

**CITY OF KEENE
PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

5:00 pm to 6:00 pm

2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall



1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)**
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** May 9, 2023
4. **Board Business:**
 - a.) Activity Planning for upcoming exchange w/Einbeck in Keene – We now are planning to host from *September 22 to September 30, 2023.*
 - d.) PCC Exchange Survey/Facebook updates.
 - e.) Update on Student Exchange - MC₂. – October 9 – 22, 2023.
 - f.) Update on other future exchange ideas – YMCA/Youth Centers – Pickle Ball – Dance.
5. **Communications:**
6. **Reports:**
 - a) Treasurer Report
7. **New Business:**
 - a) Discuss additional guidelines/expectations to be added for people from Keene traveling to Einbeck.
8. **Next Meeting:** Next meeting is July 11, 2023
9. **More Time:**
 - a) Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities
 - b) Pumpkin Fest, potential fund-raising opportunity. Brats and Kraut sales – potential free use of grill and donation for brats and kraut, volunteers.
10. **Adjournment**

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

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5 PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

5:00 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
Mayor George Hansel
Mari Brunner
Kürt Blomquist
Doris McCollester

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

Councilor Michael Giacomo
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Gregg Kleiner
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Gerald Lins, Alternate

8
9

10 1) Call to Order

11

12 Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

13

14) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

15

16 Roll call was conducted. Chair Mitchell welcomed guest David Clinton, stating that Mr. Clinton
17 has expressed interest in the committee through a letter. Mr. Clinton introduced himself.

18

19 3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – April 11, 2023 (there were no minutes recorded)

20

21 Chair Mitchell noted that there are no April meeting minutes.

22

23 4) Board Business

24 A) Activity Planning for upcoming exchange with Einbeck in Keene - September
25 29 to October 7, 2023

26

27 Chair Mitchell asked Mayor Hansel for an update from the working group. Mayor Hansel stated
28 that the working group has not met since the last PCC meeting, but will meet next week. He

29 continued that based on the communication Chair Mitchell has had with Jurgen Herbst (in
30 Einbeck), it sounds like the Einbeck travelers' thoughts are aligned with the PCC's
31 in line with what the PCC was thinking. The schedule the working group is creating includes a
32 trip to the Pioneer Valley and to the White Mountains for a possible overnight. They are
33 gathering pricing information. He gave more information.

34
35 Chair Mitchell thanked the working group and stated that it seems like the schedule is filling in
36 nicely. He asked if the working group is at/will get to the point where they need to dole out short
37 tasks – for example, pickle ball setup has been taken care of by one person. Mayor Hansel
38 replied yes, and they probably need one more month (to determine that). He continued that when
39 they meet next week, they will start doling tasks out to the working group members and then ask
40 the PCC for help if needed. Each working group member is taking a different chunk of the trip
41 and the research. Next month they will have things firmed up even more and have some asks for
42 the PCC.

43
44 Ms. Brunner asked if pickle ball should be a specific day or if it is flexible. Discussion ensued.
45 Chair Mitchell asked if October 1 is best, noting that it could be October 2 or 3. Ms. Brunner
46 replied that there are a few possibilities.

47
48 Chair Mitchell stated that he received recent correspondence from Frank Klenke, regarding
49 soccer. He continued that in years past, the soccer exchange was run almost entirely by Wally
50 Secord (from Keene) and his counterpart in Einbeck, other than the finances, and the exchange
51 received generous support from committee members. There is a lot that goes on with the soccer
52 exchange. He has spoken with Frank a few times, and this written correspondence is his
53 thoughts on what he believes the soccer exchange should look like. It lines up well with what
54 the PCC has been looking at. Gina De Santis has experience playing semi-professionally, and
55 coaching, and is interested in being involved. The man who runs the sports arena in Swanzey is
56 also interested. The potential for the exchange is here; it is a matter of who takes the weight of
57 it. He encourages the PCC to read what Frank sent. At some point, they will need someone on
58 the PCC who has more experience with this or is willing to take the lead on it. It sounds like
59 Frank could probably make an exchange work this year, but it is more realistic to wait until
60 2024.

61
62 Chair Mitchell stated that the next correspondence is from Kirsten Hillebrecht from Germany.
63 She emailed him months ago, looking to develop an exchange. He approached the YMCA and
64 the YMCA does not believe they have any of the infrastructure that would allow for an exchange
65 (e.g. the people) and at this point they are not interested. MoCo is interested in learning more
66 but also believes they do not have the infrastructure of people to supervise an exchange. The
67 Lions youth and Rotary youth are tied into the schools, and both organizations thought their
68 youth groups would not be a good fit for this, either. Thus, he leaves it up to the PCC, regarding
69 how they can move on this.

70

71 Mr. Blomquist stated that Kirsten met Andy Bohannon (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities
72 Director) when she was here and they had a conversation. He continued that in Germany, this is
73 a quasi-governmental function; the multifunctional youth centers are run by the Einbeck
74 government. Einbeck is suggesting everything from basketball to modern dance. He can talk
75 with Mr. Bohannon and see what his thoughts are. He continued that similar to the soccer
76 exchange, this will probably require someone who can take the lead in coordinating the
77 participants, host families, etc., with the PCC supporting with finances. MoCo would probably
78 be interested in being involved in some way, despite their lack of capacity to organize host
79 families and such. The question is who is able to handle the logistics; this all comes down to
80 logistics.

81
82 Chair Mitchell stated that there is probably housing for everyone. He continued that they just
83 need someone to be in charge. They will not solve this today, but he encourages everyone to
84 continue to think about it. Ms. Brunner asked if it is true that it does not necessarily need to be
85 an organization that takes the lead, and it could just be a person or people who are able and
86 willing. Others replied yes, but such a person/people would need to have connections and people
87 to support them. Mr. Blomquist spoke of the need for some resiliency and structure, which
88 comes with organizations, so the exchange program does not rely entirely on one person.
89 Discussion continued.

90
91 Mayor Hansel suggested they talk with Ritu Budakoti, who is a teacher at Keene Middle School
92 and involved with the Keene India Association and civic activities. He continued that he can talk
93 with her; he thinks she has a good number of connections with youth.

94
95 **B) PCC Exchange Survey/Facebook Update**

96
97 Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had any activity to report. Others replied no.

98
99 **C) Update on Student Exchange – MC2 – October 9 to 22, 2023**

100
101 Mr. Blunt gave an update on the upcoming student exchange, stating that MC2 students met
102 yesterday, via video conference, with their German counterparts. He continued that they are
103 starting to connect, and have a rough draft of the itinerary for October when Einbeck students
104 come to Keene. MC2 students plan to have a solidified itinerary to present to the PCC at their
105 next meeting, and would like the PCC's thoughts and feedback. Originally, MC2 had planned on
106 going to Einbeck in April 2024, and they are looking to change that to June. Neither side is yet
107 in a rush to lock down the dates. He continued that fundraisers for the exchange, at the
108 Showroom, will be on September 23 and in February. Everything is going well and they are
109 excited.

110
111 Chair Mitchell asked how many students they are looking at. Mr. Blunt replied sending eight
112 and receiving eight, with two staff members both ways as well. Discussion ensued. Chair

113 Mitchell asked if it would be possible for Mr. Blunt to email the itinerary to the PCC by the day
114 before the PCC's next meeting. Mr. Blunt replied yes.

115

116 **D) Update on other future exchange ideas**

117

118 Chair Mitchell asked Ms. Brunner about the idea of a dance exchange, and about the dance
119 community in the Keene area. Ms. Brunner spoke of how the tango community she is a part of is
120 mainly older people/retired people, so it would not be a youth exchange.

121

122 Chair Mitchell stated that he is hopeful that there are enough pickle ball players in Keene to
123 connect with the pickle ball players coming from Einbeck, and maybe that could become an
124 exchange. He continued that the PCC may run into this multiple times and need a form for how
125 to fill the exchange coordinator positions, or whatever the title will be – here they have three
126 potential types of exchanges, but they need coordinators to keep them going. Mr. Blomquist
127 replied that logistically, they need organizations to coordinate/facilitate, as opposed to
128 individuals – for example, for insurance purposes. The PCC should perhaps talk about whether
129 the PCC, through the City, takes on more of the responsibility. They were very fortunate to have
130 Wally Secord doing what he did for the soccer exchange, with the framework that he had.
131 Discussion ensued about insurance/liability issues. Mr. Blomquist spoke about how organized
132 groups have the necessary structure and framework, and how it works well to have an
133 organization that can be the sponsor, with an individual within the organization who can manage
134 the day to day. Chair Mitchell replied yes, like when he facilitated the Keene High School
135 exchanges, and was thus covered by the high school.

136

137 Chair Mitchell asked if there were any other thoughts on future exchange ideas. Mr. Blomquist
138 summarized that they are getting the school exchanges going again, and the choir groups, and
139 there is the question of sports. He continued that there are two directions there – soccer, with
140 definite interest in Einbeck; and the youth center, which could go in a couple directions and even
141 vary year to year. It is a matter of finding people to start looking at this and looking at the
142 logistics.

143

144 Mayor Hansel stated that he floated the idea of doing an industry exchange with the
145 manufacturers, and there is a lot of interest, but they do not have anyone who knows enough
146 about how to do this and have employees work for a period of time overseas. Area manufactures
147 are interested in potentially sending employees to Einbeck for a 6-month period and having
148 Einbeck employees come to Keene, but no one has experience in doing it. Discussion ensued
149 about what this could look like.

150

151 Mr. Blomquist stated that there has always been conversation off and on about the Chamber of
152 Commerce and the Einbeck equivalent and the small business community. The idea is floating
153 out there for how to, for example, have a Hannah Grimes type of relationship. How could they
154 connect start-up businesses in Einbeck with people who do start-up businesses in Keene?

155

156 **5) Communications**

157
158 Chair Mitchell stated that the PCC received a letter from the local Republican Committee, saying
159 that the women's club would like someone to come speak for 10 minutes about what the PCC is
160 up to. He asked if anyone would like to do that. Discussion ensued. Chair Mitchell stated that
161 he can do it.

162
163 **6) Reports**

164 **A) Treasurer Report**

165 Ms. Mattson stated that the regular appropriation account has \$12,000, and they probably will be
166 spending every bit of that on the exchange. She continued that the PCC special account has
167 \$18,260.90. She does not foresee any expenses from that account at this point.

168
169 Mr. Blomquist stated that if he remembers correctly, they have \$5,000 in the budget request. He
170 continued that that would give them the \$17,000 for when the Einbeck group gets here.

171
172 **7) New Business**

173 **A) Discuss additional guidelines/expectations to be added for people from Keene**
174 **traveling to Einbeck**

175
176 Chair Mitchell stated that the PCC set up an advisory group (working group) regarding creating
177 additional guidelines/expectations for people traveling to Einbeck. He continued that he has not
178 heard from anyone, and he hopes this is in the works. He asked if anyone knows. Ms. Brunner
179 asked if Councilor Giacomo knows he was put in charge of this working group. Chair Mitchell
180 replied probably not. Discussion continued. Mr. Blomquist asked Ms. Mattson to send
181 Councilor Giacomo a copy of the current guidelines so the working group has a starting point.

182
183 Chair Mitchell stated that Mr. Herbst had promised the PCC a list of the people who are coming,
184 and their bios, and the other part of his email to him (Chair Mitchell) was an apology for not
185 having those ready yet. He continued that he thinks they will probably have that in a week or so.
186 He will forward it to Ms. Mattson when he gets it, and Ms. Mattson can forward it to the rest of
187 the PCC. Ms. Mattson agreed.

188
189 **8) Next Meeting – June 13, 2023**

190
191 Chair Mitchell stated that he will not be here for the July meeting. He continued that sometimes
192 they take August off. Ms. Mattson replied that typically the PCC does not meet in July or
193 August, but they have been, because they have an exchange taking place. Mr. Blomquist replied
194 that they could take June off, but they will need the July and August meetings. Chair Mitchell
195 replied that he would rather keep them all on the calendar. Others agreed that that is fine.

196

197 Chair Mitchell stated that the PCC had talked about having the hosts meet/connect ahead of time.
198 He continued that as soon as Mr. Herbst gets him the list of people who are coming, he would
199 like to start on this before the next meeting. Unless the PCC disagrees, he will start calling the
200 people on the list, connecting with them, and sorting people out. Others agreed.
201

202 **9) More Time**

203 **A) Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities**

204 Chair Mitchell asked if any fundraising ideas or opportunities have shown up. Ms. Mattson
205 replied no. Chair Mitchell stated that they are waiting for the Mayor with his direct asks, which
206 will be valuable to support the soccer group or the school group, and he thinks the PCC will need
207 to use their budget money directly for hosting the official visit. Others agreed. Mr. Blomquist
208 replied that the appropriation they get each year is geared toward that.

209 **B) Pumpkin Fest, potential fund-raising opportunity. Brats and Kraut sales –**
210 **potential free use of grill and donation for brats and krauts, volunteers.**

211 Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had news about this. Mr. Blomquist replied that Pumpkin Fest is
212 still working on their plan. Ms. Mattson replied that Councilor Giacomo would have the update.

213 Ms. Brunner asked if the PCC had decided at the last meeting to not do the Taste of Keene. Ms.
214 Mattson replied that the Taste of Keene decided that. The PCC will not be participating.

215 Ms. Brunner stated that there is also the Octoberfest event that Stonewall Farm is doing
216 September 16. Discussion continued. Chair Mitchell stated that hopefully that will be a good,
217 strong fundraiser for the PCC.

218 **10) Adjournment**

219
220 There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:45 PM.

221
222 Respectfully submitted by,
223 Britta Reida, Minute Taker
224
225 Reviewed and edited by,
226 Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison
227