

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, April 11, 2019**

**6:30 PM**

**Council Chambers**

**Members Present:**

Mitchell H. Greenwald, Chair  
Carl B. Jacobs  
Thomas F. Powers  
Terry M. Clark  
Bettina A. Chadbourne

**Councilors Present**

Steve Hooper  
Randy Filiault  
George Hansel

**Staff Present:**

City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon  
City Attorney, Thomas Mullins  
Parks Recreation and Facilities Director,  
Andrew Bohannon  
Finance Director, Merri Howe  
Asst. City Manager/IT Rebecca Landry  
Fire Chief, Mark Howard  
Police Chief, Steve Russo  
Parking Operations Manager, Wendy  
Walker

Chair Greenwald called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**1) Acceptance of Donation - Fire Department**

Fire Chief Mark Howard was the first to address the Committee and made reference to a donation the department had received in the amount of \$50.00 from Susan Hood. The Chairman asked whether it was for any special occasion. The Chief stated it had a note attached extending Ms. Hood's appreciation to the department for their service to the community.

Councilor Clark made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Powers.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept a donation of \$50.00 from Susan Hood.

**2) Approving an Application for CDBG Funds Resolution R-2019-22**

Mr. Jack Dugan of Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and Tiffany Wright store manager of the Food Coop were the next two speakers. Mr. Dugan stated he is before the Committee as they have had to revise and resubmit the Community

Development Block Grant Application the Committee approved a while ago. The application is for the same project the committee previously approved. The reason the Community Development Finance Authority is requesting re-submittal of the application is because MEDC is going to be expanding the building it leases to the Food Coop and the Food Coop is going to be purchasing this building as well as the lot next to it and expand the building, which Mr. Dugan felt is a long term commitment on the part of the Food Coop. Ms. Wright added this expansion is going to help with efficiencies and bring their finance and marketing departments under the same (they are currently leasing space at the Hannah Grimes facility). The Chairman noted this project is going to exceed 2.2 million dollars which he felt was a substantial investment in the downtown. Mr. Dugan added this contributes to MEDC's loan fund which in turn could help other businesses in the area as the Coop pays back the money.

Councilor Powers clarified the timeline would work for the applicant as far as getting the necessary documents approved by the City Council. Mr. Dugan agreed it was.

Councilor Jacobs asked whether any action needed to be taken on the Resolution. City Attorney Mullins stated this would be a question for Rebecca Bullock but stated his understanding is that a public hearing needs to happen prior to making a recommendation on the Resolution. Rebecca Bullock of Southwest Regional Planning Commission stated tonight is to provide an update on the project, a public hearing has been scheduled for next Thursday, April 18 at 7 pm, this is when action would be taken on the Resolution.

Attorney Mullins suggested making a recommendation on the Resolution, suspending the rules and voting on it at the City Council on the 18<sup>th</sup> - the Resolution needs to be approved by the City Council, this Committee is making a recommendation to the Council.

Councilor Powers made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Jacobs.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2019-22.

### **3) Lease Agreement - 12 Gilbo Avenue**

Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director Andrew Bohannon stated this item is in reference to a lease agreement for 12 Gilbo Avenue with Ash Sheehan. This space is currently leased by Mr. Sheehan under the Taco Odelay lease and this lease expires at the end of this month. Mr. Sheehan is looking to renew the lease and have a new contract to go along with his new business – a nano-brewery which he is opening at the old TD Bank space on Main Street.

Mr. Bohannon stated one item the city requested from Mr. Sheehan is to keep the bathrooms open while his business is open for public use. Mr. Sheehan has agreed to do so. Chair Greenwald stated Lindy's Diner is pleased to have other restrooms that are open downtown. The Chairman asked whether there is anything in the lease which requires

him to keep the bathrooms open. The City Manager stated the lease language would need to be negotiated with Mr. Sheehan once this item is approved. She further stated language is going to be added regarding access and the city wants to make sure the space is not going to be turned into storage and to make sure it stays active.

Councilor Clark asked whether there are any set standards the tenant has to meet to be opened a certain number of hours to operate as a restaurant. The Manager stated she was not aware of any set standards and this is something staff will be working out with Mr. Sheehan.

Councilor Jacobs made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Powers.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a lease with Ash Sheehan for the space located at 12 Gilbo Avenue.

