



**CITY OF PORTLAND
EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
October 6, 2021 at 6:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Marcques Houston calls the meeting to order. Introductions of committee members.

APPROVAL OF LAST MEETING'S MINUTES

EGLINTON motions to approve minutes. CHANN seconds. Roll Call: EGLINTON, HOUSTON, CHANN vote yes. Passes unanimously.

WORKSHOP

- Presentation from Attorney Aga Dixon on Drummond Woodsum memo on State statute and Charter language regarding education and school department.
 - School Board can act as municipal legislative body
 - School Board by statute has authority to make expenditures
 - School Board may be able to do its own bonding
- Testimony from Portland Mayor Kate Snyder, former Portland School Board Member and Executive Director of Portland Public Schools Foundation.
 - During the 2008 financial crisis, City Council stepped in to help the School Board right the ship. Cited several charter provisions. Changes were made to prevent surprises to taxpayers and city.
- Testimony from Former Portland Mayor Ethan Strimling
 - School Board needs more autonomy. We also need executive mayor. Need noncitizen voting.
- Testimony from Former Portland Mayor and State Rep. Michael Brennan
 - Everybody wants to see Portland have the best education system possible; Met with the superintendent every month to go over budget issues, etc.; Tried to meet with legislative delegation frequently to know state landscape; Process can be formalized more to set expectations and make them public. Unified budget would help streamline.
- Testimony from At-Large Councilor Nick Mavodones
 - Changes made in last charter commission that put in place more collaboration between school board and city council and respective finance committees was beneficial. Not in favor of school setting its own tax rate. There is already a good balance. School board should have fiduciary role. May already be in there.
 - Charter Commission should codify more collaboration between council and school board.
- Testimony from Portland Superintendent Xavier Botana
 - School Board Workshop held about the Drummond Woodsum memo, Houston was present. Parity in the budget process. There needs to be a true city budget presented at

once. Having mayor present school budget together with city budget. School board being the legislative body that can bring items to the voters. A way to increase the accountability of the school board.

- Testimony from School Board Chair Emily Figdor
 - Parity between the school board and the council is the most important issue. We should trust the voters. The budget goes to the voters and we should trust them to make the decision. The school board should have more accountability and budget autonomy. The school board should be the legislative body. Bonding – complicated but interested in bonding authority.
- Testimony from School Board Member Anna Trevorrow
 - Last charter commission made many changes, including paid parity, name change, etc. Feels like separate constituencies – feels like school board is being asked to raise taxes to support schools, while council is being asked to lower taxes by property tax payers. Charter Commission shouldn't be afraid to take on issues that it feels need to be taken up. Commissioners elected to do this job. Universal Resident Voting – Linda Cohen said it could be done via paper rolls or separate rolls. Documentation: Asking noncitizens to do affidavits, etc.
- Testimony from Corporation Counsel Danielle West and Commission Attorney Katsiaficas

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Comment from John Thibodeau of Equity for Portland Schools
 - Better communication. School board not treated as peers. No parity. Separate city and school tax bills good idea. More flexible committee rather than rigid and condensed.

NEW BUSINESS

- Decide topics for next meeting? Wait til Monday.
- Consider an interim report out to full Commission 27th meeting.

ADJOURN

EGLINTON motions to adjourn. Seconded by CHANN. Passes Unanimously.