

Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee

September 9, 2025, 5:30 PM Remote Meeting

Committee Attendance:

Anna Bullett, Chair (District 4), Sarah Michniewicz (District 1), Wesley Pelletier (District 2).

Councilor Attendance:

City Staff:

Adam Harr, Executive Assistant; Greg Jordan, Assistant City Manager; Chad Johnston, Fire Chief; Jason King, Police Major; Caity Hager, Emergency Management Coordinator. Linda Weare, Director of Elder Services; Keith Gautreau, Contract Employee; Nicole Albert, Associate Corporation Counsel.

1. Announcements

- None.

2. Review and Approval of Minutes from May 13, 2025

- Councilor Pelletier Moved to approve the minutes and seconded by Councilor Michniewicz. The minutes were approved unanimously 3-0.

3.Drones

- There is extensive back up material.
- How will the police department prevent surveillance of daily life from inadvertent filming?
 - Assumption that drones would take off from the Police Department was incorrect; drones are carried or driven to the location of a specific law enforcement action.
 - They do not passively record; police must activate recording.
 - There are statutes governing investigation records which anything recorded would be.
 - If the release would be an unwarranted invasion of privacy, they would be protected.
 - Ownership
 - The City would be the sole owner of our footage, not Axon.
 - It is only accessible by Axon
 - Storage capacity
 - The data storage demand is so great that it simply impractical to record more than the discrete law enforcement action.
- Uses
 - Search and rescue
 - Barricades subjects
 - Active Assailant
 - Accident reconstruction.
 - Crime scene reconstruction

Public comment opened at 5:57PM and closed at 5:58 PM without pubic testimony.

Committee questions and comments.

- Councilor Fournier appreciates the backup materials and FAQs which address privacy concerns and explain the uses which will increase efficiency and add resources.
- Councilor Pelletier is concerned about drones being used on public assembly.
 - Statute dictates that law enforcement cannot use drones on private citizens peacefully exercising their rights of free assembly.
 - It is hard to delineate when peaceful protests stop being peaceful.
 - Can we positively affirm the use cases?
 - Violations would be investigated by Internal Affairs and violators would go before the Board of Trustees of the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.
- Councilor Michniewicz
 - Asked what the storage of data looks like?
 - Evidence.com account store our sensitive data from body cams currently and our data would be stored there.
 - At the recommendation of the manufacturer, we are at medium resolution to limit file size.
 - Safety does not need to be recorded and reconstruction may not need to be recorded either.
- Councilor Bullet
 - Thanked the Major and Nicole for checking the Axom agreement on data ownership.
 - She asked about the ongoing costs and if additional funding would be needed.
 - Asset forfeiture has some funds and it will be looped in to their other Axom contract costs.

Committee Action

- Councilor moved to recommend the Drone program be passed at the full Council and Councilor M seconded and the motion was approved unanimously 4-0.

4. Emergency Operation Plan (EOP)

- The EOP is still in draft form.
- The EOP aligns the City with FEMA standards and makes sure it is compliant with our own ordinance and state statute.
- Seeking committee feedback with a committee and City Council approval sought at upcoming meetings.
- EOP purpose is to provide a unified framework to respond to emergencies.
- Risk assessment
 - Identifying hazards most likely to affect Portland.
 - (THIRA)
 - CaRAT
- Roles
 - City Leadership
 - Policy, declarations, and resource allocation.
 - Office of Emergency Management
 - EOP maintenance & Stewardship

- EOC activation/coordination
 - Training
 - Departments
 - Utilize the plan.
 - Outside agencies and partners
 - Cumberland County, EMA, MEMA/FEMA, utilities, healthcare, schools, NGOs and Private sector.
- Preparedness Priorities & Next Steps
 - 2023 shooting shut down busiest intersection in Maine for 5 hours waiting for the State's drone for reconstruction.
- Chapter 2 article changes
 - Changed title from Emergency Preparedness to Emergency Management
 - City manager emergency declaration takes one additional councilor.
 - Section 409.
 - Recommends review and update every three years.
- Community engagement
 - Open ended plan that will solicit and incorporate public feedback.
 - Transparent and inclusive planning process.
 - New engagement page on the City website.
 - <https://portland.civilspace.io/en/projects/emergency-planning>
 - Idea board
 - September 18th Age Friendly Summit: Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults
 - Thursday, September 18, 2025 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM
 - Located at 1342 Congress Street (Jewish Community Alliance)
 - Free - lunch included
 - Registration:
 - Online Form:
 - https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScKLjPpaX97M4R0dxOGmr_-A7qcWlz2eUaRtG1YpdkO4eQRug/viewform
 - Physical Form: Print form by visiting: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/e6e5d1e9-1198-4585-a114-8f2fbd3798ae>
 - Questions? Email: AgeFriendlyCommunity@PortlandMaine.Gov or call 207-541-6620
 - Many changes are just terminology.
 - Suggests removing 403 requiring City Council reviewing emergency management organization as it contradicts 403.A.
 - 404 Designates the Fire Chief as the Director Emergency Management as the City Manager cannot be.
 - 406 clarifies when declaring an emergency the City Manager must consult with one or more City Council Members when the Mayor is not available.
 - 407 maximum number of days from 5 to 10 for emergency declarations for needing a council extension.
 - Review every three years.

- City Manager has authority to make administrative changes to EOP such as annexes or lists of partners.

Committee Questions and Discussion

- Councilor Michniewicz asked if neither the Police Chief or Fire Chief are available, who becomes the director?
 - The department designee who normally leads when either Chief is unavailable.
 - If neither is available it would be their designee when they are out of town.
 - Language will be reviewed to establish a clear line of succession when neither chief is available.
- Chair Bullett
 - This is for us to make policy as such that operations play out as best as it can.
- Councilor Fournier is excited for public engagement.
 - She asked if staff is working with Communications Director Grondin and if there will be social media promotion?
 - Yes.
 - Age Friendly Portland Summit is well advertised.
 - What are going to go for extreme cold and hot weather?
 - When look at ordinance it is framework to respond and have these plans in place.
 - Don't want to give too much direction as policy makers with details too in the weeds on the operations side.
- Councilor Pelletier asked if there are any components of the plan that staff think is particularly well crafted, improving on the current plan.
 - The plan is concise and interactive, reducing the plan from 300 pages to 95 pages.
 - Easier to find things.
- Section 3 defines which each department's roles are in an emergency.
- This will return in October for public comment recommendation to the full council.

Public Safety Update: Fire

- Calls for service is closely tracking just under last year's.
- Downtown has slightly more calls than normal.
- Ambulance transport:
 - Grant ambulance
- Non-linear response levels for EMS Calls for Service
 - Hot (multiple) to Cold (Single)
 - Capability (BLS to ALS)
 - ECHO conditions require very early recognition and immediate dispatch if the nearest trained crew.
 - Omega conditions approved low acuity and qualify for non-EMS referrals.

Committee Questions

- Councilor Fourier had to leave the meeting before committee questions and discussion.

- Councilor Bullett asked what is counted as travel time

Chair Bullett entertained a motion to adjourn: moved by Councilor Michniewicz and seconded by Councilor Pelletier. The motion passed 3-0 with Fournier absent. The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:52 PM.