

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held Thursday, April 2, 2020. The Honorable Mayor George S. Hansel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Mayor Hansel read into the record the Emergency Order #12, issued by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04. He continued the members of the City Council would be participating remotely. The Mayor asked that during the roll call for attendance, each Councilor identify their on-line presence and if there are others with them in the room. Roll called: Michael J. Remy, Janis O. Manwaring, Michael Giacomo, Randy L. Filiault, Robert C. Williams, Philip M. Jones, Terry M. Clark, Raleigh C. Ormerod, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Catherine I. Workman, Mitchell H. Greenwald, Kate M. Bosley and Thomas F. Powers were present. Stephen L. Hooper joined the meeting at 7:07 PM. Gladys Johnsen joined the meeting at 7:20 PM. A motion by Powers to accept the minutes from the March 19, 2020 regular meeting was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion passed on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Johnsen was not present for the vote. The Mayor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – MAYOR

Mayor Hansel announced that the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee for next week would be canceled. He added this was for lack of pressing business.

PRESENTATION – STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE 100% RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY IN KEENE BY 2030 – THE CADMUS GROUP

The Mayor recognized Mari Brunner, City Planner for introduction to the presentation. Ms. Brunner explained that the presentation this evening is part of a larger energy-planning project that came out of the 100% renewable energy goals adopted by City Council in January of 2019. Some of the goals included sourcing 100% of electricity from renewables by 2030, sourcing 100% of energy for heating, cooling and transportation from renewables by 2050. The City also made a commitment to produce a plan to reach these goals that is due by the end of this year. Tonight the City's consultant, Cadmus Group, will talk about the current electricity landscape in Keene as well as actions we as a community can take to move toward our 2030 electricity goals. At this point, Mayor Hansel recognized Ben Butterworth of Cadmus Group. Mr. Butterworth explained that his firm was hired by the City to assist with options for achieving the City's renewable energy goals. Mr. Butterworth continued that Cadmus is a strategic and technical consulting firm, and his role is working with communities to develop and implement de-carbonization plans.

Mr. Butterworth began by providing some background on the project, noting that the City set the goals mentioned by Ms. Brunner in January of 2019. Those goals included achieving 100% renewable electricity by 2030, with a strategic plan to reach these goals developed by December of 2020. The City hired Cadmus to identify and evaluate renewable energy strategies to achieve to overall renewable energy electricity goal. To identify strategies actionable and appropriate strategies specific to Keene the Cadmus Group first conducted an electricity context review, followed by an electricity baseline analysis and a renewable energy strategy analysis.

Mr. Butterworth went to discuss the current energy consumption and baseline. For the baseline analysis, the first question to answer is what energy sources are currently being used to generate electricity. He noted in Keene renewables account for about 20% of the electricity supply. This includes such things as hydro, refuse, wind, wood and solar. Keene has also made great progress in photo solar voltaic systems in the community, with 65 homes having installed solar, and 1,872 kilowatts of non-residential solar have also been installed. For context, the 1,872 kilowatts is equivalent to 325 homes. The second question to answer is what types of buildings consume electricity in Keene. He went on to explain that 47% of consumption is residential, 43% commercial, 9% municipal, and 1% is industrial and manufacturing. The third question to answer is what will Keene's electricity supply look like in 2030 without local intervention, policies and programs. The Cadmus team's analysis of Keene in 2030 is that about 32% will be generated from renewable sources based on the State's renewable portfolio standard commitment, large renewable energy anticipated to impact the regional grid and the City's plan to obtain 100% renewable electricity for municipal operations. Now that we know what Keene will look like in 2030 without local action, the next question would be what types of policies and programs can the City enact to get to 100% renewable electricity by 2030.

Mr. Butterworth stated he would review the renewable energy strategy analysis next. Five criteria was used to evaluate potential strategies: scale of impact, local impacts, local environmental and social goals, inclusion and social equity, and feasibility. He noted this is an exciting time for renewable energy because of the innovative actions being taken both at the national and regional levels. There are great opportunities for Keene to increase its renewable energy sources. Based on feedback from the Energy and Climate Committee, six strategies were selected for further analysis. Mr. Butterworth noted that one key thing to keep in mind is that there are potential synergies across the various strategies that he will be going over this evening.

Mr Butterworth continued that recommended strategy number one is to establish community power. This would enable local government to pool community electricity load and procure electricity on behalf of residents, with the local utility, in this case Eversource, providing delivery. There is very little administrative burden to this strategy. The advantages to this strategy include local control, and potential cost savings to customers. Mr. Butterworth continued there are tiers of renewable energy credits or REC's. Some REC's link directly to renewable energy projects being built that would not otherwise have been, while others have less of a direct impact on renewable energy projects being built. Some of the lower tier REC's are easier to obtain, but through the creation of a community power program it allows obtainment of higher tier REC's and drives development of local renewable energy projects over time. Some of the challenges to this strategy are that this is a relatively new concept in New Hampshire, and there would be some administrative burden placed on City staff to implement the program. Mr. Butterworth went on to describe some of the steps involved in implementation of a community power program including governing body approval, selection of a broker to assist with procuring an energy contract, and notification of residents and businesses once this was launched. It would be optional to participate in the program.

Mr. Butterworth explained that because community power programs are relatively new, there has not been a program launched in New Hampshire, though there are communities that are interested in doing so. He went on to describe the results for Cambridge, Massachusetts as an

example of a community electricity program (CCE). He explained that Cambridge has a city-run CCE, which provides residents and businesses two rate options. Option one is the Standard Green Rate which is the renewable energy content available in the regional grid, which in Cambridge equals about 20%. The second rate option is the 100% renewable energy Green Plus option. CCE's offering a 100% renewable energy rate option often charge a slight price premium. Most standard offerings are less expensive than the basic rate offered by the public utility company, so there is competitiveness in this option. This is one of the advantages of the CCE.

Moving onto strategy number two, Mr. Butterworth indicated the recommendation is to engage in Virtual Power Purchase Agreements (VPPA). A traditional power purchase agreement (PPA) is between the buyer of the electricity (such as a CCE) and a renewable energy generator to purchase renewable energy credits produced by the renewable energy project. A virtual power purchase agreement is similar to a PPA, but the advantage is that it provides better price certainty and geographic flexibility. A traditional PPA must be signed with a renewable energy project that is connected to the New England power grid, while a VPPA can be signed with any renewable energy project in the United States regardless of the location. Mr. Butterworth continued that the renewable energy credits (REC) obtained when a CCE signs a VPPA are very high quality REC's. Meaning they directly lead to new renewable energy projects being built that otherwise would not have been. This is a key benefit along with the price certainty and flexibility provided by a VPPA. Disadvantages include the contractual complexities that may require outside legal support. Also VPPA works better as scale increases. The commitment of a small CCE program may not be sufficient to cover the financing of a project. This potential barrier could be resolved by partnering with neighboring CCE's in the future. There are a lot of synergies between CCE formations and VPPA's. The combination of these two strategies can go a long way in increasing renewal energy in Keene.

Mr. Butterworth moved on to strategy three, which involves collaborating with the public utility to develop a Pilot Battery Storage Program. Batteries are important for energy cost savings, especially for commercial customers, because they reduce the demand on the grid during times of peak demand. Storage also improves resiliency and can serve as an alternate to diesel generators, providing emergency back-up power. They complement solar systems in many ways as well. This strategy would involve collaborating with Eversource to explore potential options for launching such a program, starting with one or more municipal facilities. This strategy would leverage utility funding, is relative low cost, and show municipal leadership. This could potentially be expanded to local businesses and other communities as well. One of the challenges would be that the City would not be in direct control of the program and would be reliant on Eversource to be a willing participant. There is also minimal precedent in New Hampshire for this type of program. This is an emerging technology and will decrease in cost over time. Mr. Butterworth noted that Eversource has similar programs available now that could easily be expanded to include battery storage. He went on to display a graph showing the demand response benefits of battery storage.

Mr. Butterworth went on to review strategy number four to partner with local financial institutions to offer renewable energy loans. This would help to expand access to renewable energy by Keene residents and businesses. This would support the local economy, and make

renewable energy accessible to those that might not otherwise be able to afford it. The disadvantage is that the City would not be in direct control, and there would be an administrative burden on staff to get the program started. He mentioned some similar programs that the City could draw from to determine the steps involved in implementing this strategy.

Mr. Butterworth described strategy five, to implement a Building Benchmarking Ordinance. Using Energy Star's portfolio manager as a tool, a benchmarking ordinance would enable municipal and commercial business owners to compare their energy consumption to similar buildings across the country and identify areas for improvement. A key benefit of energy benchmarking is that it identifies buildings that can most benefit from energy efficiency improvements, and increases the participation in this program. This can also be linked to financial incentives to further encourage participation, such as economic development incentives. City staff time would be required to monitor this program. He went on to explain action steps to implement such a program.

Mr. Butterworth went on to review the sixth and final strategy, which is to adopt solar and EV ready guidelines for all new commercial developments. This policy could begin as voluntary and transition to mandatory overtime. It is much more cost effective to design buildings for the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations is much more cost effective than to retrofit an existing structure. Targeting new construction is a cost effective way to implement this strategy. Boosting EV charging availability in Keene makes it more practical to purchase an EV as a Keene resident. There are also a number of resources available to support the City in this program including a Department of Energy program that offers free technical assistance. A challenge is that this only targets new construction so the impact is somewhat limited. There is also limited precedent in New Hampshire for this type of stretch building code, though other communities nationwide have implemented this type of program. He went on to describe the action steps to implement.

Mr. Butterworth concluded by discussing the next steps involved by the City and his firm. He ended by offering answer any questions the Council might have.

Councilor Jones referred to a recently adopted solar ordinance that provides property tax relief for solar installations. He asked if that ordinance should be expanded to include other types of renewable energy. Mr. Butterworth answered in the affirmative noting currently solar is the most common, however that will change with time.

Councilor Remy asked Mr. Butterworth for statistics on how each of the strategies presented would affect the overall goal of the City. Mr. Butterworth explained this was a bit out of the scope of their work but a combination of the first two strategies of a CCA combined with a purchase power agreement would really drive access to renewable energy across the entire community. These would have a profound impact in increasing renewable energy supply across Keene.

Councilor Williams asked which of the options has the best opportunity to create jobs in the renewable energy sector. Mr. Butterworth commented that there is opportunity to drive local solar development through a purchase power agreement, especially with reference to local

renewable energy projects that will be linked directly to the grid. Collaborating with local financial institutions for renewable energy loans would foster partnerships with local businesses as well.

As there were no further questions, the Mayor took a moment to thank Mr. Butterworth for his thorough presentation.

CONFIRMATIONS

A motion was made by Councilor Powers and duly seconded by Councilor Filiault to confirm the following nominations: Catherine Workman to serve as an ex-officio member on the Historic District Commission with a term to expire December 31, 2021 and Gladys Johnsen to serve as an ex-officio member on the Heritage Commission with a term to expire December 31, 2021. On a roll call vote, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor, the nominations were confirmed.

COMMUNICATION – BRUCE BICKFORD/FARMERS MARKET OF KEENE – REQUEST TO USE CITY PROPERTY

A communication was received from Bruce Bickford, of the Farmers Market of Keene, requesting use of parking spaces on Gilbo Avenue for their members to vend their produce and wares on Saturdays starting on April 25, 2020 and continuing to the end of October and on Tuesdays starting on May 5, 2020 and continuing to the end of October. The Farmers Market is also requesting a reduction in the charge associated with their use and/or “complimentary” parking for their customers. The communication was referred to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee.

MEMORANDUM – CITY MANAGER AND RESOLUTION R-2020-10: RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

A motion from Councilor Powers to suspend Section 35 of the City Council Rules of Order to act upon Resolution R-2020-10 was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. On a roll call vote, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor, the Rules of Order were suspended. A motion from Councilor Powers to adopt Resolution R-2020-10, relating to Emergency Management was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. Councilor Powers stated that they all received a memorandum from the City Manager requesting some action on a Resolution that currently exists, which was adopted in 1994, that was to streamline our financial systems and how we spend our money. It provided for some provisions in emergencies and some ability for the City Manager to have some latitude in spending outside the City’s normal parameters when necessary. During our current state of emergency, the City Manager is looking to have an amendment on this Resolution to fit current circumstances. He requested the City Manager be recognized for further explanation. The City Manager stated the current Resolution that is on the table tonight is one that deals with the budgeting within the City. There is a section in the Resolution from 1994 that talks about the separation from personnel lines and other operating lines, there is a restriction from using unspent personnel funds for other operating expenses without prior approval from the City Council. The Resolution on the table this evening is an amendment to allow such funds to be used in emergency situations, like the current one,

