



City of Portland Charter Commissioners Meeting

via Zoom
Wednesday, July 15, 2021
6:00 PM

1. Call the Meeting to Order

a. Zoom Meeting Instructions – Please click the link below to join the webinar:

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Commission Chair, Michael Kebede, called the meeting to order at 6:09 PM. All Commissioners were present.

2. Approval of the prior Meeting Minutes

a. June 28, 2021 Minutes

Commissioner Barowitz mentioned that the minutes included a misspelling of Commissioner Chann's last name.

Motion was made by Commissioner Eglinton to approve the June 28, 2001 Minutes with the correct spelling of Commissioner Chann's last name, and was seconded by Commissioner Washburn. Passage 12-0.

3. Discussion about Rules of Procedure

a. Draft Rules of Procedure

Motion was made by Commissioner O'Brien and seconded by Commissioner Eglinton to approve the Rules of Procedure.

Motion was made by Commissioner Chann and seconded by Commissioner Stewart-Bouley to amend Rule 6.F of the Rules of Procedure to read “Speakers should abide by the Commission’s Ground Rules *and Community Agreements...*” (emphasis added). Passage of the amendment 12-0.

Motion was made by Commissioner Eglinton and seconded by Commissioner Washburn to amend Rule 6.F. of the Rules of Procedure to delete “without personal any attacks or loud and disrespectful behavior.” Motion was made by Commissioner Barowitz to amend Commissioner Eglinton’s amendment to change the title of Rule 6 to read “Conduct at Public Meetings and Hearings.” Passage of Commissioner Barowitz’s amendment 12-0. Passage of amended Commissioner Eglinton’s amendment 12-0.

Motion was made by Commissioner Chann and seconded by Commissioner Houston to amend Rule 1 of the Rules of Procedure to add sentence at the end to read “The Commission should also abide by the Ground Rules and Community Agreement adopted by the Commission.” Passage of the amendment 12-0.

Motion was made by Commissioner Barowitz and seconded by Commissioner Washburn to amend Rule 6 of the Rules of Procedure to add subsection J to read “Members of the Commission shall act in good faith during all proceedings.” Passage of the amendment 8-4 (Buxton, Chann, Sheikh-Yousef, Washburn) [Note: During the meeting, the initial roll call vote was not tracked and Commission Chair Kebede asked that those opposed to the motion raise their hands. At that time, only Commissioners Buxton, Sheikh-Yousef, and Washburn raised their hands. Passage of the amendment 9-3.]

Passage of the main motion to approve the Rules of Procedure, as amended, 11-1 (Chann).

4. Discussion about Community Agreements

Commissioners Chann and Buxton provided a brief overview of the draft Community Agreements they prepared. They welcomed input, and acknowledged the document was not ready for a vote. Commission Chair Kebede asked for unanimous consent to remove the item from the agenda and no one objected.

5. Discussion about Initial Commission Support Needs

Commission Chair Kebede and Commissioner Eglinton provided background on the agenda item, which was intended to cover a discussion of initial support needs such as a notetaker and legal support, and the associated budget requirements. After discussion among the Commissioners, Chair Kebede summarized the next steps:

- Commissioners Kebede, Waxman, Washburn, Barowitz, and Lizanecz will seek a meeting with City Manager Jennings to clarify the Commission’s ability to spend funds allocated to the Corporation Counsel’s office to support the Commission. The group will wait until they receive a response from the City’s Finance Director.
- Pending a review of the available budget, the Commissioners will discuss legal support needs, implications, and next steps.

6. Set Date/Time for Next Meeting and Topics for that Agenda

Commissioner O'Brien proposed that the Commission meet every second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, and the Commissioners adopted the proposal by unanimous consent.

The location of meetings and any remote access will depend on the outcome of the Commission's consideration of a remote participation policy. Attorney Katsiaficas provided an overview of the State law that governs public meetings and said he would provide draft language for a remote participation policy that aligns with the Portland City Council. Commissioner Kebede said he would add an item on a remote participation policy to the agenda on July 28, 2021, which is otherwise designated for a public hearing, so that the public can weigh in before meetings start in August.

Commissioner Waxman asked that the Commission aim to keep meetings to two hours in length. Commissioner Waxman also suggested setting a six-month calendar. Commissioner Chann recommended adding an agenda item regarding hiring trainers and facilitators to support the Commission's work.

7. Charter Communications

Commissioner Buxton summarized the need for a way to communicate with the public, providing uniform messaging across multiple channels, and suggested the formation of a Communications Committee.

Motion was made by Commissioner Washburn and seconded by Commissioner Sheikh-Yousef to create a Communications Committee composed of Commissioners Buxton, Chann, and Washburn. Attorney Katsiaficas reminded the Commission that a committee would be subject to the Maine Freedom of Access Act, including noticing and recording (minutes) requirements. Due to limited time for deliberation, Commissioners Washburn and Sheikh-Yousef withdrew the item from consideration.

Commissioner Washburn offered to prepare a press release to help get the word out about the public hearing on July 28, 2021.

8. Other Business

None.

9. Adjournment

Motion was made by Commissioner Eglinton and seconded by Commissioner O'Brien to adjourn. Passage 12-0 at 9:20 PM.