



CITY OF BANGOR

Government Operations Committee Monday, February 2, 2026

Committee Members: Beck, Fish, Deane, Walker, Mallar

Non-Committee Members: Carson, Leonard, Hawes (Chair), Faloon

Staff Present: C. O'Donnell, C. Lear, J. Gunderman

Opened at 5:43 p.m.

1. Order: Accepting the 2026 Annual Report for the Advisory Committee on Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights

Committee Chair Katie Bryden presented the report for the Advisory Committee on Racial Equity, Inclusion and Human Rights and outlines the work that was accomplished in 2025. She explained that it includes engaging with the community and policy and procedures and how we worked to elevate community concerns. She stated that the Committee began restructuring leadership this year because there were a couple of members not able to fulfill their commitment and there was no mechanism to remove them, resulting in a lack of quorum for many meetings. Looked at the ordinance to outline how we could better evaluate the attendance and discussed having a secretary as a position.

The committee has had a table at Bangor Pride with opportunity for feedback. Chair Brydon explained that a couple of individuals come to the table to ask us to bring forward some ideas or practices that we could deliver to the city council. She also shared that they tried to meet with different collaborators and some city leaders regarding what a safe outdoor space might look like. The Committee is also trying to evaluate the best recommendations that we could present, which were presented to Council on January 5.

Key goals are hearing from citizens, helping to elevate the things for Councilors and staff as to what we can do to help make sure the citizens of Bangor feel heard, have a place to share their needs and then evaluate the best way to bring that forward to be considered by Council.

Councilor Beck made a motion accept this report and to move this forward to full council; seconded by Councilor Walker-no objection.

2. Ordinance: Amending the Code of the City of Bangor to Repeal Article VI of Chapter 23, Which Established the Advisory Committee on Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights

City Manager Lear came forward to introduce this item and Councilor Beck read the proposed ordinance aloud before pointing out that it would essentially prevent the committee from existing by repealing the Committee.



CITY OF BANGOR

There was discussion about this item came forward, the intent behind it, and the purpose of the committee including what is currently in ordinance. Many Councilors gave their opinions related to the committee, some expressing support and others concern with the Committee.

Assistant City Manager O'Donnell discussed how the agenda is decided and implemented. The Committee takes referrals from Council (as well as staff). There is a meeting with Chair and Vice Chair of the committee a week or two before the meeting to set the agenda with items rolling over meeting to meeting, as needed.

Councilor Fish made a motion to recommend tabling this discussion; seconded by Councilor Mallar. Motion was doubted and there was a roll call vote with two voting to table and three against. Motion failed.

Councilor Walker made a motion to move it to the full Council; seconded by Councilor Deane. Motion was doubted and there was a roll call vote with two voting in favor and three against. Motion failed, item will not move to full Council.

- 3. Order: Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Subcontract with Maine Mental Health Connection's Together Place Peer Run Recovery Center to Receive up to \$50,000 from the State of Maine Overdose Response Pilot Grant.**

Nomination from Councilor Deane to stand in for Councilor Beck who has a conflict with this item on the agenda. Motion was seconded without any doubt being brought. Councilor Beck left the room.

Jen Gunderman, Director of Public Health & Community Services, provided an overview of this item and shared that a few weeks ago, there was a vote to approve funds for the Overdose Response team. This Order would allow a contract with Together Place to employ one of the individuals who are part of the Overdose Response Team. This contract has been going on for many years and is one way the City works with partners with expertise in these areas. She stated that she's asking for approval.

In response to a Councilor concern, Director Gunderman explained that the funding is from the State and comes with strict fiscal and programmatic reporting. Councilor Mallar has requested to see reports regarding this funding in the past.

Councilor Faloon made a motion to move it to the full council; seconded by Councilor Walker; no objection.

Councilor Deane turned the meeting back to Council Beck.

- 4. Public Health Update**



CITY OF BANGOR

Director Jen Gunderman reviewed the memo in depth.

