

2011 Government Operations Committee Meeting Minutes

(Note: this is a *partial listing from 07/12/11 – end of year*)

Table of Contents

Government Operations Committee Meeting Minutes for:

- [July 12th, 2011](#)
- [September 13th, 2011](#)
- [October 11th, 2011](#)
- [November 15th, 2011](#)
- [November 29th, 2011](#)
- [December 27th, 2011](#)

Government Operations Committee

July 12, 2011

Minutes

Council Members: Blanchette, Gratwick, Longo, Bronson, Palmer

Staff: Farrar, McNeil, Bradley, Willette

Other: Dennis Marble, Bangor Area Homeless Shelter
John Rubino, V.P., Husson College

1. Proposed Transit Agreement between BAT Community Connector and Husson University

Joe McNeil, Bus Superintendent, explained that the proposed agreement is similar to the agreement between the University of Maine and EMCC (Hogan Road.) Some studies have been done and a contract developed that is mutually agreeable to both parties and allowing for changes along the way if necessary. McNeil's looking to begin with this fall semester and a representative from Husson College John Rubino, Vice President was in attendance to answer any questions.

Gratwick asked how McNeil arrived at the figure of \$10,000. Was it based on number of rides? Is there any way to be sure that it will be fair to the City and to Husson?

Joe McNeil responded to Gratwick stating they ran surveys at certain times of the year to track how many people were traveling to Husson and how many were getting dropped off at Husson. Also factored into it was a usage for passengers navigating beyond the borders of Husson. The City of Bangor will not be affected by this, and it will be a great marketing tool for Husson.

Palmer commented that Husson has been a part of the Bangor community since 1898. He applauds this decision to move forward with this agreement.

Responding to Blanchette, Rubino said that the student government brought this idea to the administration. Husson thought that it was exciting and moving in the right direction and wants to offer this as an opportunity to our students, faculty and staff to ride the bus.

Palmer made a comment that he would like to see more of this type of agreement with the BAT service in downtown Bangor. Blanchette added that it may be a way of encouraging folks to change their way of transportation.

McNeil recommended the proposed agreement move to full Council. Longo moved staff recommendation on Item 1. The motion was seconded and approved.

2. Update on Homeless Initiative and Strategic Plan

Rosie Bradley (Community and Economic Development) began with an update on the Homeless Initiative Project. The City pulled together a group of service and housing providers along with health and community service and community development leaders to look at creating a local plan to end homelessness in Bangor. Currently there is a State of Maine plan, a Federal plan and the City would like to add a local plan. The group has done some data collection reviewing such things as duplication of services, available resources, and possible gaps or barriers involved. One of the first goals is housing for the homeless. It is extremely important for the homeless to have an address as a start in changing their lives. Permanent housing will help them to become stable, and hopefully obtain employment. The group will also meet with landlords. Bangor has a lot of sub standard housing and GA vouchers that pay for some of those. They are trying to come up with an opportunity to improve that. They are working with case managers to continue the support services once they do get placed, and are also looking at moving Park Woods to an asset for the city, rather than a liability to the city.

Gratwick questioned why Park Woods is currently considered a liability rather than an asset? Bradley answered that she feels the issue is that it should become self-sustaining with some improvement in place. There is not a lot of overhead and she would like to see management adjustments made as far as rents, screening of applicants, and great transitional planning with case managers.

Gratwick mentioned that the problem is not just housing, but there's another realm that is brought into that. There are people with mental and physical illnesses or substance abuse, etc. What are role models, best practices, are there other cities that have done this well?

Bradley replied: “We’re shooting for no homeless people”. Of course, there will be that component of folks with issues such as mental illness, etc. Part of our research gathering is looking at models across the country where they have similar programs. The group is still in the working stages and have more information to gather.

Longo asked how many people in Bangor are homeless. In a year’s time, how many people change their lives vs. those that stay in that same situation? Who are the stakeholders and what are their roles? Shawn Yardley responded that in Bangor on any given night, the shelters are full. In Portland, they are overloaded to the point where they set up cots side by side to fit all those in need. We are trying to look at it comprehensively. The other problem is that we compete for Federal Grants with places like Los Angeles where they have 24,000 people every night in L.A. homeless shelters, and a total of 54,000 in the county surrounding Los Angeles. There are limited federal dollars and competing with those kinds of places makes it difficult. In Maine, Bangor is competing with Portland which has 250-300 people a night in shelters. The money may go where the biggest problem is. Bradley said we need to look at things like; is the current housing stock in Bangor being used to its maximum? Are we subsidizing sub standard housing with some of our policies? When Maine Care policies change, that often changes the needs of the individuals. We are doing everything we can to get as much funding as possible.

Dennis Marble, Bangor Area Homeless Shelter, said that on average in Bangor on a given year, they shelter approximately 2,500 people overnight. Another 3,000 utilize shelters during the day or in crisis services, phone calls, questions, etc. Bangor has a lot of transients and it’s not just Bangor residents. We need to try to design different programs at different levels around the needs of the various types of situations around housing and services offered. Are we maximizing what we do locally? We can’t mandate what services we receive, but if we do the groundwork here we can advocate as a community showing our work efforts and what is needed from grants.

