

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 8, 2020

5:30 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

Janis O. Manwaring, Chair
Michael Giacomo, Vice Chair
Randy L. Filiault
Bettina A. Chadbourne
Robert C. Williams

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager
Thomas P. Mullins, City Attorney
Rhett Lamb, Assistant City
Manager/Community Development Director
Kürt Blomquist, Public Works
Director/Emergency Management Director
Andy Bohannon, Director of Parks,
Recreation & Facilities
Aaron Costa, Water Treatment Facilities
Operations Manager

Members Not Present:

Chair Manwaring called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM, welcomed the public, and read the authority to hold a remote meeting: Emergency Order #12, issued by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04. In accordance with this order, Councilors Filiault & Chadbourne reported that they were calling alone from their respective home addresses, Councilor Williams was calling from home with his niece present, Vice Chair Giacomo was calling from home address with his wife present, and Chair Manwaring was calling from City Hall with City Staff present.

1) REPORT OUT: Eclipse Management Group – Construction on City Property and Eclipse Management at Keene ICE

Chair Manwaring welcomed the Director of Parks, Recreation & Facilities, Andy Bohannon, who recalled a presentation before this Committee a few weeks ago from the Eclipse Management Group, wanting to establish a junior hockey club at Keene ICE. Eclipse subsequently held public sessions to field community questions and concerns, which centered on player education, and room and board that would occur on the Keene State College campus. In addition to those community concerns, a cost differential arose for Eclipse regarding the ability to adapt their original plan to Covid-19 measures for their players and Keene ICE. Although it would have been a revenue friendly venture for Keene ICE, the amount of work required for the facility in a short time to build the locker rooms was not feasible, and so Eclipse decided to move on to another facility if they can find one. Mr. Bohannon explained that this process caused the Board of Keene ICE to publicize a request for proposals to develop that storage space in question

so that if/when another group is interested in establishing at Keene ICE, it is a fairer opportunity. He said that many current public user groups of Keene ICE were pleased with the Board's decision. Overall, Mr. Bohannon thought this was an interesting experience for the Board of Keene ICE and the community ice group.

Vice Chair Giacomo made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Filiault:

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee moved to report out the request from Eclipse Management Group for construction on City property at Keene ICE.

2) Water Supply and Water Conservation Measures – Operations Manager & Assistant Public Works Director

Water Treatment Facilities Operations Manager, Aaron Costa, explained that despite some recent isolated storm events, the City has been in a drought for several months; the Public Works Director, Kurt Blomquist agreed. Mr. Costa explained that the State of NH issues weekly a statement and map categorizing drought conditions, and Keene was in a moderate drought for the two weeks preceding this meeting. The City has two surface water supplies: the Babbidge Reservoir holds 145 million gallons when full and is estimated to contain 100 million gallons today, and the Woodward Reservoir holds 500 million gallons when full but is under construction and largely inaccessible today. Additionally, Staff monitors water measurements at the City's four ground water production wells. The City's current daily demand for water is approximately 2.5 million gallons. On June 17, Staff put the West Street Well #1 into production and on July 1, the Court Street Well #4; together those two wells produce 1.6 million gallons daily and the remaining City demand is served by the surface water sites.

Given current surface water levels, lack of rain, and persistent heat, it was appropriate for Staff to bring this to the Council's attention and Staff will continue to monitor and provide updates. Section 98-74.1 of the City Code of Ordinances authorizes City Council to declare three stages of water conservation measures:

1. Water Conservation Alert: a request that the community voluntarily reduces water use in the event that a water supply shortage exists and/or in the event that the water demand exceeds a rate that would reduce the available raw water to a volume representing 120 calendar days or less.
2. Water Storage Watch: in the event of an imminent water supply shortage and/or when water demands/need exceeds a rate that would reduce the available raw water to a volume representing 90 calendar days or less. Upon declaration of a water shortage watch, the Public Works Department shall be authorized to impose such mandatory restrictions necessary to abate the water supply shortage and/or to conserve and maintain adequate reserves of the public water supply. Additionally, residential, commercial and industrial customers may be required to reduce their water use by 20 percent compared to the previous year through whatever means are available. The Public Works Department in cooperation with the customer will determine compliance with the reduction. Upon

written request, the Public Works Director and/or designee may grant exceptions or impose fewer restrictions based upon demonstration of health or safety concerns.

3. Water Shortage Warning: in the event of an immediate water supply shortage and/or when water demands/need exceeds a rate that would reduce the available raw water to a volume representing 30 calendar days or less. Upon declaration of a water shortage warning, the Public Works Department shall be authorized to impose mandatory restrictions necessary to abate the water supply shortage and/or conserve and maintain adequate reserves of the public water supply. Establishments may be required to reduce their water use by 50 percent compared to the previous year, and severe limitations may be placed on other activities.

Staff recommended that City Council declare a Stage 1 - Water Conservation Alert.

Chair Manwaring asked what concerned citizens can do to cooperate. Mr. Costa suggested that citizens stop watering their lawns or to do so strategically. Instead of washing cars at home, residents can visit local car washes that typically have water recycling facilities. He recommended people also check for leaky plumbing.

Vice Chair Giacomo recalled the City having a rain barrel program in recent years and asked if there were plans to revive that. The Public Works Director said that program was through the Transfer Station and there was a grant from another source for either composting or rain barrels. Moving forward, he said it would be a more educational program and when funds are available a similar barrel program could be possible again. Currently, residents are encouraged to reduce peak water usage over the next few months.

Vice Chair Giacomo made the following motion which was seconded by Councilor Filiault:

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee recommends the declaration of a Stage 1 - Water Conservation Alert as per Section 98-74.1 of the City Code of Ordinances.

The Public Works Department began publicizing the drought conditions via their social media and press releases one week before this meeting and would increase the effort following Council's declaration. Chair Manwaring also suggested that the City Manager include this in her report to Council.

There being no further business, Chair Manwaring adjourned the meeting at 5:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katriona Kibler, Minute Taker
July 12, 2020

Additional edits by: Terri M. Hood, Assistant City Clerk