She started with the HIV/HCV outbreak. As of 1/26/26 the CDC is reporting 36 cases with one additional case since memo was prepared. She shared the Federal CDC team was in Bangor for about two weeks and during their time here they performed qualitative interviews with people in the impacted population, people who are part of the outbreak, and people who are not part of the outbreak but at risk for transmission. They made a lot of observations regarding how we are doing and did some education while they were here.

Reducing stigma is a critical part of this work. They mentioned that there are opportunities for improving system efficiency. She mentioned that there is no additional funding being received for this HIV/HCV outreach work and that they are trying to offer resources that make the most sense based on the high-impact, low-resource model.

Next update was around syringe service programs (SSP). There have been some questions around how syringe service programs came to be around Bangor. An entity that wants to be an SSP must put an application into the Maine CDC, they review the application through their review committee but the City is not involved. There are currently three brick & mortar SSP, Wabanaki Public Health & Wellness over on Hancock St, Needlepoint Sanctuary now has two different locations Ohio St. location and the church. These are the only CDC approved SSPs in the City of Bangor. Last legislative session new bill was passed that will change what SSP services will look like across the State.

She explained that SSP services are more than needle exchange, they are also education, referrals, collecting the needles and HIV/Hep C testing. Regarding the needle exchange it used to be one for one but that changed over COVID a person can receive up to 100 needles at a time. There was additional discussion about locations, and the future of Public Health potentially filling in as an SSP to address gaps but don't currently have a clear understanding. It was explained that the oversight of the SSPs is done by Maine CDC.

Director Gunderman also shared updated on federal funding including a Maine Continuum of Care Rental Assistance Program and a SAMHSA situation that happened on 1/14, which would have cut funding immediately for several programs which would have caused loss of funding and staff if it had happened. By end of day there was bipartisan support to get those programs back up and running.

She shared an update on the maternal and child public health nursing program. The public health nurses have been providing home visits for many, many years but concerned with funding source. Looking at a billing process for those lactation consults for those that have insurance.

Lastly, she reviewed the numbers provided in the memo regarding warming center statistics.

5. Ordinance: Amending the Code of the City of Bangor to Create a Standing Legislative Committee



CITY OF BANGOR

City Manager Lear explained this would add to the Council's standing committee roster the committee that was discussed in the goal setting section and then again after the meeting with our legislative delegation. This committee would consider all items of interest happening at the State level in Bangor, liaison with the legislative delegation and would potentially seek sponsorship of legislation that's in the City's interest. There was discussion about the process.

Councilor Fish made a motion to recommend approval, Councilor Deane seconded. No objection.

6. Ordinance: Amending the Code of the City of Bangor to Create a Standing Committee on Homelessness and Affordable Housing

This item was brought to the committee a couple of months back and there was discussion regarding formulation of the committee. There was a draft committee on homelessness and Councilor Beck had a draft standing committee on housing. There was some very vague direction as how to combine those two concepts. City Manager Lear drafted a 15-member standing committee that attempts to marry those two concepts. No changes to the makeup of the committee but the scope of the committee was borrowed from Councilor Beck.

There was discussion section by section of the proposed formulation of a Standing Committee. Further discussion of this item will occur at a special Gov' Ops meeting on Feb. 18.

7. Order: Authorizing an Update to the Public Use of City Hall Property

Asst. City Manager O'Donnell provided an overview of this item. This policy was in great need of update as the current policy is from 1996. Most recently the renovations of the Council Chambers created a need to update this policy, particularly to include the Paul Bunyan Room to be used by non-profits, civic organizations and other governmental entities. List of what that priority looks like and the there is a longstanding charge of \$25/hr of use. We are recommending that it be \$50/hr for afterhours use due to staff time. It would also add language around the approval process and what that looks like requiring that they sign off on an agreement making sure the understanding of liability perspective if something were to be damaged that there is insurance coverage for that. The policy also addressed reasons for denial of the room. It was noted that weddings performed by the City Clerk's office should also be allowed as it could be considered a gathering.

The policy also speaks about postings and that no outside entity should be allowed to post inside City Hall. There were concerns discussed around protesting on the steps of the City Hall. Also discussed listing specific groups that are allowed to use other spaces in City Hall.

Councilor Fish made a motion to recommend to full Council; seconded by Councilor Deane-no objection.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.