Palmer encouraged a separate workshop on just this topic of homelessness in Bangor. He mentioned boats on shore as a housing option..... just something to explore as they’ve done in New Orleans.

#3. Skate Park Recreation Plans and Discussion of Required Funding

Tracy Willette, Parks and Rec. Director, said that progress is moving forward with the new arena and requested that \$55,000. (estimate) be used to move the current skate park to create a new skate park across from city owned land on Maine Avenue. The current plan is to take apart the pieces that we have and relocate them to the new site. There are permitting issues that need to be resolved, but staff is currently working on those. We want to move as quickly as we can to relocate the skate park to get it up and going again. In addition, we are working with a group of adults and youth who use the park and would like to include some concrete events at some point at the new site. We would like to move forward awaiting approval of pending funds.

Palmer expressed his support of the relocation. He also wanted to make clear that this new site will be a permanent site that should be zoned as a public park.

Bronson stated that he is unclear and not familiar with the City's Improvement Reserve. Bob Farrar, Asst. City Manager, responded that the improvement reserve has existed for many years as a fund for capital improvement items such as this. Money goes into that account from a couple of sources. Council appropriated some funds from this year's budget into that account. Part of the PERC credit that the City receives each year gets appropriated into that account to help fund the capital needs of Bangor. As needed, it is appropriated out of the account for particular projects.

Responding to Longo, Willette explained that the estimate included only creating an asphalt pad of approximately 15,000 square feet. This is the same size as the pad we currently have. Going forward, there will be an opportunity to apply for grants to expand the park such as adding concrete areas.

Palmer made a motion to move to staff recommendation for the funding of the project. Bronson seconded. Blanchette called it a vote. Farrar noted that an appropriation Resolve will be prepared for the City Council Agenda

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Government Operations Committee
September 13, 2011
Minutes

Councilors: Blanchette, Bronson, Gratwick, Longo, Palmer
Staff: Farrar, Yardley, Cammack, Nicklas, Dubois
Others: Hermon Fire Chief Pipes

1. Extension of Lease with Community Health and Counseling Services for Four Units at Park Woods

Nicklas noted that the proposed lease extension with Community Health and Counseling Services would increase the monthly rent amount for each unit from \$300 to \$550 for a term through December 31, 2011. At that time, the parties will re-evaluate the lease to determine if it will continue and under what terms and conditions. The lease itself refers to a one-time payment to be made to the City. Because the lease not in place by July of this year, a lump sum of \$3,000 will be paid by CHCS to the City for the months of July, August and September. Responding to Longo, Yardley explained that the City sublets to CHCS and the clientele served is through CHCS. A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. In response to Gratwick, Yardley said that the apartments would be repainted every five years by the City. Yardley said that in between time CHCS will be responsible for the maintenance of the property. Gratwick spoke about the need of good tenant standards. The Committee vote was unanimous.

2. Discussion of Recently Enacted Election Law Impact on the City's Early Voting Process

The passage of LD 1376 made certain changes to the State's Election Law. This Legislation will have an impact on the City's early voting program. Dubois reviewed the impact and discussed options for consideration. There is now a three-day cut off for requesting absentee ballots, which falls on the Thursday preceding each election. Ballots can continue to be submitted up until the close of business on Election Day as always but requests will not be honored after the close of business on Thursday. Other pieces of the Legislation were a two business day cut off for voter registration activities including Election Day. Coupled with that were provisional ballots which are necessary if there is no Election Day registration. Because of the successful People's Veto effort, it will be on the November ballot so that piece of the Legislation is suspended from going into effect. Also the provisional ballot piece is suspended because it is only necessary with no Election Day registration. This affects the long-established schedule for early voting which, more recently, has been one week prior to each election including the day before election. With the provision for a two business day cut off, that would mean that in-person absentee voting needs to cease at the close of business on Thursday prior to the Election.

For the upcoming Election, Dubois suggested that significant staffing and hours be available for early voting on Monday through Thursday from 8 am to 6 pm. She suggested that this standard schedule continue from here on out. For the 2013 Presidential Election, it could be extended to 7 or 8 pm. Responding to Palmer, Dubois said she has been with the City for almost 7 years and there has been no voter fraud of which she is aware. Palmer asked about Saturday voting. Dubois said that typically Saturday is the slowest day. Longo asked about extending the Thursday hours until 8 pm. Dubois said it is a possibility but it doesn't necessarily increase voter turnout. It only allows more convenience for voters. Ballots can be requested 45 days prior to each election. She spoke of the need for a consistent schedule from year to year. Bronson spoke of the need of informed voters. In response to Bronson, Dubois said she is looking for the Committee's decision on the Monday through Thursday, 8 am to 6 pm, early voting schedule prior to the Election. Responding to Gratwick, Dubois said the City of Bangor is unique and is the only municipality that staffs a separate polling place a week prior to the Election and offers in person absentee voting. Gratwick asked about provisional ballots. Dubois said that provisional ballots are coupled with same day registration. It is for the individual who shows up to vote, finds they are not on the voting list, and they are allowed to vote a provisional ballot. A form is required. The ballot is sealed in an envelope and held until the Clerk determines whether or not that ballot should be cast. A motion was made and seconded to continue with early voting as requested by the City Clerk.

Palmer spoke of making the voting process easy. Palmer applauded the efforts of the City Clerk's Office. Longo noted that Bangor's process should become a model for the state. Blanchette asked how the City will inform the electorate of the changes, and suggested PSA announcements on the government channel and with the local media. She mentioned the lack of voting on the Friday before the Election Day. Blanchette asked if an absentee ballot received on Friday would be processed. Dubois said that the law requires that no requests for absentee ballots be received after the close of business on Thursdays. Absentee ballots can continue be accepted in person or by mail. There are some emergency provisions; i.e. if an individual is suddenly incapacitated and hospitalized, a family member can come to City Hall, swear under oath and receive a ballot for the incapacitated family member or if an individual is called out of town at the last minute for work related purposes. Blanchette again stated that this needs to be made known to the citizenry. The vote was unanimous. Palmer noted that candidates and petitioners should understand the voting process and the public relations process.

3. Request to Donate Surplus Fire Department Ambulance to the Town of Hermon

Cammack introduced Hermon's Fire Chief Ray Pipes. Cammack said that the Town of Hermon has inquired whether the City of Bangor would consider donating its 2003 surplus ambulance to their Fire Department. With the recent acquisition of a replacement ambulance, Bangor Fire no longer has a need for this older ambulance. In the recent past, the City donated a surplus ambulance to Eastern Maine Community College for their use in a program at the College, and we have donated both an ambulance and fire engine to United Technology Center so this is not a unique request.

Responding to Palmer, Cammack estimated that the auction price for this piece of equipment would range between \$1,000 and \$3,000. Responding to Gratwick, the Fire Chief said the last rescue unit was purchased for \$119,000. The 119,000 miles is actual road mileage but that equipment idles a lot. He estimated another 35,000 to 40,000 could be added on top of the mileage for idling only. Pipes said that Hermon's use would be far less than Bangor's. Longo spoke of communities working together and asked if Bangor and Hermon have worked together in the past. Cammack noted that Bangor has a great relationship with all of its mutual aid partners. Hermon is mainly utilized for tanker shuttles. Bronson talked of a nominal price of a few hundred dollars for the unit. A motion was made and seconded to move staff's recommendation. The item will be placed on the upcoming City Council agenda. Hermon does not have a rescue unit and the service is provided by a private corporation. The subject unit would be provided as a backup. Blanchette noted that if area municipalities were able to have their own rescue vehicles that it would pay for itself in the long run, and Bangor would not be required to provide as much service to the surrounding communities. Gratwick spoke of the City's anti-idling policy. Farrar said there is a general anti-idling policy but it deals with non-emergency vehicles. Cammack noted that the mobile data and defibrillator units inside the units need to draw power at all times. If the vehicles are turned off, these units are not likely to restart. The vote was unanimous.

Committee adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Government Operations Committee
October 11, 2011
Minutes

Council Members: Blanchette, Gratwick, Durgin, Bronson
Staff: Farrar, Willette, Patti Dubois, Paul Nicklas

1. Request to Authorize the Parks and Recreation Department to Begin Efforts to Replace the Former Gazebo at Paul Bunyan Park

Councilor Blanchette announced that Councilor Longo is ill and unable to attend this meeting, therefore, Councilor Durgin will be substituting for Longo this evening. Willette stated that there is a group of people within the community that has started the process and effort to replace the gazebo that was formerly located at Paul Bunyan Park. The gazebo was used for many things including and primarily the Bangor Band as well as serving a variety of functions and activities throughout its existence. It was built through the efforts of three Bangor service organizations; the Lions Club, the Kiwanis Club and the Rotary Club. After careful consideration, it was determined that the structure must be dismantled and rebuilt. Volunteers are more than willing to assist by fundraising and establishing a new location. The Parks and Recreation Department would like to request authorization from the Committee to work with this group to replace and relocate the gazebo. This would be similar to the process with the Community Garden and restoration of the Paul Bunyan statue.

Gratwick asked what a rough cost estimate would be. Willette responded that this group will be looking at various gazebos and their functionality before an estimate can be given. Gratwick asked for a ballpark figure. Willette estimated \$25,000. (This was the cost of the previous gazebo.) It could be as high as \$50,000. We want to place the gazebo where it will have the best chance of success long term and not impact the city parks or surrounding neighborhood. Gratwick suggested that local woodworkers be contacted as a way of professionally dressing up the gazebo as well as making it a community effort.

Durgin agreed with the idea of local woodworkers helping out with the new gazebo. Durgin also asked Willette about the status of the Skateboard Park. Willette said that he has been working with the folks at Public Works in preparation for a spring opening of the Skate Park.

Blanchette also commented on how the new gazebo could be part of Bangor's history by putting the community together to build the structure.

Bronson came in the meeting late, but asked if a new gazebo is necessary or could The Bangor Band use another location such as the Waterfront Amphitheater. Willette said that they are currently looking at options that include the Amphitheater. Bronson gave a closing comment that he wanted to see the arena fund give a nominal amount to the gazebo, but had hoped that most of the funds be gathered by fund raising. Blanchette added that she anticipates the Council will help in any way they can to go forth with this project.

Gratwick moved to staff recommendation. Durgin seconded. Blanchette authorized staff to go forth with the replacement of the gazebo and declared it a vote.

2. Council Ordinance 11-301, Amending Chapter 14, City Elections, Section 14-5, Compensation of Elected Officials of the Code of the City of Bangor By Amending the Wage of Election Officials.

Nicklas stated that some City election workers are compensated for their time, and their rates are according to the current ordinance depending on their position at .50¢ to \$1.50 above minimum wage. The ordinance speaks of it pertaining to the Federal minimum wage. The State minimum wage is higher than the Federal. The proposed amendment would set compensation of election workers at a rate that is keyed to either the federal or state minimum wage. It would be the aforementioned .50¢ to \$1.50 above (depending on position) either the federal or state, whichever is higher. This would conform the ordinance to both law and practice.

Durgin asked about the language in the ordinance as it refers to compensation for wardens, ward clerks and ballot clerks. He asked what the difference is in a ward clerk vs. a ballot clerk. City Clerk Patti Dubois answered by explaining that the warden at the polls is in charge of the polls on Election Day. The ward clerk can take the place of the warden in the event that the warden needs to be away for a period of time. Ballot clerks and election clerks perform tasks on Election Day such as check in, distribution of ballots, and that sort of activity.

Assistant City Manager Bob Farrar explained that this issue came about as a result of an annual audit. The auditors recommended that the City make its practice concurrent with its ordinance. The change with the new ordinance would read federal or state, whichever is higher.

Durgin moved Staff Recommendation. It was seconded. Blanchette accepted a motion to adjourn.

Meeting closed at 5:20 p.m.

Government Operations Committee
November 15, 2011

Minutes

Councilors: Longo, Durgin, Gratwick, Sprague
Staff: Farrar, Yardley, Willette
Others: Shannon Small, Chair of the Dog Park Committee

1. Application for a Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Program Grant in the Amount of \$1,513,989 to Provide Housing and Support Services

Yardley explained that each year the City submits an application to HUD for funding under the Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Grant Program. Over the past 9 years the City has received over \$4.5 million, which has been leveraged well over double that amount from local social service agencies. As part of this year's application under the Supportive Housing Program component, the City will request funding for an existing homeless youth outreach program at Shaw House, PCHC's Bridge program, OHI's supportive housing programs, and the Shelter Plus Care programs operated by the City of Bangor Health and Community Services Department. A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation to apply for the grant.

Responding to Durgin, Yardley said the effective date is fluid. It is determined by HUD but it should be within the current fiscal year. In response to Gratwick, Yardley said at one time the City administered the entire grant and each of these agencies had to submit through the City their reporting requirements. Over the past several years, it has changed. While the City is the applicant, when the grant is awarded the individual agencies work directly with HUD on both receiving the funding and reporting for it. The role of the Continuum of Care is that there are committees of local individuals that review last year's grant and whether the agencies are doing what they said they would do as well as to look at the community needs. Once the amount of money available is known, agencies will then apply to the Continuum of Care. There is a scoring committee made up of stakeholders that do not have a conflict of interest and who review all the applications and make a recommendation on how the available money is divided up. Responding to Sprague, Yardley said the regional organization is represented by Community Health and Counseling, OHI, Shaw House, Penobscot Community Healthcare. The meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at Dorothea Dix. The vote was unanimous. This item will be referred to the full City Council.

2. Annual Election Ballot for Municipal Review Committee Board of Directors

Formed in the late 1980's, the MRC assists in overseeing operations at the PERC Waste-to-Energy Facility in Orrington and represents municipal interests, including assets owned by communities. Farrar noted that each year three of the nine seats on the Municipal Review Committee Board of Directors expire. Charter municipalities elect the Directors. There are six candidates, 3 three-year terms and 1 one-year term. Farrar has served as a Director on the Board for more than 20 years and currently holds the

title of Treasurer. Of the candidates, Sophia Wilson has asked for the City's support. Staff's recommendation is to support Ms. Wilson. A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. Responding to Gratwick, Farrar said that John Chishom of Levant is the Chair and the Vice Chair is Greg Brown from Waterville. Gratwick noted that Farrar has one more year on the MRC Board and noted that he would like to fill Farrar's position at that time. In response to Longo, Farrar said the voting process is that each charter municipality has essentially one vote for each 100 tons of guaranteed annual tonnage. Bangor's guaranteed annual tonnage is 30,500 and computes to 305 votes. There is not an opportunity for write-in candidates. The vote was unanimous.

3. Update – Dog Park Establishment

Willette noted that in 2010 the City Council approved Parks and Recreation staff to work with a group of citizens and interested parties who had a goal to establish a Dog Park in Bangor. Council Order 10-89 authorized this effort, and Council Order 10-181 designated a selected site for the Park. A variety of locations were reviewed and ultimately through input of all involved, the parcel on the waterfront commonly referred to as The Round House site was chosen. Waterfront parcels are identified as development sites. The interested group has had some time constraint challenges and, in the meantime, the contractor doing the work for MDOT has used The Round House site for a staging area. Since then, the group has grown and has new leadership and renewed interest. Two fundraising events have taken place and a third event is in the planning stage. Willette said that this is similar to the Community Garden effort and the effort to restore the Paul Bunyan Statute. The Council has been receptive to these types of efforts.

Willette spoke of the Essex Woods site which was quite extensively reviewed and at one point had been identified as the primary location for the dog park prior to The Round House discussion. The group's intent is to take a phased approach with Essex Woods. Small said the group has some money saved and would like to continue with their fundraising efforts through the spring of 2012. They would like three dog yards. One for small dogs with a 4 ft high fence, doubled gated. There would be a training/time out yard and a large dog yard where the majority of dogs would play. The area is quite thick with trees and it would be beneficial to thin it out. Willette has suggested contacting the Forestry Department for solutions. Small mentioned contacting the UM Forestry Department to see if there is an interest in transplanting any of the trees. Any trees cut down and not used could be used for mulching purposes for the park, which would save money for the City instead of grass. Fundraising events could be held on site at the current PAL building at Essex Woods. Small has an estimate cost for fencing. Small and Sprague discussed the benefits of Essex Woods. Durgin clarified that the entire area of the dog park will be fenced. The maintenance of the area will be handled by the citizen volunteer group. Willette noted that there is limited lighting on the area, a flood light on the sliding hill and one on the PAL building. Willette said he had not discussed this with the Police Chief but would do so going forward after receiving feedback from the Government Operations Committee. The dog park hours would coincide with the City's park hours, sunrise to 10 pm.

Durgin made a motion to approve staff moving forward working with the Friends of Bangor Dog Park for fundraising and opening the dog park area. Willette noted that the first request this evening is to allow the group to move forward concentrating on the Essex Woods property. The Friends will start with a small dog area and proceed with a phase approach as fundraising permits to a larger area. Procedurally, Farrar suggested that if the Committee finds this approach acceptable that it would direct staff to prepare a Council Order essentially re-designating a new site.

Durgin said he was satisfied with the concept but had not heard anything about the impact on City funding. Willette said there would be no direct cost to the City. Small replied to Gratwick indicating the fence around the larger area will be 6 ft. in height. Gratwick asked questions about the locations suggested at Essex Woods and felt that the mountain bickers should be included in the process. Gratwick continued speaking but stepped away from the microphone. Longo explained that while off mic Gratwick asked about the other side of the road to the left. Willette said he would look at Gratwick's suggestions with the citizen group. Gratwick agreed to site but did want further discussion as to the specifics to be determined. Small said the group is very open to the design concept and more than willing to work with the City realizing that the park needs to be accessible to all users. Sprague asked about residential neighbors in the area. Small said the site is behind a church. All of the residential area is across the street on Essex Street. Willette noted that the Drew Lane development is quite removed from the site. There are two residences on Watchmaker Street. Sprague expressed concerns about noise and wanting to be sure that residents are notified. Small said the area is currently being used as a leash free area. There is also considerable traffic due to the sledding hill. Responding to Durgin, Small said the group is not a 501 C 3 organization. Willette said, as similar with the restoration of Paul Bunyan and Community Garden projects, the Finance Director Cyr established a trust and agency account. This one will be defined as Dog Park. Fundraising dollars are made payable to the City and are expended in that manner.

Durgin made a motion of staff recommendation to move forward with the Essex Woods site as the new location for the dog park. A Council Order will be drafted reflecting the change of location and revise the name of the current group. Sprague again asked that the neighborhood be contacted. Gratwick voted in opposition. He feels that the Committee needs to meet with neighborhood residents, bikers, walkers, etc. He also feels the Council should have a policy whereby they do site visits before voting. Longo agreed with resident contact. Longo voted in opposition as well. Willette said there are two options to either move forward or return with an update. It is the Committee's pleasure. Given the received valid comments, Farrar suggested that the staff will work through the comments and return to the Committee in two weeks with an update, with resident comments, and a Council site visit. With that in mind, Durgin withdrew his motion and agreed with Farrar's suggestion. Sprague withdrew his second of the motion. Longo clarified that the item will be postponed to a future meeting. Gratwick suggested a maximum of four weeks. Willette agreed. Small said she is more than willing to meet with the Council on site.

Adjourned at 5:48 pm.

Government Operations Committee
November 29, 2011

Minutes

Councilors: Hawes, Longo, Gallant, Durgin, Blanchette, Sprague, Baldacci
Staff: Farrar, Yardley, Conlow, Heitmann, Gastia
Others: Joe Pickering, Fran Loring, Dennis Marble

Hawes noted that items 2 and 3 would be covered first.

1. Request to Establish Regional Committee to Discuss the Future of the Dorothea Dix Facility

Councilor Baldacci had requested that a regional committee be established to discuss the future of the Dorothea Dix facility. This request follows recent discussions initiated by the State of Maine concerning the possible closure of the facility. Baldacci spoke about the 25% budget reduction facing the facility in 2012. The Legislature has approved a \$2.5M reduction of general funding that translates into approximately \$7M in total reduced funding when the federal matching monies are taken into account. The reduction will cause a decrease in maximum bed at the facilities and the outpatient services would be limited. The facility employs 280 staff and the reduction would eliminate 70 positions. Baldacci said he would like to see the force of the community, the region get behind the idea of offering an alternative vision to persuade Legislators and to make a case to them that the people in Bangor care.

Blanchette spoke of the importance of the Bangor City Council going on record to notify the Legislature that the City is taking this issue very seriously. Dorothea Dix cannot be downsized. She referred to the effectiveness of a prior formed group that dealt with methadone clinics in Bangor.

Gastia said it is his belief that the closing of Dorothea Dix will adversely affect law enforcement within the City and the region. With the reduction in funding for agencies, he finds that the Department's resources continue to diminish.

Durgin spoke of his background in dealing with the BMHI since 1966. At the hearing in Augusta last month, Durgin represented the Bangor City Council and make the plea to not close the facility but to redefine what keeping it open means. There are a number of alternatives to consider. He noted that Dorothea Dix is funded by the DHHS.

Pickering said that CHCS operated the joint in-patient program with the then BMHI. It was closed due to federal policy. He spoke of federal and state policies that are not integrated. He expressed concern that some decision will be made based on politics.

Longo spoke of fostering partnerships across the other five counties to help with a task force/committee.

Loring spoke of her nursing career at Bangor State Hospital in 1966. There is an assumption of resources being available in the community to help this population and they aren't. Cost shifting has nothing to do with cost saving. She indicated that when the State wishes to save money it shifts it to the police force, the community, to individual taxpayers. She urged the formation of a committee to look at solutions, not just identifying a problem, and to learn the history of the facility.

In response to Hawes, Yardley said the Public Health Advisory Board was created 4-5 years ago by City Ordinance around the impetus of preventive health issues and is part of the State's efforts to have a statewide public health infrastructure. He spoke of the potential of Dorothea Dix becoming a subcommittee of the Board. Hawes commended the Board and said that that the Board's meetings are not televised and people aren't aware of their valid hard work. Durgin agreed with the subcommittee concept as the PHAB's membership reaches out to all agencies having a stake in the issue.

Marble agreed with the PHAB's involvement by forming a subcommittee. He spoke of the need for additional members other than those currently serving on the PHAB.

Baldacci felt that a meeting of the Government Operations Committee and the PHAB would be beneficial. He would like to see a focused effort regarding Dorothea Dix. Baldacci would like the Council to invite individuals from beyond Bangor's city limits.

Longo spoke of the importance of the matter. He spoke of a forming separate group from the PHAB as soon as possible. He was not in favor of a subcommittee of the Board. Blanchette spoke of time sensitivity with the issue, and the City's lobbyist (Richard Trahey). The City needs to contact him about the matter. Gallant spoke about the safety of the citizenry as evidenced by the recent vote to keep Bangor's dispatch. The City needs a strong, educated, willing and focused group to stop the closing now. Durgin said the PHAB has taken a position to move with this matter if needed. He feels the Board can act quickly.

Hawes, Heitmann and Yardley talked about the PHAB membership as well as adding members for this one issue.

Baldacci again asked for a meeting of the joint meeting of the PHAB and Government Operations Committee within the next week to make a focused case. Baldacci also would like to include regional individuals to the meeting. Conlow clarified that the PHAB regularly meets bimonthly at 3 pm. Yardley said the Board serves 14 communities and can be brought together for a meeting. Heitmann did recommend a Council Resolve to establish the Council's position on the issue and to set parameters for a committee structure.

Longo made a motion to have an independent committee separate from the PHAB formed with representatives from the PHAB and representatives deemed appropriate from various partners and agencies, members of the public and Council. Baldacci

seconded the motion but requested that the Council Resolve be added to the motion. He still requested a meeting with the PHAB. Yardley stated that the PHAB serves 14 communities in greater Bangor. There is also the District Coordinating Council which serves Penobscot and Piscataquis County, and their regularly scheduled meeting is next Friday. Next week the State Council for Public Health meets, and Yardley is the Chair. He will bring the issue to their attention as well. He suggested that a focus group be formed including some of the PHAB membership. He isn't certain what would be gained by meeting with the PHAB as they have already formed an opinion about Dorothea Dix.

Gallant spoke about a referendum process versus forming a committee. Baldacci said it is more of a decision by the State Appropriations Committee, which needs a clear and concrete message from the City. The objective is to keep the facility open. He would like to reverse the cut which is set for July 1, 2012.

Responding to Pickering, Durgin spoke of the State's report regarding Dorothea Dix indicating that the report was indecisive. He mentioned the need to meet with area representatives. Blanchette said that any bill that goes forth to reestablish funding would have to be emergency legislation.

Hawes referred to the motion which had been seconded. Longo restated the motion to establish a regional committee to discuss the future of the Dorothea Dix facility and make recommendations to the Council as well as the Legislature and the Governor. The vote was unanimous among the voting Committee members. This item will go to full Council.

Marble spoke of a December 12 breakfast meeting at the Shelter at which the topic of Dorothea Dix will be discussed. Councilors have been invited as well as the Legislative Delegation. Hawes and Conlow discussed a joint meeting of the Council and the Legislative Delegation. Blanchette also added that the Chair of the Appropriations Committee should be included. Hawes asked Committee members to provide the City Manager with a list of individuals to invite to the Legislative/Council meeting. Yardley also spoke of the Hot Stove League meetings at which Legislators attend.

2. Council Resolve 12-016, Accepting and Appropriating a \$90,000 Community Transformation Grant from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services

Yardley noted that this grant offered to the Penquis Public Health District will be used to implement public health strategies. Funding will be used to hire a staff person to increase physical activity, tobacco, control blood pressure, cholesterol and related strategies. A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The Order will be placed on the December 12, 2011 Council Agenda.

3. Authorizing Application for and Acceptance of a \$25,000 Strategic Planning Grant from the Libra Foundation to Further Develop the Healthy Homes Asthma Project

Staff is requesting permission to apply for and accept this grant funding for the Healthy Homes Asthma Project. A motion was made and seconded to approve staff's recommendation. The Order will be placed on the December 12, 2011 Council Agenda.

Adjourned at 6:37 pm.

Government Operations Committee
December 27, 2011

Minutes

Councilors: Hawes, Longo, Blanchette, Baldacci, Gallant, Gratwick
Staff: Farrar, Dubois, Lovejoy, Heitmann
Others: Bill Sullivan, Dawn Gagnon (BDN)

1. Ordinance 12-029, Amending Chapter 28, City Departments, Article XV, Records Department, Section 69, Records Retention of the City of Bangor

This Ordinance amendment will eliminate the current records retention listing in the City Code, and replace it with the State Statute reference. This will result in the City being in compliance with State Law, and will avoid any potential conflicts that could result by the City maintaining its own records retention listing.

Hawes noted that due to technical difficulties that the first few minutes of the meeting were not broadcast.

Gallant spoke of a records center wondering if the staff had looked at available space within the City facilities. Dubois said not in that detailed manner. In the last couple of years, staff has looked at records in a comprehensive way Citywide. Progress has been made but not to the point of specifically looking at location. Her focus had been to secure digital software to digitize records to try to free up space such as at Health and Community Services where records are maintained for sixty years so that the City is not leasing space to house records. She spoke of space under the grandstand at Bass Park as well as in the new arena facility. Responding to Longo, Dubois said that some communities have scanning programs and may make the non-confidential records available to the public. The State Archives has a lot of records available on-line. The Clerk's Office has documents back to the 1800's that can be perused but the documents are very fragile. Dubois noted that a records center would also require a responsible staff person.

A motion and second was made approving staff recommendation to eliminate the current records retention listing in the City Code and to replace it with the State Statute reference. This item was first read at the December 12, 2011 Council meeting.

2. Discussion of Polling Locations

This item was included at the request of Councilor Baldacci. The City currently uses the Civic Center for its single polling location. Councilor Baldacci discussed this practice and asked whether alternative site(s) should be considered. He noted that elderly and disabled citizens have mentioned the Civic Center's difficult access. He spoke of

neighborhood polling sites and, in 2005, the Council voted to move to one site. He would like at least one other polling place in Bangor, would like to know if a system could be in place where citizens could chose either voting place, would like electronic voter check-in, and also mentioned the lack of Dutton Street for access to the Civic Center. He feels that these changes would maximize voting in Bangor.

Responding to Baldacci, Dubois said that an east side/west side choice scenario would not be possible as there needs to be one check off list for each location only listing citizens within that district(s). This is State Law which insures that voters cannot vote twice. Electronic check-in is not available at the State level and is not in their foreseeable future. Bangor's 2010 absentee voting was at 60% as Bangor does staff and promote early voting at the Civic Center. The Presidential Election year is of concern but most will be voting before Election Day through absentee voting. With the current set up, 1,000 voters per hour can be handled at the Civic Center. Dubois feels that Dyer, once again, can take care of the traffic and parking issues related to the closure of Dutton Street. Baldacci and mentioned the Cohen School as a possible polling location but Dubois mentioned the lack of adequate parking during the school day. She spoke about the streamlined process of one polling place.

Longo spoke in favor of the single polling site.

Gallant spoke of positive citizen comments relating to early voting and the voting experience at the Civic Center. One concern he noted was proximity of the handicap accessible parking spots. He asked about the use of the Civic Center this coming November 2012. Dubois said it will be available through the end of 2012 but noted that the voting location will change in 2013, whether at the new civic center or another site.

Bill Sullivan, 37 Packard Drive, has served on the City Clerk's committees dealing with voting places and has a long standing interest in voting statistics and procedures and spoke of the creation of the single voting place resulting in several positive consequences. He reviewed statewide statistical voting data for several years. He spoke of having wheelchairs and/or wheelers available at the door of the polling location. He agreed that handicap parking needs to be available and closer to the door of the Civic Center. Sullivan spoke of the City perhaps receiving public comment on how the voting process could be improved at the Civic Center. He feels that the support will be overwhelmingly positive.

Baldacci commended Sullivan. He spoke again in favor of neighborhood voting. At a minimum, he asked the Committee to consider undertaking an effort to look at the Civic Center from a physical layout perspective to assure plenty of easy handicapped access as well as a public listening/forum session at some point in the spring. The accessibility issue is of more importance in looking ahead to November of 2012 in terms of Dutton Street's closure. He wants everyone in the City to have an opportunity to vote and not to be discouraged by obstructions.

Gallant strongly agreed with Baldacci's points and making sure that more than one wheelchair needs to be available. He encouraged 8-10 handicapped parking spots be made available within a reasonable proximity to the Civic Center.

Dubois said that staff has discussed purchasing 2-3 transport chairs, which are very portable and relatively inexpensive. She feels certain that the City Clerk's Office can work with Dyer for the close proximity parking spots. The traffic pattern could be altered for that day only in front of the Civic Center to allow for parking along the curb. Dyer could also assign staff to parking and traffic. She spoke of the possibility of using golf carts in the parking lot to transport individuals. Gallant asked about liability issues. Heitmann will check with the City's insurance carrier. Blanchette suggested publishing a telephone number which individuals could use if they were experiencing difficulty in accessing the building. She mentioned area school youth clubs and groups could be accessed as well as working with EMMC to use their wheelchairs.

Gratwick commented that the voting system is not broken and doesn't see the need to fix it. He also spoke of the concern of candidates standing out in front of the Civic Center and has heard voter objection to it. He would like it to be included in a future discussion. Heitmann said it is covered under State Law but will check into it.

Baldacci would like the City staff to return to the Committee in February with a coordinated approach to making the Civic Center as voter friendly as possible in the Presidential Election year. At that time, perhaps the Committee could discuss a public forum in the spring about voting places and voting in general.

3. Discussion Concerning the Size of Political Campaign Signs

This item has been included at the request of Councilor Blanchette. Currently, the City Ordinances do not regulate the size of political campaign signs. Councilor Blanchette would like to discuss the current situation, the practices of other communities, and whether there is interest in establishing any size restrictions for signs within the public right-of-way.

Blanchette discussed placement of campaign signs within City limits has been to the point of being obnoxiously rude. Some signs are blocking other candidate's signs and several areas are overloaded with signs. She asked that restrictions be considered on where signs over the standard size can be placed in City owned property; i.e. esplanades, triangles, etc. She also mentioned that candidates are not dutiful in picking up signs following the election. She does not want to restrict anyone's right to place a sign on private property.

Brunswick has two zones that allow and do not allow political signs. Blanchette felt that was a bit restrictive.

Baldacci said he doesn't feel it is the size of the signs but rather the multiplicity of signs in the same location. Since it is a First Amendment issue, he asked Heitmann for parameters over the next few months in terms of the type of permissible regulations for the future.

Gallant noted that 4' x 8' political signs are allowed under State Law. He feels that if there is a candidate who wants to put the time and effort into signage to attain their individual goals that the City of Bangor should not restrict it.

Longo referred to Brunswick's Zoning Ordinance which does not allow for signs on public ways. Gratwick spoke about the importance of obstruction of view. He also noted that the Public Works Department also should be given permission to remove signage and not just the Police Department if the signs are obstructive of views.

Blanchette and Gallant continued to discuss large hand painted signs. If there isn't anything in the current Ordinance which is unfair, Gallant suggested looking at the timely manner of which people pick up their signs, looking at the proximity of signage to intersections and to site lines. He did not agree with an Ordinance limiting sign size. If it a sign is creating a safety issue, it should be handled. To have a fair election, the underdog needs to always have a chance. Baldacci agreed with Gallant's thoughts in terms of a reasonable approach, and noted that he would not support a prohibition on campaign signs. He did speak about addressing the issue of the congestion of signs.

Heitmann indicated he would prepare something for the Committee based on the evening's discussions, the current state of the Ordinance and State Law, and options in terms of what can and cannot be done. Responding to Longo, Heitmann said it would not take long to pull the information together. Longo didn't feel the issue is an appropriate use of staff time. Blanchette clarified that the City can be more restrictive than State Law but not less restrictive. Baldacci felt it appropriate for the City Solicitor to provide legal framework.

Hawes asked if the Committee agreed to have the City Solicitor return to a subsequent meeting to further the discussion. A majority of the Committee agreed.

Adjourned at 6:35 pm.