
 - Increases over the last three months, but needles are going down.
 - What does a deeper dice look like?
 - 48% increase in overdose.

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- Large increase in people who legally died during their overdose but refused transport to the hospital.
- 38 fatalities YTD.

Committee questions and discussion.

- Councilor Chong saw the increase in overdoses and asked if this is related to the violence in the area experiencing those overdoses.
 - We would need to look into if there is a correlation between the increase in needles and violence/overdoses; last month we distributed less needles than we took in.
 - Does a safe injection site make sense?
- Councilor Pelletier got a lot of positive feedback on the infographics.
 - Are we still doing the 1 to 1 distribution?
 - State did rulemaking to recommend doing away with the 1 for 1 and do a 1 to up to 100.
 - Looking at this with the City Manager.
 - Dr. Vergara said the policies implemented make sense from a Public Health perspective to help people from an education perspective.
 - Interventions that help people out of drug use.
 - Takes time for policies to make a difference.
 - City has a comprehensive way to get needle disposal information.
 - Will monitor closely to look at seasonality and changes in distribution.
 - Will look at data in relation to overdose.
- Councilor Dion asked when and should the City engage in strategies that move from consumption to therapy?
 - How many referrals come out of exchanges?
 - We track this and can share.
 - Syringe exchanges build trusted relationships with individuals and referrals come out of those relationships.
 - We don't provide substance use treatment at the City and it is lacking in Portland; someone may be ready for treatment but there is nowhere to send them.
- Councilor Trevorrow appreciates the directions of this conversation: that policing is only one part and solutions must include treatment, etc.

HSC Neighborhood Advisory Committee

- Advisory committee must be in place by construction finishes in February, 2023.

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- Meets monthly for the first year.
- Committee membership will be comprised of representatives from:
 - The Riverton Community Association
 - Neighborhood residents
 - Area businesses
 - The Portland Police Department
 - Homeless Service Center staff
 - Homeless Service Center clients
 - The District Attorney's office
 - Portland Trails
 - The District 5 City Councilor or their designee
- The Neighborhood Advisory Committee will:
 - Meet monthly for the first year;
 - The committee will vote on shifting to quarterly meetings in year 2.
 - Be chaired by a representative of the City's executive staff;
 - Review complaints;
 - Recommend operational changes:
 - Reduce neighborhood impacts;
 - Improve client services.
 - Review the Neighborhood Engagement Strategy;
 - Record meeting minutes:
 - Maintained for a 24 month period at the HSC;
 - Available for review on request;
 - Record the specific recommendations of the advisory group;
 - Annotated to show if recommendations have been implemented.
- It does not specify how many businesses or members.
- There will be community members who want to be at the table which is why we are making this an open process.
- The HSC will be in Councilor Dion's district and several constituents were opposed; their voices and concerns will be share with his committee.
 - What are the PD and Fire's plan to deal with problems that will arise?
- Councilor Trevorrow would like to see the advisory board have as many Social and mental health professionals as possible to have the best interest of the people we serve centered.
- Councilor Pelletier asked how the formation will work; is there an opportunity for entities not on this list to apply?
 - It's affine line of not getting too big that nothing is accomplished.
 - Individuals with lived experience will need outreach.

- - Maine Trans Net
 - Immigrant Welcome Center
 - Main Disability Network.
 - This is located in district 5 but constituents from all over the city will access the shelter.
- Mayor Snyder asked about how this committee will be put together.
 - Once members are committed and start meeting, they will explore how they will do outreach.
 - It is a platform to state publically what we are doing.
 - Staff will build out the committee and relay progress to the HHS&PS committee.
 - We can do community meetings and add info to the news roundup.

2022 HHS&PS Work Plan

- Councilor Pelletier would like to add and focus on overdose prevention sites but is mindful that there are only two months left.
- Councilor Trevorrow would like to look at harm reduction strategies going forward.
 - People have reached out on cannabis delivery services.
 - Another constituent group, decriminalize Maine, reached out to this committee.
- Councilor Dion summarized the work plan is around persistent conditions around substance use and homelessness.
 - Go through the work plan and say what progress has been made.
 - Meeting with cannabis business owners soon to identify the issue.
 - May be able to do something before the end of the year.
 - Councilor Pelletier to connect with Director Dow.
 - Decriminalizing psychedelic plants should have adequate time.
 - Could invite group to share information and the slides that were presented to the Mayor and Councilor Pelletier.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:40 PM.