

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 10, 2023

5:00 PM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Mayor George Hansel
Councilor Michael Giacomo
Kürt Blomquist
Gregg Kleiner

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

Dawn Thomas-Smith
Mari Brunner
Doris McCollester

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted. Ms. Mattson stated that two guests are present today, Elizabeth Cardine and Derek Blunt, who will be a member starting with the next meeting.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – November 8, 2022

Mayor Hansel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 8, 2022. Mr. Blomquist seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

A) Update - Student Exchange with MC2

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Blunt for an update. Mr. Blunt reported that MC2 has been in touch with BBS School BBS is waiting for MC2 to approve its school calendar so they can choose dates for German folks to come. He continued that Ms. Cardine just let him know the calendar is approved. He believes the dates BBS was looking at were somewhere between October 9th

and 20th of this year. Communication is going well. Both sides are looking forward to making this happen. MC2 has about seven students so far who are looking to participate in the exchange. Discussion ensued.

- B) Update – Rotary Exchange/Ideas**
- C) KSC Music Department – March and May Exchanges – Funding for Van Transportation - \$580.00**

Chair Mitchell reported that Sandra Howard has asked the PCC for financial assistance with van transportation of their Student music group coming in March. Discussion ensued.

Mayor Hansel made a motion to approve the expenditure of \$580.00 to assist with funding for van transportation to Keene. Councilor Giacomo seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

- D) PCC Volunteer to Greet Einbeck’s Choir, Sat., 3/25 at 6:00 PM – Courtyard Marriott**

Chair Mitchell stated that Sandra Howard would like some representatives from the PCC, on March 25 at 6:00 PM at the Marriott, to help welcome the families. He asked if anyone is interested and available for this, and if anyone can bring something like cold drinks, fruit, or cookies. He himself will be there. Discussion ensued.

- E) PCC Exchange Survey/Facebook Updates**

Chair Mitchell stated that he does not think there is anyone present today who can speak to this item.

- F) Future Exchange Ideas - Student Exchanges and Others**

Chair Mitchell asked if everyone has had a chance to review the messages from Einbeck. They have some ideas about potential exchanges, such as pickle ball, which is now popular in Einbeck. This could be blended with light tourism. Discussion ensued. Mr. Schoefmann gave an update about a potential rugby exchange, stating that someone from the rugby club in Keene will talk with someone from one of the rugby clubs in Einbeck and see what both clubs have in mind, and see where it goes. Discussion continued.

5) Communications

Chair Mitchell stated that the most recent communication he has had from Einbeck is what he shared with the PCC at the last meeting. He continued that Einbeck is thoughtfully reviewing their experiences with hosting, and that might be helpful to the PCC when they review theirs as well. Discussion ensued.

6) **Reports**
A) **Treasurer Report**

Mr. Kleiner gave a reported that the city appropriation account balance is currently \$12,000 and the Partner City account is \$18, 840.90

7) **New Business**
A) **Discuss additional guidelines/expectations to be added for people from Keene traveling to Einbeck**

Chair Mitchel reported the Einbeck PCC is also reviewing their own guidelines.

B) **Discuss next exchange time frame for drafting invitation letter to Einbeck Mayor**

Chair Mitchell stated that the travelers to Germany last time made the offer to be flexible about when to be hosting this coming year. He continued that he has heard that fall is the preferred time, perhaps September 29 to October 7. What does the PCC think? Discussion ensued about the dates, about honoring what works best for the German folks, and about the events and activities that would be happening in September and October.

Mr. Blomquist made a motion to choose the dates of September 29 to October 7, 2023. Chair Mitchell seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Chair Mitchell stated that a challenge the PCC has is how to encourage the people who traveled to Einbeck, who are not here at monthly PCC meetings, to host and participate when people from Einbeck come to Keene. Mr. Blomquist gave ideas for communicating with folks to remind them of their commitment to hosting and participating, and scheduling a meeting in a few months to bring those folks into the process. Discussion ensued about how there are two layers: hosting; and additional participation, such as in the activities and events during the week or helping with transportation. Discussion ensued about how many hosts/beds might be needed. [Some audio inaudible]. Discussion ensued about Ms. Mattson sending out an email to folks who might have the ability and interest in hosting, with information about what it entails, and an invitation to a meeting in March to discuss it.

Chair Mitchell asked for PCC members' thoughts on how to plot this, in terms of the timeline. Mr. Blomquist asked if there is a theme they want to focus the visit on. Discussion ensued about potential themes like reconnecting, who the participants might be, whether they have already been to Keene or not, and how that affects the activities and events to plan. Mr. Schoefmann suggested creating a three-person working group/subcommittee to draft this. Discussion continued.

Chair Mitchell stated that he hopes that by the next PCC meeting, they will have worked through sending an invitation to Einbeck and have received at least a casual reply so they can have a rough idea of the group size that is coming here, and he hopes that by the next meeting they will have sent out some sort of email to past members and community groups to say this is a go and give them the dates. He continued that then, the February meeting can include more planning. He will work with Ms. Mattson this month to do those three things. In February, they can start laying out a calendar.

Ms. Cardine stated that MC2 will be planning their school exchange at the same time. She asked what level of detail the PCC expects from them. Chair Mitchell replied that the more information MC2 can give the PCC, the more useful the PCC will be to them. More details mean more opportunities. His advice is that MC2 cannot over-plan or over-inform the PCC.

8) **Next Meeting – February 14, 2023**

Discussion ensued about whether it works for the group to meet on Valentine’s Day. The PCC decided to keep the meeting date as is.

9) **More Time**

A) **Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities**

B) **Pumpkin Fest Participation for Next Year**

Councilor Giacomo stated that Pumpkin Fest event request will be on the City Council agenda tomorrow night, which the Council will likely place on more time. He continued that the plan is October 21. The intention is for a smaller scale event. They have not yet fleshed out the opportunities for vendors and the details of that. They will probably give priority vendor spots, or first right of refusal, to the folks that had “basically been with the festival forever.” There is a chance that the PCC might not make that cut; they do not know yet how many vendors there will be. The PCC should not plan on being able to raise significant funds, at least not this year, until they figure out exactly what the festival will look like.

C) **Planning for Taste of Keene for Next Year. Brats and Krauts sales –potential free use of grill and donations for brats and krauts, volunteers**

Mr. Kleiner reported that Taste of Keene preparations are going well. He continued that they have submitted their event request to the City, which will go to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee this week and be placed on more time. The Taste of Keene welcomes the PCC with open arms. The event will be June 3, with June 4 as the rain date. They see no problem with the PCC doing brats and kraut sales. Discussion ensued about creating a subcommittee/working group for this. [Some inaudible audio].

10) Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison/Executive Assistant