



**Legislative Committee
March 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

The March 2, 2021 remote Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Pious Ali at 8:01AM on Zoom.

Councilor Pious Ali (Chair), Councilor April Fournier, Mayor Kate Snyder, Councilor Nick Mavodones, Jon Jennings (City Manager), Dena Libner (Chief of Staff), Kathy Jones (City Clerk), Kate Knox (Bernstein Shur), Alysia Melnick (Bernstein Shur), and Chris Feeney (Bernstein Shur) were present.

Councilor Fournier made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from February 25, 2021, seconded by Mayor Snyder, no amendments, vote 4-0.

Dena Libner provided the Committee with City staff feedback to new bills

LD 525 (An Act To Allow Medical and Adult Use Marijuana Stores To Share a Common Space)- staff is concerned about the enforcement challenges that PD and possibly Permitting and Inspections will face given the difference in age restrictions in entering each door of type of store.

LD 553 (An Act To End At-Will Employment) – staff believes there is significant value in the flexibility they have in determining when Department’s Directors or Assistant Directors need to be removed because of infractions that can’t be remedied by progressive disciplinary steps. Also the majority of City staff is covered by collective bargain agreements and this bill will not have a positive impact in them.

LD 555 (An Act to Expand the Rights of Public Sector Employees)- many of the services that the City provides are not covered by the Public Safety exemptions included in this bill, allowing those employees to strike, shutting down essential City services including shelters, Barron Center, etc.; putting vulnerable population at risk.

LD 534 (An Act To Allow Tax Abatements for Catastrophic Loss) -The Assessors is strongly in agreement of it and recommends for it to be supported.

Councilor Mavodones expressed his support to City Staff in particular to bills **LD 553 (An Act To End At-Will Employment)** and **LD 555 (An Act to Expand the Rights of Public Sector Employees)**

Mr. Jennings expressed that the Legislative Policy Committee decided not to support **LD 553 (An Act To End At-Will Employment)** and **LD 555 (An Act to Expand the Rights of Public Sector Employees)**

Kate Knox asked for clarification from the Committee to regards to their support to **LD 534 (An Act To Allow Tax Abatements for Catastrophic Loss)**, also asked if the Assessors plans to testify on the bill. Dena confirmed that the Assessors plans to testify in favor of it.

Councilor Mavodones and Mayor Snyder agreed their opposition to support **LD 553 (An Act To End At-Will Employment)** and **LD 555 (An Act to Expand the Rights of Public Sector Employees)**. Kate Knox confirmed that opposition testimony will be needed. Councilor Fournier would like to hear from Representative Sylvester before agreeing or opposing to the bills. Councilor Ali asked Kate Knox to obtain a short statement from Representative Sylvester in regards to the bills.

Mr. Jennings asked the Committee for permission for the Bernstein Shurs team to review some of the outstanding bills. He expressed how helpful it is to hear from the Bernstein Shurs team as to where bills are standing and the impact to the City.

Mr. Jennings asked Kate Knox about the financial impact contemplated on bill **LD 521 (An Act To Modify the Rule-making Process for Establishing County and Municipal Jail Standards)**. He asked if there is any expectation from county and municipal jails to improve to a certain standard that will increase cost for running a jail. Kate Knox said that more information will be known during the hearings but based on the language sounds that they are trying to set a baseline that everybody will have to meet. Alysia stated that the languages does mention the minimization of additional cost and that if the bill were to pass this will be the first step of a lengthy process giving multiple opportunities for comments and modifications. Mr. Jennings asked for the committee to agree to continue to monitor the bill which to the committee was in agreement.

Mr. Jennings asked the City Clerk about **LD 580 (RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine Regarding Early Voting)**, Kathy Jones said that the Maine Town and City Clerk Assn Legislative Policy Committee will be discussing the bill today but she believes that they will be in favor of the bill because it will minimize the process when it comes to voting. Kathy said she will know more information after today's meeting.

Councilor Fournier requested additional information in regards the following bills:

- **LD 570 - An Act To Provide for Fairness in the Taxation of Extraordinary and Unearned Income by Establishing a 3 Percent Surcharge on Net Capital Gains and Dividends Income over \$250,000 for Taxpayers Filing Single or Married Separate Returns and over \$500,000 for Taxpayers Filing Joint Returns**

- **LD 498 - An Act To Reauthorize a 3 Percent Tax on Income over \$200,000 To Lift All Maine Workers out of Poverty**
- **LD 488 – Resolve, To Expand Recovery Community Organizations throughout Maine**
- **LD 227 - Resolve, To Conduct a Feasibility Study for Extending Passenger Rail Service from Brunswick through Augusta and Waterville to Bangor**
- **LD 182- An Act To Expand the Definition of "Essential Worker" To Include Retail and Food Service Workers**

Councilor Ali asked Dena to look into them and get City staff feedback about them. Mr. Jennings said that they will look at all of them and prepare a memo to facilitate the discussion but staff might not have a definite recommendation as the bills are more policy than what the City is responsible for. Kate mentioned that **LD 182- An Act To Expand the Definition of "Essential Worker" To Include Retail and Food Service Workers** had a public hearing already. As for **LD 570 - An Act To Provide for Fairness in the Taxation of Extraordinary and Unearned Income by Establishing a 3 Percent Surcharge on Net Capital Gains and Dividends Income over \$250,000 for Taxpayers Filing Single or Married Separate Returns and over \$500,000 for Taxpayers Filing Joint Returns** and **LD 498 - An Act To Reauthorize a 3 Percent Tax on Income over \$200,000 To Lift All Maine Workers out of Poverty**; they are part of a series of bills that are looking to increase revenue based on individuals income, LD 498 will have a hearing next week.

Councilor Mavodones made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mayor Snyder, vote 4-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 AM.