



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, November 13, 2023
10:00 a.m.
Conference Room A
City Hall Complex, 1 Junkins Avenue,
Portsmouth, NH 03801

1. Welcome and Call to Order - 10:01AM
2. Roll Call – Councilor Kate Cook, Councilor John Tabor and Councilor Vincent Lombardi all present. Also present, Suzanne M. Woodland, Deputy City Manager/Regulatory Counsel
3. Review and approval of the Minutes from the October 10, 2023 meeting – Councilor Tabor moved to approve the October 10, 2023 meeting minutes. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi. All in favor.
4. End of year report – Councilor Cook asked if the Committee wanted to submit an end of the year report. This report could identify outstanding work for next year and make a recommendation to continue the Committee Council next term. She also stated that the Committee provided the Council with an extensive report at the end of August and wouldn't need to provide a full report at this time. Councilor Tabor stated a short-written update would be appropriate. Councilor Cook offered to write it and provide it to the other members for review before the next Committee meeting so the Committee could provide it to the Council at the December 18, 2023 meeting.

Councilor Lombardi stated that he believes that the Committee has more work to do. Councilor Tabor stated that the Committee has done some good work, i.e., sunseting six committees that were no longer active and creating a permanent Sustainability Committee and a Public Art Review Committee. He concurred the Governance Committee has outstanding work to do regarding making some committees permanent. He stated that he could see the Committee working further on the Parks and Recreation, Energy and City-wide Neighborhoods Committees, along with helping to recruit people. Councilor Cook agreed and stated that the administrative ordinances, along with other ordinances, need to be reviewed to make sure they are where they need to be. Suzanne Woodland states that there will be several ordinances coming forward for City Council's consideration over the next term. Councilor Cook stated that she has been considering an additional committee - Diversity Equity and Inclusion type of Committee as this was raised with her by a few different advocates around accessibility and who didn't feel they had a separate voice or space to discuss

controversial issues around equity and inclusion, i.e., concerns around Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day and bringing people together to discuss in a meaningful way across communities. Is it reasonable to have a new committee at the city level that thinks about these things or is it another Committee? Councilor Tabor asked if it is a policy and how would we make it happen? Suzanne Woodland stated that this could be discussed at a City Council orientation / goal-setting meeting. She also stated that the Portsmouth Public Library has been working to set up forums for some of these difficult conversations and that they could come and speak to the Committee regarding their programming and efforts.

Councilor Lombardi made a comment about the Levenson Room at the Library, it is a great space and people often feel more comfortable there to speak out than in the Council Chambers and asked if the technology be upgraded in the Levenson Room. Suzanne Woodland stated that the City is reviewing how we might best utilize that space and if there are any technology upgrades that need to be done to continue to provide a safe space for free exchange in a respectful manner.

Councilor Cook stated that the Rules will come to Council in January and the Committee will look at these and that it is healthy to review every 2 years. The public dialogue format did not seem to be effective at getting more engagement in the community and might be reconsidered. There may also be Charter changes to consider.

5. Public Comment – No public comment.
6. Announcements – The next Committee meeting will be on December 4, 2023. Councilor Lombardi stated that presentation of the Archive Committee will be on November 14, 2023 in the Levenson Room at 6:00PM.
7. Adjournment – Councilor Lombardi moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Tabor. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:24AM.

DRAFT Meeting Minutes prepared by:

Barbara J. Zulkiewicz

Minutes approved: December 4, 2023