COVID-19. The need is to have the flexibility if needed. The City Manager explained that throughout an emergency response, there is a great deal of problem solving. Emergencies are complex problems with limits on time and severe consequences of failure and host of other difficulties. When judging alternatives it is important to have as much flexibility as possible and to be able to act swiftly. She stated that she did not think a month ago or at any other point in her career it would be necessary to have this level of flexibility when expending the budget during an emergency. It is not only long lasting but because of the type of emergency, it also severely limits the ability to run government in the way we have always done. She has no longer have the confidence that we are able to imagine every scenario that could impede us from operating in our traditional ways. The City Manager is responsible for the people who work the City and responsible for keeping essential services in operation. With this amendment, she is requesting the flexibility to expend dollars budgeted for personnel costs on non-personnel items during a city emergency. There would be reporting of use of those funds to the Council. The City Manager works in a very public setting, he or she is not only held accountable by the Council, but also scrutinized by the public. Any City Manager who abused this authority would likely find themselves quickly out of a job and their professional reputation greatly damaged. A brief discussion took place. City Attorney provided a couple of options for a motion. Another brief discussion took place. The motion was made by Councilor Clark to amend the Resolution to add at the end of the existing Resolution, “provided, however, that the City Manager shall provide an accounting of the expenditure of the funds to the City Council as soon as reasonably possible under the circumstances of the Emergency”. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault. On a roll call vote, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor, the amendment passed. A motion by Councilor Remy to further amend to Resolution to add the following: “provided further that this Resolution shall be rescinded when the current COVID-19 State of Emergency is declared to be ended by the Governor”. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The City Attorney explained that with this amendment, if the State of Emergency was to be lifted by the Governor, then this would be rescinded. A brief discussion took place. On a roll call vote, with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor, the second amendment passed. Councilors Manwaring, Filiault, Jones, Ormerod and Powers were opposed. On a roll call vote, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor, the amended Resolution R-2020-10 was adopted.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

The City Manager began her comments regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated that most of her updates regarding our operational changes and our overall response to the COVID-19 Crises had been communicated to the Council and the Public through the Mayor’s memos and other messages throughout the week. Information will continue to be shared during this emergency in this fashion.

The actions that have been taken to date and will continue are to protect our citizens and our staff. As a municipality, we have the responsibility to be proactive in the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. At the same time, we continue to work hard to maintain essential City services.

The City Manager stated after reading the Governor's Emergency Order #23, specifically section #6, which addresses building permits in municipalities that are not offering any building permits or inspection. We want to make it clear to the public and local contractors that the City of Keene is still accepting building applications, conducting plan reviews, issuing permits and conducting remote inspections. There will be some changes to the Community Development home page to try to make the online submittal process clearer to the public.

In addition, the City Manager reminded people that they can still call city hall and make an appointment to register their new vehicle. She urged people to do motor vehicle renewals online but noted she realizes that it is not an option for new vehicles. The Governor's order also discussed the use of electronic signatures. The staff is in the process of putting some standards in place so that we may be able to use electronic signatures to process more things.

The City Manager shared a drafted and signed letter to the Governor from the City of Keene and the town and city managers of Durham and Rochester. The letter was requesting that the Governor consider an emergency order to allow a local option for towns and cities to waive interest on the June tax bill for up to 3 months. She announced that the Governor mentioned this concept at one of his press conferences as something he is currently considering.

The City Manager continued with the Alternative Care site on the Keene State College campus. Preparing for the worst-case scenario is a huge undertaking in any emergency. Fortunately, the City of Keene has the available facilities of KSC, as well as the support from the President of KSC and the university system and the assistance from their staff, which has been crucial over the last few days. This will continue with preparations for the facility to be ready if needed. The hospital is critical to the success of this facility and it actively working with the group to plan the logistics of operating this site. This site would become an extension of the hospital. The National Guard not only facilitated the discussion over two days to create our plan, but also has pledged service men and women to help us staff this facility if it were opened. The Emergency Management Director, Kurt Blomquist, is doing a great job bringing all the pieces together as incident commander for our community. Fire Chief, Mark Howard, Deputy Incident Commander, and Captain John Bates have been vital to the medical planning for the alternative care site. Police Chief, Steve Russo, Officer Matthew Bomberg, and John Rogers, Health Officer, have been working on integrating plans on campus for isolation and respite housing for City Fire, Police, EMS, and other city front line workers critical to performing our essential services. Every day there are new challenges and every day this group steps up to meet that challenge.

The City Manager recognized two other departments that have been doing some heavy lifting over the last couple of weeks. Beth Fox, Human Resources/Assistant City Manager, along with the Human Resources' team and Rebecca Landry, IT/Assistant City Manager, along with the IT team were recognized. The amount of work created from this ever-changing situation has been monumental for these two departments as we navigate changes that come down from the federal and state level. We have engaged technology in ways we have never done before, like virtual public meetings. This is not an easy thing to pull off.

The City Manager spoke about the need to closely monitor our first responders, to make sure they are protected and supported. As the Emergency Management Director had stated in the past, this emergency is a marathon not a sprint. The isolation and respite option at KSC is critical to also keeping their families healthy.

The City Manager recognized Will Schoefmann, Mapping Technician in the Community Development Department for moving the City towards a virtual Emergency Operations Center platform for the emergency management team. This pandemic is not out typical emergency, such as a major flood, where you would staff an actual room for several days to run your EOC. We do not have the bandwidth to do all we are doing and physically staff an EOC and right now it really doesn't make sense to do so, when we are doing most things virtually. This new tool has a lot of potential.

The City Manager gave many thanks to all departments and their employees that have stepped up.

The City Manager wanted to end on a positive note, that the City of Keene workers received the Gold Award from the United Way. This award is to acknowledge the employees of the City of Keene for their personal contributions all year long through their payroll deductions to the United Way organization. The pledges were over \$20,000 for this year.

Councilor Manwaring was contacted by various constituents concerned about the homeless, and what our obligations are as a City. The City Manager stated she is concerned as well. If someone comes to the shelter and are exhibiting symptoms, they have a fever and need to be in isolation, then we are providing a place for them to be isolated. The City has four people who have been showing some symptoms with a fever and we are providing support to them. The Health Inspector and the City Manager have asked the State the process with the homeless. If we can still help the homeless within the city capabilities that is great. If it gets too overwhelming then we will ask for help from the State. The State has created a place for the homeless to go and get better. The State will transport them to the nearest location, likely a hotel. Once the homeless are better then they will be transported back to the community from which they came.

Councilor Greenwald asked about the subject of the homeless having no place "to go", being that restaurants are closed, he was wondering if the port-a-potty option could be accelerated. It is no longer freezing, the exotic outside bathroom, and thinks it is more urgent than waiting for a more permanent solution. The City needs to have an outhouse or two near the skate park. The City Manager responded, once the Library has been closed, City Hall is still open and the second floor bathrooms are available. There has been more activity coming to use those bathrooms. She also reminded the Council that they just recently approved another lease for 12 Gilbo. They are in the process of setting up and as part of that lease; those bathrooms will be accessible to the public during those hours of operation. Councilor Greenwald commented that the need is more urgent and he did not want to be the "downtown bathroom" and is looking for a port-a-potty for the immediate timeframe. The City Manager responded that she would get back to him regarding this question.

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Councilor Williams wanted to expand the port-a-potty issue to include shower facilities for the homeless, maybe have a gym membership where they can go and take a shower. The Manager noted that unfortunately, many of those opportunities are no longer available. The cities of Portsmouth and Rochester have put up portable shower stations that the homeless are using.

Councilor Chadbourne responded that Hundred Nights does not have showers, but Salvation Army, off of Roxbury Street, had showers accessible in the past. She believes that the Hundred Nights have been using the Salvation Army for the showers. City Manager believes that is still the case.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:35 PM, there being no further business, the Mayor adjourned the meeting.

A true record, attest:


City Clerk