

MINUTES
City Council Legislative Subcommittee
Thursday, September 8, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room A, 1 Junkins Ave., Portsmouth, NH

In attendance: Mayor McEachern; Assistant Mayor Kelley; Councilor Tabor; Councilor Cook; City Manager Conard; Assistant City Attorney Ferrini;

I. Greeting: Mayor McEachern began the meeting at 3:01 p.m. with a roll call

II. Approval of March 28, 2022 Minutes

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved and Councilor Tabor seconded a motion to approve the March 28, 2022 minutes. The motion passed by **unanimous vote** of the Committee.

III. Review and discussion of the New Hampshire Municipal Association's Proposed Legislative Principles and 2023-2024 Proposed Legislative Policy Positions

The Committee discussed the 11 NHMA Proposed Legislative Principles.

Councilor Tabor moved and Councilor Cook seconded a motion to approve and recommend the Proposed Legislative Principles to the City Council. The motion passed by **unanimous vote** of the Committee.

The Committee discussed the 2023-2024 Proposed Legislative Policy Positions. The Committee discussed supporting the integrity of local decisions, reasonable cost recovery under the right to know law, the authority of municipalities to set reasonable conditions on public meetings and supporting a redistricting Commission in light of recent redistricting. The Committee discussed definition of the term evergreen clause in contracts and confirmed public employees lacked the right to strike.

Assistant Mayor Kelley raised concerns regarding the NHMA policy that lists specific types of state funding if cannabis is legalized. The Committee supported generally the legalization of cannabis and for the state to provide funding for costs associated with legalization but took exception to the specific use of local funds listed under Substance Use, Prevention & Response, NHMA opposes: third bullet, second sub-bullet, (i) – (iv). The Committee raised concerns regarding the perceptions and assumptions embedded in funding list. The Committee discussed removing these funding restrictions (i) – (iv) at the NHMA policy conference and if that was not possible, not supporting those specific funding restrictions under that Substance Use, Prevention & Response policy.

The Committee continued to discuss the NHMA policies by discussing obstacles to using the income approach for assessing property values in abatement appeals and acknowledged that legislation last year lowered the interest rate for tax abatements to four percent. The Committee further discussed supporting policies that would restore revenue sharing, the state's obligation to distribute state meals and rooms tax revenue and state aid to municipalities and the restoration of the state's share of employer's contribution to employee's retirement.

The Committee discussed that the NHMA policies do not take a position on education funding. The Committee further noted that there has been an improved expansion of NHMNA policies that support energy, sustainability and water resources.

The Committee discussed the various issues regarding affordable housing and the NHMA policy opposing state mandate requiring municipalities to allow specific type of housing. Councilor Cook raised her objections to the NHMA policy regarding opposing statewide changes to zoning regulations. She noted the positive results from the ADU legislation and felt that many in the community would support some of the statewide zoning changes opposed by NHMA last year like tiny houses and multiple units in single family dwellings. She said sometimes there is a need for state housing mandates in order to move forward on housing issues. She also expressed concerns about the City's ability to require construction of workforce housing without supporting legislation. Councilor Tabor noted that permitting multiple units in single family dwellings should be debated locally. After discussion, the majority of Committee members supported the NHMA policy to oppose state mandates requiring municipalities to allow specific types of housing. Mayor McEachern noted that the issue of workforce housing is easier to change on a state level and we currently lack the ability to require a percentage of units for workforce housing. The Committee agreed to schedule a meeting with our delegates after the primary to discuss introducing legislation on the subject.

Councilor Cook moved and Assistant Mayor Kelley voted to strike the word "for items such as the following" and the funding restrictions in the third bullet, second sub-bullet (i) (ii) (iii) and (iv) under the Substance Use, Prevention & Response. The motion passed by **unanimous vote** of the Committee.

Assistant Mayor Kelley moved and Councilor Cook seconded a Motion to approval all Legislative Policies as amended as long as they conform with the City's Legislative Principles. The motion passed by **unanimous vote** of the Committee.

IV. Suspension of the Rules to allow public comment

The Mayor suspended the rules to allow public comment by Jeff Grimbalsky, a representative of the Carpenter's Union to introduce himself and explain that his organization brings legislative issues to municipalities that support construction workers.

V. Discussion of legislative issues of interest for the City of Portsmouth for next session

The Committee agreed to schedule a meeting with our delegation after the primary to discuss their positions on legislative issues and legislative issues of interest to the City.

VI. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.