



Legislative Committee May 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes

The May 18, 2021 remote Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Pious Ali at 8:00 AM on Zoom.

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

Kate Knox provided an update on the status of the legislative session in Augusta.

Mayor Snyder asked about the process for approving testimony when it was needed before the Committee was next scheduled to meet. Councilor Ali explained that the Committee's longstanding process was that the Chair and Mayor could accept staff recommendations and approve the submission of testimony if needed, in an emergency. Kate Knox said it depends on the comfort level of Committee members, but generally she would email the Chair, Manager, and Mayor when a bill that needs immediate attention comes up. She suggested sending a new bills report whenever a new bill is released.

Councilor Fournier inquired about LD 677, which staff had submitted testimony in opposition to. Dena Libner confirmed that staff had shared their feedback and opposition when the bill was first published, and the Committee had agreed to monitor. The public hearing was scheduled quickly, and staff submitted testimony after email approval was granted.

The Committee reviewed the list of new State bills. Dena shared updated staff feedback related to LD 1695, and the Committee agreed that staff could submit testimony. Testimony would be shared with the Mayor and Councilor Ali by email, for approval, and submitted prior to the workshop the following day.

Regarding LD 1702, Jon asked for confirmation that this bill did not related to funding for the harbor dredge project. Dena confirmed that it did not. The Committee discussed LD 1478. Kate Knox said she and Mayor Snyder spoke to Rep. Lookner about the City's concerns, and that he hadn't considered those or been aware of the City's sophisticated crisis response procedures. Kate discussed the concerns with

Rep. Morales, who was not opposed to an amendment to accommodate those concerns. She said the bill stemmed from a request from Lewiston to develop a procedure, and she was looking for a robust conversation about these issues. She was not concerned about allowing municipalities with an existing protocol retaining their own authority.

A workshop on LD 1478 was scheduled for May 20, and Kate asked if the Committee would like to formally submit any other testimony before then.

Mayor Snyder said she still believes the legislation as it stands is not the right legislation for Portland, but that if it were amended to recognize the legitimacy of the crisis protocols in Portland, it would be a move in the right direction. She said she believed additional, formal input from the Committee was important. She asked that opposition to the existing legislation or testimony that would advance the need for an amendment be developed.

Councilor Fournier said she would like to work toward an amendment that recognizes our any crisis protocol that either meets or exceeds what the Attorney General would be asked to develop.

Councilor Mavodones expressed support for the Mayor's recommendation.

Councilor Ali said that if co-sponsors were open to amend it he would consider changing the testimony to support. If they did not choose to amend it he would be neither for nor against.

Councilor Fournier made a motion to support the bill if it is amended, but if it is not to leave the testimony as it is, seconded by Councilor Mavodones, vote 4-0.

Kate suggested that the best way to communicate that to the Committee is to do it in writing. Councilor confirmed that that was the intent of the Committee. Dena asked for clarity in the drafting and approval of the testimony; Councilor Ali confirmed that it would be submitted to the Chair and Mayor for approval.

Mayor Snyder suggested that the Committee work with Bernstein Shur to draft the amendment and testimony, with which the Committee agreed.

Councilor Fournier made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from May 11, 2021, seconded by Mayor Snyder, no amendments, vote 4-0.

Mayor Snyder made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilor Fournier, vote 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 am.