



**Legislative Committee
Meeting
January 5, 2021**

AGENDA

I. ZOOM Information:

- a. The Portland City Council will hold a meeting on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 at 8:00 AM. This meeting will take place remotely using Zoom.
Virtual meetings are allowed using emergency legislation approved by LD 2167; 1 M.R.S. §403A, that authorizes cities and towns to conduct meetings online.
Allow your computer to install the free Zoom app to get the best meeting experience. If you are not able to attend live, a recording will be uploaded to portlandmaine.gov/livestream the next day. For public comment, you will need to use the "raise your hand" feature. To raise your hand via the telephone, please hit *9. You will be unmuted by the host when it is time for public.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89370662286?pwd=RmFNV0dJdGlsZkQxNzIzUHpCRUlyZz09>

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II. Call to Order

III. Approval of Meeting minutes

- a. December 2, 2020 Meeting Minutes
- b. December 11, 2020 Meeting Minutes

IV. Legislative Update

- a. City staff priorities with bill sponsors, for review

V. Adjournment



Legislative Committee December 2, 2020 Meeting Minutes

The December 2, 2020 remote Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Pious Ali at 9:30 AM on Zoom.

Councilor Pious Ali (Chair), Councilor Jill Duson, Mayor Kate Snyder, City Manager Jon Jennings, Dena Libner (Chief of Staff), Kate Knox (Bernstein Schur), Chris Feeney (Bernstein Schur), and Alysia Melnick (Bernstein Schur) were present.

The Committee approved minutes from meetings on June 1, June 8, June 22, and September 14, 2020, 3-0.

Jon Jennings reviewed a memo outlining various State legislative priorities of each City department. He emphasized that City staff's primary goal is to prevent funding cuts to programs and services the City relies on.

Danielle West-Chuhta recommended that municipalities' ability to conduct remote meetings be set in stone so that the City would be better able to plan in advance for meetings rather than wait to see if the Governor extends her emergency order.

Mayor Snyder asked the City Manager for the City's plan for funding innovations investments, such as electronic vehicle charging stations. Jennings said the City is currently very dependent on grant funding for such projects, and would like to be able to expand funding sources even further. However, he said that public revenue streams are not bouncing back as quickly as the City had hoped since the pandemic began, so resources for such projects are limited.

Kate Knox indicated that, since cloture is scheduled for December 18, 2020, she and her team would need an indication before that date as to which of the City's priority bills the Committee would like pursued for drafting. Councilor Ali said he would like to wait until the new Committee members weigh in before deciding what action the Committee will take. In addition, he said the Committee would be meeting on Friday, December 11 with the Portland delegation to Augusta and would discuss the legislative priorities with them then.

Knox said she would ascertain the status of as many past bills as possible prior to that meeting.

Mayor Snyder made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Duson, vote 3-0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 AM.



Legislative Committee December 11, 2020 Meeting Minutes

The December 11, 2020 remote Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Pious Ali at 10:30 AM on Zoom.

Councilor Pious Ali (Chair), Councilor April Fournier, Council Nick Mavodones, Mayor Kate Snyder, City Manager Jon Jennings, Dena Libner (Chief of Staff), Kate Knox (Bernstein Schur), Chris Feeney (Bernstein Schur), Alysia Melnick (Bernstein Schur), Rep. Michael Brennan, Rep. Ed Crockett, Rep. Grayson Lookner, Rep. Barbara Wood, Rep. Rachel Talbot-Ross, Rep. Sam Zagar, Rep. Mike Sylvester, and Rep. Ben Collings were present.

City Manager Jon Jennings presented a memo of policy priorities identified by staff for consideration by the Legislative Committee.

Rep. Zagar requested information regarding how the City balances budget priorities between police funding and rescue interventions. Jennings described the departments' respective budgets and programs.

Rep. Brennan described changes in revenue sharing between the City and State. He said State revenue is not down as much as had been originally projected. Jennings said that the City's priority is to maintain current funding levels and to prevent any cuts to revenue sharing, particularly as Federal assistance is not guaranteed.

Jennings described the need for funding support from the State for a homeless services center, which acts as a regional center due to a lack of any other publicly funded centers.

Rep. Talbot-Ross requested information about the inclusion of a bill to prevent “doxing” of law enforcement officials. Specifically, she asked why this priority was included and other pieces of reform were not.

Jennings said that the City is working on reforms within the Police Department, including the development of a better system on data collection to help inform ongoing reform efforts. He added that several officers were targeted over the summer, at their homes, and the City is interested in correcting issues throughout the entire system. He said he would ask the Police Chief to provide additional information on the Department’s request.

Council Mavodones asked for additional information about the security needed by other municipalities when officers were targeted at their homes.

Rep. Sylvester requested that staff provided legislators with information about challenges related to homeless services. He said that it would be helpful for the City to engage with legislators in that way.

Rep. Crockett asked if a bill was being drafted to address funds for homeless services in Portland. Rep. Brennan stated that Maine State Housing Authority is interested in creating a regional system of emergency shelters and seeking funding via a bond issue for that purpose.

Councilor Mavodones made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mayor Snyder, vote 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM.

City Priorities with Bill Sponsors

Health & Human Services

The Department would like to see changes to the reimbursement formula used to determine the State's portion of General Assistance. Additional legislative priorities include:

- LD 1403: An Act To Amend the General Assistance Laws Governing Reimbursement
 - Resubmitted by Rep. Brennan
- Recommendations submitted by the work group established by LD 459, which included 100% state reimbursement for any assistance issues as an emergency above the guidelines.
 - The Department is to provide recommendations and suggested legislation to HHS
- LD 1142: An Act to Expand Transportation Services for Seniors
 - Resubmitted by Senator Chloe Maxmin
- LD 1258: An act to Increase Access to Transportation for Workforce and Other Essential Transportation Needs (allow non-medical transportation under Mainecare)
 - Resubmitted by Rep. Fay
- LD 1410: An Act To Create Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits (supports family caregivers who need time off to care for elderly relatives)
 - Sponsored by Senator Matthea Daughtry
- LD 474: An Act To Ensure the Health and Wellness of Older Residents of the State (expands funding/ access to home delivered meals programs)
 - Sponsored by Rep. Talbot-Ross
- LD 1733: An Act To Ensure Comprehensive Interdepartmental Planning, Coordination and Collaboration on Aging Policy (creates a Cabinet on Aging and cabinet position to develop and coordinate state agency goals, resource use, research, and inform the State Plan on aging)
 - Resubmitted by Rep. Fay

Housing & Economic Development

§6042. Maine Working Waterfront Access Protection Program

Funding this program, previously through the Land for Maine's Future Program, provides private pier and waterfront property owners to "sell" development rights for non-marine use to the State and use the proceeds for infrastructure upkeep or upgrades.

The program has not been used in Portland in the past, but has been successful in multiple coastal communities. Portland has many properties that could make use of the funds. This program has been under funded in the past which has limited its potential application to more expensive real estate, such as the piers in Portland Harbor.

Workforce Training

- Submitted by Sen. Sanborn

LD 647: An Act to Attract, Educate and Retain New State Residents to Strengthen the Workforce

- Resubmitted by Rep. Cloutier

LD 1956: This bill looks at zoning and land use to increase housing opportunities.

- Resubmitted by Speaker Fecteau (said he submitted a few housing bills)

Sustainability

LD 1748: last session the Council supported this legislation, which would help businesses access capital to invest in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

LD 1711: We anticipate efforts to amend this bill and will need to monitor this closely to protect our existing projects and investments

Submitted by Sen. Sanborn

Possibly utility reform: We should track this on several fronts, including streamlined data access for customers and authorization for the creation of publicly owned utilities.

“Green Bank”: The Governor’s Office and some legislators are investigating the creation of a “green bank” to accelerate private investment in climate and resilience projects.

Police Department

Based upon our experiences this year, and with the safety and well being of our employees and their families in mind, we suggest seeking legislation to **prevent doxxing of law enforcement officers** (i.e., the posting of police officers’ private personal and family information, such as home addresses or vehicles for the purpose of harassing, intimidating and even soliciting or advocating for violence against our public servants or their families.

We recommend **requiring Maine BMV to obtain and include next of kin or close contact information on driver license and state identification applications**. This information could then be made available in a much more efficient and effective manner in order to allow public safety agencies and medical facilities access to such data during those critical incidents in which a victim or decedent’s is unidentified or their next of kin is not readily known or available. Additional information is available at <https://toinformfamiliesfirst.org/>.

Similar to the previous suggestion, **require Maine BMV to obtain and include a phone number for driver license applicants and vehicle registrants**. Again, this could be used by public safety to help more efficiently contact a licensee or registrant in the event of an emergency or other incident.

Submitted by Sen. Sanborn

Tax Assessor

Continue to push for passing of:

- LD 560: An Act To Improve Access to Property Tax Exemptions for New Homeowners

Resubmitted by Rep. Grohoski

- LD1234: An Act To Expand the Value of the Homestead Exemption to \$25,000 and State Reimbursement to 70 Percent of Lost Property Tax Revenue

Submitted by Rep. Talbot Ross

Lastly, consider new legislation to **allow for an abatement of a portion of current year taxes when a property owner experiences a catastrophic loss** (fire, flood, etc.) defined as a loss of 50% or greater of the property’s market value.

-Submitted by Sen. Sanborn but Sen. Chipman would like to take it

Finance

We recommend advocacy to keep revenue sharing percentage at current budget levels

(3.75%).

Public Buildings & Waterfront

Fire Station Renovations and Replacement

Funding in the amount of 25M is needed to support renovations of 5 stations and replacement of 1 critical station. The existing stations were constructed 40-80+ yrs ago. With current residential and commercial development the need for additional apparatus and proper living quarters is needed to safely support the citizens of Portland and the men and women that live in these facilities.

-Brennan

Police Station Relocation

Support is needed for the relocation of the Portland Police Department. Neither the location nor the design of this facility supports the safe operation and needs of our police department and the men and women that serve our community and beyond. The facility is approaching 50 year old. It's 55,000+ square feet with 300+ employees, and includes a regional crime lab and space for the FBI. The facility lacks safe and secure parking for officers, proper storage for evidence, interrogation rooms, SWAT equipment storage, etc.

Local/ Regional Shelter

Portland has looked into many options to replace it's existing operations. Public Buildings was recently tasked with developing a concept design and cost to construct a facility on a city owned site. This work has been completed, the cost estimate of 20M in our opinion provides substantial space and resources to address homelessness and potentially drug addiction and mental illness. We feel the approach taken for this task was done responsibly, which includes a Maine owned business to provide a bulk of the project and partnerships with the Portland Public Schools and many local agencies that are currently doing great work. Once funding is secured this project could be occupied within 18 months.