

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, March 3, 2022. The Honorable Mayor George S. Hansel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Roll called: Bryan J. Lake, Michael Giacomo, Randy L. Filiault, Robert C. Williams, Philip M. Jones, Andrew M. Madison, Kris E. Roberts, Raleigh C. Ormerod, Catherine I. Workman, Kate M. Bosley, and Thomas F. Powers were present. Councilor Ormerod led the Pledge of Allegiance. Gladys Johnsen arrived at 7:03 PM. Michael J. Remy, Bettina A. Chadbourne, and Mitchell H. Greenwald were absent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Hansel led a moment of silence to recognize the suffering of the people of Ukraine.

After the moment of silence concluded, Mayor Hansel spoke about the importance of the people of Keene standing together in unity to support those community members with family in Ukraine. He went on to say that in a show of solidarity, there would be a candlelight vigil on March 4 from 6:00 PM–6:45 PM in Central Square. Leaders from multiple denominations would be speaking. He encouraged all those able to attend to participate to make this important statement in our community.

MINUTES

A motion by Councilor Powers to approve the minutes of February 17, 2022 was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley and the motion carried unanimously with 11 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Johnsen arrived after this vote was conducted.

PUBLIC HEARING – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – 2023-2029

Mayor Hansel called the hearing to order at 7:03 PM and requested comments from the City Manager.

City Manager Elizabeth Dragon stated that this public hearing encompassed Fiscal Year 2023 through 2029 of our Capital Improvement Program (CIP). For the Councilors some of her comments will be repetitive, but she thought it was an important summary to share with the public present and watching at home. She said the City Staff and Councilors had worked hard to produce a Capital and Operating Budget that met and balanced citizen and community needs, and City Council Fiscal Policy. The CIP includes projects with an estimated cost in excess of \$35,000 and anticipated useful life of at least five years. Expenditure and funding activity anticipated from any Capital Reserve fund is also presented in the CIP, regardless of the amount. The City utilizes strategic plans at the Department level to advance projects and initiatives over time such as the Active & Passive Recreation Plan, the Watershed Master Plan, and the Asset Management Plans for road, sewer, water, and sidewalk infrastructure.

This past year, in an effort to more closely align budgets with Council Goals through a strategic governance process, the City Manager said they had attempted to more clearly define the strategic plans and guiding documents that drive recommendations in both the Operating Budget and Capital Plan. Strategic governance brings together strategic thinking with operational governance to create a pragmatic approach to decision making over a long period of time, working to accomplish the goals of the City's Master Plan and the City Council Goals as well as many

smaller departmental level plans. Implementation of those plans occurs incrementally over time, often spanning several years and therefore several budgets. In recent years, the priorities expressed by the community, the City Council, and the Comprehensive Master Plan clearly show an emphasis on City road and bridge systems, flood control, support for public safety services, and other initiatives like the library, parks, and facilities. This past year, the message was clearly received that sidewalk infrastructure deserves the same level of planning for improvements. To that end, Staff created a Sidewalk Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, which was reviewed by the Council and has been incorporated in this CIP document.

The City Manager said that City Staff had been careful to see that all newly identified projects deemed important to realizing the goals and objectives of the City of Keene were incorporated into this plan. Two years ago, Fiscal Policy changes included language about using unanticipated and unrestricted revenues to help advance budgetary policies related to bond debt and capital outlay. Again this year, proposals were put forward in the CIP to do just that in an effort to reduce debt and interest expense. This Plan also moves closer to level funding the use of current revenues and capital reserve appropriations each year of the Plan. This number directly effects the budget each year; it is the net of debt issuance, capital reserves being used, grants or other funding sources to fund projects.

The City Manager stated that the CIP reflects the continuance of the philosophy of seeking opportunities for strategic investments that leverage other resources and partnerships to advance the goals of the City's Master Plan, as reflected in the Library Campus project, the Bike Park, the proposed Skate Park, and the prospective Dog Park projects. Through engagement with residents, employers, non-profit organizations, social service agencies, and other governmental partners and community groups, we collectively advance the City Council priorities.

New for the Fiscal Years 2023–2029 Capital Plan is the introduction of project types. As projects requests are developed and project worksheets created, each project is assigned a category type of either a project or a program. A project could be a single item purchased or a one-time multi-phase project like the Ashuelot River Dam Repair or Removal projects, which is both a design phase and has implementation and construction phases as well. A program is one that is reoccurring and ongoing, often tied to Asset Management Plans and may include regular expenditures and appropriations. Road preservation and rehabilitation, sidewalks asset management, and sewer manhole linings are just a few examples of programs in the Capital Plan.

