

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 13, 2020

5:00 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Mari Brunner
Councilor Michael Giacomo
George Hansel, Mayor

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison

Members Not Present:

Dr. Delene White
Kürt Blomquist

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM. He read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared COVID-19 State of Emergency.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if needed)

Roll call was conducted.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – September 8, 2020

Mayor Hansel made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

A) Planning for Future Exchanges with Einbeck

1. Future Exchange Ideas – dance, YMCA, rugby

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he has have not carried the conversation any further, other than just saying to the rugby team that it is a possibility. Ms. Brunner stated that the whole dance community she is a part of is not meeting right now. Chair Mitchell asked if there was any other discussion. Hearing none, he moved on to the next item.

2. Student Pen-Pal Ideas

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she and Chair Mitchell talked about how a Fuller elementary school teacher and the sister of the Einbeck committee chair Jürgen Herbst helped facilitate this. She continued that Chair Mitchell said that the Fuller teacher might be retired now but they could check. She asked Chair Mitchell to give more information about that. Chair Mitchell replied that the teacher at Fuller was Tom Sullivan, who is now retired. He continued that maybe they should reach out to him – he might be interested in doing this in retirement. Discussion ensued about how to contact him. Chair Mitchell stated that his wife is connected to Fuller School so that is a connection they could use. Ms. Brunner stated that she has Tom Sullivan's email address and can share it with Ms. Thomas-Smith.

Chair Mitchell stated that his students have kept up communication with the Einbeck families they had been hoping to travel to, but everything is on hold at the moment.

B) Discuss Promotional Activities/Media Opportunities to help Promote the PCC Events and Exchanges – Dawn Thomas-Smith

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that the last piece they talked about was the survey Dr. White put together and some edits to that, and also, the meeting minutes reminded her that they were going to be touching base with the City Attorney for the photo release form. She continued that Ms. Mattson emailed her his email address today, so she can share it with the City Attorney and get his feedback. She thinks the only change/question the PCC had about the photo release form was about [what happens] if people wanted to revoke permission. She asked, was that the question for the City Attorney? Ms. Mattson replied that the City Attorney wanted to know more about the criteria they use for setting up the form. Otherwise he thought it was okay. She continued that IT Director Rebeca Landry looked at the PCC's Google survey and she was pleased with it but prefers a different format from Google; she wants to keep it in format that the City of Keene uses. Ms. Landry can recreate the survey in that format easily when the PCC is ready for that.

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that they did not talk about the process of distributing the survey. She continued that if they have email addresses for past participants, they could email them directly, and they can share the survey on social media. Survey distribution is secondary - getting the form finalized is first.

Mr. Schoefmann asked Ms. Mattson what timeline Ms. Landry gave for converting the survey. Ms. Mattson replied that she did not give a timeline.

Chair Mitchell stated that regarding promotion, the youth groups are not meeting, due to COVID-19 and the alternate schedules. He continued that it is a difficult time to promote the exchange. He is not able to have anyone come into the school right now from outside of the system. Until that is remedied it is difficult to work with the students to promote this in the building.

Mr. Schoefmann replied yes, it is a perfect time for the PCC to collect as much information as they can about past exchanges and organize that into something like a slideshow or pamphlet. He continued that as long as they can get the survey distributed through social media and email and however else they can, that is probably the best they can be doing at the moment.

Chair Mitchell stated that he is starting to collect materials from Wally Secord - all physical material, not electronic. Ms. Thomas-Smith replied Mr. Secord reached out to her and said he has a lot of photos but he does not know the best way to get them to her. She asked if what Chair Mitchell is referencing is mostly photos. Chair Mitchell replied that he has mostly photos and he thinks Mr. Secord does, too. Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that they can figure out a way to get the photos.

**C) Dedication of Einbeck's old synagogue meeting space to coincide with
October visit – delegation from Cohen Center**

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone wants to speak to this. Mr. Schoefmann stated that this is just on the agenda from when the October exchange was potentially happening, but if there has not been any movement on it, they can probably just report it out. He asked, did they do a virtual ceremony? Mayor Hansel replied that if they are doing that it is through the Cohen Center and the PCC no longer has anything to do with it. He agrees that they should just report it out. Councilor Giacomo agreed. Chair Mitchell stated that maybe someone could highlight this for the next exchange – when people from Keene again go to Einbeck, it would be good if they could somehow recognize that the experience happened and the PCC had hoped to be part of it.

5) Communications

Chair Mitchell reported that he received an email from Jürgen Herbst, which he sent to Ms. Mattson. He continued that he also continues to communicate with Vanessa, the co-teacher who works with BBS in Einbeck - they have students who are eager to come and they are getting more students interested, too. He thinks that part of the exchange is staying pretty healthy, from the communications he has had.

6) Reports

A) Treasurer's Report – Dr. Delene White

Vice Chair Schoefmann stated that Dr. White is not here. He asked Ms. Mattson if Dr. White has given her any Treasurer's Report. Ms. Mattson replied no. Vice Chair Schoefmann stated that it is safe to say that there has been no change.

7) New Business

A) Fundraising Ideas

Chair Mitchell stated that always the “new business” is fundraising. He asked if anyone has any new thoughts on that important component. He continued that this is a tough time to fundraise.

Vice Chair Schoefmann stated that it is a tough time to ask people for money. He continued that if they can pull together the items and highlights from previous exchanges that is the mechanism that will help them do outreach for this fundraising. Ms. Brunner replied that she agreed. She continued that if they can position themselves to hit the ground running when things are a little better for fundraising; that is a good strategy for now. She cannot think of anything they could be doing right now for fundraising that would not be insensitive.

8) Next Meeting – November 10, 2020

Chair Mitchell asked if November 10 is suitable for everyone. There was no objection.

9) More Time

A) Review Rules of Order

Chair Mitchell asked the Mayor what to do about this item. The Mayor replied that they should just keep it on more time. He continued that he would rather address this agenda item when they are again able to meet in person, although he does not see that happening until after the New Year at the very earliest and even then it will probably be longer.

B) Student Exchange – Update on Postponement – John Mitchell

Chair Mitchell stated that they are very fortunate to have a group of students who are ready to go. He continued that they are discouraged that they cannot go. There are even some football students eager to go. There is a good group at the high school who are excited about this, and they are making connections, via social media and video calls, which is great. Mr. Schoefmann asked if they are meeting virtually with people who would have been their hosts. Chair Mitchell replied yes, and a surprising number of them are keeping up the communication even though they have not been together in person. He continued that he mentioned [Einbeck] to a student in passing, who is shy and not even his student, hoping this student had not forgotten about it, and he was surprised to hear how engaged this student still is with his exchange partner in Einbeck. It is really positive.

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone else had anything to talk about. There being no further business, he adjourned the meeting at 5:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Further edits by,
Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison