



Portland Police Department

**City of Portland, Maine
Public Safety / Health & Human Services Department
January 14, 2014**

Meeting Minutes

Committee Attendance: Chair Suslovic, Councilor Leeman, Councilor Dusen and Councilor Coyne.

City Staff Attendance: Chief Sauschuck, PPD; Doug Gardner, HHS; Chief LaMoria, PFD; Julie Sullivan, Public Health/HHS; Sheila Hill-Christian, Deputy City Manager; Trish McAllister, Corporation Counsel; Caroline Teschke, Public Health/HHS; Zoe Odlin-Platz, Public Health/HHS.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – Meeting Called to Order and Minutes from October Meeting Reviewed:

Meeting was called to order at approximately 5:30 PM by Chair Suslovic. Minutes were reviewed and all accepted 3-0. Chair Suslovic iterated that there were no action items on the agenda tonight and therefore no public comment would be taken.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – Public Health Division Quarterly Update

Julie Sullivan gave her quarterly update to the Committee outlining the Affordable Care Act, Public Health Systems, Substance Abuse Prevention/Environmental Health as well as Flu Shots and Restaurant Inspections. The Accreditation process is speeding up – Public Health is finalizing documentation to submit by June 18 followed by a site visit this summer. The Accreditation is good for 5 years.

Julie also updated the Committee on their grant through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, exploring a regional or state consolidation of public health officers, and what types of services such a contracted officer would provide to participating towns, as well as benefits and liabilities to the City of Portland.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Needles Improperly Discarded Discussion

Chair Suslovic stated that at September's Bayside Neighborhood Association meeting, the community cited concerns regarding discarded needles and the related dangers, and there was discussion about the need for a plan to address this problem. Caroline Teschke, Program Manager at the India Street Clinic, spoke tonight of the range of services at the Clinic as well as a description of the Portland Needle Exchange Program and the benefits it provides. She also stated that the problem of discarded needles is a city-wide problem requiring a coordinated response from multiple entities, as it is too large for the Needle Exchange to manage alone. Zoe Odlin-Platz, a staff member at the Portland Needle Exchange, outlined a proposal of four ideas to address this problem, to include increased community drop-off sites for needles, increased community education regarding sharps disposal, training Public Works employees

specifically for sharps disposal, and collaborating with the Police Department to train community members about sharps disposal.

Chief Sauschuck stated that with the increase in heroin use, we have seen an increase in discarded needles. He agrees educating the community is important and offered the Police Department's Community Services Division staff to help in that educative effort.

Bayside Neighborhood Association President Steve Hirshon agrees that outreach and education are key, and supports a city-wide collaborative effort.

Chief LaMoria offered the assistance of the Fire Department, as they have staff already trained and are fully equipped to handle sharps. He is willing to provide more drop-off sites at Fire Department locations.

Councilor Leeman advised the formation of a working group to coordinate this effort and standardize protocols, which was seconded by Sheila Hill-Christian, who offered to lead the working group.

Chair Suslovic asked that the working group be prepared to present their plan at the February meeting, in time for implementation with the annual spring clean-up in April.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – Housing First Pre-Development RFP (taken out of order)

Doug Gardner reports that the Housing & Community Development Committee is recommending that \$50,000 in Housing Replacement funds be allocated to create a Housing First Pre-Development Grant. These funds would be allocated through an RFP process, with proposals reviewed by City staff.

Recommendations from the taskforce will be presented to the full Council in February.

Councilor Leeman asked where we were with the idea of an independent review of the recommendations, and Doug Gardner stated that plan was never formally adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 4 - Ordinance Enforcement Efforts

Trish McAllister, Neighborhood Prosecutor, discussed the ordinance enforcement efforts over the past four years, stating that since 2010, the number of citations written for ordinance violations has markedly increased, from 15 in 2010 to 124 in 2013. Citations written encompass a wide range of ordinances, including dogs-at-large, public urination, abusive solicitation, graffiti, littering. She stated that police cadets and park rangers were responsible for writing a great number of the citations. After meeting with the judiciary and setting up the special docket day for Portland violations, enforcement efforts have been positively impacted, and the court schedule for 2014 includes one day a month set aside for a Portland docket.

In response to Councilor Duson's query whether the cluster of citations written has led to noticeable behavior change, and whether there may be in the future a process whereby citizens can write citations, Trish recalled the idea of a neighborhood accountability board being a step towards that and culture change.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – 2013 Public Safety/HHS Committee Year-End Review

Chair Suslovic stated last year was a busy one, and wondered if we need further attention paid to the smoking ordinance, i.e., is there enough signage, the need for consistent enforcement and how to accomplish that on a year-round basis without cadets writing citations. Chair Suslovic asked if e-cigarette

usage is covered under the existing ordinance, and Trish McAllister stated that it is not. Chair stated that consideration of an amendment to this ordinance should be added to the work plan for 2014.

Councilor Duson stated with the change of grantee, there will be a need for continued efforts to ensure adequate healthcare for the homeless.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – 2014 Work Plan

Discussion about future agenda items, including the Police Department's community survey results and action plan proposal; Healthcare for the Homeless and options going forward to ensure continued service to clients; a progress report on recommendations on homelessness and Rapid Re-housing.

Chief Sauschuck plans to create a 2014 calendar of agenda items which he will bring to the next meeting.

With no further business to attend to, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM.