



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, December 4, 2023

10:00 a.m.

Conference Room A

City Hall Complex, 1 Junkins Avenue

Portsmouth, NH 03801

1. Welcome and Call to Order: 10:05AM
2. Roll Call: Councilor Cook, Councilor Tabor and Councilor Lombardi all present. Also present, Suzanne M. Woodland, Deputy City Manager / Regulatory Counsel (DCM/RC) and Todd Henley, Director of the Recreation Department (present for Review of Recreation Board Ordinance Change section of the agenda).
3. Review and approval of the Minutes from the November 13, 2023 meeting: Councilor Tabor moved to approve the November 13, 2023 meeting minutes. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi. **All in favor.**
4. Referral from City Council - Review Recreation Board Ordinance Changes: This was moved forward in the agenda for discussion. Director Henley provided context - Recreation Board made some revisions to their bylaws to memorialize current Board membership. The Governance Committee agreed to support the ordinance as is at the second reading, but requesting the Recreation Board to consider how to add an additional youth / student member. Director Henley stated that he has spoken to the Chairman of the Recreation Board and they will put this item on the agenda of their December 20, 2023 meeting. Director Henley stated that they wanted to do some research as to what the parameters would be regarding having a youth member on the Board, i.e., would they be a voting member, however, he feels that it would be a valuable addition to the Board. Councilor Tabor asked if the Committee should defer tonight's vote to go to second reading. DCM/RC Woodland stated that passing the ordinance as is at tonight's City Council meeting would update the ordinance to reflect the current membership. The Recreation Board could bring forward an amendment next year after they have given adding student membership some thought and determine what that student involvement would be, however, passing it now would get the ordinance in line with their current membership structure. Councilor Lombardi asked if other committees have bylaws and DCM/RC Woodland advised that some do and some don't and that some committees want another layer of structure. Director Henley stated that their document is named 'Operational Guidelines' vs. bylaws and its purpose is to state who they are, what the purpose is, meeting information, who does what, and the role of the Recreation Board in terms of their advisory capabilities. Councilor Cook stated that it was logical to her as the Public Art Review Committee has a set of procedural guidelines that they created around reviewing art. Councilor Cook stated that the newly formed Sustainability Committee has student representation and that the Recreational Board could look at their structure for assistance, also keeping in mind that since there are non-residents in

our school system, this would be a factor to be mindful of during discussions. Director Henley left the meeting at this point. Councilor Cook recommended that the Committee let the Council know that the Committee discussed the changes with Director Henley and that the Governance Committee is ready to move forward with the ordinance as is to be presented at the meeting this evening. All agreed this was a reasonable approach.

5. End of Year Report to Council: Councilor Cook presented a draft of the end of the year report on a shared screen. For review by the Committee, Councilor Cook provided details on the work accomplished by the Committee, i.e., made recommendations to the City Council to adopt new Ordinances and Policies, reviewed and made changes to Ordinances, i.e., Ethics Ordinance around Conflict of Interest, along with reviewing Ordinances and Policies for other Committees. Also, on-going work was discussed and reviewed, i.e., reviewing Blue Ribbon Committee conversions, the Administrative Code and any additional changes that arise in the 2024 – 2025 Council term. Councilor Lombardi brought forth a topic for discussion – having the public comment section of the meeting before the broadcasted portion of the meeting, i.e., this could alleviate apprehension from people being recorded. Councilor Cook said it would entail changing the order of the agenda and could be discussed during Rules discussion. Also, Councilor Lombardi said that jockeying to make motions looks unprofessional. He stated that the Pease Development Authority assigns all the motions per the agenda to Committee members - that person reads the motion and submits it for a second. Councilor Cook stated that this would entail another discussion and an amendment to the Rules. Councilor Cook stated that it would be possible for the Governance Committee to meet before the first City Council of the new year to compile some recommendations. Councilor Cook stated another matter the Committee could add to their review is the Sign Ordinance, which was requested by Land Use. She stated it would be logical for the Governance Committee to work on this, with guidance from the Legal Department. It would also affect a number of Committees and it would also provide an opportunity for public comment before it goes to the Council.

Councilor Tabor mentioned that the Committee has not looked at the Citywide Neighborhood Committee. He stated that it is a good Committee, and it would be good to review what it does, what it could do better and what are its boundaries. It is really one of the citizen-led Committees and how people have gotten involved in city government. This was added to the 'Ongoing Work' list as a potential Blue Ribbon Committee conversation. Energy Advisory was also added to this list. Councilor Tabor stated that a lot of cities and towns have Energy Committees. Regulatory Counsel Woodland stated that staff has been working on a number of ordinances changes of a technical nature, such as the Sewer Use Ordinance. Councilor Cook stated that the Committee needs to review the Charter and any changes, and determine if there are any conflicts between State law and the Charter. The time frame for Charter revisions was discussed and DCM/RC Woodland suggested that a special meeting should be scheduled to specifically discuss process and timeframe with all interested parties, i.e., City Clerk and Legal and ensure that they would be well-prepared in advance to answer questions regarding making changes and putting on these items on the ballot. Motion by Councilor Tabor to approve sending the report to the City Council for the December 18, 2023 meeting. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi. **All in favor.**

Councilor Cook advised that she will look into scheduling the 2024 meetings and will check on scheduling the room and if Mondays at 10:00AM are good for everyone, the Committee will tentatively begin having meetings on Monday, January 8, 2024 at 10:00AM.

6. Public Comment: There were no public comments.
7. Announcements: There were no announcements.
8. Adjournment: Councilor Tabor moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:56AM. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi. **All in favor.**

Meeting Minutes prepared by:

Barbara J. Zulkiewicz

Minutes approved: February 5, 2024