

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 26, 2018

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

Members Present:

Janis O. Manwaring, Chair (Arrived 6:38 PM)
Randy L. Filiault, Vice-Chair
Gary P. Lamoureux
Robert B. Sutherland

Members Not Present:

Stephen L. Hooper

Staff Present:

Thomas P. Mullins, City Attorney
Rebecca Landry, IT Director/ Assistant City
Manager
Patricia Little, City Clerk
Kürt Blomquist, Public Works Director
Don Lussier, City Engineer
Mark Howard, Fire Chief
Steve Russo, Police Chief

Vice Chair Filiault called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, welcomed the public, and explained the rules of procedure.

**1) Roxbury Street Bridge Replacement – Selection of Preferred Alternative –
Public Works Department**

The City Engineer introduced the consulting engineers for this project from McFarland Johnson: Josh Lund and Brian Colburn. The City Engineer said selecting an alternative is the next step in acquiring state funding for the bridge. Staff is asking the Committee to recommend the bridge type and construction method identified as Option 1 to Council. This project is not scheduled until 2019 and staff has put an aggressive deadline on the consultants to go through this process. He cannot answer questions yet about aesthetics or other fine details; they will present before this Committee again in a few months once the preliminary design is clearer. This formal action requested is necessary to continue per Department of Transportation (DOT) procedure.

Mr. Lund said the consultants developed two alternatives for replacement structures, which they briefly presented to Council the previous week. This is for bridge replacement on Roxbury Street over Beaver Brook. The consultants and staff recommend option one of two. He went on to describe each option as follows:

- Option 1: Three-Sided Precast Concrete Rigid Frame
 - This option is recommended because it will facilitate water diversion to run a pipe through that area
 - There are two construction possibilities for this option:
 - Accelerated Bridge Construction
 - 30-60 day full bridge closure
 - Signed detours to Beaver Street will be posted

- Less cost
- Easier construction – because the contractor has access to the whole site, which means fewer safety concerns
- Phased Construction
 - Maintain one lane of traffic for cars and pedestrians
 - 4-6 month construction
 - Higher cost
 - More difficult construction
- Option 2: Four-Sided Precast Concrete Box
 - Not recommended because it would complicate construction and interfere with the water diversion pipe

Mr. Lund continued discussing hydraulics in Beaver Brook related to this project. Beaver Brook is a flood-prone area. At the existing bridge opening, a sewer line extends 1' above the bottom of the culvert. They propose a 22' structure that matches the flares as well as a new sewer line below the stream bed at the culvert. Still, the bridge will need a waiver from the state for 50-year flood requirements.

The City Engineer explained the two staff-proposed motions for the Committee's consideration. The first allows the City to report back to DOT with their preferred alternative. The second allows staff to continue this process, like moving forward with waiver requests that might be necessary because of conditions downstream or talking to adjacent property owners about access.

Vice Chair Filiault asked the timeframe for construction if all goes well. The City Engineer replied that construction will occur during optimum conditions, likely beginning between July 1 and August 1, 2019. Vehicles will be encouraged to detour via Beaver Street and pedestrians will be encouraged to detour via 93rd and Church Streets. Staff are also exploring where parking might need to be blocked around the construction area to ensure turning radius.

The City Attorney asked if all these infrastructure changes can occur in the existing City right-of-way. The City Engineer replied yes, though he expects some temporary construction agreements with adjacent property owners.

Vice Chair Filiault recognized Peter Hartz (Brook Street, Keene) who asked if, during construction, Roxbury Street will be open to Norway Avenue and if Norway Avenue will remain open. The City Engineer replied yes to both.

Councilor Sutherland made the following motion, which Councilor Lamoureux seconded.

On a vote of 3-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends that the rigid frame structure, as presented, be selected as the preferred alternative for the replacement of the Roxbury Street Bridge over Beaver Brook, and that "Accelerated Bridge Construction" be selected as the preferred construction method.

Councilor Sutherland made the following motion, which Councilor Lamoureux seconded.

On a vote of 3-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the preferred structure type and construction method for the replacement of the Roxbury Bridge over Beaver Brook.

2) Cheshire Coalition for Tobacco Free Communities – Raising the Legal Minimum Age for the Sale and Possession of all Tobacco and Nicotine Products

Vice Chair Filiault invited the petitioner, Kate McNally, to speak first and instructed subsequent speakers to limit their comments to three minutes when recognized.

Ms. McNally, the Program Manager for the Cheshire Coalition for Tobacco Free Communities at Cheshire Medical Center, thanked the Committee for this continued discussion about increasing the minimum age for sale and possession of tobacco and nicotine products. She said the real goal of this initiative is minimize tobacco and vaping devices in middle and high schools. Since beginning this process in July 2018, other NH towns have voted in favor of these measures and Massachusetts passed a statewide Tobacco 21 law that is now in six states. Community members have been working toward this initiative for one year, including local school programs. Keene Middle School students presented about youth tobacco threats to Mayor Lane, who still had doubts about Tobacco 21 implementation. In Dover, the program (first in the state) is working well. She appreciates this conversation and sees both sides of the issue. The biggest concerns she has heard in the community are that the City will begin criminalizing youth tobacco use. She said this community has never done that and the Coalition simply wants to help anyone who wants to quit. They want to avoid penalizing tobacco use because they know it is an addictive substance; this is not a new initiative to harass teens. She only proposes prohibiting sales to people between ages 18-21 to help keep tobacco out of schools. There are 76,000 residents of Cheshire County; 3,500 are ages 18-21 and 7,696 are under 18 years old. Thus, the goal is to improve the health and future for nearly 8,000 county residents. She said the Institute of Medicine, a trusted source, predicts a 12% revenue reduction for businesses because of this age change, which only amounts to approximately 0.5% reduction in tobacco sales overall. She said this is minimal compared to offsetting the \$735 million per year state and federal tax burden of annual health care costs. She referred to other trusted sources and endorsements, which can be found in the meeting packet. This ordinance is expected to reduce youth initiation of tobacco use 25%, which is significant for ages 15-17. She responded to the critique that if individuals can serve their country in the military at 18 years-old they should be able to choose to smoke. Her response is that the legal age for alcohol consumption is 21 and it would be easier for clerks and retailers if these legal ages were the same. Her father was a veteran who died of tobacco use and she thinks we should give veterans the best quality of life. She said, contrary to others arguments, there is evidence that vaping leads to tobacco use. Many who never smoked before report using cigarettes because they started vaping first because they thought it was safer. Monadnock

youth (46%) report borrowing vape devices from social sources, not buying them (15%). This ordinance will help reduce tobacco products—including electronic nicotine devices—that we do not want in schools. Additionally, the Coalition will offer free educational materials to stores and restaurants and will continue vendor compliance checks to ensure retailers are being responsible. She recalled that former Mayor Blastos was one of the greatest advocates of smoke-free restaurants and helped Keene set an example for the rest of the state. Initiatives like this start here locally and send a message to Concord that we want a state law. Council has always protected the youth of this community and, therefore, she hopes they will support drafting an ordinance.

Vice Chair Filiault continued the public hearing. He recognized members of the public one at a time to speak for no more than three minutes:

Jonathan Shaer, Executive Director of New England Convenience Store and Energy Marketers Association – His organization represents legislative and regulatory issues across New England. There are 20 retailers with approximately 100 employees in Keene. These stores hire locally and provide valuable services to the community; they are also the primary line of defense in restricting tobacco access to minors. He argued that increasing the legal age will only export customers to neighboring towns; this is not only about tobacco products, but all the other convenience items sold to customers when they are at stores. He said it is unrealistic to think 18-20 year olds will not drive to neighboring towns to buy the same products. Elected officials have an obligation to both businesses and general public health. He said this issue should be addressed on a more macro level; this should be directed to Concord to take action at the state level, which has limitations but would make access equal statewide. He also suggested stricter punishments for underage users or those who give tobacco to minors. He said Council should be certain this will actually limit youth tobacco use in the City before taking action to justify potential harm to local businesses. He agreed that everyone, including retailers, want to keep tobacco from minors. Still, in FY18, tobacco-related revenue in NH was \$261.3 million and state funding for cessation and education programs was \$1.3 million, only .0047% of that revenue, which he said is shameful. He said the FDA should take a science-based, thoughtful approach to increase the age nationally and Keene should allow them time to come to that conclusion.

