

Charter Commission
City of Portland, Maine

Governance Committee

***DRAFT* MINUTES**

September 22, 2021
via Zoom

Attending: Commissioners Ryan Lizanecz, Nasreen Sheikh-Yousef, Robert O'Brien (Chair).

The meeting was called to order at 6:08pm. Chair O'Brien called the roll.

Commissioner Lizanecz moved to accept the meeting minutes of September 8, 2021, seconded by Commissioner Sheikh-Yousef. No discussion. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

Timeline

Chair O'Brien shared the committee's work plan timeline on the screen and discussed each item. Commissioner Sheikh-Yousef asked to add the list of potential city managers to invite. Chair O'Brien agreed to for the minutes. There were no other modifications mentioned by the committee.

- September 22: Values Mapping and Desired Outcomes.
 - 9/12/21 RJO'B invited Pam Plumb to moderate the discussion.
 - 9/15/21 Pam Plumb declined but offered three referrals.
 - 9/19/21 [David Plumb](#) accepted invitation to facilitate.
- October 13: Individual interviews with three recent mayors.
 - 9/11/21 RJO'B: Requested interviews of all three mayors.
 - 9/11/21 Ethan Strimling committed to attend. 7:30pm
 - 9/12/21 Kate Snyder committed to attend. 6:00pm
 - 9/18/21 Michael Brennan committed to attend. 6:30pm
 - Committee may invite one or several councilor-mayors to interview.
- October 27 (will need to be rescheduled to a nearby date): Individual interviews with city managers. Draft list:
 - Jon Jennings, Portland City Manager
 - Catherine Conlow: ten-year manager of Bangor's council-manager gov't, just hired as Ex Dir of Maine Municipal Ass'n.
 - Kevin Sutherland: once chief of staff to mayor of Ithaca, NY; then four-year City Administrator for City of Saco (executive mayor gov't).

- (Former Portland) Deputy City Manager Sheila Hill Christian, Acting City Manager between Mark Rees and Jon Jennings.
- November 10 (or nearby date): Expert testimony from guest speakers.
 - 9/12/21 RJO'B invited Dominick Pangallo, chief of staff to the executive mayor in Salem, MA, to speak.
 - 9/15/21 Dominick Pangallo agreed to speak, may need different date.
 - 9/13/21 NSY talks with Prof. Chryl Laird.
 - 9/15/21 Prof. Laird committed to speak.
 - Committee members considering several academics recommended by public.
- November 24 (or nearby date): Public hearing with prompts for input.
- December 8: Diagramming potential City Structure models to propose to the Commission as a Whole.
- December [TBD]: Governance Committee reserves possibility of additional meeting.

Chair O'Brien opted to move public comment on the agenda to within the Values Mapping exercise in order to allow the public to respond to the discussion and committee members to reflect on public comment.

Values Mapping & Desired Outcomes Exercise

Chair O'Brien invited David Plumb to facilitate the session. Mr. Plumb is a professional mediator at CBI. He grew up in Portland and recently moved back with his family. Mr. Plumb volunteered his time.

During the exercise, the committee identified the following values for a city government structure:

Accountable and Responsive

- There are channels for concerns that are accessible and result in actual responses.
- There is a clear chain of command, and clarity on who you can speak with about your interests and concerns
- People see the connection between the public voice and decision-making

Transparent and communicative

- People know what is going on and there is easy access to information

Participatory

- There are vehicles to participate
- Barriers to participate are removed – we recognize that time is a major barrier for working people

Representative and Giving Voice

- Decisions are made considering the whole community
- Local government includes people with different experience and background
- Access to government is not defined by money
- The systems work for everyone

Efficient and Showing Leadership

- City can tackle problems and reach conclusions. Local government is seen a place of solutions
- The city policy-making process works to address interests and concerns – people use it and see their interests met.
- The city has big plans and develop bold ideas through a democratic process

Integrity

Public Comment (paraphrased)

Eamonn Dundon

- Good exercise to ask *What is the problem we're trying to solve?*
- Look to the municipal budget where priorities are made through funding.
- Current city budget passed without resistance; evidence of collaborative city government.

Phil Steele: if I were to add future headlines to noteboard:

- Clean elections worked!
- Citizen engagement way up.
- Secrecy down (re: executive session meetings of the city council)
- Lawsuits against the city down.
- Voter registration way up.
- Satisfaction surveys of city leadership at record high.
- First time a mayor was able to move their platform through the city council.

There was no new business.

Commission Lizanecz called for a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Sheikh-Yousef. The motion passed unanimously and the committee adjourned at 7:17pm.