

ADOPTED

City of Keene
New Hampshire

COUNCIL GOAL SETTING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, February 8, 2017

4:45 PM

**IT Training Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Carl Jacobs, Chair
Steve Hooper
Philip Jones
Robert O'Connor
Bettina Chadbourne

Staff Present:

Medard Kopczynski, City Manager
Thomas Mullins, City Attorney
Patty Little, City Clerk

Members Not Present:

1) **Call to Order**

Chair Jacobs called the meeting to order at 4:46 PM.

2) **Approval of Minutes – January 25, 2017**

Councilor Chadbourne suggested three corrections to the minutes of January 25, 2017. First on page 2, the acronym for CEDC needed to be spelled out to Comprehensive Economic Development Committee. The second correction was on page 3, last paragraph, first sentence, “Chair Jacobs recalled the Saturday...” should be corrected to “Councilor Jones”. The final correction was on page 3, third paragraph, PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) should be corrected to PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes).

Councilor Jacobs made a motion to approve the minutes of January 25, 2017 as amended, which was seconded by Councilor O'Connor and carried unanimously.

3) Goal Five Objectives

Chair Jacobs began the discussion with Goal Five: Regional Collaboration. He explained how this subject was a topic at the previous Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee meeting and the idea of dispatch services was discussed. Chair Jacobs continued to explain how the City of Keene had the Sheriff's Dispatch, the Keene Police Dispatch and the Fire Mutual Aid Dispatch. Chair Jacobs said this was an area of opportunity for more regionalism. He continued to explain how there were lot of service silos in the City with departments having a long history of operating independently. Chair Jacobs said he was not sure if this set-up best served the taxpayer or the person in need of assistance.

Councilor O'Connor said that the New Hampshire State Police, Troop C did not have a local dispatch center and the dispatch services were located in Concord. Councilor O'Connor explained that there was a known difference between a local dispatch and the dispatch being located in Concord. He continued to explain how someone located in Concord did not necessarily know the Keene area and the location of certain streets. Councilor O'Connor said that factor could be detrimental to the trooper or even the local officer. Councilor O'Connor said that he could see a benefit for the taxpayer by having one dispatch, but not for the officers involved. Chair Jacobs asked if the unified dispatch was not as safe. Councilor O'Connor replied that his reason for stating a unified dispatch was detrimental, was due to location. He reiterated that someone from Concord may not know the entire area of Cheshire County, and may not have familiarity with the pronunciation of names or the location of streets.

Chair Jacobs said that he understood there were a lot of issues associated with one dispatch but that people looked at the situation from a point of efficiency. He said the answer to having one dispatch could be "no" because of an officer's safety. Councilor Chadbourne recalled at the last FOP meeting, Chief Costa explained that Keene Police Dispatch was currently set-up where someone could go into the KPD and speak to someone in dispatch 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. She said that this "storefront" would be missed if dispatch was centralized. Chair Jacobs said he was not sure if a centralized dispatch would take away the storefront.

Councilor Hooper said based on his experience as the former Chair of the local Red Cross; he saw a decline in the service level when they transferred some of the local operations to Concord. He said the transfer was to save money but the service part seemed to go downhill. Councilor Hooper explained that the City could strive to save money by having a regional collaboration but the City should also keep in mind there was a possibility reduced service on a local level. Councilor Hooper said he would not recommend closing local services.

The City Clerk referenced the Statements from the Comprehensive Master Plan, noting how Keene was referenced as the hub of the region and the regional provider of services. She continued that information would be helpful in order to set the context that Keene

was taking the lead. The City Clerk said perhaps the City of Keene was not being appropriately compensated for the services the City provided to the region.

Councilor O'Connor said that the Keene Fire Department was the hub of the region. He explained how surrounding towns relied on the KFD for fire and ambulance services. Councilor O'Connor noted the KFD was fully manned with 24/7 coverage. He explained how it could be a burden for the KFD to cover surrounding towns by leaving the City with less manpower. Councilor O'Connor said the question was how the City should be compensated properly. The City Attorney explained that it was discovered that towns contracting with Diluzio Ambulance Services used the KFD as a backup in case Diluzio was unable to show. He continued to explain how the City no longer held contracts with the Town of Swanzey to provide backup service. The City Attorney said these were issues that needed to be resolved because they were real money issues for the City. A discussion ensued on how these responsibilities placed great importance on the City and how the City could work together with the surrounding towns.

The City Manager said the best way to phrase the objective was the recognition of the uniqueness of Keene. He explained that when it came to the provision of services, Keene was the regional hub and provided a lot of services. He continued to explain how the services such as welfare, were concentrated in Keene. The City Manager also discussed the criminal justice system as well as the fire Services. He explained how the City needed to begin thinking about a regional reach, how to best provide services and how to be paid for those services. The City Manager said he believed there needed to be equity, fairness and recognition when providing these services.

He continued to explained what was seen with the fire service was an inability of the towns to provide manpower to their voluntary system. The City Manager said that in many cases the KFD was the first to respond to a scene or the only one at the scene. He noted it was the same with ambulance services.

