

Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee

February 10 2026, 5:30 PM Remote Meeting

Committee Attendance:

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

Councilor Attendance: Pious Ali (At-Large)

City Staff:

Adam Harr, Executive Assistant; Greg Jordan, Assistant City Manager; Mark Dubois, Police Chief; Maggie McLoughlin, Director of HHS; Dena Libner, Assistant City Manager; Chad Johnston, Fire Chief.

1. Announcements

- Public comment will be taken on the committee work plan.

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

- Councilor Moved to approve the minutes and seconded by Councilor. The minutes were approved unanimously 3-0 with Councilor Fournier not yet at the meeting.

3. Winter Warming Shelter Update

- HHS Director McLoughlin gave an update:
 - It has been open for 32 nights.
 - 343 unduplicated clients at about 50 per night.
 - Low of 15.
 - High of 61.
 - 90% have done coordinated entry information releases.
 - Half have never been to the Homeless Services Center or within the last six months.
 - Self-reported substance use disorder and mental health issues.
 - People in Coordinated Entry have a collective 124 years of homelessness.
 - 2,430 OT hours from staff to date.
 - Grant for 400,000 with \$160,000 and costs about \$30,000 per week.
 - We are on track to open 64 days when we were budgeted for 50 days.

Committee questions and concerns

- Do we anticipate needing to ask for more funding?
 - Not currently.
- What data is reported to MaineHousing and at what interval?

4. Public Safety Update

- Overall decrease in violent crime.

- Decrease in property crime across all categories.
- 1% increase in calls for service.
- Bayside represents 18% of calls for service.
- Reactive calls increasing and proactive (officer initiated) decreasing.
 - Attributed to less staff.
- Overdoses high at 535, 18 of which were fatal.
- Narcan was administered in almost all, but officer administered Narcan 43 times.
- Citations doubled over last year due to a focus on traffic violations.
- Hit and run crashes are up.

Committee questions and concerns

- Sexual assaults are up 33%
 - Many more reported.
 - Assessing the reason.
 - Will return with the total number.
- Is there a partnership opportunity with Through These Doors?
 - Yes, they have an office in the PD.
- Urban ranger program
 - On their own since the end of the last week.
 - Just getting started due to a delay in uniforms.
 - They will focus on the non-grass city parks on peninsula.
 - They will ~~have~~ tracked citations and will issue reports.
 - Routines will evolve over the next three months as the season changes.

5. Committee 2026 Workplan

- Councilor Michniewicz asked how the policy initiatives will lower the 120 chronically homeless number by 50% (housing 60 people).
 - This number is a moving target and is up for debate.
 - Staff would like clarification on if staff should focus on unsheltered or chronic (120 does not make sense of outside of just unsheltered).
- Councilor Fournier said that metrics will be developed as higher level policy initiatives get developed.
 - Homelessness is a regional issue and should not just be Portland driven and that be reflected in the providers we speak to and the metrics tracked.
 - Day space is her top priority.
 - Missions of City shelter is second.
 - Use to inform a clear funding ask.
- Councilor Pelletier
 - Wants cruise ship protocol included.
 - Thinks Days space and Overdose Prevention Sites will improve outcomes in the continuum of care and will decrease chronic homelessness.
- Would like all shelters in the city to share data.

- Day space can be informed by St Vincent DePaul's work and data from this year.
- Buy-back program is reducing syringe waste.
- Ranking
 1. Consider recommending funding a day space as a part of FY27 budget
 2. Review missions of shelter facilities
 3. Consider policy to allow the operation of overdose prevention centers
 4. Review current efforts to reduce syringe waste and explore additional policy solutions
 5. Cruise ships (Norovirus or other infectious disease protocol)
 6. Assess and consider regulation of charitable food distribution
- Can staff include cruise ship communicable disease info as part of their normal work?
 - Staff would present on how Public Health partners with CDC and how we may communicate to the public in different scenarios.
 - CDC did not flag norovirus so the committee would need to direct staff but a vote or policy is not needed.
 - Looking for what City comms will due when there is an outbreak.
- Public comment
 - Joan Lochtov thanked the committee for looking at an improved protocol for cruise ships. There was a gap last October and they have a proposal for improved communication between the port, cruise ships, and the public.
 - Tess Parks, Resident of District 5 is excited to see Overdose Prevention Centers considered as a top goal. We have seen a 20% reduction in the past year, but 1 Mainer a day is still dying which is a policy failure. They encouraged people to read the legislated appointed committee to study Overdoes Prevention Center's report that show they reduce sing litter and there is not data suggesting that they increase crime. The syringe buy-back program leading to a 20% increase in safe syringe disposal is incredible. They offered themselves as Policy Director of Maine Recovery Action project for any data needed.

Next meeting is March 10, 2026.

Councilor Michniewicz moved to adjourn, and was seconded by Councilor Fournier. The motion passed unanimously 4-0 and the meeting adjourned at 6:24 PM.