Daniel Cavallero, Owner of Monadnock Vapors, 341 Court Street – He said the Committee has read his letters and already know how he feels about this issue. He said while it seems like there will be no significant effect on his business, that is a macro-level viewpoint; not the micro-level perspective of his business and what he will lose. He added that increasing the age will not actually solve the problem of youth tobacco use because if a person wants something they will get it despite their age; he has never sold to minors, yet the devices end up in schools. Increasing the age to 21 will create a black market and he thinks the opioid epidemic is giving the Keene Police Department enough work. It offends him as a small business owner and a libertarian, who thinks youth should make their own choices and they are adults at 18 years old.

Sierra Quigley, 7th Grade Keene Middle School Student, 9 Drummer Road – She said three important words come to mind when she hears the word tobacco: family, safety, and addiction. Tobacco harms many families and she fears it will affect hers in the future. Tobacco poses safety risks like cancer, stroke, and death at higher rates. She said 9/10 adults began smoking as minors and still smoke. Tobacco companies target youth with enticing candy-like flavor in e-cigarettes, which seem less risky but are just as addictive and unsafe. Other towns have increased the legal age and she thinks Keene should join them because the brain does not develop fully until age 25; this will allow Keene's youth more time to be healthy and make good decisions to protect their futures. She is surprised there are already 20,000 kids under 18 years-old in NH who will eventually die from smoking related illnesses. Smoking is responsible for \$506 million in productivity loss. She hopes the Committee will consider raising the minimum age to purchase tobacco.

Andy Huneck, 50 Dover Street – He is opposed to increasing the minimum age because it will hurt local smoke and vape shops because they rely on that revenue; it will send people and tax revenue to other towns. Additionally, the legal age in NH is 18 and he does not see how it is legal to increase the age in only one jurisdiction.

Robert Call, 109 Kendall Road – He cannot support any legislation that takes rights from any NH citizens. He said it is ridiculous to advocate this will keep tobacco out of schools; he would like to know the percentage of 18 year-old high school students in NH. He said most students graduate by age 19. He said, with this line of reasoning, they should just increase the age to 30. This will not keep tobacco out of schools effectively.

Christopher Wade, 109 Kendall Road – He proposed eliminating nicotine and coffee use for everyone, not just those between ages 18-21. He said there are risks from many things in life and we do not have a right to decide what risks others choose to take. He has never smoked or drank coffee, but he does not want to take rights from others at any age. He thinks it is absurd to manipulate children, making them pawns of a school system manipulated by tax dollars and bringing them to this meeting with a script. By passing this law, kids can go to other towns and just order electronic devices online, thus sending money to other towns and businesses in other countries. His business has been affected by Supreme Court rulings that make NH businesses collect taxes for other states. He said increasing the legal age of tobacco will do the same thing effectively.

Chuck Redfern, 9 Colby Street – He said this is reminiscent of when Council voted to prohibit smoking in restaurants; Keene was the first in the state and it was controversial, but now it is a state law. He said it was a hard decision because they knew business owners would be effected but the City decided those effects were outweighed by the public health benefits. He said this should not be a debate about revenue loss or lobbyists but about public health. He agreed this should be addressed by the state but in the meantime Keene can set an example for the state as they have with many initiatives. He added that the City will not lose tax revenue because the state does not share the tobacco tax income; they keep it for their own funds. He sympathizes with small business owners who, he assumes, will be marginally affected but the City will not lose money.

Dennis Lane, Executive Director-Coalition for Responsible Retailing, MA resident – He understands this is an emotional issue for both sides. He countered Ms. McNally's assertion that this initiative will help protect young military heroes. He trains his store staff to thank veterans for their service. He never wants to tell a veteran who made the decision to serve that they cannot purchase a vaping device if they are over age 18. If individuals put themselves on the line, can vote, and can get married they should be able to choose to purchase tobacco. He does not think increasing the age will work because 15% of people buy their devices online or get them from social sources. He said that retailers are actually the first defense between tobacco and minors; he does not think retailers should be penalized for following the rules. He called for increased education in schools instead of increasing the age. His retail business is already threatened by increasing minimum wage, workers compensation, and taxes; taking even a small part of a retailer's business profitability reduces their ability to hire from the community.

Jeannine Leclerc, Integration Specialist and Wellness Coordinator-Monadnock Middle and High Schools, 20 Knight Street – In recent years, she has integrated wellness throughout all subject areas and all ages as part of a mission statement committed to providing resources to staff and students to make good life choices; based on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Right now, e-cigarettes are a primary topic in the high school. Area communities are high risk with 1/10 people smoking and 1/3 people vaping. She said vaping companies market to youth and design discrete devices that are indistinguishable from other objects in class, like USB drives. She loves living in this community and believes people come here because we make good decisions for greater good and health. Her parents did not know the impacts of smoking and therefore she has secondhand smoke damage. She said there is not enough information about vaping but kids are trying it and adults/teachers are struggling to combat it. Chewing tobacco is also a big problem with the students. She said this is not about Keene or Concord but about healthy youth and communities. She said Ms. McNally has demonstrated commitment working with students on tobacco issues. She understands both sides but hopes Council will support this ordinance.

Ian Matthews, 10 Sesame Street – He said he did not have a wellness committee or child reading a script, which he said is despicable. He has asthma and COPD and has vaped for the last three years. It made a world of difference for him because he can breathe again. His fiancée has also not smoked in more than one year because of vaping. Dover made the change but Keene is a college town with a high population boom every August. Therefore, he said, this ordinance would exacerbate a lot of issues for local businesses and he does not think it will be beneficial for the City.

Pam Rogerson-Ruiz, 32 Washington Street – She said she was speaking as a mom and grandma. She is a smoker but has never smoked in the house or car with her children, which she says is why only one of her five children and none of her adult grandchildren smoke. She said while the liquor law is for age 21, there are still minors drinking every weekend. She said we do not want kids on drugs but most have marijuana. Even when things are illegal, kids will still find ways to get them whether we raise the age or not. She switched to vaping, which her 16 year-old granddaughter said is better than smoking

two packs of cigarettes per day, and she agrees. She does not think increasing the age is a solution.

Richard Durkee, Senior at Keene High School, 27 Old Chesterfield Road, Spofford – He goes to Concord for the Governor’s Youth Council monthly. Every time he enters a bathroom at the high school there are students vaping. He will be 18 years-old soon and many of his friends are of age and buying products; he said this age is when kids have the most pressure to fit in and have the comfort of living at home. He does not think 18 year olds are old enough to make decisions that will affect them for years to come. He does not want to go school where people are vaping on the bus or in the bathroom. He also does not want to live in a city where people can be legally exposed to addictive substances.

Ian Freeman, 63 Emerald Street – He said it is refreshing to hear the petitioner does not want tobacco prohibition but this is personal when it impacts peoples businesses. He added that doctors tell us many things are dangerous, like fast food and soda, but people should be free to make their own choices, the City should not prohibit them. Prohibition clearly does not work because youth are still accessing products and will continue to whether use and sale are limited or not. He said the solution is education and demonstrating consequences to youth. He said initial results show vaping is better and he knows many people who have used vaping to stop smoking. He suggested collaborating with law enforcement, many of whom do not think prohibition works. He agrees it will not work and creates unintended consequences.

David Souther, Meadow Road – He is a parent, resident, and community volunteer. He got involved with the Coalition in 2017 because of secondhand smoke at bus stops. He thinks increasing the legal age and restricting access by the most vulnerable is a good action to stop the cycle of nicotine addiction; it is less about tobacco and more about nicotine. Both tobacco and vapes deliver nicotine, which is why vapes are included in this category. Nicotine is physically, mentally, and behaviorally addicting making users habitually require nicotine in certain stressful situations. It is difficult to correlate brain development issues with nicotine use, but animal models show parts of the brain are developing under age 21 and are particularly vulnerable to nicotine addiction. He cited a recent study that e-cigarette vapor may be less dangerous but many of the chemicals in vapes are carcinogenic, whether the product contains nicotine or flavoring. As a veteran, he said the minimum age of military service does not equal readiness to enlist in a lifetime addiction to nicotine. Like military service, tobacco use is not a right or a privilege; nicotine is addictive and deadly and has been shown to negatively impact military readiness. He said the possible revenue losses do not counter the \$735 million in annual tobacco-related health costs adequately. He asked how much businesses are losing compared to the quality of life people you love are losing.

Bradford Hutchinson, 35 Baker Street – He supports the spirit of increasing the minimum age but he thinks it is wrong and suggests the Committee not recommend further action to Council. He recalled a problem several years ago with products containing unlabeled chemicals sold in local stores. He agreed with the City regulating that because every store

in town needs licenses. He said vaping is different. He does not think Council is the appropriate venue for these laws; the state has tobacco laws and tax but the City has no tobacco tax and does not have the legislative authority to increase the age for a product the City cannot otherwise regulate or tax. Instead, he recommended the City write a resolution or proclamation to Council to issue a statement to state legislature. The City is not the appropriate level for this and will not keep tobacco out of schools.

Daniel Cavallero, Owner of Monadnock Vapors, 341 Court Street – He thinks it is contradictory to pass an ordinance that restricts vapes when others admit we do not know enough about the risks of vaping. He said there is enough proof of vaping safety and cited a top global lung specialist who studied people vaping for 3.5 years, who never vaped or smoked previously, and found no effects at the end of the study. There is additional research from Public Health of England. He said the FDA has not been effective because studies show that vaping is at least 95% safer than smoking. He asked how the City can pass an ordinance when we do not know enough about vaping.

Skylar Rice, 238 Base Hill Road – He purchased a vape in Keene a few years ago, which he recently gave to a neighbor to encourage them to quit smoking. Vaping helped him quit smoking because you can reduce the nicotine levels over time. He said it seems politically expedient to target youth and take rights from them, but he thinks they should have freedom to make poor choices (like drinking soda or eating red meat) that carry inherent risks. He said it is ironic, in this situation, that a right like voting can be used to cause harm to one group of people by extracting rights from them.

Jay Edison, 433 Main Street, Marlborough – He is a retired physician and is amazed people are concerned about individual rights when talking about a poison. He has been involved with smoking programs at churches, prisons, and schools for many years and is involved with the Coalition. There are people suffering the effects of nicotine. He said vaping is not safer because it is purposefully flavored like candy. He cited an article from the NE Journal of Medicine (9/20/18) that said vaping devices could deliver an addictive level of nicotine without adverse user experience or other tobacco-related deterrents, which might be why 80% of 15-20 year-olds who try Juul vapes continues using them. He said they make devices like candy to trap kids into getting addicted to poison. He said more people die from nicotine than opioids, just not as fast or with the same headlines. Some of these devices are inconspicuous and look like other electronics that people can conceal readily or use on school grounds. The vaping flavors are not safe and aerosols can include volatile additive compounds that can be harmful to adolescent users. Nicotine affects the brain and vapes can be gateways to cigarette use. In April 2018, six public health organizations urged the FDA (who regulate e-cigarettes) to take action to prevent youth Juul use. He said comprehensive actions are needed for this crucial age group.

Kylie Tenney, 122 Ian Road – She is 18 years-old and already graduated high school and thus cannot bring tobacco to school. She started smoking when she was age 17 but mixed it with vaping when she turned 18 in high school. She only vaped off-campus during study hall, not at school. She said the problem is students who are already troublemakers who vape at school to make more trouble. She is not friends with anyone in high school

and does not bring them vapes but there are other 18-19 year olds who might still have those friendships. She does not want to have to quit vaping because of other's bad choices.

Jonathan Shaer, Executive Director of New England Convenience Store and Energy Marketer Association – He agreed the FDA declared a vaping epidemic but they said their primary target is online sales, not local businesses. They could have suggested raising the legal age but they recognize the internet is the first place to start. He agreed everyone is against the potential harm of this product/addiction and that keeping tobacco out of schools is a good thing. He urged Council to ensure this will have the intended results for both public health and businesses before passing an ordinance.

