

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.