The City Manager said that the City had never talked in depth with the surrounding towns or the County. He continued that it was really just the initiation of the conversation that needed to happen. The City Manager said that a regional collaboration had broader consequences than just where a dispatch should be located. A discussion ensued on how specific the objective statement should be stated in respect to potential opportunities. The City Attorney questioned how specific should the objectives be with respect to any regional objectives. Councilor Hooper said that he liked the idea City Manager mentioned by initiating the conversation with the County and the surrounding towns. He suggested looking at other cities that had a regional collaboration to find out how that city organized its collaboration efforts with surrounding communities. Chair Jacobs said that if the City did not address this issue of regional collaboration sooner than later, the City might face the possibility of providing these services and the Keene taxpayers not be willing and able to pay the bill.

Chair Jacobs recalled the City Council Goal Saturday session, where the Committee discussed marketing the region. He said that marketing the region should not just be up to the City of Keene. The City Manager said another item the City was exploring was the purchasing of cooperative energy. The City Attorney said that a benefit to exploring this area was an increased purchasing power in procuring electric and natural gas.

The City Clerk suggested the Committee think about asking selectmen in the surrounding towns what services their town needed. She continued the City may find that in return a town may ask if the City could provide services such as dispatch, social services or even minute taking for their public bodies.

The Committee agreed on the following: **Goal Five, Objective One: Initiate a conversation with other communities for the provision and payment of common services.**

Chair Jacobs said one of things to do was to define the region. The City Manager said it may depend on the service. The City Attorney said that regional collaboration sparked a broader conversation regarding gateway cities such as Keene. He continued explaining how Keene was a gateway community, where the rest of the State depended on taxpayers from the community to facilitate the operation of tourist areas such as Laconia and the Lakes Region. He used the example of motorcycle accidents that happened in the area and how it was not Laconia picking up the cost of transportation services. He continued to explain that it opened the conversation of what the statewide interest was of gateway cities and making sure gateway communities had appropriate reimbursement of the costs associated. Councilor Hooper noted the costs that have shifted down to lost hikers in order to place more responsibility on the hiker.

The City Clerk said there needed to be enticement for the surrounding towns in order for them have an interest. The City Attorney said that one of the tasks was to get people to want to be involved in a collaborative effort.

The City Manager continued the discussion stating there were things that were regional needs. He said these things would probably need to be worked together with legislation or the Department of Transportation. The City Attorney said that everyone benefited from a Route 10 or a Route 12 that was in decent shape. Therefore, the City Attorney said there may need to be legislative authority to do some of these things. Chair Jacobs said there was a profound difference in roads from one town to another and perhaps there was some coordinated planning that could occur making the collaboration mutually beneficial.

The City Clerk said in the Statements from the Comprehensive Master Plan there was a reference to Southwest Region Planning Commission and the regional transportation plan, which outlined eight recommendations for planning and development of a future transportation system. She said that it sounded like someone had been doing work on a transportation system and it could that one of the recommendations for Goal 5 would be to have City endorse the efforts of Southwestern Regional Planning Commission. The City Attorney said that what the City Manager raised was the idea that the City may need

to be advocating for legislative changes. He noted that was something the Southwestern Planning Commission was not comfortable doing. The City Manager used the example of what the City was doing with broadband. The City Clerk suggested the issue of broadband could be an enticement in order to get the surrounding towns together. She also noted economic development could also be used to entice the surrounding towns.

The Committee agreed on the following: Goal Five Objective Two: Coordinate road improvement efforts regarding interconnected class 5 rural roads.

Chair said the one group that was not thought about was the legislative delegation. He said that this could be the political body that talked about regional issues.

The Committee agreed on the following: Goal Five, Objective Three: Enhance cooperation with the County Legislative Delegation with respect to State legislation and regional issues

Councilor Chadbourne reference the statements from the Comprehensive Master Plan regarding the Airport as follows, "Working collaboratively with the Town of Swanzeay to address the question of revenue sharing is recommended." Discussion ensued regarding how the City of Keene cooperated with the Town of Swanzeay on the airport.

Councilor Chadbourne asked from a regional perspective if the City would encourage other towns to use the airport. She continued if that was case how the towns would contribute to the City. The City Manager replied ultimately the goal was to have the airport become an economic generator. He continued as the airport was being developed more they were seeing increased jet traffic from corporate jets. He said they were seeing jets from Walmart and Amazon. He noted they were also seeing on a regular basis up to 5 or 6 private jets where people were coming in for local tourist attractions. The City Manager noted C&S was a regional job generator for both Brattleboro and Keene. He said C&S headquarters was primary located in Keene because of the airport. He noted C&S provides the area with 1200 jobs. Councilor Jacobs noted the potential of the Troy Mills property. Councilor O'Connor said the airport could be used for law enforcement training. He noted there was plenty of parking at the airport. He said it would be nice if the building could provide an area for training inside. The City Manager replied there was and that the lobby area was cleared for meeting space.

Councilor Chadbourne asked if Councilor O'Connor was suggesting that other towns that had fire departments use the airport for training which would be collaborated by the City. Councilor O'Connor replied in the affirmative.

Next Steps

As the hour was growing late and members had to leave to go to another meeting, Chair Jacobs recommended the Committee continue their discussion on Goal 5 at their next meeting. After concluding that discussion, the Committee could then review their entire list of objectives for each of the Five Goals to determine whether anything was missing. The Clerk stated she would provide a rollup of the Committee's recommended objectives

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for that discussion. Chair Jacobs indicated his intent to provide an update to the City Council as to the progress of the Committee.

4) **Adjourn**

Hearing no further business, Chair Jacobs adjourned the meeting at 5:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jennifer Clark, Minute Taker