#### **4) Downtown Parking Options - City Manager**

City Manager Elizabeth Dragon stated this item is because of concerns raised by Ms. Masten owner of Pedraza's regarding parking. The letter was forwarded to the MSFI Committee who made recommendations to the full Council to remove the kiosk and reinstall the old meters. The Council has forwarded the item to the Finance Committee for an in depth review of numbers and how much each option would cost.

The Manager went on to say she is requesting the Committee support the modification of the kiosk at Central Square West to a "pay and display" model using a new vendor - IPS, with 30 days of successful implementation and operation. After which time the Parking Services Division will come before the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee with a plan to convert the remaining existing kiosks and install additional kiosks around Central Square using the same technology.

The Manager agreed the City has had some issues with this kiosk and stated the current kiosk vendor is Cale and they use AT&T for communications. She noted there have been some physical hardware issues and AT&T does not have the most reliable service in Keene. There have also been some user issues such as unfamiliarity with this system.

The Manager went on to say the parking division has, through their review, recommended the pay and display model. The new vendor staff is recommending uses Verizon which has the best coverage in New Hampshire. Another feature of pay and display is that it can also work offline so if there is an issue with communication, the information could be stored and the transaction could be processed at a later time – this would help enforcement officers do a visual inspection of the receipt on the dashboard instead of relying on an update of the software.

The city has also discussed with the vendor adding a tilt sensor to let us know if the kiosk is being jolted and have requested IPS look at turning the kiosk to reduce sun glare.

The Manager went on to say with the Park Mobile app, once the maximum of two hours is reached a driver has to wait 15 minutes before they are permitted to move their vehicle to a different spot. With this new kiosk, that time limit has been changed to five minutes. The city is looking at reducing that even more and relying on chalking of tires for compliance.

Another possibility being considered is if a driver purchased time from the kiosk and has remaining time on their pay and display receipt they will be able to move their cars to other non-kiosk locations, such as traditional meters on Main Street. Parking enforcement will not only check the meter to see if time is expired, but will also do a visual inspection to see if there is time left on a pay and display receipt. Ms. Dragon noted this is for on-street parking kiosks only not for garage/lots which have different rates. This allows for maximum flexibility and addresses other issues the city has been made aware of.

Ms. Dragon noted the Parking Services Division is planning training sessions both at the kiosk and in the office. The other issue is pay and display has a .45 cent transaction fee but there is the option to purchase pre-paid cards at the parking office that have no fees.

Ms. Dragon went on to say phase two would involve locating this model of kiosks around the square to provide for consistency in this area of downtown.

The Manager then talked about the cost - phase one cost would be at no cost to the city for the first 30 days and will not require any permanent changes to the sidewalk.

Phase two would convert all eleven existing kiosks at \$2,800 per unit, for a total cost \$30,800. The Manager stated after 30 days if the city decides to continue with implementation of the new kiosks the city would need to add two kiosks around central square for an additional cost of \$5,600.

Ms. Dragon then provided a comparison of smart meters around Central Square. There are 41 metered spaces at Central Square, there will be four more purchased for repair and malfunction. Each of these will be at a cost of \$473 for a total cost of \$21,285.

The ongoing cost for smart meters is \$8 per meter per month and for 41 meters that would be \$328 per month.

The costs for kiosks covering the same amount of space would be \$55 per month. For three kiosks it will be \$165 per month for an annual difference of \$1,956.

Ms. Dragon then went over what the MSFI Committee recommended. If the old meters were to be installed, the sidewalks would need to be drilled to locate these meters. Staff has confirmed the city has enough meters for the 14 parking spaces located at Central Square West. There aren't sufficient meter posts but these could be ordered at \$46 per post and this could cost close to \$320. Dig safe would need to mark utilities and this work could take approximately three working days. Once the Kiosk is removed from the sidewalk pad - public works would cut and grind down remaining bolts. The

installation could take two public works employees no more than four hours, which equals approximately \$250 of staff time during regular hours. The installation of these meters would require reconfiguration of the outside seating space.

Ms. Dragon stressed the importance of downtown outdoor dining space. She noted she had a conversation with the owner of The Stage Restaurant who indicated the outdoor dining area is very important to his business. Ms. Dragon stated this owner is not opposed to a kiosk. She went on to say her memo talks about the prior reconfigurations of the area in front of Pedraza's. This was because of some tree and drainage issues but there are also some maintenance issues public works deals with in the winter and summer due to the parking meters and clearing those areas.

The Manager noted the last page of her memo gives pros and cons for mechanical meters, single space meters and multi space meters. She went on to say smart meters are the wave of the future but having a limited amount of space which is important for outdoor dining, becomes an issue. Ms. Dragon referred to a chart prepared by the Parking Manager to show what the trend for usage was for this location and since 2015 all of the areas have trended down in terms of utilization and this area is no different from the rest. She also noted the increase in mobile payments. This concluded the Manager's presentation.

The Chairman thanked staff for all the effort that has gone into this item and indicated every concern that has been raised has been addressed with this memo.

Councilor Powers clarified parking services has received numerous comments about the mechanical aspect of this kiosk- the Manager agreed and noted the review staff did indicate there have been communication issues with all of the kiosks and this definitely indicates it has a lot to do with AT&T being the service provider.

Councilor Chadbourne clarified changing a service provider would not require changing kiosks. Ms. Dragon agreed. The Councilor went on to say she felt this work should coincide with the work being planned for downtown, even though she is not suggesting anything at this time. Ms. Dragon noted new kiosks did not need to be purchased the existing ones could be modified and this was the \$2,800 cost she had mentioned earlier. The two extra kiosks she had requested is to maintain redundancy. The Councilor asked how much loss of outdoor seating staff was anticipating. Ms. Dragon stated staff would have to recalculate the seating and stated she did not have this number today but noted there is a one-foot radius around the meter that would be needed as a buffer as well as space for people to walk through.

Councilor Chadbourne asked whether the new vendor would also carry the .45 cent user fee. Ms. Dragon answered in the affirmative and went on to say this is a part of the park mobile transaction but if customers want to avoid the fee, parking cards could be purchased directly from the parking office. The Councilor noted when she parks in Concord the user fee is included in the parking rate.

Jarred Goodell of 14 Skyview Circle and Dorrie Masten of 326 Matthews Road, Swanzey addressed the Committee next. Mr. Goodell stated he is representing Ms. Masten on this issue as it relates to The Pour House, Pedraza's, Keene Apartments and the other businesses she owns. He noted they have been before the MSFI Committee with respect to this item, and that committee voted 4-1 to remove the kiosk located on the west side of Central Square and replace it with traditional meters, which item has been forwarded to the Finance Committee. He noted they have many concerns with the Memo from the City Manager – Mr. Goodell stated the owner of The Stage had indicated he did not say that he approved a kiosk, but rather that he preferred smart meters and stated he had that in writing from Mr. Benik.

Mr. Goodell went on to say city staff has been very cooperative with this issue. However, these kiosks have negatively impacted the petitioner and added replacing them with the pay and display system just would not work. He stated one of the problems the current system has is not just a software issue, but also a hardware issue where the receipts are getting jammed and added the pay and display also requires a receipt. He explained with the system jamming the receipts that eventually come out are expired tickets. He questioned why the city is trying to fix a problem that is not broken and pointed out the traditional meters that exist elsewhere in the city are very functional. He stated the petitioner is open to the installation of smart meters which will take time but the petitioner in the meantime demands the kiosk located on the west side of Central Square be immediately removed and replaced with the old meters. He stressed the negative impact this kiosk is having on the petitioner's businesses.

Ms. Masten added to how badly these kiosks operate, she asked the traditional meters be brought back and then the city have a discussion with businesses as to a proper solution. She referred to the many negative comments this item has had on social media and the 27 downtown merchants that have signed a petition and asked the city listen to what the businesses are asking for.

Mayor Lane felt it was strange to be discussing going back to a 1940's model for parking meters – what should be discussed is how the 1940 technology could be eliminated and move forward with a newer version. He agreed the kiosk being discussed does have issues but noted the one at the City Hall deck does work very well. The Mayor went on to say there has been question about waiting until the downtown revitalization happens but noted it is unclear when this is going to happen and the city is a long way from any proposal for this work and asked not to hold up parking based on that plan. The Mayor felt the discussion should be how to make kiosks more user friendly and get rid of the existing meters.

Chair Greenwald clarified if the city was to go with the existing kiosk staff's suggestion is for a different vendor, different software and hardware. The Manager agreed and went on to say staff did look at the data for how many times there have been problems with receipts, the last time was in 2018 and this time it was because of paper installation which caused the jam. The Chairman felt the two-hour limit should also be changed.

The Chairman asked whether staff could address the benefits of a kiosk versus traditional meters. Parking Operations Manager Wendy Walker and Police Chief Steve Russo addressed the Committee next. Ms. Walker stated different communities have different needs, but noted angle parking lends itself to multi-space meters also known as kiosks. People also prefer the view which posts tend to block, Public Works also benefits not having posts in the way for cleanup. The Chairman stressed he would like to know the benefit for the community. Chief Russo added it is not about being easier for Public Works but more so a safety feature being able to remove more of the snow. Ms. Walker added when people are able to pay using credit cards they tend to stay in the downtown much longer and not having to carry coins makes it easier for the public.

Councilor Powers asked why pay and display is better than the other technology of putting in one's license plate. Ms. Walker stated pay by plate isn't as user friendly, it has more steps – which causes user errors. The Councilor noted there is also the need to have to walk back to one's car and put the ticket on the dashboard.

Councilor Clark asked how many instruction steps are required with the pay by plate. Ms. Walker stated with the pay by plate there are three steps.

Councilor Jacobs noted the CIP has an appropriation for smart meters and it has been stated these meters are the wave of the future and asked if this was the case asked how adding more kiosks gets to that plan for the future. Ms. Dragon stated the space restriction that exists on Central Square exists elsewhere in the downtown and the kiosks are to address those space issues. Ms. Dragon stated there still needs to be a decision made as to whether smart meters would work or whether the city should be going with kiosks. Chief Russo noted if there are 14 meters on Central Square there would be the need to purchase 14 individual meters but a kiosk could serve one particular zone and they can be connected should one break down. The Chairman asked whether the City is chalking tires – Ms. Walker stated this depends on the number of available staff on a particular day.

Councilor Hooper stated he would like to slow this process down and not make any decisions without getting more input from the public. He felt pay and display is an easier system compared to the pay by plate. The Councilor added pay and display is easier but there is still some confusion for those who are not used to it. The Councilor suggested slowing down the decision on this item and giving the public the chance to provide input.

Councilor Filiault stated he agreed we don't want to go back to the 1940's technology but to bring everyone to the same playing field; this might be the best option while the City discusses all of downtown. He felt the city should slow down with this decision, put the meters back temporarily and not "piece meal" it and take time to figure this out. He asked the Finance Committee to do what the MSFI Committee did; take this in two separate phases (1) put everyone on the same playing field – put the meters back. (2) Have the City Manager study the situation and take time to look at the issues. He reminded the Committee this was the second time the city has installed a kiosk that has not worked in the downtown.

Mr. Goodell addressed the Committee again and asked what in the hardware specifically relating to the receipts will be changing. Ms. Dragon stated the outside box will remain but the hardware inside will change which will change the software and the service provider. Mr. Goodell stated they would be happy to provide a detailed list for the next Council meeting regarding this receipt issue which seems to be a consistent problem. He further stated with the issue of people not having change to pay for meters, that problem can be solved with the park mobile app. Mr. Goodell asked for one safety issue that has arisen because of the older meters. He also brought up the issue about not wanting to drill into the sidewalk to install these meters and noted smart meters are going to need the sidewalks to be drilled. With respect to user error, Mr. Goodell felt the public seems to be blamed for the kiosk not functioning and agreed this might be the case but felt the downtown should be something that works for everyone and this kiosk does not work for everyone. He went on to say the petitioner is willing to pay for half of the cost to change the existing kiosk back to what Central Square originally had.

With respect to moving from one kiosk to another one because of kiosk failure –Mr. Goodell asked why anyone would want to waste time moving around from one kiosk to another when there are places like Applebee’s where parking is free. He reiterated the need for bringing back the traditional meters and Ms. Masten’s willingness to indemnify the City for half its cost.

Councilor Chadbourne felt Councilor Filiault explained this issue well, and felt the City should consider Ms. Masten’s offer to indemnify the city for half the cost. She went on to say no-one really is talking about going back to the 1940’s and what the public is favoring are the smart meters. She indicated she supports replacing what exists and added neither Mr. Goodell nor Ms. Masten raised any concern about the loss of outdoor seating space.

The Chairman noted the City could on the other hand at no cost try the pay and display for 30 days while working on the long range parking plan.

Councilor Clark felt the parking meters should be taken down and a tax district be brought in. He went on to say he is happy to see this report as it lays out the entire plan. The Councilor stated he likes the idea of fixing the problem and moving forward.

Councilor Chadbourne asked why one of the other existing kiosks could not be converted for the 30-day trial. Ms. Dragon stated one of the reasons for her recommendation is because of the concerns raised about the kiosk before the committee tonight giving the businesses and residents an opportunity to try this change downtown. She also added this change does not cause the need to make any construction changes; the change is only inside the unit.

