



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2024

11:00 a.m.

Conference Room A

City Hall Complex, 1 Junkins Avenue

Portsmouth, NH 03801

1. **Welcome and Call to Order at 11:02.**
2. **Roll Call:** Assistant Mayor Kelley, Councilor Cook, Councilor Tabor, and Councilor Lombardi all present. Also present, Suzanne M. Woodland, Deputy City Manager / Regulatory Counsel (DCM).
3. **Review and approval of the Minutes from the February 5, 2024 meeting:** Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to approve the February 5, 2024 meeting minutes. Seconded by Councilor Tabor. **All in favor.**
4. **Charter Amendment:** Councilor Cook summarized the opinion and recommendation of the Legal Department to add an explanatory note to the Charter. That proposed language is as follows:

“The law is clear that where there is a direct conflict between State law, the City Charter and City Ordinances, the priorities between them in interpretation would be generally determined in that order. However, because State law, the City Charter and City Ordinances have developed independently over centuries and are continuing to do so it is necessary to analyze the timing of the adoption of any particular State law, Charter or Ordinance provision to ascertain whether apparent contradictions cannot be understood to coexist, lawfully. Such determinations are made as necessary, in the first instance, by the City Legal Department.”

Motion by Councilor Lombardi, seconded by the Assistant Mayor to recommend to the City Council that the Explanatory Note be added to the Charter. **All in favor.**

Councilor Cook will bring this recommendation forward on the next City Council agenda.

Committee members discussed training for members of the public who serve on boards, committees, and commissions. Item to be brought up at the next City Council meeting for potential referral back to the Governance Committee.

5. **Public Comment:** Susan Sterry of Portsmouth attended the meeting via Zoom. Her comments were regarding the Charter and specifically the language in Article 3 – Officers & Employees, Section 3.14, 3.15. She felt that the language regarding the appeals process was not very defined and the language in this section could be made clearer. She suggested that a future presentation be given which would be helpful in order to clarify

the process.

6. **Adjournment:** The Councilor Cook moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:35AM. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi. **All in favor.**

Meeting Minutes prepared by:

Barbara J. Zulkiewicz

Minutes approved: March 11, 2024