

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, August 19, 2021. The Honorable Mayor George S. Hansel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Roll called: Stephen L. Hooper, Michael J. Remy, Janis O. Manwaring, Randy L. Filiault, Robert C. Williams, Philip M. Jones, Gladys Johnsen, Andrew M. Madison, Raleigh C. Ormerod, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Catherine I. Workman, Mitchell H. Greenwald, Kate M. Bosley, and Thomas F. Powers. Michael Giacomo was present in the audience and did not participate in the roll call. Councilor Workman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANOUNCEMENTS

Birthdays: Councilor Michael Remy on July 17 and Councilor Thomas Powers on August 12.

Upcoming Council workshops, both at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers:

- Tuesday, August 24 – Council meeting process
- Tuesday, September 14 – Strategic budgeting

MINUTES

A motion by Councilor Powers to accept the minutes of the July 15, 2021 meeting was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley and the motion passed on a show of hands with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Giacomo was absent.

COMMUNICATION – COUNCILOR MICHAEL GIACOMO – RESIGNATION – WARD THREE COUNCILOR

Mayor Hansel brought this agenda item forward. A communication was received from Michael Giacomo, resigning from his position as Ward Three Councilor. Mayor Hansel invited Councilor Giacomo forward from the audience and presented him a key to the City, which is a tradition when a Councilor must end their term early due to moving out of their Ward. Councilor Giacomo said it had been a pleasure working with everyone.

Mayor Hansel stated that he was accepting Michael Giacomo's resignation from the Keene City Council with regret and, as provided by Section 37 of the Rules of Order, Mayor Hansel established the following process to fill the vacancy. The filing period for the Ward Three City Councilor Vacancy will start at 8:00 AM on Tuesday, August 31, 2021 and extend up until 5:00 PM on Monday, September 13, 2021. The election by the City Council will occur at the September 16, 2021 regular Council meeting. At the September 16 meeting, each candidate will be given five minutes to address the Council relative to their vacancy. As provided for in Section 37 of the Rules of Order, City Councilors will not be permitted to ask questions of the candidates.

PROCLAMATION – PATRIOT

Mayor Hansel presented a Proclamation to Keene Police Officer Josh English and his son, whose family suffered the loss of K9 Officer, Patriot, on July 6, 2021. As such, Mayor Hansel declared August 19, 2021 as K9 Patriot Recognition Day in the City of Keene, NH and presented a copy of the Proclamation to the English family.

PRESENTATION OF RETIREMENT RESOLUTION – BILL BYRNE

Mr. Byrne was unable to attend. This Resolution was read into the record on July 15, 2021 and Mr. Byrne was invited to the Christmas party to be honored with all the other retirees who were not honored in-person during Covid-19.

PRESENTATION OF RETIREMENT RESOLUTION – ERIC SWOPE

Mayor Hansel welcomed Eric Swope with a short video playing in his honor. The Mayor read into the record a Resolution recognizing Mr. Swope's retirement. Mr. Swope expressed gratitude for the City as an employer that provided him the latitude to embrace his creativity and for his supportive group of coworkers, including the Director of Public Works, Kürt Blomquist, and Wastewater Treatment Plan Operations Manager, Aaron Costa.

PUBLIC HEARING – CHARTER AMENDMENT – SECTION 2 “WARDS”

Upon the Mayor's request, the Deputy City Clerk read the public hearing notice into the record, and Mayor Hansel opened the public hearing at 6:20 PM.

The Deputy City Clerk, William Dow, presented the Staff position on behalf of the City Clerk, and provided background on why this amendment was proposed. Every 10 years, there is a Constitutional requirement for the City to redistrict its Ward lines to achieve as equal a population between the Wards as possible. Redistricting is based on the US Census data. The Deputy City Clerk said the recommended changes to the Keene City Charters would be delayed significantly this year due to late release of the US Census Bureau data, which is received by the City typically in early June but would not be available this year until September 30. This delay will not provide sufficient time for the statutory legal review and notice requirements for the November 2, 2021 municipal election. The City Clerk proposed a Charter Amendment, with a ballot question to the Keene voters on whether to remove the Ward line descriptions and authorize the City Council to re-district Ward lines. This redistricting effort could impact Councilors and elected officials who are elected specifically from Wards and therefore, this proposed Charter Amendment provides language so that they remain in office until their terms have concluded from which they were elected. Along these lines, later in this meeting the Mayor would appoint an Ad-Hoc Redistricting Committee, whose charge would be to review the US Census Data once received and make any recommendations to the City Council for adjusting Ward lines as necessary to equalize population between Wards. Following the Redistricting Committee's recommendation, a public hearing will be scheduled for public comments, and any recommendations to the street-by-street descriptions would be adopted through an Ordinance codified into the City Code. Because there is a redistricting effort at the state and federal levels led by the House Redistricting Committee when the Legislature reconvenes in January. The City Clerk recommended that the effective date for the Keene Ward line changes be January 1, 2022. This would allow the State the most advanced notice of Keene's Ward changes as they work to comply with their own statutory process.

