



Legislative/Nominating Committee Meeting

September 28, 2021

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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 comment.

AGENDA

ZOOM INFORMATION:

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

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II. Call to Order

III. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

- a. Approval of the September 14, 2021 meeting minutes
- b. Approval of the September 21, 2021 meeting minutes

**IV. Working Meeting Between the Legislative Committee and Portland
Delegation to Augusta**

V. Other Business

VI. Adjournment

Legislative and Nominating Committee Minutes
September 14, 2021

The September 14, 2021 Legislative Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Pious Ali at 8:30 AM on Zoom.

Councilor Pious Ali (Chair), Mayor Kate Snyder, Councilor Nick Mavodones, Jon Jennings, (City Manager) Dena Libner (Chief of Staff), Anne McGuire (Assistant City Manager), Kate Knox (Bernstein Shur), and Alysia Melnick (Bernstein Shur) were present. Councilor April Fournier was not in attendance.

Councilor Ali explained that the purpose of this meeting was to go over legislative priorities for the City to bring to the Delegation.

Dena Libner outlined staff priorities for consideration. For this year, staff focused on legislation that had not previously been sponsored or advocated for by the Delegation.

Mayor Snyder asked for clarification on the recommendation for legislation to strengthen and grow Maine's construction workforce and reduce housing development costs. Dena Libner clarified that the Delegation or Committee could determine how this broad policy position could be implemented by statute, and confirmed that the item's focus is housing development rather than workforce development.

City Manager Jennings noted that the lack of specificity is partly due to the fact that this process is occurring early, and that staff normally would have policy positions to react to prior to cloture.

Kate Knox agreed with City manager Jennings's assessment that this is a very early deadline. They would like to provide enough information for a title and summary and would like to ensure that whatever is proposed is actually helpful.

Chair Ali asked if these items would be developed further with city staff or the Delegation. City Manager noted that the City can provide technical expertise and legislative aides on the Delegation. Chair Ali said he will send emails to the City Councilors to ask for legislative priorities that they would like to see put forward. The State Delegation will be invited to next Tuesday's Legislative Committee meeting. Councilor Ali will communicate with them via email today to extend the invitation again.

Noting the mandated state/county investment in shelters and shelter services recommendation, Mayor Snyder asked detail to be added prior to meeting with the delegation. Alysia Melnick

explained that the Delegation will want to keep the number of bills limited and have them finished as soon as possible before being introduced as this is an emergency session. Conceptual priorities will need to be more fully formed in order to be considered. City Manager Jennings noted that staff attempted to avoid being overly prescriptive regarding homelessness and state funding for homeless services.

Kate Knox asked if it might be valuable to send the staff recommendation memo to the Delegation and explain that this would be regarding legislative priorities that are being considered, and that it might be productive to give them advance notice prior to Tuesday's meeting. Chair Ali, Mayor Snyder and Councilor Mavodones agreed that sharing the document would be productive and Chair Ali agreed to send it to the delegation. Kate Knox asked for more background information on the affordable housing/construction costs items in order to conduct outreach prior to next Tuesday's meeting.

Mayor Snyder announced that she spoke with mayor Cayer of Lewiston regarding funding for the rail study designated in LD 991. Both Lewiston and Auburn agreed to be funding partners to the agreement. Lewiston earmarked \$10,000 for this but Auburn did not earmark funding and opposed the measure. Mayor Cayer asked if the City of Portland would consider contributing the \$10,000 for the study with the City of Lewiston and Mayor Snyder agreed to bring this forward to the Legislative Committee.

Chair Ali expressed that the measure should be brought to the full Council.

Councilor Mavodones felt the expenditure is reasonable given the City's support for the measure, and agreed that the matter should be brought to the full council.

City Manager Jennings noted that the City has a contingency fund that could be used to fund this after a budgetary review, and that he believes the full Council should weigh in on any potential expenditure.

Kate Knox offered to contact Senator Libby to ask if the study is contingent on additional funding.

Mayor Snyder made a motion to approve the minutes for the last meeting, seconded by Councilor Mavodones, vote 3-0.

Councilor Mavodones made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mayor Snyder, vote 3-0. Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Legislative and Nominating Committee Minutes
September 21, 2021

The September 12, 2021 Legislative Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Pious Ali at 8:00 AM on Zoom.

Councilor Pious Ali (Chair), Mayor Kate Snyder, Councilor Nick Mavodones, Councilor April Fournier, Dena Libner (Chief of Staff), Danielle West (City Attorney) Anne McGuire (Assistant City Manager), Representative Rachel Talbot Ross, Representative Barb Wood, Representative Ed Crockett, Representative Grayson Lookner, Representative Michael Brennan, Representative Sam Zager, Senator Heather Sanborn, Senator Ben Chipman, Kate Knox (Bernstein Shur), Alysia Melnick (Bernstein Shur), and Chris Feeney (Bernstein Shur) were present.

