

Charter Commission
City of Portland, Maine

Governance Committee

***DRAFT* MINUTES**

September 8, 2021
via Zoom

Attending: Commissioners Shay Stewart-Bouley, Ryan Lizanecz, Nasreen Sheikh-Yousef,
Robert O'Brien.

The meeting was called to order at 6:08pm.

Election of Officers

Chair

Shay Stewart-Bouley nominated Robert O'Brien, seconded by Ryan Lizanecz .

No other nominations.

Nomination passed unanimously.

Vice Chair

Shay Stewart-Bouley nominated Ryan Lizanecz , seconded by Nasreen Sheikh-Yousef .

No other nominations.

Nomination passed unanimously.

Secretary

Shay Stewart-Bouley nominated Nasreen Sheikh-Yousef , seconded by Ryan Lizanecz .

No other nominations.

Nomination passed unanimously.

Issue Priorities

Considering the list of issues assigned to the Governance Committee by the Commission as a Whole at its meeting of August 25, the members of the Governance Committee bundled several related issues into "City Leadership Structure" and named it the top priority.

1. City Leadership Structure: powers & duties, relationships, districts*, terms.
 - a. Administration
 - b. Mayor Position
 - c. Council
 - d. Council-Appointed Positions (Clerk, Corporation Council)
 - e. Neighborhood Voices

2. Appointed Boards & Committees
 - a. Office of Public Advocate*
 - b. Human Rights Commission
3. Home Rule**
4. School Board/City Council Relationship*

*Seek to avoid overlap with other committees

**Seek clarity (see Public Comment)

Work Plan

Member of the committee discussed the following needs:

- Interviews with each of the last three mayors.
- Expanding a Municipal Structures Survey (to be shared as a Google Sheet).
- Interviews with political scientists and local political historians.
- Shay Stewart-Bouley recommended the book *Municipal Charters* (1911) by Nathan Matthews.
- A public hearing with specific prompts for input.

Timeline

Members agreed to the following timeline with corresponding agendas:

- September 22: Values Mapping and Desired Outcomes.
- October 13: Individual interviews with three recent mayors.
- October 27 (will need to be rescheduled to a nearby date): Expert testimony from guest speakers.
- November 10: Public hearing with prompts for input.
- November 24 (or nearby date): Diagramming potential City Structure models to propose to the Commission as a Whole.

Members agreed this Work Plan and Timeline could be adapted and altered as needed as efforts proceed.

Public Comment

Phil Steele made two points: that Home Rule may encompass referenda and citizen initiatives, and that expert testimony may be needed regarding the purpose and function of at-large council seats.

There was no other public comment.

Adjournment

Ryan Lizanecz moved to adjourn, seconded by Nasreen Sheikh-Yousef . The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:58pm.