

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, December 10, 2019

5:00 PM

2nd Floor Conference Rm.

Members Present:

Kathy Frink
Delene White
Dan Brown, Alternate
Irene Davis, Chair
Will Schoefmann
John Mitchell, Vice Chair
Kürt Blomquist (arrived at 5:07 PM)
Gary Lamoureaux

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant to the City
Manager and the Mayor

Members Not Present:

Dawn Thomas-Smith
George Hansel

1. Call to Order

Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

2. Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if Required)

Roll call was conducted, and Chair Davis appointed alternate Dan Brown as a voting member. She welcomed new member Delene White, and asked her to introduce herself. Dr. White stated that she teaches at Keene State College (KSC) in the Modern Languages Department and teaches German, among other courses.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting – October 29, 2019

Mr. Schoefmann stated that in the meeting minutes of October 29, 2019, his name should be listed in the “Members Not Present” column.

Chair Davis noted a correction to the last paragraph of page 5: It says “Mr. Blomquist stated in the invite we will limit it to one quest,” and the word “quest” should be changed to “guest.”

Councilor Lamoureaux made a motion to approve the minutes of October 29, 2019 as amended. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4. Board Business

a) Adopt New Rules of Procedure

Chair Davis stated that everyone has had a chance to review the updated rules of procedure. She continued that she has not heard any questions come up.

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to adopt the rules of procedure. Councilor Lamoureux seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Blomquist arrived at 5:07 PM.

b) Planning for Future Exchanges

Chair Davis stated that she and Mr. Mitchell received an email from Juergen Herbst. She continued that they had their meeting last week and had discussions about future exchanges. She wrote a bit of a summary. They can set aside Albert's exchange wishes. They would like to draft something for the next three years in order for Einbeck and Keene to plan appropriately.

Chair Davis continued that currently, the exchanges confirmed are:

- March 23 to April 4, 2020 – Einbeck visitors come to the Cheshire Career Center. Mr. Mitchell stated that it might be March 22 to April 4.
- June 27 to July 10, 2010 - Keene students visit Einbeck. Mr. Mitchell stated that those are the expected date ranges, but the dates are dependent on snow days, the principals, and so on and so forth.

Chair Davis stated that Einbeck's Speicher Museum is having its anniversary from July 7 to July 9, 2020, and Einbeck suggests a youth exchange. She continued that also, Einbeck invites a Keene delegation (mixed group) to attend their Eulenfest from October 9 to 11, 2020. Then, a delegation from Einbeck would come to Keene in 2021. There is a choir exchange planned for May 2021. Keene will travel to Einbeck, and in 2023 Einbeck will travel to Keene. Also, she does not know when the dates are, but a synagogue in Einbeck is supposed to get dedicated and they would like a delegation from Keene for that if possible.

Ms. Mattson stated that she will check the email. She continued that Einbeck wanted to coordinate the dates. Chair Davis replied that the synagogue dedication might be an opportunity for when Keene is there in October for the festival.

Ms. Mattson asked if people from Keene are going twice in 2020, in June and October? Mr. Blomquist replied that the school exchanges are in March and June. Chair Davis added that they were also thinking of having the youth exchange. She continued that she thinks they were talking about a judo club. Mr. Mitchell replied or a general sports club. He continued that the weightlifting group would like to exchange. Keene is being asked to do a lot of things.

Ms. Frink stated that it used to be that students from Keene would go to Einbeck one year, and students from Einbeck would come to Keene the next year. She asked why both of those trips will be happening in the same year in 2020. Mr. Mitchell replied that they are doing the same thing every two years. He continued that they moved both exchanges to the same year, so that the same students get to exchange with each other. So the exchanges happen every other year, but they keep the connection going in the off year, to build the exchanges. This is working well/the way it should be.

Chair Davis asked if she is missing any suggested exchanges. Mr. Mitchell stated that he visited the middle school for the second time. He continued that Einbeck's middle school wants to do a cultural exchange for six or seven days; they think that would fit middle school students the best. It would be an in-home exchange, not a trip or vacation. They expect their students to come to Keene and have a home visit and then go back to Germany. He met with the principal, who is supportive but does not want to put a burden on her teachers. He visited with a teacher who has been part of an exchange with his son. He is interested in picking it up but does not want to burden the teacher. He will meet with him again in two weeks. He will see if any of his coworkers are interested. This has to be ground up, getting teachers excited about it, not principal driven. Wally is very supportive and will need two more teachers to work with him.

Chair Davis asked if they have any other exchange suggestions to put forward. She continued that they are trying to see if someone will fill in for Wally in the soccer exchange. Wally is done and said he might have a person who is interested, and if so, that person will contact the PCC. Next year is the year they skip. By next fall they would have to put a team together to go for 2021.

Mr. Blomquist stated that by the end of the summer, they will need to have somebody (or somebodies) to be the coordinator(s). He continued that if they do not have anyone by this fall it will delay it by a year. He asked how they should get the word out to see who is interested. Mr. Schoefmann replied that a post on Facebook is a good start.

Chair Davis stated that she does not think they will be able to send people for the museum anniversary. Mr. Blomquist agreed. Chair Davis stated that they would have to know by January who is going. Discussion ensued. Mr. Mitchell stated that he and his students will be there in July, and they can go to this and represent Keene.

Chair Davis asked if people think they can get a mixed group together to travel in October. Mr. Blomquist replied that they can approach the new Mayor, once he is inaugurated, and start that process, probably in January. He continued that they would probably need to have identified, by June, who would be going. Mr. Mitchell asked if the PCC should send a message to soon-to-be-Mayor Hansel about this. Chair Davis replied yes, but probably the Einbeck Mayor will send a formal invitation about this in January. Mr. Mitchell suggested they send a message to Mr. Hansel sooner anyway, saying there are some people the PCC would like him to approach. Discussion continued and Chair Davis pointed out that Mr. Hansel, as a PCC member, receives/reads the PCC minutes.

Chair Davis asked if there was anything else to discuss regarding planning. Mr. Mitchell stated that he wants the committee to be aware: they have arranged the Keene students' travel to Einbeck for the summer and believe they have it under control, but also they will be hosting ten students and two teachers from Einbeck and it might be interesting for the committee to see the students who are coming and how they have described themselves. He continued that what the students have said seems to reflect that their friends who have come previously have had a good experience. These students want to come to Keene and have heard that it is a good place to visit. He has started the process at Keene High School (KHS) to look at who will host in March and April. In the past they have spent \$8,000 to \$10,000 on hosting. They have had generous donations to bring that cost down. They will have an agenda and predicted revenue sources and expenses and will be making some sort of ask at the next meeting. Einbeck and Keene have discussed bringing the costs down as much as possible, to the benefit of more of a cultural or social exchange, instead of a "going on a vacation" exchange. The numbers will be lower. Chair Davis replied yes, and they had appropriations for exchanges, and this is the only exchange for next year.

Mr. Brown asked, this scheduling that they are projecting out is principally information alone, right? Chair Davis replied currently, yes. She continued that in the next year they will have to plan, budget-wise. Mr. Brown asked, budget-wise, if they as a committee are only responsible for official visits with official invitations. Chair Davis replied yes, and, if there is a group that has an exchange they will do fundraising efforts and the PCC will assist as well.

Councilor Lamoureux made a motion to accept the planning for future exchanges as informational. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

c) PCC Operating Guidelines – Review and Approval

Mr. Blomquist stated that he sent out the PCC Operating Guidelines. He continued that changes have not been made since the last time the group adopted these guidelines.

Chair Davis stated that the only change is about guests. Ms. Mattson replied yes, her recollection is that it was "one person, plus a guest." Chair Davis replied if it is an invitation, yes. Mr. Blomquist agreed, the delegate plus one person.

Ms. Mattson asked if they want to delete the 1.D. section. Mr. Blomquist read the section in question out loud, and discussion ensued. The committee determined that the text in 1.D is redundant because it directs the committee to do something (e.g. elect Chair and Vice Chair) that they are already required to do per the City's Rules of Procedure, which the group has already adopted. Chair Davis suggested the Operating Guidelines reference the Rules of Procedure. Mr. Blomquist suggested changing 1.D. to something like, "For committee officers, refer to the official City Rules of Procedure." Ms. Mattson will help with the wording. Mr. Blomquist will send Ms. Mattson a Word Document version of the Operating Guidelines.

Chair Davis referenced section 5, “Official Exchanges,” and the wording about “may bring up to one guest.” She asked if they should add “if there is an official invitation.” Mr. Blomquist replied that it is already in the “Official Exchanges” section, and “Official Exchanges” is defined under 1.A. Chair Davis suggested “may bring up to one guest, if allowed by the official invitation.”

Chair Davis stated that they had been debating the expectation of Keene Partner City delegate hosts. She continued that she thinks everything is there. They took out the part about the PCC giving financial assistance. She asked if everyone is confident with the guidelines.

Mr. Blomquist made a motion for the PCC to adopt the Operating Guidelines as amended. Councilor Lamoureux seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Ms. Mattson stated that she will send it to everyone for final review, and will not take the draft off until everyone has approved it. She continued that she will give a hard copy to members at the next meeting.

d) Discuss Promotional Activities/Media Opportunities to Help Promote PCC Events and Exchanges

Chair Davis asked Mr. Brown if he had anything to discuss. Mr. Brown replied no.

Mr. Schoefmann asked about the Facebook/social media post about the Youth Soccer Exchange. Ms. Mattson replied that she can do that. Mr. Blomquist replied that she should get Andy Bohannon to help. He continued that they are looking for people to coordinate, organize, and manage the soccer exchange, and travel. And if there is another sport with people interested in the same sort of management, they should contact The Mayor’s Office.

Mr. Mitchell asked if the PCC has a responsibility to look into why it is so difficult to find people to coordinate these exchanges. Chair Davis replied that not many people have enough time or money. Mr. Mitchell replied maybe it is that simple. Mr. Brown stated that maybe the sports played in Keene and the ones in Germany do not line up. Chair Davis replied that there are many sports that line up.

Mr. Blomquist stated that there are a couple ways to approach this issue. One is to have several people who want to help manage sports exchanges in general, to line up donors, sponsors, and so on and so forth underneath that group, and those people would reach out and find the coach or specific person for an area. He continued that yes, it comes down to time and money. What can they do about that? Many times there is a division like this – a group within a sports league that manages the sponsorships and a group that does the actual recruitment of coaches. Maybe they could approach it like this.

Chair Davis replied that the problem is the lack of vacation time – Germans have six or seven weeks per year of vacation time, and Americans do not. She continued that they could approach retirees, or people who are self-employed or work in the school system.

Mr. Mitchell stated that it might not be worth simply targeting people who have an interest in soccer, and they need to target people who have wealth or time.

Mr. Brown asked if this is the committee's purview. He continued that he thought the committee's role was to welcome official invitations from Einbeck and either approve or disapprove of monies for other opportunities. Maybe it is not the committee's responsibility to find a new leader for the soccer exchange.

Mr. Schoefmann replied that the concern was, the Youth Soccer Exchange was a flagship exchange program they had, so why not try and see if anyone is interested. Chair Davis stated that seeking coordinators for exchanges is part of the committee's mission. She continued that their mission is to build connections, whether they are cultural, business, or sports.

Mr. Blomquist read the PCC's mission from the City Code: "The purpose of the partner city committee is to promote educational, cultural, athletic, business, and intergovernmental cooperation between Keene, New Hampshire and Einbeck, Germany, thereby nurturing mutual understanding between the citizens of both cities and their countries." So yes, finding and gathering people interested in managing exchanges is part of that. He would hate to see the Youth Soccer Exchange end without the PCC even trying to find someone to continue it. Chair Davis stated that all of the exchanges (choral, sports) started in this committee and then spun off. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he agrees that if no one comes forward to continue the soccer exchange there is not a lot the PCC can do, but they should put the request out there and see.

Mr. Blomquist stated that a component of the PCC's charge is beating the bushes, bringing people in, helping them understand what to do, and then allowing them to go out and do the work. The PCC helps them get the resources. They find the people who can do the planning. Yes, the planning the PCC does is for the official invitations. Mr. Mitchell stated that the PCC is also responding to Einbeck's requests for sports exchanges.

Dr. White stated that regarding outreach, she teaches German at KSC and has a small group of students who are interested in doing something with the City. She continued that there is not a German program at KHS or KMS. In the language class you learn a lot about a culture. She wonders if there would be an interest in having something, like an after school program, that would connect people in Keene with Einbeck even if they are not traveling to Einbeck. Chair Davis replied that if she has students that want to get together with Mr. Mitchell's students and be mentors in German culture, which would be great. Dr. White replied that her students could learn from Mr. Mitchell's students' experiences in Einbeck as well. She continued that KSC does not have an exchange in Germany. She is thinking of something multi-tiered, ways of drawing in people in town to share the excitement of what people who go to Einbeck are experiencing. Discussion continued, and Chair Davis suggested Dr. White and her students could speak about German culture at something like the Octoberfest. It would be great if they could travel to Einbeck someday. She and Dr. White should sit down and discuss opportunities. Mr.

Mitchell agreed that it would be great to have a connection between his students and Dr. White's students.

Mr. Brown asked what the age requirement is for chaperones – could an 18- or 19-year-old German student from KSC chaperone KHS or KMS students to Germany? Mr. Mitchell replied that there is an option to go if the Keene School District (KSD)'s requirements are met. He continued that he cannot imagine someone who is not part of the school system fulfilling the chaperone requirements that the school system set. The school system wants school system people. It may be possible if the person is first a substitute teacher. Mr. Blomquist stated that chaperones must meet the rules and requirements of whatever the sponsoring agency is, and each (e.g. the City, the KSD, or the Youth Soccer program) has its own requirements. Mr. Mitchell stated that the KSD has certain hurdles someone applying as a chaperone would have to meet, and he cannot speak for the KSD, but believes the hurdles would not be an impediment to a responsible person and this might be possible.

Chair Davis stated that she believes the PCC said they would post on Facebook the opportunity of coaching/mentoring youth sports groups and see if they find anyone who is interested. Mr. Schoefmann replied that when Ms. Mattson posts this, she should make sure the post is clear that this is not a paid position.

Mr. Blomquist made a motion to accept this discussion as informational. Councilor Lamoureux seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

5. Communications

6. Reports

a) Treasurer Report

Ms. Frink reported that since the last meeting, she and Ms. Mattson reconciled nine invoices. She continued that they were taken from the appropriated account, which had not been done before. All of the invoices are corrected. The appropriated account is depleted. The balance in the general fund \$18,770.06. She urges the committee to stay within the budget. This past year over \$13,000 was spent. Granted, not much was done in 2017 or 2018 but they exceeded what was appropriated in those two years. The \$5,000 they expect in July is not guaranteed. They need to stay within the budget. Chair Davis added, or they need to find more sponsors.

Mr. Blomquist stated that this is December, so that means there would not be any appropriations until July 1.

Councilor Lamoureux made a motion to accept the finance report as written. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

7. New Business

a) Discuss coordination of the re-dedication of Einbeck's old synagogue with Keene's next visit

- b) Next Meeting: January 14, 2020**
- c) More Time**

Chair Davis stated that she will reach out to the Einbeck committee and see if they can combine the re-dedication of the synagogue with the delegation's visit in October.

Mr. Blomquist raised the topic of PCC membership and whose terms are expiring this month. He continued that the Mayor will need to appoint a new City Council member, since Councilor Lamoureux is leaving this committee. Ms. Mattson spoke about how PCC members have been exempt from term limits. Ms. Mattson and Mr. Blomquist spoke about the membership number of the committee and how the question of whether to allow more City staff members to be members of the committee will be a decision for the incoming Mayor, George Hansel. Discussion continued about membership issues. Ms. Mattson stated that the City Clerk will be sending information to the Mayor regarding names of members whose terms are expiring, with recommendations to reappoint members who are eligible to serve another term. She continued that Lily Hart is no longer a member. Chair Davis noted that they will have six vacancies in the New Year. Ms. Frink stated that she submitted her resignation. Mr. Blomquist stated that people should think about who out there has a financial background they would like to recommend the Mayor appoint so there is a treasurer.

Chair Davis stated that "election of officers" should go on the January agenda. They will brainstorm names of potential new members. She asked for confirmation that everyone is exempt from term limits and thus are automatically renewed unless they resign. Mr. Blomquist replied that the City Council member is not exempt. Discussion continued. Chair Davis thanked Councilor Lamoureux and Ms. Frink very much for their service. Mr. Blomquist stated that what the exemption really means is: members still have a two-year term. He continued that the rules say, for most committees, you can only do two consecutive terms. For this committee, the number of terms is not restricted. However, members who want to continue do have to be re-nominated by the Mayor; it is not automatic. Discussion continued about who needs to be re-nominated.

Ms. Mattson asked how many members, total, would be good for the committee to have, so they can suggest a number to Mayor Hansel. Discussion ensued, and people suggested seven or eight. Mr. Blomquist noted that currently there are 14 membership spots with seven vacancies. Ms. Mattson stated that they will be suggesting to Mayor Hansel that he reduce the membership to seven, and reappoint members. Discussion ensued about whether there will be even people to constitute a quorum for the January meeting, or if the January meeting should be canceled. Chair Davis stated that they will hold the meeting as scheduled, and there will be a quorum if every single person shows up.

Mr. Mitchell made a motion for the PCC to send Albert a card, thanking him for chairing the Einbeck committee and expressing appreciation for his help with fostering exchanges. Councilor Lamoureux seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Chair Davis stated that she and Mr. Mitchell can get together to do that. Ms. Mattson stated that she will get a card from the Mayor's Office's budget. Chair Davis asked if the

Mayor is sending a Christmas card to the Mayor of Einbeck. Ms. Mattson replied that she will remind him to do so.

8. Adjournment

Chair Davis stated that the next meeting is January 14, 2020.

She adjourned the meeting at 6:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed & Edited by Helen Mattson