One of the future initiatives included in the Plan are the new Robinhood Park Improvement Project that focuses on the infrastructure of the entire park, which has aged significantly and focuses on a pool built on the banks of a reservoir that had reached its useful life. She said that this eastside park offers a variety of recreational activities, though weather and climate change have taken a toll on the natural feature of the park. Keeping in line with the Active & Passive Recreation Management Plan, which was used for both the Wheelock and the Pat Russell Parks, the community will have the opportunity to share their ideas and concepts. Engaging the community in the concept and design phase in FY-23 will strengthen the connection between the neighborhood, while promoting a sustainable and climate resilient park for today, tomorrow, and the future.

The City of Keene was recently awarded a NH Department of Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant for street and safety improvements in FY-23 along Marlboro Street. This will allow the City to expand the original scope of crosswalk improvements, painted bike lanes, and connection to the Cheshire Rail Trail to include extra safety measures, sidewalk reconstruction, lighting, and an asphalt overlay on Marlboro Street from Main Street to Eastern Avenue. Design and construction of the next multi-phase project is ongoing with the development of the Cheshire Rail Trail System, scheduled to begin in FY-23, dependent on grant funding. While putting the plan together the City Manager was notified that the project was recommended for Congressional Direct Spending, though those funds have not materialized, and the timing of this project is still in flux.

The downtown and infrastructure improvement project is in the early stages with preliminary design beginning this year. The project's focus is on replacement and upgrade of the 120-year-old infrastructure on Central Square, Main Street from West Street, Roxbury Street to Water Street, and side streets including Lamson Street, Church Street, Railroad Street to 93rd, and Gilbo Avenue. Outside of the scope of the CIP are the long-awaited improvements to West Street, with planning and design beginning FY-32. The addition of the West Street corridor improvement project to the NH DOT 10-year plan will allow the City the opportunity to update the water and sewer infrastructure at the same time.

In 2013, the City accepted a Facility Asset Inventory Report from the EMG Corporation, which included nearly all City facilities and is used in the long-term Capital Planning. Many projects have been completed since the report was first issued, such as the Library Annex and the new boilers at City Hall; some are included in this CIP, such as the Parks and Cemeteries Operations building. But the report is nearly 10 years old, and updates are needed to make adjustments in managing future CIP development and projects.

The Wastewater Treatment Plant recently received a draft update on the renewal of the discharge permit from EPA. To meet the permit requirements, modifications to the Plant will be necessary to reduce the permissible levels of aluminum in the plant's effluent. The nature and cost are unknown at this time and it is anticipated that this project will be included in the FY-25 to FY-31 Capital Plan.

After this public hearing, the City Manager said that the CIP would go back to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee for a final review before coming back to Council for a vote on March 17. This document is a plan that is then incorporated into the Operating Budget. The decision to actually appropriate or allocate for the first year of this plan is made by the Council during the Council during the May–June timeframe.

Mayor Hansel opened the hearing to public comment and welcomed general comments before those on the specific sections of the CIP. There were no general comments. Following no comments on the Capital Reserve Funding section for large capital expenses in various Departments (pp. 16–25), there was a public comment on the Community Services section (pp. 30–47).

Mayor Hansel recognized Drew Bryenton of 30 Nelson Street, who spoke as Chair of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee (BPPAC). Mr. Bryenton stated that BPPAC supports and encourages the City Council to support the following projects listed in the CIP: the open space trails program on page 41, repaving Apple Way in Fiscal Year 2024, the Transportation Heritage Trail program on page 43 (this is the highest priority project that BPPAC is tracking, and they support all parts of the project, and the Marlboro Street connector project on page 40, 80% of which is funded already a NH Department of Transportation TAP grant.

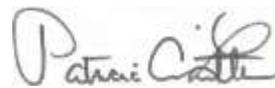
Mayor Hansel continued his department by department review of the CIP. There were no public comments on the Internal Support section, on software upgrades and facilities projects related to roofs (pp. 52–63).

There was one public comment on the Infrastructure (pp.69–103) section, including Public Works projects and the perimeter fence project at the Airport. Mr. Bryenton spoke again on behalf of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee. He commented on the sidewalk asset management program, stating that BPPAC supports the investment in pedestrian infrastructure and setting aside funds in the CIP to do so represents a good step forward. He said that walkability is an important reason why many people choose to live in Keene, including older adults, families with kids, young professionals, and others. Investments in our sidewalks is important for maintaining this highly marketable feature in our City. He said the City investment in pedestrian infrastructure is also critical for him. He cited the City’s stated goal of sourcing all transportation related energy from renewable resources by 2050. He questioned what power source is more sustainable than people power? To encourage walking, sidewalks need to be maintained in good working order.

