

Metro Regional Coalition

Meeting Minutes, January 17, 2008, GPCOG Offices

Coalition Members: Councilor Ron Ahlquist, Scarborough; Councilor Cathy Breen, Falmouth; Jerre Bryant, Westbrook City Administrator; Mayor Bruce Chuluda, Westbrook; Councilor James Cohen, Chair, Portland; James Gailey, South Portland City Manager; Mayor Jim Soule, South Portland City Council; Joseph Gray, Portland City Manager; Ron Owens, Scarborough Town Manager.

Municipal Officials, Staff & Guests: Elizabeth Boynton, Portland, Assistant Corporation Counsel; Chief Tim Burton, Portland Police; Richard Feeney, Cumberland County Commissioner; Chief Ed Googins, South Portland Police; Duane Kline, Portland Finance Department; Bill Whitten, Cumberland County Deputy Director; David Willauer, GPCOG.

Introductions: Councilor Cohen opened the meeting and introductions were made.

Minutes: The minutes from the December 6, 2007 meeting were approved as written.

Police Crime Lab: Chief Burton provided a brief status report and introduced Elizabeth Boynton, who guided members through the latest draft of the Agreement. Additions included a specified termination date [Dec 31] instead of “six months prior to the end of the agreement.” A 20-year term was specified. She described other minor revisions.

Discussion: What about other municipalities who want to participate after the Interlocal Agreement is signed and implemented? They can participate but must also pay their share of the capital costs. At this point, “you’re in or you’re out.” For example, Yarmouth has agreed to join the Agreement even though they are not formally part of the Coalition. Another issue related to the County assessment. Commissioner Feeney indicated that the County still needed to review some proposed additions by South Portland’s Corporation Counsel in this regard; the County was also still exploring the legality of assessing some but not all municipalities for the crime lab. Following the discussion, the Chair proposed that the Committee approve the agreement in concept subject to modifications which are not considered “substantive.”

Operations: Chief Burton described the discussion that took place in December at a meeting of the Coalition Police Chiefs. They discussed the operation of the crime lab board, the need to establish an annual budget by a three-fourths vote of the Board, subject to approval of the Coalition communities. The Chiefs would oversee the day-to-day operations of the lab and were comfortable with the operations process that was proposed. There was some discussion regarding the Maine State Police and the role of the State Crime Lab. Chief Burton was in contact with Colonel Patrick Fleming who has written a letter of support. The two facilities are not in competition; rather, evidence prepared in Portland will facilitate quicker processing in Augusta.

Press Release. Members discussed the need for a press release once the final document has been approved and signed by all parties. Portland is assisting in the preparation.

Grant Opportunities. There was some discussion regarding how to do this. The Board and any participating community can pursue grants. GPCOG can also help if needed. Chief Burton commented that grant opportunities would be enhanced once the lab is operational, and every dollar received would offset the need for further subsidy from the member communities.

Name: “Metro Regional Crime Lab” was proposed and favored over other names such as “Metropolitan Crime Lab.”

Vote: *Ron Owens moved to approve the agreement pending review by lawyers, seconded by Jerre Bryant. The motion passed unanimously among those members present.*

Next Steps: A memorandum will be distributed to the members from the City of Portland describing the path for approval, deadline, budget schedule, and timeline.

Next Meeting: A date of Thursday, February 28th at 8:00 a.m. was selected for the next meeting. Location TBD. With respect to meeting topics, members generated a list of topics, noted below. Members also suggested tackling no more than one topic per meeting, and ideally the topic should be one that is not being addressed elsewhere. It was decided that regional economic development initiatives would be the focus of the next meeting, and Economic Development Directors of the participating communities would be invited to join.

1. Economic Development
2. Parks and Recreation field/facility scheduling
3. GIS
4. Tax Assessing
5. Technology
6. Equipment Standardization
7. Regional Transportation

Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.