

**Minutes**  
**City Council Legislative Subcommittee**  
**Monday, March 16, 2026, at 8:30 a.m.**  
**Conference Room A, 1 Junkins Ave., Portsmouth, NH**

1. Greeting: Mayor McEachern began the meeting at 8:35a.m. In attendance were Mayor McEachern, Assistant Mayor Kelley, Councilor Cook and Councilor Flynn. Staff in attendance were Jane Ferrini, Senior Assistant City Attorney. School Board Chair Lisa Rapaport also attended the meeting.
2. Approval of February 9, 2026 Minutes: Assistant Mayor Kelley moved and Councilor Cook seconded a motion to approve the February 9, 2026 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Bills the City has registered in support or opposition: The Committee reviewed the packet of emails sent to each Committee member regarding the City's position on the bill listed.
4. Mayors' Roundtable update: The Mayor noted that the Mayors' Roundtable discussed the SchoolCare issue. He also stated that NHMA does not take any position on education funding because they have members with different views on education funding issues. The Mayors are discussing creating a League of Cities to specifically address education funding and other legislative issues that impact cities. The Mayor will advise the Committee once the League has been created.
5. Association of Counties Legislative Conference update: Attorney Ferrini relayed that she attended the Association of Counties Legislative Conference. She stated that the presenters discussed the State's balanced budget created by the delinquent tax program that waived penalties. A County Commissioner discussed HB 1804, a bill that would have made the administration of schools the responsibility of the county. One County Commissioner said he was not consulted about the bill, and he was going to testify against it.
6. Discussion of NHMA's request for proposed legislative policies to be submitted by April 17, 2026 for consideration at NHMA's Legislative Policy Conference on September 11, 2026: The Committee discussed the NHMA policy submission process and will discuss policy proposals at the next meeting. The Mayor discussed potential policies regarding amending NHMA's current policy opposing statewide zoning changes if the bills were revenue neutral or would not downshift costs on to municipalities and another policy on homestead exemptions.
7. Discussion of priorities for testimony on legislative issues of interest to the City: The Committee discussed the updated bill list from February 9, 2026 and noted that many of those bills were not crossing over. The Committee also discussed some bills listed on the new bill list dated March 12, 2026:

- The Committee discussed HB 1010. The bill as introduced was a bill to repeal the new law that permits residential development in commercial zones. The bill was amended not to repeal the law, but to provide planning boards with the ability to deny residential development if roadways, water and sewer are insufficient. Councilor Cook noted that planning boards already have those powers. She further noted that Newington had on their warrant the rezoning of many parcels to industrial, but she was not sure it passed. Attorney Ferrini noted that she did not hear back from either Representative Meuse or Representative Mandelbaum on why they sponsored bills that would limit or repeal the law permitting residential development in commercial zones for Newington.
  - The Committee agreed to change HB 1064 from track to oppose. This bill would increase liability limits for all NH municipalities.
  - The Committee also discussed HB 1359 and HB 1360, the two NHMA bills. Both of these bills died due to no action taken by the required deadline.
  - The Committee discussed the three risk pool bills: SB 605 was voted ITL (the bill that was sponsored by Senator Perkins Kwoka to extend the ability to pay risk pool assessments to 36 months); SB 661 has not yet made it out of Committee, and; HB 1491 (a bill similar to the bill the House passed last year that creates two types of risk pools and governance provisions) has passed the House and is headed to the Senate.
  - The Committee, with School Board Chair Lisa Rapaport, discussed school funding and school choice bills. School funding bill HB 1815 would change funding by shifting the State's responsibility to a "shared responsibility" with local municipalities and would make the State only partially responsible, along with local municipalities for school funding. The bill only obligates the State to pay a percentage "computed towards adequacy", and provides that education funding is a political, not a legal issue. The Committee discussed that the bill reverses Rand and supports the AG's appeal of Rand. Chair Rapaport noted there were four hundred speakers at the hearing on HB 1815 on Friday, and all speakers opposed the bill, except the two sponsors. The Committee passed the bill, and it will be on the regular calendar. The Committee also discussed that no action has yet been taken on the school choice bills.
8. Adjournment. The Committee set the next meeting for Monday, April 13, 2026 at 8:30. The meeting adjourned at 9:12 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Jane Ferrini