The Mayor requested comments from the public, but as there were none, the Mayor Hansel closed the public hearing. Written comments from the public would not be accepted but a report

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of these proceedings would be filed with the City Clerk's office and submitted to the State. Mayor Hansel did not refer this to the Finance, Organization & Personnel Committee at this time, but rather would do so when the Redistricting Committee makes its final recommendation, when there would be another public hearing.

Councilor Jones asked what happens if this ballot measure fails; would things revert to how they are now and wait for the census? The City Attorney replied in the affirmative and stated that it was important for the Council and the voters of the City to understand completely why this was happening. The Attorney continue saying that the City would be in a very difficult position if the charter amendment is not adopted. He clarified that redrawing the Ward lines would be a part of the City Code and it is not something that can be unilaterally changed any time. The City Attorney said it would be important for the Council to advocate for the charter amendment.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Hansel closed the public hearing at 6:27 PM.

A true record, attest: 
Deputy City Clerk

PRESENTATION – WEST KEENE FIRE STATION PROGRAM AND CONCEPTUAL DESIGN STUDY

Mayor Hansel welcomed Fire Chief, Mark Howard, and Director of Parks, Recreation & Facilities, Andy Bohannon for a presentation. Chief Howard began stating that this evening was the culmination of work that had been in progress since September 2020 by members of the Fire Department, other City Staff, and three City Councilors, who participated in this design phase, providing a report to the City Council at this meeting. Chief Howard recognized and thanked Captain Jason Martin, Captain Chris Staples, Captain James Pierce, all firefighters, Lance, Cleveland, Brad K, James McLean, Dan McKenna, and Brendan Canary, and City Councilors Jan Manwaring, Philip Jones, and Thomas Powers.

Mr. Bohannon introduced the guest speaker, Robert Robicsek, of the consulting firm Lavallee-Brensinger Architects. The firm understood emergency operations, and they have designed and built many stations, and could make sound decisions on the existing station. The scope for this design feasibility study was to meet the needs of emergency service operations for the West Keene Fire Station. Mr. Bohannon said that Mr. Robicsek had designed a functional building for operations serving Keene's future needs. Throughout the presentation, Mr. Bohannon asked the Council to remember that this was the first of many subsequent phases and that this was only a feasibility study to help guide the Council during the next Capital Improvement Program (CIP) discussion.

Mr. Robicsek summarized their nine months of work. He said this study was an educated look at current and 20-year future needs of the West Keene Fire Station and the overall Fire Department because some things were not incorporated into the Central Station built eight years ago. He said that overall, this study was to evaluate the needs of this location's current building and determine

whether it could serve the Department and community's needs, and if it did not, to explore alternatives. Mr. Robicsek referred to the study charge and many associated processes, some of which were linear and concurrent. Work included a kick-off meeting, facility visits, a facility current conditions report, space programming needs assessment, using Municipal Resources, Inc. for a high-level operational assessment of the whole Fire Department, developing conceptual plans and designs, preparing a budget, and preparing a final report presented to Council. Originally Mr. Robicsek's firm was retained with the idea to reuse the West Station, which was built in the 1950s. While the building appears in reasonably good shape at first glance, he said that there were many issues detailed in the report, including very old mechanical systems. Therefore, conceptual planning continued with consideration of constructing a new West Station.

