



Health & Human Services and Public Safety Committee Minutes

Tuesday, October 22, 2019, 5:30pm, Room 209, City Hall

Committee Attendance: Belinda Ray, Chair (District 1), Brian Batson (District 3)

Councilors in Attendance: Kim Cook (District 5)

City Staff in Attendance: Jon Jennings, City Manager; Kristen Dow, Director of Health and Human Services; Aaron Geyer, Director of Social Services; Sara Fleurant, Director of Oxford Street Shelter; Jennifer Thompson, Associate Corporation Counsel; Adam Harr, Executive Assistant

Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Announcements

- Member of the committee, Councilor Ali is out of town. Noted: all unanimous motions in the meeting were made by Chair Ray and Councilor Batson.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Approval of Minutes

- Councilor Batson moved to approve the minutes, chair Ray seconded and the minutes were approved without amendments.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Shelter Policy

Sara Fleurant, Director of the Oxford Street Shelter explained staff is returning with answers to the committee's questions. Link: [Memo with Staff Response HHS Questions for Oct 22nd](#)

- Shelter Statistics: Highs, lows, averages, and overflow
 - o Links:
 - [Attachment A. October 2018 to September 2019 OSS Nightly Counts and Overflow](#)
 - [Attachment B. FY 11 Oxford Street Overflow](#)
- Transportation Costs:
 - o Link: [Attachment C. HSC Transportation Costs](#)
 - o FY19 Actuals and Projections of Greyhound bus tickets for reunification, Metro tickets, and taxi vouchers.
 - o Personnel and benefits are for the anticipated shuttle
 - Dedication to transportation would depend on route and needed.
 - Some of this cost is currently in the budget as staff already transport guests using city vehicles (see below).
 - There may be additional staffing needs.

- The cost for two new shelter attendants is included to demonstrate potential costs.
- o Startup costs include the initial capital cost of the shuttle vehicle.
 - Looking at one shuttle at this point in the process but it is not set in stone.
- o An anchor area for shuttle pickup in the downtown area is planned
- o The cost of people transporting people right now is not listed for comparison
 - There are two existing vehicles
 - Existing staff do the driving.
- o The request Councilor Cook made at previous meetings on new costs was meant to be much broader, not just transportation.
 - In the initial plan, food costs were not included.
 - What other costs may be considered while making policy choices with policy preferences in the various contexts (cap, catchment area, etc.)
 - Chair Ray does not think in depth cost estimates will be included at this stage in the process as until there are policies and a facility it is not possible to estimate all of those costs. Those numbers will come after the committee makes its recommendation, during the planning and design phase.
- Food pantries and community meals on the peninsula
 - o Link: [Attachment E. Community Meals and Food Pantries](#)
- Criminal Trespass and Restriction Concerns
 - o Link: [Attachment D. HHS Committee Criminal Trespassing](#)
 - o Community wide CTOs issued
 - 170 CTOs community wide in 2018
 - OSS: 84
 - Community Partners : 86
 - o (PSRC, Joe Kreisler Teen Center, Milestone Recovery, Logan Place, Huston Commons, Amistad, Florence House, CHOM, Shalom House)
 - 188 CTOs community wide in 2019
 - OSS: 126
 - Community Partners : 62
 - o City Manager Jennings spoke to why there may be more CTOs in 2019. There has been more aggressive behavior and we will not allow that behavior towards staff to go on without accountability.
 - There were 54 assaults at the Oxford Street Shelter, some towards staff and some towards guests of the shelter.
 - An increase in CTOs from the City perspective can be attributed to the change of substance use in the population from Opioids to Meth.
 - Councilor Batson noted the hospitals are seeing an increase in meth and aggression
 - Chair Ray noted that there is not much physical space for individuals to cool down or take personal space if necessary in the current shelter.
 - City Manager Jennings commended the Shelter's staff as they de-escalate situations and continue to operate 24-hours a day without reducing hours.
 - o Chair Ray asked about other instruments that remove people from shelter?

- CTOs are a 1-year restriction from shelter
- Progressive discipline can start with a walk around the neighborhood and lead to longer informal restrictions.

Committee Questions and Discussion

- Chair Ray looked to the time in overflow answer and appreciated including that in FY2019 it was 28% chronically homeless and in FY2018 it was 32%. Our chronically homeless numbers are trending down, largely in part to the Long-Term Stayer Initiative, and that is good to see.
- Councilor Cook asked about Chapter 2 of the Maine Municipal Association General Assistance Manual.
 - Jen Thompsons explained it is a helpful document for the questions in executive session and do not reflect the recent changes to GA statute.
 - Link: [MMA GA Manual - Chapter 2](#)

Chair Ray entertained a motion to enter executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S. section 405(6)(E), to consult with the City's attorney regarding the City's legal rights and duties relating to homeless shelter policies, Councilor Batson moved to open executive session and Chair Ray seconded; the motion passed unanimously without members of the public requesting to give public comment.

Executive Session started at approximately 6:00 PM

Executive concluded and open session resumed at approximately 7:17 PM

Committee Questions and discussion continued

- Councilor Cook asked how do other municipalities provide emergency shelter under General Assistance obligations as Portland is the only one that operates shelters.
 - Are their spending and budgets available?
 - A sampling would work, such as Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston, etc.
- GA Ordinance is based on state law; how is the City of Portland's GA Ordinance the same and how is it different from other municipalities?
 - Do municipalities use an MMA standard model and is Portland's the same or does it go above and beyond?
 - Jen believes the state is required to approve ordinances and that MMA provides a model. She suspects Portland's may go into deeper detail than others with slight deviations under the general statutory framework.
 - She is happy to provide a further analysis at a future meeting.
- If there are municipalities that do so, how do other municipalities in the state provide shelter to non-GA eligible individuals?

AGENDA ITEM 4 – Next Meeting

- Next meeting October 29, 2019 (Committee members will confirm their availability)
- Goals
 - o Have prepared a resolution on policy goals for the 10/29/2019 meeting.
 - o Vote if the committee is ready to do so; if not yet ready to vote, then the committee would hold a vote at the November 12, 2019 meeting

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:24 PM.