Richard Durkee, Senior at Keene High School, 27 Old Chesterfield Road, Spofford – He responded to the argument that this ordinance is taking rights away from individuals. He said the City needs some regulation otherwise tobacco should just be available to all kids. He does not know what the appropriate age is but thinks there does need to be an age limit. With what we know about how the brain develops, he does not think 18 is the right age for individuals to make that decision. He is unsure if 21 is the right age but it should be higher than it is now.

Skylar Rice, 238 Base Hill Road – He said this would be taking away people's right to quit smoking, which vaping has helped many to do. He thinks that protecting people is a noble aspiration but asked where it stops; it is a right to make bad decisions as an adult. There are many risks to young people, like driving. He asked where the line is between the ability to make responsible decisions and where government needs to step in to parent us. It is important for youth to learn life skills and make decisions on their own with proper education.

Dennis Lane, Executive Director-Coalition for Responsible Retailing, MA resident – he said age 18 is exciting because society finally recognizes you as an adult—you can vote, take loans, or stay out late. Adults make responsible decisions because they are treated that way. He asked if we should reevaluate the age of maturity, the benefits of turning 18, and if it is worth it to take away a few rights because they are not 21 years-old.

Kate McNally, Petitioner – She showed the Committee and public what a Juul looks like and how its discreet design facilitates discreet use. The Juul is just one product getting FDA attention. She is concerned about the extremely high use and prevalence of that kind of device in schools. She said policies work for prevention and they are fairly inexpensive. There is not funding for more school programs; policies are the most effective practices to prevent mortality or morbidity of things that are dangerous to us. Tobacco kills more people than any other preventable causes of death combined. The Coalition is concerned with preventing kids from starting and creating a gap so products are less accessible in schools; both tobacco and vapes are dangerous because of addictive nicotine. She agreed this ordinance will not solve the problem but it is a multifaceted approach that will lead to change and reduced mortality. Reducing access is just one way to prevent adult use as well. She responded to the individual who spoke from

Massachusetts; she said MA has passed this law statewide and have reported no difficulties. She recalled, again, letters of support for various organizations and individuals, like the Leadership Council for Healthy Monadnock who created a regional health improvement plan. She appreciates that vaping may help some people quit smoking; there are many ways to quit and she thinks they can be considered as an option when there is sufficient evidence of their safety. She said this cannot wait until Concord takes action; the City needs to take grassroots action to protect this community. Council did the right thing in the past and she hopes they will again. She added the City does have authority to pass this ordinance via NH statute RSA-126.

Councilor Sutherland thanked Ms. McNally for bringing this forward. No one at this meeting argued against what we know about the harms of tobacco. He said the legal age of 18 dates back to 1998 when communities were allowed to choose the legal age of 18 or older. He noted she has worked with other cities in NH and asked about the speaker at a previous meeting from Ohio. Ms. McNally replied that speaker was from the National Tobacco 21 Organization. He asked why the Coalition is not working with Dover and other towns to more appropriately make this change at the state level. Ms. McNally replied they are working on that as a community and they know local action will drive state action; still, the political climate in Concord is difficult right now.

Councilor Sutherland asked if the Coalition is working with Swanzey as well. Ms. McNally replied yes. Councilor Sutherland noted Swanzey would likely benefit from the age increase in Keene. Ms. McNally replied children are sensitive to price and transportation issues. Research shows changing a location does make a difference in access and rates of abuse. She said there will always be outliers, for example people do not obey the smoke free policy at the hospital. She said this is for the greater good and the best outcome is to institute this method proven to work in other communities around the country.

Chair Manwaring thanked everyone for their input. Next, this will go before City Council, which people can attend but the public are not invited to speak. Chair Manwaring closed the public hearing so the Committee could discuss their decision.

