

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

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

**Thursday, June 11, 2020**

**6:30 PM**

**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**Members Present:**

Thomas F. Powers, Chair  
Stephen L. Hooper, Vice-Chair  
Terry M. Clark  
Michael J. Remy  
Raleigh C. Ormerod

**Staff Present:**

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager  
Thomas P. Mullins, City Attorney  
Finance Director, Merri Howe  
Airport Director, David Hickling  
Asst. Public Works Director, Duncan Watson  
Parks Recreation and Facilities Director  
Andrew Bohannon  
Youth Services Manager, Demetria Kirby

**Members Not Present:**

**George S. Hansel, Mayor**

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

- 1) **Acceptance of Donation - Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director**
- 2) **Acceptance of Donations - Keene Downtown Memorial Tree Fund - James P. Finnegan - Public Works/Emergency Management Director**

Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director Andy Bohannon stated the first item is a donation from Pathways for Keene for \$26,600 for phase 4 of the Cheshire Trails Project. He noted there is a reference to this project in the FY 24 CIP through the Transportation Heritage Trail Project in an amount of \$26,600. This donation will allow for design and allow Pathways to continue with fundraising. A design will give them an opportunity to do a more successful fundraising project. Mr. Bohannon thanked Pathways for Keene for their generosity – Ted McGreer, Charles Redfern and Wink Faulkner.

Mr. Charles Redfern of 9 Colby Street addressed the committee next and stated Pathways have already begun fund raising for next year. He noted \$26,600 are what they expect the project too cost at this time not projected out to FY24.

Public Works Director Kurt Blomquist addressed the second donation stating it is in memory of Mr. James P. Finnegan who recently passed and was a long time resident of the area and very active in the community. His family requested that in lieu of flowers, contributions in Mr. Finnegan's name be made to the Keene Downtown Memorial Tree Fund. The Public Works Department has received several donations to date. Donations that have been received in

memorial are as follows: Francis and William Hosman \$50.00 and N L Turgeon \$35.00. He indicated he is unaware how many more donations will be received in Mr. Finnegan's memory.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On a vote of 5-0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept a donation of \$26,600.00 from Pathways for Keene, Inc. and that the money is allocated for the design phase of the Cheshire Rail Trail Phase 4 project; and, to accept with gratitude, donations made in memorial of James P. Finnegan to the Keene Downtown Memorial Tree Fund.

**3) Acceptance of State of New Hampshire Grant Funding for Youth Services' Juvenile Court Diversion Programming - Youth Services Manager**

Youth Services Manager, Demetria Kirby stated that her department recently applied for a grant totaling \$24,000 through DCYF for youth programming and are in receipt of same. She noted the money would be used for specific things like scholarship opportunities for the evidence-based online courses. It will also provide assistance with restitution, provided the youth meaningfully participates in community service activities to pay back the assistance. This will relieve a portion of the financial burden many families face when their youth commit offenses. Ms. Kirby noted the funds would also be used for training and travel opportunities for staff.

This funding will also be used to provide community engagement opportunities such as documentary screenings, panel discussions and guest speakers who can educate the community on the current needs of our youth. The funds will be dispersed over two fiscal years.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On a vote of 5-0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and administer funds provided by the State of New Hampshire for Juvenile Court Diversion programming.

**4) Acceptance of Grant for Airport - FAA CARES Act- Airport Director**

Airport Director David Hickling was the next speaker who stated that the FAA CARES Act made it possible for funds to be provided to airports who were affected by the Corona Virus. Dillant Airport was eligible to receive funding due to losses it experienced during the last couple of months.

Councilor Ormerod commended the Airport Director for moving fast to obtain this award. He clarified Council approval will be required by June 30 to obtain these funds. Mr. Hickling answered in the affirmative.

Councilor Clark asked which fiscal year these funds would be applied towards. Mr. Hickling stated it is not specific to any particular year – funds can be used to cover losses incurred over the last few months. The City Manager stated this grant is meant to be a reimbursement for

losses in revenue during Covid-19 and they expect to be able to apply it towards the current budget but could provide some flexibility moving into next year.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On a vote of 5-0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and execute a grant in the amount of \$69,000 from the Federal Aviation Administration as part of the CARES Act.

**5) Acceptance of CARES ACT Funding - DHHS - Finance Director**

Finance Director Merri Howe stated this CARES Act fund is for ambulance services. It was made available to all healthcare providers who were enrolled in Medicare and received Medicare reimbursement during calendar year 2019 – which the City of Keene ambulance service is.

On April 17, 2020, the City received \$37,085.71 from the Department of Health and Human Services as part of the CARES Act Provider Relief Fund to support healthcare-related expenses or lost revenue attributable to Covid-19 and ensures uninsured Americans can get treatment for Covid-19. Based upon an analysis from Comstar, the City's ambulance billing service. Revenues for the month of April 2020 had decreased by \$35,865.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On a vote of 5-0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept the receipt of CARES ACT Department of Health and Human Services funding in the amount of \$37,085.71 under RSA 21-P:43 which states that gifts, grants or loans for emergency management purposes may be accepted by the City Council with no public hearing requirement.

**6) Operating agreement with Monadnock Choppers LLC - Airport Director**

Mr. Hickling addressed the committee again and stated this item was put on more time at the last session. This item is in reference to an Operating Agreement with Monadnock Choppers to operate at the Airport. He went on to refer to the economic benefit of the Airport to this community and hence development is a goal while at the same time reducing the negative impact that might have on the community.

Mr. Hickling stated in an effort to address some of the concerns, the applicant Kevin Provost has a drafted a letter of understanding regarding noise abatement as he runs his operation. The letter addresses procedures including minimum altitudes, early crosswind turn outs, optimizing the use of uninhabited areas for hovering and similar maneuvers and ensuring all aircrew are familiar with noise sensitive areas and how they are impacted by airport operations.

Additionally, Mr. Hickling stated he has worked with the applicant to submit a request to the FAA to provide published approach and departure procedures for all helicopters using the airport. This would result in helicopter aircrews using our airport, regardless of where they came

from or what their purpose for being here is, to have published guidance on noise abatement procedures and avoiding noise sensitive areas. He stated he would also review and reassess current published noise abatement procedures for fixed wing aircraft to see if there are other options that could further reduce these concerns.

Mr. Hickling went on to say he wanted to assure the committee as well as the community, that they are not insensitive to the concerns. This is an airport that has a lot of potential to bring new business opportunities and economic growth to the Monadnock region.

Mr. Hickling stated he also reached out to Carol Niewola, Senior Aviation Planner for the NH DOT. Ms. Niewola oversees the FAA AIP Block grant program for the state. He noted Ms. Niewola confirmed his expectation regarding the city's obligation to "*make the airport available on reasonable terms without unjust discrimination to all aeronautical users.*" She went on to reference several sections of the grant assurances that focus on the intent of promoting the growth of aviation business and activities "on reasonable Terms, without discrimination", and that the city will not interfere with this intent. Mr. Hickling added there is also language that indicates that the City will permit no exclusive right by allowing one user to perform aeronautical services but restricting another.

Councilor Remy stated he had received many comments for and against this plan. He asked about a plan the FAA released which identifies noise sensitive areas and asked for clarification. Mr. Hickling stated these are not regulations rather Best Practice Procedures and stated this is the intent and pilots are good about following these procedures. He further noted it would however, be up to the FAA if they chose to take this action. The Councilor asked should this Agreement not be approved whether there is anything that would prevent the applicant from using the airport as a landing, using the primary terminal for pick up, and drop off and as a training point. Mr. Hickling stated the applicant would need an Operating Agreement to conduct commercial activity, however he can operate a helicopter but not conduct commercial activity.

Councilor Hooper stated because this item was put on more time the public has been able to make additional comment. He felt however, the neighbors do not feel they have been adequately heard and felt continuing this item for one more cycle might be prudent. He added he is in support of bringing business to the airport but is also a proponent of giving the stakeholders a chance to be heard.

Councilor Ormerod stated he too has received emails from both sides; the concerns are about safety, noise, and property value. He felt there has been a lot of progress made on the noise issue and wanted to make sure neighbors are not persecuted just for economic reasons.

Councilor Clark noted every pro comment he has received is from a non-resident and every anti-comment is from a resident outside of the neighborhood. He noted he would like to suggest a site visit. He recalled his experience of living next to the former helicopter flight school, which he noted, was not a good experience.

Mr. Kevin Provost was the next speaker. He began by saying denying Monadnock Choppers' Operating Agreement is a direct violation of federal grant assurances. He stated he has been working very closely with the Airport Manager on the noise issue and noted the letter of

understanding he has drafted will be part of the Operating Agreement. He pointed out that other helicopters will still be able to use this facility to also include the DART Helicopter. He pointed out his company will bring revenue to the airport and the increase to traffic Monadnock Choppers will bring to the airport will also benefit the Flight Deck Restaurant.

Mr. Provost referred to his education at Keene State College and his experience as a pilot. He went on to say he has a lot of money invested in this venture and added he did not want to enter into a legal battle but if the Council was to ignore the grant assurances he will seek damages. He added continuing this item is costing him money; he stated he agreed to a live test but asked that the operating agreement be signed first.

Jess Allen of 148 Gilsum Street felt this project will benefit the airport and is something that should be encouraged. She noted the opposing comments that have been brought forward are not based on facts, they are opinion-based. She referred to the decibel level these helicopters will be producing which are considered to be mid-level and added she feels the facts she is providing are being ignored. Ms. Allen noted those who have chosen to live next to an airport should not be afforded the opportunity to dictate what can and cannot happen at this facility. She felt denying the operating agreement could cost the city legal fees as well as federal grant funding opportunities. She did not feel denying this agreement based on noise was appropriate.

Mr. Phil Suter was the next speaker. He began by saying he is not before the Committee on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce but as a private citizen. He noted the airport is a great asset for the entire Monadnock Region and as a Chamber they have been working to market the Monadnock region and to that extent, the airport will be part of that plan.

Mr. Curt Hansen of 118 Gunn Road, identified himself as Chair of the Airport Development and Marketing Committee. Mr. Hansen reiterated what Mr. Suter stated. He noted he has heard many times how difficult it is to do business in Keene and asked the committee to move this item forward.

Ms. Beth White of 86 George Street stated she is a pilot and has two planes at the airport. She indicated she has had a desire to purchase property at the airport to locate a hangar but this issue is making her apprehensive moving forward with such a venture. She noted that Mr. Provost is an airplane mechanic and felt his business should be supported. She noted to the other revenue possibilities this venture would bring to the airport such as sale of fuel. Ms. White asked the committee to support this request.

Mayor Hansel asked the committee to approve this request. The Mayor stated he hoped the committee sees this individual's desire to invest in the community and at the airport. He felt the Airport Director and the applicant have a done a good job so far and added it is too bad the experience with the prior school did not end well but felt this applicant should not be judged by that experience.

Mr. Robert Mitchell of 47 Center View Drive, Swanzey Center stated he lives 100 yards from the airport. Mr. Mitchell referred to the excessive noise and nighttime operation with the previous facility which issue is outlined in the Swanzey Planning Board minutes of meetings

held in July and August of 1999 and asked the committee to review these minutes. He indicated he supports all civil aviation activities at the airport and has had no issues with C&S jets. However, his experience has not been the case with helicopters, which linger for a long period at low altitude and could be much louder. He stated he disagrees with the sound decibel level and agreed with the suggestion for a site visit. He added noise could become a bigger issue during summer months when people sleep with their windows open.

Ms. Matthew Santonastaso of 343 Route 202, Rindge addressed the committee and stated the Keene Airport serves the entire county. He noted he was a pilot and a flight instructor and noted there are very few helicopter flight schools in the area and so far Nashua is the closest school. He indicated Nashua has noise abatement procedures and helicopters can follow them better as they climb faster than airplanes.

Ms. Ann Heffernon of Swanzey stated in the many years she has lived in this neighborhood they have never complained about airplane noise. She recalled the previous helicopter school and stated they were cumbersome and loud. Ms. Heffernan stated she was not opposed to development at the airport. She indicated she is concerned for the neighbors at Edgewood Drive due to the loss of trees and noted she did not like being told they are imagining this noise issue as they do live here and felt the committee should be listening them.

Ms. April Cushman resident of Swanzey stated it was important for this community to keep growing. She pointed to an example of someone moving next to a concert hall not expecting to have concerts going on until late in the night and the same is true living next to the airport. She also pointed out she is living in an area where she can hear the constant noise of blasting and it is having an impact on her foundation – however, this is a business and her family has accepted this issue. Ms. Cushman went on to refer to Mr. Provost’s military career and now his desire to train others with his helicopter school and felt the city should be encouraging his business.