Councilor Jacobs asked for the timeframe for installation. Ms. Dragon stated it was about a week.



Chair Greenwald went over the two motions suggested by staff:

- (1) Move that the City Council recommend that the City remove the kiosk on the western side of Central Square, and replace it with meters that are still in stock by the City; and, that the whole issue of parking be followed up by the City Manager with a report back to City Council.
- (2) The City Council supports the modification of the Kiosk at Central Square West to a “pay and display” model using a new vendor (IPS), after 30 days of successful implementation and operation the Parking Services Division will return to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee with a plan to convert remaining existing Kiosks; and install additional Kiosks around Central Square using the same technology.

Councilor Powers felt a review of the parking situation is not a priority for staff; the priority is to fix the broken meter. This is a conversation that has gone on for a long time but felt the prudent thing to do first is to get the unit fixed first so meaningful data can be obtained.

Councilor Jacobs felt the kiosk seems to work in other parts of the city and felt getting this fixed would be the best solution and stated he favors going with option 2.

Councilor Chadbourne stated a lot of information containing hard facts have been provided to this committee from staff and felt this can happen fast; she noted the Council has control over deadlines and would be making a motion she feels the rest of the committee would approve.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Powers.

On 4-1 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Council supports the modification of the Kiosk at Central Square West to a “pay and display” model using a new vendor (IPS), after 30 days of successful implementation and operation the Parking Services Division will return to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee with a plan to convert remaining existing Kiosks; and install additional Kiosks around Central Square using the same technology.

Councilor Chadbourne voted in opposition.

**5) Membership on the Energy and Climate Committee Ordinance O-2019-07**

Mayor Lane stated Ordinance O-2019-07 is intended to increase the membership on the Energy and Climate Committee from seven members to 11 members. The Mayor stated the reason for this is the responsibility of the Committee has changed dramatically; the committee is developing a plan to make the city 100% renewable. This requires a certain amount of community involvement. The committee would include representation from the county, businesses in the community – people who could buy into this program to make is successful.

Councilor Powers asked whether this was one of the committees that was restricted only to Keene residents. The Mayor stated he did not think so.

Councilor Clark asked whether there would be specific seats designated for specific representations. Mayor Lane answered in the negative and went on to say the city and an organization could certainly enter into a Memorandum of Understanding but this is something the Council would do, not something that would come from the Committee. Attorney Mullins stated he could not recall any other committee that had this sort of representation. He added this is a legislative body and the City Council has the prerogative to allow membership from outside of the city. If this is something that the Council would like to change, language would need to be added into Section 2-1089. Today it is silent on that issue.

Councilor Clark asked whether language should be added where it indicates membership does not have to be just for Keene residents. Attorney Mullins felt it would be best to add such language.

Ms. Anne Shedd Chair of the Energy and Climate Committee addressed the Finance Committee and stated cities such as Concord and Hanover have 11 members on their Energy and Climate Committee and are doing good work. She extended her appreciation for being able to increase the number. Ms. Shedd noted there is fairly good representation of various sectors on this committee and Ken Dooley who is the Facilities Manager for the School District is a Marlow resident and referred to the good work this individual has done for the school district. She referred to the various sectors represented on this committee; Keene State College, Alumni and a current student from Antioch University, local businesses, Keene School District. She asked whether it would be prudent to request this would take effect 60 days to identify other representation for the committee.

The Mayor stated he would like to have three alternates on this committee

Councilor Clark made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Powers.

That the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend adoption of Ordinance O-2019-07.

Councilor Clark made an amendment to add the following language to Section 2-1089, Membership:

*provided however, members shall not be restricted to residents of the City. In addition, three alternates may be appointed to the committee.*

The amended motion was seconded by Councilor Powers.

Councilor Powers stated some people feel city business should be conducted by city residents while others feel differently; the Councilor felt even though appointing non Keene residents is not a common practice, in this case because of the knowledge some of these members bring to the table, it was a good idea.

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Mayor Lane stated one of the challenges he has had to face in his eight years as the Mayor is that Keene's population stands at 23,000 but the day time population doubles and those individuals are as much involved in the community and bring as much expertise to the city.

The amended motion carried on a unanimous vote.

On 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Ordinance O-2019-07-A as amended.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Additional Edits by,  
Terri M. Hood  
Assistant City Clerk