Mr. Robicsek shared a few reasons why constructing a new building would be advantageous to reusing the current building. He said the City is lucky because this site is six acres and has good frontage on Hastings Avenue, which is important for a fire station. The site has a lot of depth to it and this conceptual design was able to leave the building in near to its same current footprint, therefore minimizing impact to the property, not impinging anyone else, reusing some pavement, and saving money overall. Mr. Robicsek continued stating that the building is comprised of three sections at present and he used site plans to depict the various current features. This building was constructed like many others in the 1950s with concrete masonry walls that are challenging to alter. Further, there is also only one overhead door, and such small spaces are not conducive to moving expensive and large firefighting apparatuses; this also increases response times. Everything was based on modern firefighting standards and processes. Next, he said that building a new West Station would allow for incorporating needed features of a modern station that were not included in the Central Station when it was built eight years ago. During the Fire Department operational analysis and conditions report, approximately two months were dedicated to space programming, which was a collaborative process with Chief Howard and his Command Staff based on Keene's needs. Key parts of that program for a new building included a community support area, public area, fire apparatus area, living quarters, expensive apparatus support areas, and facility support areas like mechanical rooms. The concept began with repurposing the current one-story, approximately 22,000 square foot building, but the space programming called for only 14-15,000 square feet, and so repurposing would have been a challenge and more expensive. Attempting to repurpose would require bringing 1950s designs to the current NH 2015 Structural Design Code, which is vastly different. For the reasons listed and more, Mr. Robicsek assured the Council that this conceptual design was based on diligence, needs for specific equipment sizes, meeting codes, and more. There were many conversations about how the space might work on the site, ensuring it would be at scale with the neighborhood, and having the least impact on the site, with greatest presence of the building and 70-80-foot apparatus apron on the street frontage. Mr. Robicsek used site plans to demonstrate other features of the proposed conceptual design, many of which are to improve response times, which are crucial:

- Install a U-shaped half-circle drive on the site in case of emergency. There is currently only one driveway existing on the property.
- Greenspace and public parking at the front and Staff parking at the back.
- A small public lobby leading to a service area.
- A community room, with a training room inside it.
- Radio and report room.

- Living quarters and outdoor recreation spaces at the back.
- The apparatus bay tends to be the largest, including pull-through bays, with tall ceilings and a mezzanine area.
- An emergency operations center (EOC).
- Important focus was placed on firefighter health, including distinct areas for contaminated equipment, areas for people or equipment being cleaned, and the uncontaminated living quarters.
- The outer elevations would mirror other designs in town, with sloped roofs and dormers, among other elements demonstrated in the report, including materials in keeping with the City.
- The building will have solar panels on the flat roof areas.

Approximately 10 pages in the presented report are a simple budget spreadsheet for the basic conceptual design based on some information about the general feel of the project in terms of architectural, mechanical, and civil quality. Chief Howard was comfortable with the proposed one-story building. The budget was organized by firms that Mr. Robicsek works with, Jobin Construction Costs and OPM, using an estimator to create a budget index for the third quarter of 2022; the estimator was based on NH. For the building construction, the budget breaks down to approximately \$325 per square foot. Mr. Robicsek acknowledged a volatile construction market, but stated his belief that this was a solid study that would serve the community and Fire Department well. He welcomed questions.

Councilor Greenwald asked what other locations were considered. Mr. Robicsek said he was only tasked with considering the Hastings Avenue location. Councilor Greenwald asked the City Manager how much the downtown Station cost. Chief Howard replied stating that everything included was approximately \$5.5 million eight years ago. Mr. Robicsek said to put the escalation into perspective, the recession made for low construction prices in 2010-2011, which began to level in 2012-2013, and in the years since the Central Station was built there has been escalation from 3.5%—5% and in 2018-2019 at 5%—6% for projects like this, resulting in compounded costs over time up to 35% higher for this proposed station compared to the Central Station. Chief Howard referred to Councilor Greenwald's location question and said that this location was the focus of this study because the year prior, the City Council had voted choosing this location from a GIS study of five or six different sites throughout what is referred to as District Two or West Keene. Councilor Greenwald said the West Station has different needs than the Central Station, primarily ambulance, and asked if that was considered. Chief Howard stated, "I am going to retract the history of what was said in 1998, prior to, before when Station Two was opened. As your current Fire Chief, the needs of West Keene for emergency services are not only ambulances, as it was primarily highlighted back in the mid-1990s, but fire protection. Both from a fire and EMS standpoint, to meet response standards, if Station Two wasn't there today for the call volume that is handled from that station, the City would not meet the national standards at all.

Councilor Ormerod said he was glad to see energy efficiency was being considered with solar panels and he was interested in what operational efficiencies were considered in the new building construction and systems be across the board, and whether there is extra capacity for solar banks

or farms on the property to help defray some of the expenses. He was interested in the total cost of ownership over the next 30 years, which he hoped would be a part of the next phase, and asked if there was any insight at this time. While this is a high-level study, Mr. Robicsek said that based on the current codes for energy use and efficiency it would be a fairly high performing building and he thought there was ample space for additional solar panels at the back of the building and property; many of his clients lease solar panels. The overall quality of this initial study would be to minimally meet current Code requirements, which Mr. Robicsek said are fairly extensive.

Mayor Hansel said he did not put much stock in these pre-design development figures presented likely years in advance of actual construction bids. However, he asked Mr. Robicsek as a designer of fire stations, what features of a fire station would differentiate this building from a typical commercial building so the Council could anticipate big ticket items down the line. Mr. Robicsek said that if going to bid in the third quarter 2022 based on this pre-design conceptual study, he thought the Council might be surprised how in-line some of the numbers listed in the budget might be, but beyond that there could be unpredictable variation. He said that compared to a commercial building this would be built to last as the City owns it forever and so all items would be higher quality. Mayor Hansel asked if there is a percentage, like 30%, cost per square foot difference between a fire station and typical commercial building. Mr. Robicsek said that was not a typical estimation, but he thought the Mayor's 30% mention was likely not far off.

Councilor Madison asked if there were any apparatus, equipment, or services anticipated that would be transferred from Central Station to a new West Station. Chief Howard said needs for District Two were programmed for the West Station 20 years into the future beyond regular apparatus including the following stationed there: ladder two, an ambulance, a brush truck, a large hazmat unit, and fire alarm truck. When considering Councilor Greenwald's question on emergency versus fire needs, Chief Howard said in District Two there are a lot of residential and industrial properties in West Keene that require fire and ambulance services closer than downtown. Chief Howard did not imagine these areas would be developed much more during his lifetime but on a larger scale long term, perhaps another ambulance or engine service with staffing would be needed at the West Station. He said that because of the volume of what is occurring at the local level, it could be more a matter of moving equipment from the Central Station to the West Station where more Staff is as demands change over time, as opposed to needing to add more apparatuses. He said the West Keene Station would be approximately half the size of the Central Station. In reference to the Mayor's question Chief Howard said that during space programming, everything was based on codes and standards adopted for fire service best practices and benchmarking. Various areas require infrastructure that need separation, or high costs of exhaust systems, for example. Mayor Hansel thought it was important for the Council and public to understand that this could be an expensive building, but that there were reasons justifying those costs.

Councilor Jones said the demographics of District Two have changed since 1998 and now there is a middle school, there are many employers, the largest tract of single-family houses, and the largest tract of rental properties. He said the demographics of Keene are changing and we need to

change with that. Councilor Jones continued recalling that when building the Police Station, they were told it was a public safety building that had to meet certain seismic ratings that were very expensive. He asked if the same was true of the Fire Station. Mr. Robicsek said it was sometimes misunderstood that every police and fire station must meet what the International Building Code calls a Category Four Building, which is a mission-critical, survivable facility. If Federal funding goes toward a regional EOC then those buildings might be required as Category Four and this category is common in large cities. Category Four buildings have much more stringent structural design requirements that make them more expensive. However, he said the current codes for this kind of a building have changed multiple times since the 1950s and that was an issue when discussing an addition to the current 1950s building. He said the building concept presented in this report meets all current codes, including structural codes for the region, but it was not designed as a Category Four, which the Council could opt in favor of. The last few Category Four buildings he designed were in large cities and coastal areas.

At the closure of the presentation, the Mayor thanked the architectural firm and the staff involved.

NOMINATIONS

Mayor Hansel nominated Councilor Stephen Hooper to the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board, with a term to expire December 31, 2021. The Mayor tabled the nominations until the next regular meeting. With respect to the nomination of Scott Gerhart to the Airport Development and Marketing Committee, the Mayor indicated he was aware that Mr. Gerhart was not able to serve and the Mayor was therefore withdrawing the nomination.

APPOINTMENT

Mayor Hansel appointed the following individuals to the Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee: Kendall Lane (Chair), Councilor Jan Manwaring, Michael Giacomo, Alexander Von Plinsky IV, and Marilyn Huston. A motion by Councilor Powers to confirm the appointments was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley and the motion passed on a show of hands with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Ward Three Council seat vacant.

COMMUNICATION – PAUL DUBRISKE – REQUEST TO ACQUIRE LAND ADJACENT TO PROPERTY AT 454 ELM STREET

A communication was received from Paul Dubriske, requesting to acquire a portion of the City right-of-way on Elm Street that is adjacent to his property at 454 Elm Street. Mayor Hansel referred the communication to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee.

COMMUNICATION JOHN AND LOUISE HILOW – FLOODING AT 36 WETMORE STREET

A communication was received from John and Louis Hilow, who have experienced flooding at their 36 Wetmore Street residence on multiple occasions. Mayor Hansel referred the communication to the Municipal Services, Facilities, & Infrastructure Committee.

COMMUNICATION – COUNCILOR PHILIP JONES – DECLARATION OF INCLUSION

A communication was received from Councilor Philip Jones, who recommended that the members of the Keene City Council voluntarily sign a Declaration of Inclusion. This item was referred to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee and the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee for language adjustments, which included changes that were helpful and enthusiastic.

Councilor Jones said he would be voting to suspend the Rules of Order to bypass the public process. This has been noticed publicly already through the Planning, Licenses, & Development Committee, and public input was heard, and the Committee's recommendations were used to bring this back to Council.

A motion by Councilor Jones to suspend the Rules of Order was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault.

Councilor Remy said he wanted more time for public input on this despite being in favor of it. He did not see the harm in waiting one more meeting to give the public another chance.

The motion to suspend the Rules of Order passed on a roll call vote of 12-2. Councilors Remy and Manwaring voted in opposition. Ward Three Council seat vacant

Councilor Jones moved to ask the City Council to approve the Declaration of Inclusion as presented, which Councilor Filiault seconded.

Councilor Jones said this was a process of taking a concept and making it visual. This concept has been in discussion for many years and just last May, the Council voted to accept the report from the Ad Hoc Racial Justice and Community Safety Committee. He said there is a Human Rights Committee and this Declaration would help the Committee meet four of their goals. The fourth City Council goal adopted in 2017 was to encourage a diverse and inclusive culture. The Economic Development Plan discusses multiculturalism as a great tool for development. The Keene Comprehensive Master Plan discusses the City becoming more diverse and inclusive. Therefore, Councilor Jones said this Declaration was a culmination and formalization of these concepts. Councilor Jones was unaware of other City declarations and every elected official would be invited to sign the framed document. Perspectives and wording suggestions were welcomed from Councilors and the Monadnock Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, which accepted the Declaration enthusiastically. Now, Councilor Jones said it was time to create the visual document, present it at an upcoming Council meeting, and invite Councilors to sign.

Councilor Hooper said he supported the concept of a proclamation promoting diversity and inclusion put forth by Councilor Jones and this is just a natural progression by the City of Keene and other cities and towns in NH to push for treating everyone with respect and dignity. A Sentinel editorial the other day mentioned a nearby town where selectmen voted against moving forward on an inclusion statement. A majority of them said the town has done enough. Councilor Hooper thought that was short-sighted as we need to push back as much as possible on the effort to prevent diversity and inclusion. He said the Keene City Council should continue supporting

inclusivity, diversity, and transparency; accepting all races, religions, and creeds. He is proud that the City of Keene is a leader in the State on this issue and it should continue to be so.

On a show of hands, the motion to adopt the Declaration of Inclusion passed with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Ward Three Council seat vacant.

COMMUNICATION – COUNCILORS MADISON AND WILLIAMS – REQUESTING REGULATION OF SINGLE-USE PLASTICS IN THE CITY AND ON CITY PROPERTY

A communication was received from Councilors Madison and Williams, requesting that the Planning, Licenses, & Development Committee discuss the topic of regulating the distribution of single-use plastics in the City and on City property. They further recommend that the City of Portsmouth, New Hampshire's Ordinance serve as a model for any prospective action the City may take.

