



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, October 6, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.  
City Hall Complex, Conference Room A  
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth, NH

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m.
2. **Roll Call:** Assistant Mayor Joanna Kelley; Councilor Katherine Cook; Councilor Vincent Lombardi; and Councilor John Tabor were present.  
  
Staff: Susan Morrell, City Attorney; and Jane Ferrini, Senior Assistant City Attorney
3. **Review and Approval of the Minutes of the September 27, 2025 meeting:**  
Councilor Tabor moved to accept the minutes of September 27, 2025. Seconded by Councilor Lombardi. All in favor. The motion was approved.
4. **Draft Encumbrance Ordinance:** Attorney Ferrini summarized the final revisions to the draft encumbrance ordinance which were discussed and agreed to by the Committee at the September 27, 2025 Committee meeting. The revised draft ordinance showing the redline of the changes was shown on the screen.

Discussion ensued regarding the creation of a policy regarding cultural banners. City Attorney Morrell provided information on research she conducted on other city's banner programs and recommended that consideration should be taken to avoid any public forum issues by having the banners donated to the City, much like the public art in the City, and would go through a similar approval process. Discussion ensued regarding cost of installation of the banners either by the City or contractor with a set fee. The affixing of brackets to City light posts could also cause wear and tear to the poles causing maintenance issues which would ultimately involve the DPW. It was noted that the light posts cost \$5,000.00. Councilor Tabor suggested that there are many details that still need to be determined and suggested that a working group be created, to include the DPW, Parks, Arts and Cultural Commission and others, to provide input and review the overall program. In the meantime, the Committee could move to create a policy to establish the banner program and then the guidelines and details could come later. It was agreed that the banner language would be removed from the encumbrance ordinance and would then fall under the Arts and Cultural Commission's purview. The draft of the revised encumbrance ordinance will be presented to the City Council at the October 20, 2025 meeting.

Discussion continued regarding revising the language regarding the appeals process and the Committee agreed that these matters should only be brought to the City Council only by applicants who have been denied a permit or license through the

administrative review process.

Councilor Cook asked for a motion to approve the encumbrance ordinance as amended before presenting it to the City Council. Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to accept the encumbrance ordinance as amended. Seconded Councilor Lombardi. All in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

Council Tabor asked for clarification regarding the special events permit language which states that “City Council approval is required generally, not for the issuance of the Special Event permit by the City Manager or designee”. He asked what the line of distinction was between the City Council and City Manager approvals. Attorney Ferrini stated that the City Council approves the event and then gives the City Manager the authority to act and that she would revise the language to make this clearer. Assistant Mayor Kelley revised her motion to approve the encumbrance ordinance with the revision to revise the language regarding the special event permit approval. Councilor Lombardi seconded the revised motion. All in favor. The motion was approved.

5. **Other Business:** None
6. **Public Comment:** None
7. **Announcements:** The next meeting of the Governance Committee will be on Monday, November 10, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.
8. **Adjournment:** Assistant Mayor Kelley moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Councilor Tabor. All in favor. Motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Meeting Minutes prepared by:  
Barbara Zulkiewicz

Minutes approved: December 15, 2025