Councilor Ali explained that the purpose of the meeting was to share the City's legislative priorities and receive feedback and recommendations from the Delegation.

Dena Libner noted that City staff on the call would be able to answer any technical questions regarding the legislative priorities to be presented by Kate Knox.

Rep. Talbot Ross asked that the City highlight priorities that would be considered an emergency item, and that potential funding needs be identified. Dena Libner clarified that some priorities may straddle both emergency and long term priority management

Mayor Syder asked for clarification rules and process for recently appropriated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Councilor Mavodones echoed Mayor Snyder's request, and also asked for feedback from the Delegation on what priorities may have already been funded.

Rep. Brennan noted that approximately half of the City's priorities have been addressed in the State budget or through ARPA funding, and asked if the items were timely given recent developments at the State level, with \$82 million allocated for affordable housing, a \$10 million set aside for homelessness services programming and a \$1.5 million set aside for housing navigators and noted that the City will be well positioned to take advantage of these funds. Rep. Brennan also noted that tens of millions were put into the University and Community College systems to address labor shortage issues through workforce development and training programs, revenue sharing increased 4.5 percent, and the Maine tax credit program was funded, and millions of dollars were in the supplemental budget for mental health and substance misuse programming across state, among other gains. Rep. Brennan also introduced a General Assistance bill that would have increased reimbursement up to 90 percent, which was carried

over and may move forward next session. Rep. Brennan offered to share a presentation with a comprehensive breakdown of the recent budget with the group.

Councilor Ali noted that these priorities were proposed by City staff and shared with the Legislative Committee within a very short time frame, and Mayor Snyder asked that the Delegation potentially present information to the City Council at a future date to ensure the City is aware of all the information about recent legislative changes.

Kate Knox noted that Housing and Economic Development priorities and shelter funding might not receive additional allocation due to the large amounts that have already been allocated in the State budget. Funding for Rep. Brennan's GA bill could become a City priority as it is in line with the priorities outlined by Housing and Economic Development interests. Knox highlighted the recently passed LB 1300, which would mandate county coordination on shelters but has not yet been funded and may be a good focus for the City's priorities. Mandated statewide shelters - not necessarily an emergency.

Sen Chipman, Local option sales tax for canna may not be relevant for short session. May need to wait for now because of all the ARPA funding. Bill was carried over. Cap to a couple years in terms of recouping upfront costs. May come back around. Grayson Lookner municipal zoning re: density etc.

Councilor Ali asked the group what priorities should be shelved until the next session. Rep. Zager pointed out the racial academic achievement gap was concerning, noted that Superintendent of Schools Xavier Botana's team is looking closely at the problem, and asked how bilingual social workers would address this issue.

Rep. Brennan noted that bills carried over from the last session that already address this could be reworded and considered for funding in the budget, and noted that a supplemental budget session could be a vehicle for this. Regarding the academic achievement equity issue, Rep. Brennan brought a bill forward in the last session instructing the Department of Education to develop a program to close both the racial and income achievement gap by tapping into school budgets, and that the bilingual social worker idea could be funded if this were passed and funded. He also highlighted that the 35 million in school funding the city received this session could also be funneled toward this type of program.

Mayor Snyder noted the importance of deferring to the school board on policy decisions for school districts in regards to programmatic changes.

Kate Knox highlighted using 211 for GA applicants if it would create efficiencies, and expressed an interest in Mayor Snyder's proposal on remote meetings.

Sen. Chipman noted that he is proposing a new bill at the request of Chris Huff (Assessor) regarding property tax and tax assessments and relief for people with revaluations. Mayor Snyder pointed out that the City will be voting on a potential bridge program for seniors on October 4.

Mayor Snyder explained that the City Council used a continuation of the City's emergency order to continue to meet remotely, and proposed council/staff meeting in person while allowing remote participation from the public. Reluctance due to potential issues with having large numbers of the public in the building. Sen. Sanborn: Based on judiciary decisions/discussion, reopening may result in even more restrictive legislation as the Legislature did not support the idea of meetings where the council met in person with remote participation from the public. Councilor Ali noted that the School District has been conducting hybrid meetings with the board in person and the public participating remotely.

Rep. Brennan expressed that the Delegation and City need to have a better process to meet and discuss local issues, highlighting dredging and off-track betting on Exchange Street as examples of areas where there appeared to be a disconnect between the City and the Legislature.

Councilor Ali noted that there is another meeting scheduled for next week and echoed an interest in furthering discussions with the Delegation on improving their working relationship, as did Councilor Mavodones and Sen. Chipman.

Mayor Snyder invited the delegation to tour oxford street shelter and to continue discussions around homelessness.

Councilor Ali adjourned the meeting at 9:00 AM.