Councilor Sutherland asked the City Attorney if the City does, in fact, have authority to enforce this sort of regulation. The City Attorney replied yes, per RSA-126.14, which gives local law enforcement authority to enforce a legal tobacco age, much like they do with alcohol. Councilor Sutherland asked about a minor in possession that purchased the product outside Keene. The City Attorney replied he thinks the law gives Council the right to regulate sale but not necessarily possession. He said this is uncharted territory for the City; Dover, however, prohibits sale and possession under age 21. He thinks writing an ordinance that way would limit ambiguity. It will be the court's decision, however, to allow a bifurcated ordinance.

Councilor Lamoureux thanked everyone for the information and research shared. He does not believe there is anyone unaffected by tobacco, including both his parent's deaths. Still, as an elected official, he needs to consider facts before emotions. He thinks both

sides provided good facts but he believes increasing the age will have the desired effect on the school system. Many 18 year-olds in high school are already facing pressure. Still, he would prefer a phased-in program to increase the age incrementally over a few years to help businesses react and help people already using vaping devices to move forward.

Councilor Filiault agreed with Councilor Lamoureux. He has talked to his constituents who, much like the speakers at this meeting, are evenly divided as well. He is a veteran and was turned away at bars before he was 21 years-old; he does not agree with the comparison that being in the military equates to legal age to purchase potentially harmful substances. He thinks this is a flawed ordinance because it should be at the state level, but they have not acted so Keene must deal with it. He was planning to vote against this ordinance, but further research and FDA listing vaping as an epidemic in high schools changed his mind. He said that FDA report is informative whether you agree with government bodies or not. He said, as of this meeting, he is in favor of the ordinance; while his constituents are divided, public health is his greatest concern. He said the City faced similar challenges before when opioids were legal and thought to be harmless. He said if Council needs to step forward and take the risk to reduce sales of risky products, half of the community will agree and half will not, but that is what they are elected to do. He could still change his mind with further information before Council adopts an ordinance.

Councilor Sutherland recalled there is not an ordinance yet and drafting one will demand many conversations. He said it is interesting representatives from the hospital are pushing against tobacco distribution but are the biggest providers of opioids. He has listened to the community and business owners, read research, and cannot deny the potential benefits to public health. He thinks it is problematic for the City to address this before the state because of ambiguities over enforcement and possession. Most business owners argue they sell more gas and goods than cigarettes. His biggest concern is part of their business going to neighboring towns. He said this is not problematic because of taxes but because it creates an uneven playing field between towns. He would appreciate if the petitioner and Tobacco 21 focused more on Concord than changing this town-by-town. He agreed the health issue needs to be addressed, but will be voting against an ordinance at this time.

Chair Manwaring said she is voting in favor because it seems important to target youth. Unfortunately, the vaping community is lumped into tobacco sales because if we say we do not want kids smoking or chewing, we need to be consistent and include vaping. Her concern is that kids will think vaping is cool and without consequences. She said nicotine is a magic drug that has mental and emotional effects that often cloud how our brains think, which is dangerous. If we can keep young adults from abusing nicotine and give their brains a healthier chance she wants to do that.

Councilor Lamoureux confirmed an ordinance could address purchase and possession to eliminate conflict.

Councilor Sutherland said he is in favor of offering a resolution to the state. He wonders if it is a more appropriate process because there are many issues beyond possession and sale. He questioned the hospitals and other smoking cessation programs that provide nicotine products to people under age 21. He thinks there are other things to evaluate before moving ahead with an ordinance hastily. He thinks Council should review a proposed ordinance before agreeing. Chair Manwaring clarified this vote would only instruct staff to return with a draft ordinance, which this Committee will review before it goes to Council. The City Attorney agreed staff would return with an unnumbered ordinance that can still be edited before going to Council. Councilor Sutherland said that makes sense but thinks there are things Council has not considered enough yet that they might want to address.

Councilor Filiault made the following motion, which Councilor Lamoureux seconded.

On a vote of 3-1, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends to full Council that staff draft an ordinance to change the age of sale and possession of all tobacco and nicotine products from 18 years-old to 21 years-old for review and consideration by the MSFI Committee. Councilor Sutherland opposed.

3) Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Chair Manwaring adjourned the meeting at 7:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker