

## Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee

March 11, 2025, 5:30 PM Remote Meeting

### Committee Attendance:

Anna Bullett, Chair (District 4), April Fournier (At-large), Sarah Michniewicz (District 1), Wesley Pelletier (District 2).

### Councilor Attendance:

Regina Phillips (District 3)

### City Staff:

Adam Harr, Executive Assistant; Mark Dubois, Police Chief; Dena Libner, Assistant City Manager; Greg Jordan, Assistant City Manager; Maggie Mcloughlin, Director of Health and Human Services; Bridget Rauscher, Public Health Director.

### 1. Announcements

- None.

### 2. Review and Approval of Minutes from February 11, 2025

- Moved to approve by Councilor Fournier and seconded by Councilor Pelletier. The minutes were approved unanimously 4-0.

### 3. Pedestrian Safety (Mark Dubois, Police Chief)

- Chief Dubois presented on pedestrian and traffic accidents:  
<https://portlandme.portal.civicclerk.com/event/7211/files/attachment/25425>
  - From Jan 2022 to YTD 2025, Portland has had:
    - 146 accidents involving pedestrians.
    - 39% resulted in minor injuries,
    - 34.2% in possible injures,
    - 12.3% in serious injuries, 8.9% in no injuries, and
    - 5.5% resulted in fatalities.
  - Most pedestrian fatalities occur at night and during winter months.
  - Pedestrian accidents mostly occur during clear weather whereas most calls for service occur in inclement weather.
  - Most accidents occur during high volume commute times in the work week.
- Councilor Michniewicz asked can the conditions of the sidewalk at the time of an accident be tracked?
  - Not tracked systematically but there may be detail in the report such as “raining” or “snow.”
  - The conditions that make people feel they need to walk in the street could be insightful.
  - Are pedestrians tested for sobriety?

- Yes, for fatalities or serious injuries based on medical records, on an individual basis.
- Councilor Fournier asked about the Overtime (OT) for traffic detail:
  - 5 days a week, with people working them four out of the five days in 4 hour blocks.
- Councilor Pelletier asked if there is training available to understand why crashes occur?
  - Yes and no: the traffic unit has two people certified in accident reconstruction who made a recommendation to install lighting along the driveway at the HSC after analyzing the 645 Riverside Street accident.
- Councilor Phillips asked how stops for insurance are initiated.
  - They are stopped for something else initially, then cited for not having insurance.
- Councilor Michniewicz asked what staffing is needed to roll traffic enforcement into regular shifts instead of OT?
  - The traffic unit has two people following up on motor vehicle accidents.
  - When we have more staffing, it will be a judgement call between patrol shifts and adding to the traffic unit; there will be a slow accumulation of personnel in both.
  - 10 people are on every team and would assess which team needs personnel the most.
- Councilor Pelletier asked how AAA was chosen as a partner as they a lobbyist for the motor vehicle industry that lobbied for car-centric infrastructure and policy such as creating the concept of jaywalking.
  - They have educational materials and are partners for other informational community events; we do not have materials internally and AAA had them readily available.
  - Can assess a more Portland focus education campaign with local partners.
- Councilor bullet asked how PD feel about traffic safety/speed cameras
  - Illegal in Maine but plate readers are effective for identifying suspect vehicles and drivers with a warrant.
  - Traffic enforcement would be difficult even if we were allowed.
- Vision Zero
  - Memo: <https://portlandme.portal.civicclerk.com/event/7211/files/attachment/25406>
  - Draft resolution out of GPCOG regional plan adopted by Portland.
    - <https://portlandme.portal.civicclerk.com/event/7211/files/attachment/25426>
  - Next steps
    - Adopt GPCOG Vision Zero Plan,
    - Adopt goal to eliminate traffic fatalities by 2045,
    - Quick action plan in short term,
      - What design elements may have contributed?
    - Long term work: reworking complete streets policy,
    - Creating a comprehensive transportation plan.
  - Maine DOT has jurisdiction on most streets
  - Need to work with communities at risk.
- Councilor Bullett encouraged people to attend Sustainability & Transportation Committee (S&T)
- Councilor Pelletier asked about the 2045 goal and would prefer ten years. Can this be changed?
  - 20245 aligns with GPCOG's long term plans and we could choose a smaller timeframe.
  - No less than ten years recommended due to the time needed for infrastructure construction.
  - Councilor Fournier likes that there is a quick action plan and would like a target of 2035 or 2030.

- Councilor Fournier asked the process be explained to the public.
  - Going to S&T for a vote on the resolution.
  - 20 years has already gone out to the public but can ten years can be talked about tomorrow.
  - Once approved it goes to council without a second read.
    - When it appears on the Council agenda is TBD.
  - Once Council approves it will go back to S&T for the quick action plan.
- There is a public safety update every meeting; next meeting is the Fire Department update to discuss recent fires.

#### **4. Policy Consideration Re: The State of Childcare (Councilor Anna Bullett, Chair)**

- Starting Strong Policy Recommendations:  
<https://portlandme.portal.civicclerk.com/event/7211/files/attachment/25394>
- Using one time-funds aren't sustainable; Councilor Fournier would like to find a way to give ongoing support such as the scholarship.
  - The state subsidy can only be given to people currently employed and currently enrolled in school but not for job seekers and people applying to school.
  - There have been small cohorts of providers providing scholarships for people in this gap using CDBG funding and ARPA money.
- Before and After the Bell; Enrollment has been capped at lower numbers
  - What would it take for the Parks department to serve more kids and to serve pre-k?
  - Portland public pre-k is a lottery.
  - Pre-k is not offered before and after the bell, leading people to have to decline pre-k.
    - What would it take to add pre-k to this program?
  - The more quality early education, the better outcomes later in life.
- Choose one thing to move forward exploring this evening.
  - Councilor Fournier would like to look at the scholarship/subsidy (\$82,00 for the year when funded by ARPA)
  - Assistant City Manager Libner confirmed staff would bring information on what a program would look like and its cost to this committee to make a recommendation via an amendment to the finance committee or action via resolution
    - Is a resolution more permanent versus an amendment?
      - Future Councils cannot be obligated any operating costs and each council would need to affirm funding annually regardless of route.
  - Councilor Bullett supports either an amendment or resolution.
  - Councilor Fournier supports an amendment.
  - Councilor Pelletier and Michniewicz agreed.

#### **5. Staff Update re: Opioid Settlement Funds Request for Grant Applications (Maggie McLoughlin, Health & Human Services Director)**

- Signed on to the nationwide settlement from Opioid manufacturers in 2017. Funds will go for 18 years and must be used for opioid abatement strategies.
- The Council Decided to allocate funds to three programs: syringe services program, methadone treatment, and day space.
- Day space and methadone treatment program on peninsula RFAs
  - Received applications
    - 4 for methadone

- 1 for day space
- Of the \$1.3 million available in funding, the total ask to fund all programs that applied was \$4.5 million, showing a large gap between requests and availability.
- One applicant is already moving forward leasing up on the peninsula.
  - There will be a methadone clinic on peninsula, regardless of city investment.
- Funds a re time limited with an initial 1.3 million then smaller and smaller funds. As methadone treatment needs will be met, the committee prioritized day space.
- Day space: Commonsense request \$1.3 million to use 14 Baxter boulevard, owned by HUD via PHA.
  - Seeing if we can pursue a lease.
    - This may take some time.
  - Working to refine the application.
  - Not sure how long it will take to secure the lease.
- Councilor Fournier asked if there a final end date if the lease does not seem to be able to move forward to help the methadone services if they are not already in operations.
  - What is the contingency for the day space project being unable to move forward?
  - Staff recommendations are based on feasibility; if things seem to be progressing we will stick with Commonsense.
    - We do not expect it taking more than three months to know if the Day space project is viable.
- Councilor Michniewicz asked if there is community outreach planned.
  - The Commonsense application includes outreach to the neighboring areas, setting up a neighborhood advisory committee.
  - Outreach will happen further in the process when there is less uncertainty.
  - Committee/Council Approval is not required but the City Manager is looking for such approval; part of that process will have opportunity to engage the public in advance and during Committee/Council meetings.
- Are the opportunities for matching funds to help retrofit the space?
  - Premature, but we will explore that as part of the refining process such as city staff doing some interior work.

**6. Staff Update re: Syringe Services Program (Bridget Rauscher, Public Health Director)**

- Memo: <https://portlandme.portal.civicclerk.com/event/7211/files/attachment/25399>
- Operational improvement plan:
  - Decrease number of improperly disposed syringes.
    - Client education to return to the exchange or community sharps containers.
    - Syringe redemption program.
    - Harm reduction ambassador program.
    - Improved ratio of safely disposed / return syringes.
    - Staff increased cleanup; every member of the team is doing increased community cleanup without supplanting time serving clients.
    - Added 5 new community sharps boxes that are metal and able to withstand weather and tampering.
    - Distributed 1,100 personal sharps containers to clients.
    - Held focus groups with clients to know what they are doing with their syringes and barriers to community or personal sharps containers.
      - Shame and stigma.

- Improve data systems.
  - Improved Arc GS mapping.
  - Improved collaboration with Parks.
  - Collected municipalities/zip coeds from clients.
    - 97% within Portland.
    - 90% reported 04101 as their zip code.
    - Most of the remaining 3% live in a town near Portland.
  - Tracking rate of return to target outreach for people who have low rates of return.
- Respond to neighborhood concerns.
  - Went to one neighborhood association meeting
  - Narcan training
  - Promote syringe reporting resources: see click fix.
- Syringe redemption project
  - Launched in January.
  - Opioid settlement funds awarded for one year period.
  - Result: substantial increase in returned syringes.
    - 58% increase in syringes collected at the exchange overall in the six weeks following the program start (76,554 pre-program vs. 120,793 post-program).
    - 76% reduction in observed improperly disposed syringes by exchange staff.
    - 19% (42 encounters) returned more than 200 syringes, exceeding the maximum weekly redemption amount.
- What is the disposal cost?
  - Contracting with biohazard collection is factored into our budget but has increased with the growth of the community need and program.
- Ambassadors have a small stipend for a 6 month period to then allow others to participate.
  - Not having an address is a barrier to the stipend, red tape that affects clients experiencing homelessness.
  - Uses Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) funding.
- People must be exchange clients in order to access the redemption program.
- People can request a sharps container form the Public Health Director; we will work with Parks to install.
- Most syringes are returned to the exchange, but some are disposed of elsewhere such as public restroom sharps containers/community sharps boxes. surrendering to access shelter, they moved; there are many reasons but most regular users of the exchange return to us thanks to our ease of access being open all day, Monday through Friday.

### **Other business**

- Chapter 35
  - Councilor Fournier said a potential change to chapter 35 to discuss a business that was preparing beverages on site. The business had until January 31<sup>st</sup> to remedy and asked for assistance on amendments to the chapter. Chapter 35 was worked on HHS&PS and HEDC and decided this committee to take up later in our work plan. Councilor Fournier asked the committee to move this item to the next meeting.
    - Councilor Bullett supports moving it to next month's agenda.
    - Councilor Pelletier and Councilor Michniewicz support expediting to the next meeting.

- Next steps:
  - Staff to give background on what a change to Chapter 35 would look like. (Fiscal impact, operational considerations)
  - Will be next meeting, if Corporation Counsel has capacity to draft an order for consideration in time for next meeting.

**7. Next Meeting: April 8, 2025**

- NOTE: the next meeting is postponed to April 10, 2025.

Councilor Bullet entertained a motion to adjourn. Councilor Michniewicz moved to adjourn, Councilor Pelletier seconded; the motion passed unanimously 4-0 and the meeting adjourned at 7:14 PM.