Ms. Holly Gorsuch a Keene resident stated she too supports the airport growth and felt airport growth is important to any community. She stated she agrees there are concerns with noise, but this is an airport and as a result, an airport needs to be used as such.

Mr. Michael Cushman Swanzey resident stated he supports the airport. He talked about the positive impact Mr. Provost has had on his child. With reference to noise, he could not see why this item could not be approved and then address it as an ongoing issue.

Ms. Chris Manning Gray of 51 Greenwood Avenue stated those in the neighborhood who are speaking against this item are not anti-airport. She stated she is not against development at the airport and does understand the airport’s obligation of not using city revenue to support the airport. However, she felt the airport has been overzealous of its goals, which has made it lose track of sight that it is part of a community. She felt the airport operates with a narrow focus of trying to get its goals accomplished. This creates an “us versus them” nature. Ms. Manning Gray went on to say she agrees with Councilor Clark’s suggestion for an onsite test. She noted there is the reality of what a helicopter sounds like versus what is written in a document.

Mr. Andrew Wood of 14 Summer Street Swanzey stated his family has lived in this area for six

generations. He stated he brings a unique set of circumstances to this discussion – he stated he is a harness maker but at the moment, his business is on hold. He recalled his experience with Mr. Provost going back to college days and Mr. Provost’s assistance with his business and felt Mr. Provost would have no problem working with the community on the concerns it has. He stated supporting Mr. Provost’s business would support many ancillary businesses in the community.

Ms. Joann Darius from Fitzwilliam began by expressing support for Mr. Provost. She stated she has aircraft at the airport. Ms. Darius stated she had listened to the comments and read the minutes from the prior meeting. She stated her comments today are specifically towards a member of the public who called last time and again today to speak against Mr. Provost and referred to her many complaints to The Keene Sentinel. She did not feel these complaints should be ignored but it did not matter what development went into the airport, this individual is likely to oppose it. She pointed out that the Dillant Hopkins Airport is growing and is looking for economic development. However, in the past five years there has been only one flying related business at the airport and hoped this can change.

Ms. Chelsea Casper of 678 West Street stated she was calling in support of Monadnock Choppers who will provide valuable aviation service to the community. She indicated she is also a small business owner and is disappointed the city is not doing more to support small businesses both current and emerging. She noted if one decides to live next to an airport, the issues being raised become part of living next to an airport.

Mr. Richard Casper of 102 Highland Circle, Swanzey stated he has lived in this location since 1999 – he lived through the last helicopter school and had no issue with that and has no issue with the proposal before the committee tonight. He felt with what this country is experiencing in these times, young people need to be afforded the opportunity to start a business and gain footing and felt Kevin Provost was one of those individuals.

Mr. Kyle Bentley of 43 Woodland Heights Swanzey felt this community has a great asset in the airport, with the third largest runway in the State and has seen Air Force One land in this airport. He felt this community needs to use this asset to its fullest potential. Mr. Bentley noted there is one other helicopter school in the state, and there is a shortage of helicopter pilots. He felt Mr. Provost should be given the opportunity, as he is willing to work with the community on issues that have been raised.

Mr. Bill Hattendorf of 7 Pitcher Point, Swanzey addressed the committee and stated he lives a few yards away from the airport. He stated he is impressed with the support this proposal has received tonight and stated that he has an aviation background and is familiar with the operation of helicopters. Mr. Hattendorf stated when he moved to this area he thought he was moving away from helicopters and was not in favor of this proposal.

Ms. Jess Allen spoke for a second time, stating what has not been said today is that these helicopters are already in operation today for personal use and maintenance and added it is too bad noise is still being discussed.

Mr. Jason Horn of 79 George Street stated he is a pilot and owns a hangar at the airport and

received his pilot's license from this airport. He stated he knows Mr. Provost is a local resident who received his education in Keene and questioned what Mr. Provost would do if this operation were not approved. He stated he understands noise but noted the loudest thing at the airport are the C&S jets and the helicopters do not make that type of noise.

Mr. Bernie Cashliff of 138 Old Homestead Highway, Swanzey addressed the Committee and stated he is not against aviation. He stated he has heard the helicopters flying around, is not entirely against the noise, and questioned the number of flights per day. He also asked where the training is going to take place, and where the flight path would be located. He suggested the operation happen away from residences near Wilson Pond.

Ms. Sarah Ellsworth of 123 Greenwood Avenue stated she has lived at this location for 21 years and knew she was moving next to an airport and agreed she did make this choice. She stated she is hearing a lot of anger and frustration at this suggestion. She indicated as a midwife she is aware of the DART Helicopter and is thankful for its operation. Ms. Ellsworth stated she is glad for the work the applicant has done so far with the Airport Director but this is a community with residents and businesses and felt there needs to be a balance and felt a sound test would be prudent. She also hoped that night flights could be limited and there could be sensitivity shown for the neighbors who do pay taxes.

Mr. Provost addressed the committee and asked for the City Attorney's comments about not abiding by the grant assurances. Attorney Mullins stated he would reserve his comments for City Council.

Ms. Chelsea Casper of 678 West Street for a second time, stated there has been a lot of reference to the former helicopter school – she stated if the city was going to base all new businesses on past experiences, the city is not likely to have any new businesses. She agreed a sound check was appropriate but added helicopters are currently being permitted out of the airport and felt this was a waste of resources.

Ms. Beth White addressed the committee again and stated she hoped the city was doing due diligence with accepting federal funds and were not discriminating against certain businesses and certain practices. She went on to say if night flying was going to be, restricted Dart is looking for helicopter pilots. She further stated individuals might be confusing these helicopters with the Black Hawks who fly in to check power lines and perhaps those should also not be permitted. She further stated public night flights are currently not prohibited.

The Chairman stated the committee's role tonight is to hear comments and make recommendations to the full City Council.

Councilor Ormerod stated that none of the Councilors is against new business and his career has been about launching new businesses. He went on to say there would not be anything in the FAA Requirements that mandate the city to subject its citizens to excessive noise, pollution and other things they are complaining about. He added, he is however, glad to see progress being made on the concerns raised.



Chair Powers explained there are basic FAA Regulations as to how helicopters are flown and in this case, the applicant has instituted a Memorandum of Understanding, which will make those Regulations tougher and asked for clarification on this from the Airport Director. Mr. Hickling responded by saying at the present time there are no approach or departure regulations for helicopters. What Mr. Provost is proposing is to come up with standard operating procedures for his operation to take precautions for noise. He added he is under the impression the prior operation did not take those considerations. Mr. Hickling went on to say what is worrisome to him is how all helicopters are grouped together for this discussion, which he felt, was unfair. The ones being proposed by the applicant are much smaller.

Chair Powers asked about the minimum height a helicopter is permitted to hover over residences. Mr. Hickling stated it was 500 feet or higher but referred the regulatory question to Mr. Provost.

The Chairman asked the committee how they wished to schedule the sound check visit. Councilor Clark stated it would be similar to how site visits are conducted for the Planning Board – it is a matter of coordinating it with staff and the applicant. He added he wants new business at the airport but would like to address the concerns of the neighbors and hoped due diligence can be done.

Councilor Hooper stated he wanted to commend Mr. Provost for coming up with the Memorandum of Understanding and stated he wanted this business to be successful. He thanked everyone for their comments tonight and stated the city is trying to find a balance and hoped staff could assist in this process.

The Airport Director stated he would not be opposed to the site visit but added it would be at an expense to the applicant and therefore he would need to be willing to do it. He added the logistics of trying to get a visit scheduled could be difficult based on things like weather.

Mr. Provost addressed the committee again and stated airplanes usually fly at 1,000 AGL, while helicopters are authorized to fly at 500. He stated it is easy to adjust this height as necessary. He noted the Memorandum of Understanding prohibits him from flying at intrusive heights and he is happy to agree to this, but added he needs an operating agreement to do that. Mr. Provost went on to say when the airport accepts federal funds it agrees to abide by those regulations and those regulations say that the city cannot discriminate against category or class of aircraft; the city cannot give one operator exclusive rights and felt the city seems to be ignoring same. Chair Powers in response stated the committee is not ignoring anything, they are still at the stage of obtaining information. The Chairman asked for the Manager's comment. Ms. Dragon stated she was happy to work with the Airport Director and Mr. Provost to schedule a time for a site visit. She asked whether there was a way to move this item forward – she noted next week this item could go before the full Council but did not feel anything can be done before next week.

Councilor Ormerod stated he wanted to voice his support for all parties as well as support for a sound test as soon as possible.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

That the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to negotiate and execute an Operating Rights Agreement with Monadnock Choppers

LLC, to provide specialized aeronautical services at the Dillant-Hopkins Airport; and

Move to recommend that the City Manager be authorized to negotiate and execute a Lease Agreement with Monadnock Choppers LLC for office space located in the Airport Terminal building; and

Move to recommend that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to amend an existing Land Lease Agreement with Kevin Provost, managing member of Monadnock Choppers LLC, so that the lease term and termination provisions run together with the Operating Rights Agreement and Terminal building Lease Agreement.

Councilor Ormerod proposed an amendment to the motion on the floor by adding the following to the end of the first paragraph: “*subject to the condition that the agreement specify in writing the specific measures that Monadnock Choppers LLC is required to implement to address the multiple noise, air pollution and safety concerns that have been voiced by the public.*” The amendment was seconded by Councilor Remy.

Councilor Remy stated he was in support of the amendment and felt it was not fair to delay the Petitioner any further. He further state he trusted the City Manager that the Memorandum of Understanding is sufficiently restrictive to make sure the concerns are addressed adequately.

Councilor Hooper stated this was a good way to move this item forward and was happy that a lot more concerns were raised tonight. He felt this amendment would give the Manager an opportunity to come up with a strong agreement.

The proposed amendment carried on a unanimous roll call vote.

Councilor Remy stated he hoped this item can be moved forward and hoped throughout the process staff can provide the committee with a bullet list of what the next steps would be with the FAA to get the long-term process outlined – so it is fair to the petitioner and others who come through the airport.

Councilor Hooper stated he agrees with Councilor Remy’s comments, and feels this is a good way to move this item on with the understanding that time is of the essence. He felt there were a lot of comments this evening and that all the concerns were put on record. He is satisfied that we have an understanding of all the concerns and appreciated the positive comments as well. He thanked the public for their input and noted we are sensitive to that. He thought the motion as proposed will allow the City Manager to work with the petitioner to come up with a satisfactory plan.

Councilor Clark asked whether the motion is only to negotiate or whether it was also to execute. The Chairman stated it is to negotiate and execute. Councilor Clark asked about the site visit. The Chairman stated he heard the Airport Director indicate he will work with the applicant to get this scheduled and timing is such depending on weather. He further the City Attorney would need to be consulted as to whether this is a noticed meeting and the amendment before the committee is specific based on conditions to be outlined in the MOU. Councilor Clark stated he

heard mention that “time is of the essence”. He felt that was a legal term, and asked whether that was an issue. The Chairman stated this term is not in any of the motions the committee will be voting on; it was indicated that there would be consideration given to time. Councilor Clark clarified if this item goes before the Council no more neighborhood input will be allowed. The Chairman stated the public is always allowed input by contacting any member of the Council or through the Clerk’s Office.

Councilor Ormerod asked the Manager whether the MOU would be ready in time for the next Council meeting. Ms. Dragon stated staff has drafted an MOU that outlines the flight path but stated she was in no way ready to execute same based on the comments received today. She stated the Council will approve it on Thursday of next week but hopes to have the neighbors at the airport to have a conversation with them before it is finalized with Mr. Provost. Today’s vote is to move that process forward. Councilor Ormerod asked if the word “execute” was taken out of the motion whether the process could be moved forward as he senses hesitation from certain individuals about not having a final check. Ms. Dragon stated if the word execute is not included the committee will have to go through this entire process again which will probably add another month; the next FOP meeting is June 25<sup>th</sup> and the next Council meeting will be July 2.

Relative to the motion on the floor as amended:

On a vote of 4-1, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to negotiate and execute an Operating Rights Agreement with Monadnock Choppers LLC, to provide specialized aeronautical services at the Dillant-Hopkins Airport *subject to the condition that the agreement specify in writing the specific measures that Monadnock Choppers LLC is required to implement to address the multiple noise, air pollution and safety concerns that have been voiced by the public;* and

That the City Manager be authorized to negotiate and execute a Lease Agreement with Monadnock Choppers LLC for office space located in the Airport Terminal building; and

That the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to amend an existing Land Lease Agreement with Kevin Provost, managing member of Monadnock Choppers LLC, so that the lease term and termination provisions run together with the Operating Rights Agreement and Terminal building Lease Agreement.

Councilor Clark voted in opposition.

7) **Renewable Energy Project at Dillant-Hopkins Airport Phase 1-Wastewater Treatment Plant, Phase 2- Net Metering for Municipal Use - Assistant Public Works Director**

Asst. Public Works Director Duncan Watson addressed the Committee next and stated this item is for the City Manager to enter into a Letter of Intent (LOI) with ReVision Solar, the same company that competed the solar project at 350 Marlboro Street to install a solar array at the City of Keene Wastewater Treatment Plant. The current project is for phase 1, which is a Behind the Meter solar array adjacent to the WWTP to supply electrical needs for the plant, which is the greatest energy use in all of Cheshire County. Phase 2 would be along the access road to the

plant.

Mr. Watson stated the LOI does not obligate the city to anything; staff will be back before the committee to enter into a power purchase agreement similar to what was structured for 350 Marlboro Street. The company would install a solar array and charge the city a rate for electricity costs which is lower than the electricity cost. Phase 2 once it is fully developed would be to direct the electricity to other municipal users. There is also a process that would need to be done to determine the fair market value. Once all the necessary work is completed with the LOI, a proposal would be created and brought to the council for its review.

Councilor Clark stated he is very excited about this proposal and felt this project as with the 350 Marlboro Street will move forward without any issues and thanked everyone on the committee that made it happen. He hoped the FCC would approve plan.

Councilor Ormerod also expressed his enthusiasm for this project and asked whether it was necessary to have an LOI for phase 2 and whether the city cannot build its own plant.

Councilor Remy asked whether there were any downside, protection on the rates should the market fall out.

Ms. Dragon stated by including a larger project (phase 2) the city was able to drop the rate further. As far as long term rates, based on the review staff has done, the rates seem like they will only go up and locking in the rates at the lowest rate possible seems like the best option for the city. Mr. Watson added the reason for pursuing this track is so that the city does not have to come up with any capital investment. He further stated if we can lock in a cost such as this, it is a good investment for the city. Councilor Clark stated what he is learning is that fossil fuel power, power on the grid will only go up as time moves forward and felt this was a very safe option.

Councilor Ormerod thanked staff for their work on this project and felt Keene could handle many more solar projects.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On a vote of 5-0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a Letter of Intent (LOI) with ReVision Solar to develop Phase 1, a Behind the Meter 1 Megawatt (AC) solar installation to supply the City of Keene Wastewater Treatment Plant. Furthermore, the LOI will seek to assess the viability of a Phase 2 development to install a Front of the Meter 2.25 Megawatt (AC) solar installation adjacent to the Wastewater Treatment Plant access road on Keene Dillant-Hopkins Airport property.

**8) Community Power Program & Ad-hoc Community Power Committee - Assistant City Manager/Community Development Director**

City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon stated she was excited to bring this item forward as this is the second project to move the city toward its community renewal energy goals. Community Power

is a way to bring all homes into one pool and use that buying power to save money for residents and increase the purchase of green energy. She thanked Community Development Director, Rhett Lamb and Planner Mari Brunner for their work on this project

Planner Mari Brunner addressed the committee next. Ms. Brunner stated Community Power is enabled under RSA 53-E in New Hampshire. She noted that energy bills currently have two parts to it; the first is the delivery charge, which pays for infrastructure, and the second is the supply charge that covers the electricity itself. Currently, Eversource provides electricity to customers in the Keene area by default and this is referred to as default service. However, customers can choose to go with any other supplier as Keene has a de-regulated market. She went on to share her screen and present a Powerpoint Presentation.

Under Community Power Law (NH RSA 53-E) local governments can pool their electricity demand and procure electricity and electricity-related services on behalf of residents and businesses who are currently on Default Service. Eversource will continue to be responsible to electricity delivery, transmission, distribution and maintenance of wire, as well as customer billing. Customers can always opt out if they choose to receive basic service from Eversource or from a competitive supplier.

Ms. Brunner stated that grouping electricity customer accounts within a jurisdictional boundary can increase savings as well as increasing the percentage of green energy. She noted Keene is already doing this by contracting with a competitive energy supplier to obtain renewable power at a cheaper rate compared to the basic rate from Eversource.

Ms. Brunner stated there are some exciting benefits for the customer such as:  
Rates can be lower than default service; Community Power programs can contract for a year or more to provide price assurance; Local governments can vet brokers and suppliers for customers through government procurement procedures; and Consumers have greater control over the price and content of their electricity supply.

In addition to the benefits to the consumer, there is also benefits to the community:  
Ability to increase the percentage in the renewable mix; Help with energy planning by making local data accessible; Greater consumer awareness of where their electricity comes from and what other suppliers exist; Integrating distributed energy & flexible demand side management resources (e.g. energy efficiency, smart meters, batteries, etc.).

Community Power Law does establish a process communities need to follow.  
The first is to form a Community Power Committee, get public input by scheduling at least one public meeting, then bring it to City Council for approval and if approval is received, the city can go out to bid for power supply. If the city does not receive a favorable bid the city is not locked into choosing any of the bids. If the city were satisfied with a bid, they would then move into the public education and enrollment process. Once the program is launched, there is ongoing customer support.

The primary objective of the committee would be to draft a Community Power Plan and Assist in a competitive RFP process to select a broker for assistance in the design, implementation, and ongoing monitoring of their Community Power program. Brokers are used to provide technical

expertise and take up front risk and are not compensated by the city but will be compensated by the supplier once they are chosen. Ms. Brunner stated Ann Shedd, Chair of the Energy and Climate Committee was present tonight to address the committee as well.

Ms. Shedd stated Community Power ties in well with the city's sustainable energy goals. She noted the Energy and Climate Committee was tasked by the Council to come up with a plan for sustainable energy goals, a Resolution, which was adopted in January 2019. Ms. Shedd stated any plan to move a community towards 100% renewable energy include at least three elements: maximize energy efficiency, generate what renewable energy the city can locally, and source electrical purchases in the electrical grid. The third element has been available through competitive energy suppliers ever since NH moved to its de-regulated energy market. Many businesses have chosen to purchase energy through a competitive bid process for cost savings.

Ms. Shedd noted Community Power is a new process but with careful planning, it could well advance 17 key strategies that have been identified so far. She added there has also been tremendous interest for Community Power throughout the state. Ms. Shedd stated creating an Ad-Hoc Committee is a first step in this process for Keene to gain ground towards its 100% renewable energy goal by 2030 and 2050.

Councilor Clark stated if the city was going to reach its renewable energy goal by 2030 and 2050 we will need to get thousands of families involved. Councilor Clark clarified this committee will be defining the term renewable energy and went on to say the Governor has been advocating to include landfill gas for fuel and stated he disagreed with that plan and hoped the committee will work towards clean energy. The Councilor noted Councilor Ormerod has vast knowledge in the field and felt his experience would be a valuable asset on this committee.

Councilor Ormerod thanked Councilor Clark's comments and also thanked Ms. Shedd and the rest of the committee for their work. He felt this program is going to have a positive impact on this community.

The City Manager stated community power has been looked at for many years and the change in legislation has made this possible for the city. She stated there are communities talking about getting into much more complicated programs. She hoped that won't hold the city up – once the larger groups are up, and running the city can get involved with them.

Councilor Remy stated he is already signed up to one of the third party services to obtain 100% clean energy but has to pay a premium for it and was hoping for another option. He stated he also had the opportunity to watch the Climate committee explain a complex concept and hoped the community can also observe these meetings.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On a vote of 5-0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the Mayor be requested to constitute an ad-hoc Community Power Committee to develop a Community Power Plan for submission to the City Council in accordance with RSA 53-E.

**9) Councilor Remy - Requesting Use of the City Seal – Facemasks**

Councilor Remy addressed the committee and stated what he is proposing is a way of showing solidarity with the rest of the council members, city staff, charter officers and Mayor, by having a uniform mask (mask with the city seal) to support the Resolution that just passed. In addition, as meetings start transitioning back to Council Chambers, this might be way to show the Council is one big team and have the best interest of the community at heart.

Councilor Ormerod thanked Councilor Remy for his thoughtfulness and asked whether they were washable masks. Councilor Remy stated he was working with a local company to produce washable masks with individual councilor names and the city seal on it.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Clark.

On a vote of 5-0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends approve the use of the city seal for facemasks to be paid for and provided by Councilor Michael Remy for official business.

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Additional Edits by,  
Terri Hood, Assistant City Clerk