There were no comments on the following funds: Parking, Solid Waste, Sewer, Water, and Equipment funds. There were no further general comments on the CIP.

Hearing no further business, Mayor Hansel closed the public hearing at 7:18 PM. Written public comments would be accepted until 1:00 PM on Tuesday, March 8. Written comments must be signed and submitted to the City Clerk by that date and time to be included in the record.

A true record, attest:



City Clerk

CONFIRMATION

A motion by Councilor Powers to confirm the nomination of Linsey Edmunds to the Energy and Climate Committee, with a term to expire December 31, 2023 was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. Councilor Ormerod expressed his support for this nomination. He continued highlighting the Energy and Climate Committee. However, he said that the Committee was unable to meet in January and at least one other time due to lack of membership, including alternates. He urged his

fellow Councilors to recruit community members for the Committee, which has four sub-task groups doing a lot of important work.

The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Remy, Chadbourne, and Greenwald were absent.

COMMUNICATION – DANE D'ARCANGELO/EVERSOURCE ENERGY – REQUESTING PERMISSION TO REMOVE TREES ON SCENIC ROADS

A communication was received from Dana D'Arcangelo of Eversource Energy, requesting that a joint public hearing be scheduled with the Conservation Commission regarding their request to remove trees on various scenic roads in the City, which include Concord Road, Concord Hill Road, Moore Farm Road, and Nims Road. Mayor Hansel referred the communication to the Municipal Services, Facilities, & Infrastructure Committee and scheduled a joint public hearing with the Conservation Commission for April 7, 2022.

COMMUNICATION – EDWARD COPPOLA – EXPRESSING HIS CONCERN OVER LOCAL WILDLIFE AND ASKING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL CONSIDER MEASURES TO MINIMIZE THE NUMBER OF BIRDS AND SMALL ANIMALS THAT DOMESTIC CATS KILL WITH THEIR FREE-RANGE HUNTING HABITS

A communication was received from Edward Coppola, requesting that the City Council consider the following measures to minimize the number of birds and small animals that domestic cats kill—such as the licensing of cats, taking steps to control cats from wandering onto other private landowners' yards; requiring that cat owners provide bells or multi-colored “scarves” to alert wildlife of the presence of a cat and advising property owners of their rights regarding cats hunting on their property. Mayor Hansel referred the communication to the Municipal Services, Facilities, & Infrastructure Committee.

MSFI REPORT – HARRIS CENTER FOR CONSERVATION EDUCATION – REQUEST TO TEMPORARILY CLOSE JORDAN ROAD FOR UP TO SIX NIGHTS IN MARCH AND APRIL – MIGRATING AMPHIBIANS

Municipal Services, Facilities, & Infrastructure Committee report read recommending that the City Council authorize the closing of Jordan Road from Concord Road to Peg Shop Road for up to six nights in March and April that are coordinated with City staff when conditions are favorable for amphibian migration. City staff may cancel the closure and/or reopen the road at any time if deemed necessary for the convenience and safety of the public. Further, future requests for the closing of Jordan Road for amphibian migration are administratively handled by the City Manager. A motion by Councilor Filiault to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Williams. The motion carried unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE GRANT ACCEPTANCE – FIRE DEPARTMENT

Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read recommending to the full City Council the acceptance of the New Hampshire Department of Justice Grant awarded to the Keene

Fire Department totaling \$84,425 and to allow the City Manager to do all things necessary for the acceptance and execution of the grant. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Madison. The motion carried unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT – CONSULTANT SELECTION – PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute professional service contracts for engineering, technical, and construction services with Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. for the Downtown Infrastructure Improvements and Reconstruction Project. Further, if the City cannot come to an agreement, the City Manager is authorized to move to the second highest ranked proposer. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Madison. The motion carried unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

The City Manager began by providing an update on the solar project at the Airport to power the Wastewater Treatment Plant. She said construction had started and was going well. The mechanical portions of the project should be complete by April 4 and a few weeks later it should be energized. She said to stay tuned for a ribbon cutting ceremony late April–early May.

Next, the City Manager provided an update on the Council Goals. She provided Councilors a Goals document, as revised during their workshops in November and January. In November, the City Council held the first of two workshops to review and update the 2021 City Council Goals. Councilors participated in small groups and evaluated each of the eight 2021 goals to analyze what had changed in the past year, evaluate future trends affecting each goal, and to identify where specific and measurable actions could be included. This process is a part of the overall strategic governance process, intended to tie updates to existing City reports, assessments, and strategic plans as they might be available to Council Goals. A summary of all discussions, comments, and ideas for each of the eight current goals was then generated and shared with the Council. The summary included a series of “themes” or objectives from each table, which were then incorporated in the Goals document to help bring more specificity to the Goals and prioritize actions steps for the upcoming year(s).

The City Manager continued on the goals, stating that at the second workshop held in January, the Council reviewed the summary of the November workshop and made adjustments to the language included as themes or objectives. The Council was presented with a clean copy of the revised goals document and attached to that a copy that had been marked up to show the changes made at the January workshop. Highlighted in yellow was new or revised language from your January workshop. The goals document is titled 2022–2023 to align with our Budget and Capital Planning process. The language of the eight goals was modified only slightly: Goal #1 regarding managing municipal finances was amended to cite both finances and resources. The bulk of the work related

to the Goals document was around adding more specificity to the themes or related objectives. The Goals document will be added to the next Council meeting agenda for approval. If anyone has questions or thinks something was missed or is not accurately reflected from the two workshops, they should contact the City Manager.

Next, the City Manager provided an update on the Fire Department Staffing Committee. There was a smaller group meeting on Friday, March 11 to look at the data that is available in our Fire House software. This group hopes to better understand the data that is available so that the Committee can determine what data needs to be extracted from the system. This will help the Committee better understand what reports can be generated to analyze trends. Trends related to number of calls, types of calls, location of calls (in or out-of-town), response times, man hours required, etc. The Committee was also investigating whether there is a way to track responses from our mutual aid partners; we know we can track which towns provide assistance at a call, but it is unclear if we can track more than just the town. Can we determine how many people and what equipment responded? Councilors were provided with the notes from the Feb 11 Committee meeting.

Next, the City Manager reported that the City received the “Tree City USA” designation for 2021, making it the City’s 43rd year as a recognized Tree City by the Arbor Day Foundation. The Tree City program was started in 1976 and is one of the Arbor Day Foundation’s oldest programs. It was created to encourage a vision of a greener, healthier America, and hoped that this initiative would inspire change on a nationwide level. In the State of New Hampshire, there are 17 communities that are recognized Tree Cities. The City of Keene is the second longest recognized community, with Durham being first being recognized for 44 years.

Next, the City Manager said the Library was working with the Community Kitchen to encourage people to grow extra produce for donations. This information is being distributed through our seed library and gardening tool programs as well. Some of these foods can be grown in very little space, so it is easy for City residents and patio gardeners.

Lastly, the City Manager alerted the Mayor and Council to the purchase of body-worn cameras and a request to authorize the City Manager to apply for, accept, and expend any and all related grants will be on the FOP agenda in case anyone is interested in attending or tuning in.

MORE TIME – MSFI REPORT – LORETTA SIMONDS – DAMAGE TO A SEWER LINE AND HOUSE FOUNDATION AT 79 WOODBURN STREET AND A REQUEST TO REMOVE A NEARBY CITY TREE

Municipal Services, Facilities, & Infrastructure Committee report read recommending that the communication from Loretta Simonds requesting the removal of a City tree be placed on more time. Mayor Hansel granted more time.

RESOLUTIONS – RELATING TO THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR THE WINCHESTER STREET BY-PASS PROJECT – Resolutions R-2022-03 & R-2022-04

A memorandum was received from City Engineer, Don Lussier, recommending that Resolutions R-2022-03 and R-2022-04 be referred to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee for

03/03/2022

their consideration and recommendation. Mayor Hansel referred Resolutions R-2022-03 and R-2022-04 to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee.

RESOLUTION – RELATING TO THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR THE THOMPSON ROAD REPAIR AND STABILIZATION PROJECT

A memorandum was received from City Engineer, Don Lussier, recommending that Resolution R-2022-05 be referred to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee for their consideration and recommendation. Mayor Hansel referred Resolutions R-2022-05 to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee.

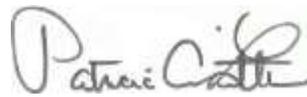
RESOLUTION – COUNCIL POLICY: RELATING TO THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS – RESOLUTION R-2022-06

A memorandum was received from Mayor Hansel, relating to the City Council Policy on the legislative process, which clarifies what legislative initiatives or agency rules are within the purview of the City Council. Mayor Hansel referred Resolution R-2022-06 to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee.

ADJOURNMENT FOR LEGAL ADVICE

There being no further business, Mayor Hansel adjourned the meeting at 7:36 PM.

A true record, attest:



City Clerk