



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, September 29, 2025
City Hall Complex, Council Chambers
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m.

2. **Roll Call:** Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley; Councilor Katherine Cook; Councilor Vincent Lombardi; and Councilor John Tabor were present.

Staff: Carl Weber, Deputy City Manager; Susan Morrell, City Attorney; and Jane Ferrini, Senior Assistant City Attorney

3. **Review and Approval of the Minutes of the September 15, 2025 meeting:**
Councilor Tabor moved to accept the minutes of the September 15, 2025 meeting. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi. All in favor. The motion was approved.

4. **Draft Encumbrance Ordinance:** The Committee reviewed edits to the ordinance per discussion at the September 15, 2025 meeting. These edits included the addition of a new section in the ordinance on Arts and Culture banners at the suggestion of the Arts and Cultural Commission. A section on special events was also added. Attorney Ferrini provided a summary of the banner ordinance language and stated that the banners would be similar to a flag and would require an annual permit fee and fee. City Attorney Morrell stated that the banner policy will be discussed the next City Council meeting and recommended that it be referenced and included as part of the encumbrance ordinance. Council Cook stated that the City Council policy will direct the City Manager to establish a banner program with guidelines. Councilor Lombardi asked who would be able to request permission to hang a banner and added that the selection of applicants would need to be broad enough to allow not only non-profits, but civic organizations, as well. The Committee discussed the inclusion of education and civic institutions, as well as arts and cultural non-profit, or affiliated with a non-profit, would be eligible to apply for selection. Assistant Mayor Kelley inquired if a time limit of 30-45 days seemed reasonable and recommended that there should be a break between hanging a different banner. There was discussion that a manageable number of banners should be determined, along with specific areas or zones, time frames, and events. Input from the Public Works Department will be obtained to help determine these criteria and as the City light posts would be utilized, determine if DPW would have the bandwidth to hang the banners due to potential damage by others, along with the cost to do so.

Special Events Permits: Attorney Ferrini provided a summary of this addition to the encumbrance ordinance. She stated special event permits are being created in

order to standardize what and how special event information is submitted to the Council, along with streamlining the special event process, making it easier for the applicants to navigate the process and the staff to issue permits. It is anticipated that these permits will be available on the OpenGov permit system in the near future.

The Committee discussed presenting the first section of the revised Encumbrance Ordinance to the City Council for a first reading on Monday, October 20, 2025 in order to have final reading and approval by the end of the year.

5. **Other Business:** None
6. **Public Comment:** None
7. **Announcements:** The next Governance Committee meeting was scheduled for Monday, October 6, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. in Conference Room A.
8. **Adjournment:** Councilor Lombardi moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Assistant Mayor Kelley. All in favor. Motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

Meeting Minutes prepared by:
Barbara Zulkiewicz

Minutes approved: October 6, 2025