

**Legislative Committee & Portland
Delegation Minutes**
February 15, 2022



MEMBERS
Councilor April Fournier, Chair
Mayor Kate Snyder
Councilor Pious Ali

I. ZOOM INFORMATION:

- a. This meeting will be held remotely pursuant to the Remote Meeting Policy adopted by the Legislative & Nominating Committee and as authorized under 1 M.R.S. 403-B because of the existence of an emergency or urgent issue that requires the committee to meet by remote methods. Allow your computer to install the free Zoom app to get the best meeting experience. If you are not able to attend live, a recording will be available following the meeting. For public comment, you will need to use the "raise your hand" feature. To raise your hand via the telephone, please hit *9. You will be unmuted by the host when it is time for public comment.

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II. Call to Order & Introductions (2 minutes)

Chair Fournier called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM.

Chair April Fournier, Mayor Kate Snyder, Councilor Pious Ali, Dena Libner (Chief of Staff), Sheba Brown (Executive Office Manager), Kristen Dow, Tina Pettingill, Chief Gautreau, Interim Police Chief Heath Gorham, Anne Torregrossa, Caity Hager, Alysia Melnick, Kate Knox, Chris Feeney, Senator Ben Chipman, Senator Heather Sanborn, Representative Sam Zager, Representative Barb Wood, Representative Dan Brennan and Representative Ben Collings were present.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes (1 minute)

Mayor Snyder made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2022 meeting, seconded by Councilor Ali, vote (3-0).

a. Minutes from the meeting of February 1, 2022

IV. Discussion: Resettlement of Asylum Seekers (20 minutes)

Chair Fournier introduced the discussion and introduced Kristen Dow, Director of Health & Human Services, and Mayor Snyder.

a. Staff Summary Memo (Kristen Dow, Director of Health & Human Services)

Kristen Dow reported on the limited capacity in City-run shelters and hotels housing asylum-seeking families and individuals, and current efforts the City is taking to address these issues.

b. Recap of Portland Delegation Update (February 8, 2022)

Representative Zager briefly discussed updates from the Portland Delegation.

V. Review of Legislation

a. LD 1879 (An Act To Support Law Enforcement Officers, Corrections Officers, E-9-1-1 Dispatchers, Firefighters and Emergency Medical Services Persons Diagnosed with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder)

The Committee discussed this legislation and took staff feedback on certain issues with this legislation. The Committee decided to monitor this legislation going forward.

i. *This item was voted out of the Committee on Labor and Housing on February 7, 2022.*

b. LD 1626 (An Act Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Implementing Act)

The Committee and Delegation discussed this legislation. Chair Fournier agreed to work with staff to draft testimony in support of this legislation, and will bring it to the Committee for a vote at the next meeting.

i. *Councilor Fournier requested a discussion of this bill among Committee members and the bill sponsor, Representative Talbot Ross, in light of a public hearing scheduled for February 15, 2022.*

- c. **LD 969 (An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for the Construction of a Convention Center in Portland, Improvements to the Augusta Civic Center and a Competitive Grant Program for Capital Improvements to Public Venues across the State)**

The Committee discussed this legislation and asked Representative Zager to speak on the bill. Representative Zager explained that this bond measure would provide funding for public venues in City of Portland as well as numerous other municipalities in Maine.

- i. ***If available, Committee members would like additional insight from bill sponsors regarding the practical implications of LD 969, including job creation, operational responsibilities, etc. to inform their potential support.***

After discussing the question of practical implications, the Committee decided to continue to monitor this legislation.

- d. **LD 1337 (An Act To Increase Affordable Housing and Reduce Property Taxes through an Impact Fee on Vacant Residences)**

- i. ***This LD was originally reviewed by the Legislative & Nominating Committee in April 2021. At that time, the primary concern of staff was that the State would be implementing and administering this program. Staff believed that the program should be implemented at the discretion of local municipalities, with revenue staying in the community. The LD has since been amended and is enclosed for Committee members' review and discussion. On February 3, 2022, the Taxation Committee advanced the bill to the full Legislature (8-4).***

The Committee asked for staff feedback on this legislation. Staff have expressed strong support of this bill in its amended form. The Chair asked staff to draft testimony in support of this legislation for the Committee to vote on at the next meeting.

- e. **Discussion: Remote Meeting Bills (LD 1971 and LD 1772)**

This item was not discussed.

VI. Non-Agenda Discussion Initiated by Representative Brennan on the Governor's Budget

Representative Brennan asked to discuss the Governor's budget and bring to the Committee's attention a number of items directly related to the City of Portland, specifically Education Stabilization funds, free lunch programs, childcare facilities, and numerous other issues.

VII. Adjournment

Councilor Ali made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 AM, seconded by Mayor Snyder, vote (3-0)