Before making the referral, the Mayor recognized Councilor Filiault for a comment. Councilor Filiault stated that even though he agreed with both Councilors in their desire to address single-use plastics, but he thought the communication should go to the City Attorney for review first. Councilor Filiault realized that Portsmouth passed an ordinance related to this recently and that Keene tried to two years ago but pulled back because the State actually controls the decision as to whether to regulate locally. Portsmouth did pass this recently and no one had challenged it yet and he said that if someone does it would be an extensive court battle. Councilor Filiault said he spoke with the City Attorney and asked, if the City Council does pass this and someone challenges – the Councilor assured that someone from the City would challenge it – what the legal ramifications and costs would be. At this point, he asked to send the communication to the City Attorney first and not Committee, which would send it to the City Attorney anyway. Councilor Filiault said this would save time and it is the Council's job to not spend taxpayer money on needless legal expenses. Councilor Madison concurred with Councilor Filiault and was more comfortable with City Attorney reviewing the legal background. Councilor Madison agreed that Portsmouth had not been challenged yet, but it has been two years since enacting the regulation without a challenge. He was happy to receive the City Attorney's professional opinion. Mayor Hansel referred the communication to the City Attorney.

MSFI REPORT – SIDEWALK ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN – DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

A Municipal Services, Facilities, & Infrastructure Committee report read, recommending the acceptance of the Sidewalk Asset Management Plan presentation as informational. Mayor Hansel filed the report as informational.

FOP REPORT – ACCEPTANCE OF DONATION – PATHWAYS FOR KEENE – JONATHAN DANIELS TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept a donation of \$18,100.00 from Pathways for Keene, Inc for trail improvements to the Jonathan Daniels Trail. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by

Councilor Hooper and the motion passed with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Ward Three Council seat vacant.

FOP REPORT – ACCEPTANCE OF DONATION – MULTIPLE DONORS – FIRE DEPARTMENT

A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept donations totaling \$175.00. Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Hooper and the motion passed with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Ward Three Council seat vacant.

FOP REPORT – ACCEPTANCE OF DONATION – ART IN CITY HALL – HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept the donation of framed artwork for placement in City Hall. Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Hooper and the motion passed with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Ward Three Council seat vacant.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

The City Manager started her remarks by sharing exciting news for the Police Department. Officer Michael O'Donnell has been selected as our next K9 handler and he is about to be matched with his dog for training. In September, Officer O'Donnell will attend Ronin Dog Training, based in Europe and Tennessee. Ronin is a reputable and internationally recognized service dog breeding and training organization. They offer an extensive basic K9 Handler course that trains new handlers in all areas of dog maintenance, training, and deployments. During this course, he will be assigned to his new K9 partner, and they will leave the training certified and thoroughly prepared to take on the responsibilities of the City of Keene's next Police K9 team, thus increasing our operational capabilities while reducing our dependency upon outside agencies for assistance.

Continuing on with great news from the Fire Department, the City Manager stated training as a paramedic is both time consuming and expensive, however it is important that we both recruit and train paramedics to maintain the level of care we continuously strive to provide on our ambulances. On August 18, the City was notified by Senator Shaheen's office that we were awarded a 2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) in the amount of \$373,954 to send four new candidates to paramedic school. These funds will cover tuition and overtime costs to backfill the positions. The City Manager said this was a big deal for Keene and a very large expense that was not able to go into our operational budget this year. She congratulated Chief Howard and all those who worked on this grant application (Deputy Chickering, Lt. Seymour, and FD Administrative Assistant, Kelly Derosier).

For the Public Works Department, the City of Keene received the Association of State Dam Safety Officials' 2021 Regional Award of Merit. The regional Awards of Merit are given to

individuals, companies, organizations, municipalities, or other entities working in the dam safety field that have made outstanding contributions to dam safety within each region. The award recognizes the City's efforts in addressing safety concerns of the City's five high hazard dams (Babbidge, Goose Pond, Robin Hood, West Street, and Woodard). The City has made substantial investments in these dams. Around 2009, NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) issued the City of Keene letters of deficiencies for four of the five high hazard dams. Following these notifications, the City developed a master plan to rehabilitate its dam inventory and prioritize public safety, while maintaining public services. Total reconstruction costs were approximately \$5.3 million dollars.

Next, the City Manager spoke of the significant flooding damage throughout the community during the month of July. FEMA toured the City a couple weeks ago and damage totals in the County are expected to exceed the amount (over \$2 million per event) to qualify for a Federal Emergency Declaration Request to the President. This would mean 75% of expenses made to repair our roads would be reimbursed through FEMA. The Public Works Department did an excellent job providing an overview of preliminary damages and necessary documentation. The City Manager said Keene is fortunate to have a Director of Public Works so well versed in FEMA requirements. Fortunately, the City Manager said with all the flooding damage and the record amount of rain in July, our Wastewater Treatment Plant performed extremely well. Since 2005, we have made significant investments in infrastructure: upgrading pumps, sewer main lining and replacement, manhole lining and replacement, cleaning programs to reduce grit buildup in the collection system, and increased maintenance and cleaning of our storm drain system. This July we received 17 inches of rain in comparison to the 15 inches we received back in 2005. In 2005 we had 14 NH DES permit violations and over 100 tons of grit from the collection system that ended up in the plant. In comparison, in July 2021 with two inches more rain, Keene had zero NH DES permit violations (with the even more stringent permit limits we now operate under) and just a fraction of the grit we received in 2005. Once again, the City's investments in infrastructure have paid off.

The City Manager provided updates on other initiatives. Keene signed onto an initiative with Eversource to encourage weatherization and energy efficiency. As part of National Energy Awareness Month in October there will be an effort to reach out to small businesses in the downtown. A joint letter is being sent to businesses in our downtown area offering free energy audits on September 14 and 15. Auditors will also be walking door-to-door. The audit is free and up to 100% of the cost can be covered by Eversource. The amount covered by Eversource is based on how much energy is saved versus the cost of any upgrades. The customer portion can be paid over time for 0% interest on their electric bill. The business is under no obligation to move forward with the proposal.

Regarding the sign at the Post Office used by non-profit groups to advertise their events, Peter Poanessa was issued a contract several months ago to design and construct a new sign stanchion in front of the Post Office that would allow for easier installation of event signs. Previously the signs were 4x8 foot plywood, which was very heavy and difficult to mount. New signage will be vinyl. The stanchion for the Post Office location has been constructed and installed. As part of

the contract, Mr. Poanessa will also be updating the stanchion at Fuller Park. The look will be very similar to the signs at various trailheads and the Walldogs signage on Railroad Square. This project involved Keene State College students who designed six backboards that will be posted during times when there is not a licensed event sign installed.

As the City Manager mentioned at prior meetings, Staff have been aggressively pursuing grants from a variety of sources and so far it appears they have been pretty successful. There is another large grant opportunity available through the US Economic Development Administration. Staff met with the County to request the assistance of their Grant Director, Suzanne Bansley, to with an application for funds for the Transportation Heritage Trail. It appeared the City would be successful getting phase one funded through an earmark working with Kuster's office for \$394,800 through a grant request we submitted a couple months ago. The entire project is estimated to cost \$2.5 million and right now construction is in the CIP for fiscal years 2026-2027, without a current revenue source and therefore it would likely be bonding. This would be an immense relief to our CIP if were successful at getting the remaining funds through another grant. It would open-up the possibility of addressing some of our other pressing needs, like the Robin Hood Pool.

The City Manager continued providing a Covid-19 update; all Councilors received a memorandum from the Mayor. Positivity rates had increased in NH and New England, so the response team was meeting again weekly, beginning each meeting by discussing what each organization was witnessing. There had been recent positivity in Keene and so the City would be monitoring numbers and adjusting policies accordingly. The Emergency Management Team is adjusting to track positive contacts and follow the CDC recommendations related to travel and when quarantine and testing are required. Signs would be placed in City buildings recommending wearing face masks and face masks would be made available. New Hampshire has a mobile vaccine van that is available to be scheduled on their website. The Covid-19 van is available upon request for any size group across the state of New Hampshire at no cost. The Biden Administration announced on August 18 that Americans will be able to get a Covid-19 vaccine booster shot starting on September 20. The booster is still subject to authorization from the US Food and Drug Administration, but likely we will see booster shots become available in the near future. Further details were outlined in the Mayor's memo. This concluded the City Manager's report.

Mayor Hansel recognized Councilor Jones, who shared positive news of the youth-14 Babe Ruth Baseball team winning the NH and New England Championships before losing the world series in Iowa. He said everyone is proud of the team and volunteers who helped them. There is a team website where you can send messages of support to the team which is leading kids from throughout the region by example. There were team members from Keene, Fitzwilliam, Harrisville, and Swanzey. Mayor Hansel thought there would be more on this at a future Council meeting.

ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READING – RELATING TO THE RESTORATION OF INVOLUNTARY MERGED LOTS – ORDINANCE O-2021-11

A memorandum was received from Daniel Langille, City Assessor, recommending that Ordinance O-2021-11 relating to the Restoration of Involuntary Merged Lots have a first reading at the August 19, 2021 City Council Meeting and referred to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee for a recommendation. Mayor Hansel referred Ordinance O-2021-11 to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee.

ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING - RELATING TO PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE – ORDINANCE O-2021-12

A memorandum was received from Tara Kessler, Senior Planner, recommending to refer Ordinance O-2021-12 to the Planning, Licenses, & Development Committee and to the Joint Committee of the Planning Board & Planning, Licenses, & Development Committee. Mayor Hansel referred Ordinance O-2021-12 to the Planning, Licenses, & Development Committee and to the Joint Committee of the Planning Board & Planning, Licenses, & Development Committee.

RESOLUTION R-2021-35 – RELATING TO THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE CAPITAL RESERVE – PUMP STATION MARTEL COURT (08022) FOR MARTEL COURT PUMPING STATION EMERGENCY GENERATOR REPLACEMENT PROJECT (08099-18) AND THE REALLOCATION OF FUNDS – MARTEL COURT PUMPING STATION EMERGENCY GENERATOR REPLACEMENT

A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read on a vote of 3-0, recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2021-35 and recommending the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to reallocate \$18,224.85 of remaining fund balance from the Wastewater Treatment Plant Lighting Project (08104-21) to the Martel Court Pumping Station Emergency Generator Replacement Project (08099-18).

A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Hooper and the motion passed with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Ward Three Council seat vacant.

A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt Resolution R-2021-35 was duly seconded by Councilor Hooper and the motion passed on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor, Ward Three Council seat vacant.

RESOLUTION R-2021-36 – WATER MAIN REPAIR AND WAIVER OF PURCHASING REQUIREMENTS – WETMORE STREET AND WINCHESTER STREET EMERGENCY WATER MAIN REPAIR

A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read on a vote of 3-0, accepting the Wetmore Street and Winchester Street Emergency Water Main Repair as informational. Mayor Hansel filed the report as informational and that Resolution R-2021-36 be adopted.

A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt Resolution R-2021-36 was duly seconded by Councilor Hooper.

08/19/2021

Councilor Jones asked if this would rectify the flooding problem identified in the communication from the Hilows earlier in the meeting and the City Manager said that this Resolution would not address that issue. On a roll call vote with 14 Councilors were present and voting in favor. Ward Three Council seat vacant. Resolution R-2021-36 declared adopted.

RESOLUTION R-2021-38 – RELATING TO THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE SEWER FUND UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE FOR THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT SOLAR PROJECT

A memorandum was received from the Director of Public Works, Kürt Blomquist, and Aaron Costa, Wastewater Treatment Plan Operations Manager, recommending the reading of Resolution R-2021-38 Relating to the Appropriation of funds from the Sewer Fund Unassigned Fund Balance for the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Solar Project and referring to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee. Mayor Hansel referred Resolution R-2021-38 to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee.

ADJOURNMENT FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING – NEGOTIATED CONTRACT

At 8:50 PM a motion by Councilor Powers to adjourn for collective bargaining with outside legal counsel from Tom Closson under NH RSA 91:A was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. On a showing of hands, 14 Councilors were present and voting in favor. Ward Three Council seat vacant. Discussion was limited to the subject matter. The meeting reconvened at 9:04 PM. A motion by Councilor Powers to authorize the City Manager to do all things necessary to execute the negotiated contract with the Keene Police Officer's Association, AFT-NH, AFT Local #6246 to be effective July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2025 was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. On showing of hands, 14 Councilors were present and voting in favor. Ward Three Council seat vacant.

A true record, attest:



Deputy City Clerk