

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, July 13, 2023**

**6:00 PM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Thomas F. Powers, Chair  
Michael J. Remy, Vice Chair  
Bettina A. Chadbourne  
Bryan J. Lake  
Andrew M. Madison

**Members Not Present:**

*All Present*

**Staff Present:**

Thomas P. Mullins, City Attorney  
Rebecca Landry, ACM/Communications  
Director  
Elizabeth Fox, ACM/Human Resources  
Director  
Kurt Blomquist, ACM/Emergency  
Management Director/Public Works Director  
Steven Tenney, Police Captain  
Andy Bohannon, Parks Recreation and  
Facilities Director  
Fire Chief, Donald Farquhar  
Airport Director, David Hickling

Chair Powers called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

**1) FY23 DOJ Justice Assistance Grant - Police Captain Steve Tenney, Police Captain**

Police Captain Tenney addressed the Committee regarding the Edward Byrne Department of Justice JAG grant. Captain Tenney stated the Keene Police Department co-applies for this grant with Cheshire County, which is the fiscal agent. The City enters into a Memorandum of Agreement with the County for the City's portion of the money. The City's portion this year would be \$5,525. The funds will be used for cell phones for field operations, investigations and for the SRO.

Councilor Madison asked for the total value of the grant. Captain Tenney stated the total amount of the grant is \$12,155. The County gets the same amount as the City received to be used for direct expenses and the balance of \$1,105 is used for in-direct costs of the grant.

Councilor Lake made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Madison.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to co-apply with the County of Cheshire, and to accept and expend the U.S. Department of Justice FY23 JAG in the amount allocated to the City of \$5,525.

2) **Donation - Dog Park - Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director**

Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director Andy Bohannon addressed the next item. Mr. Bohannon stated this item is in reference to a donation of \$40,000 for the Keene dog park. He indicated the group has been working diligently on this effort based on the Dubois and King study. He added that they have been working with various contractors who have donated their services and in addition they removed the pavilion out of their scope of work which reduced the cost of the project. Mr. Bohannon stated this donation starts the bidding process for the City and the plan is to start work in early fall.

Mr. Bohannon noted Rebecca Lancaster is in the audience who spearheaded the second effort for the dog park and thanked her for her efforts. He invited Ms. Lancaster to address the Committee. Ms. Lancaster stated they are grateful to have the support of the City and recognized Paige Walker and Susan Newcomer, who have helped with the fundraising efforts as well. So far, they have been able to raise \$89,000 from the community, personal donations, and corporate members and felt they were in an excellent place to begin construction in the fall.

Councilor Chadbourne and Councilor Madison recognized the efforts of this group and thanked them for their work. Ms. Lancaster indicated their website is keenedogpark.org, and they also have a very active Facebook page.

Councilor Madison made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Remy.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept a donation of \$40,000.00 for the purpose of building a dog park in Wheelock Park.

3) **CDFA Grant Acceptance - Brian A. Mattson Recreation Center Project - Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director**

Mr. Bohannon addressed the next item as well. He indicated this item is for the City to accept a grant in the amount of \$801,250 for the Brian A Matson Recreation Center project through the CDFA, Community Center Investment Program. He reminded the Committee in April he brought this item forward through a grant application process and the City has been fortunate to receive those funds.

Mr. Bohannon indicated the City has completed the level 2 survey which would focus on the HVAC system specifically in the multi-purpose room, office, and lobby. It will also create an ADA ramp from the parking lot to the war memorial. All windows within the building will also be replaced.

Councilor Remy stated this is a forgivable loan and asked what the conditions for forgiveness would be. Mr. Bohannon stated it would be 0%; instead of having a grant which has a lot more reporting, this loan does not. He indicated CDFA recommends the City go forward with a loan as

opposed to a grant. Asst. City Manager/HR Director Beth Fox added the condition of forgiveness is a pretty low threshold; the City has to own the building and do the work. She added Mr. Bohannon is correct in that if CDFA put this through their customary grant process, it would bind the City to enumerable grant conditions into perpetuity. She added that she wanted the Committee and Council to be aware that this was a very unique funding opportunity completed in a short timeline. Mr. Bohannon had to work hard and was successful, while eight or nine other applications were not. There were 18 applications in total and many were not successful, some were not successful because they were not attentive to the threshold requirements which the City paid attention to. She also noted that the City was well positioned to compete for this grant because it was an asset management focus and had information available in the capital improvement planning process. Mr. Bohannon commended Scott Martin, Facilities Manager for his work with this item

Councilor Remy made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to accept, execute and expend a Community Development Finance Authority Grant award for \$801,250.00 for the Brain A. Mattson Recreation Center project.

4) **Invest NH Grant Acceptance - Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director Andy Bohannon, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director**

Mr. Bohannon stated this item is an Invest New Hampshire Municipal demolition grant for an award of \$130,000 for a property located at 160 Water Street known as Findings. Mr. Bohannon indicated the City acquired this property last September and went forward to move the skate park to this location. The current building footprint is where the parking lot and the existing parking lot are where the skate park would be located.

Mr. Bohannon indicated that what this grant enables is for the skate park to have some additional square footage which they would be able to use from the Land, Water and Conservation Fund. That application is in the Federal process right now and is looking very favorable.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Remy.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to accept, execute and expend an Invest NH Municipal Demolition Grant award for \$130,000.00 for the property located at 160 Water Street.

5) **Kevin Watterson/Keene Swampbats - Request To Use Previously Approved Community Funding**

Mr. Kevin Watterson was the next to address the Committee. Mr. Watterson stated as a 50-plus-year resident of Keene and a close friend of the late Brian Mattson he wanted to thank Mr. Bohannon for his effort with the previous item.

He stated he was before the Committee tonight relative to Independence Eve, the City's annual fireworks display. The weather conditions on July 3rd were such that the Swamp Bats chose to postpone the event due to safety reasons. Mr. Watterson thanked police and fire for being so

flexible with the event being postponed. He stated he is requesting the community funding that was previously approved to be instituted for their makeup date of Friday, July 28<sup>th</sup> - rain or shine.

The Public Works Director reiterated what Mr. Watterson stated.

Councilor Lake made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Madison.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee recommends the communication submitted by the Keene Swampbats on June 15, 2023, requesting an additional fireworks discharge in July be reported out as informational. The Keene Swampbats are further authorized to reschedule their Independence Eve community-funded event to occur on Friday, July 28 on Alumni Field subject to the same conditions as the previous authorization. The petitioner agrees to absorb the cost of any City services over and above any amount of City funding allocated in the FY 24 Community Events Budget for the display. Said payments shall be made within 30 days of the date of invoicing.

6) **Pamela Russell Slack - Requesting an Amendment to the City Council's Rules of Order – Workshops Pamela Russell Slack will not be attending**

Councilor Madison made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Remy.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the request from Pamela Russell Slack in regards to an amendment to the City Council's Rules of Order regarding Workshops be placed on more time.

7) **Councilor Filiault - Reimbursement for Speaking Fee - Jeff Speck Visit**

Councilor Filiault stated he was before the Committee requesting reimbursement of the \$2,500 City taxpayers' money that was spent on the Jeff Speck presentation on the downtown project. The Councilor stated the event might have been acceptable, but the end result was not because Mr. Speck was conducting book sales, the event turned into a for-profit event.

The Councilor stated he sees in the proposed options for motions prepared for the Committee an option to accept this item as informational. He requested the Committee not do that. He felt elected officials of Keene should be asking for any tax dollars back when it is not used for precisely what it is intended for.

Councilor Remy stated the Council agreed to bring in a speaker who, by nature is not a nonprofit. He is a person who runs a business and this is what he does for a living. Hence, stated he did not understand why there would be any perception that he was doing this out of the kindness of his heart. He added the books that were being sold in the lobby were being sold by Toadstool Bookstore, not by Mr. Speck. Councilor Filiault stated he was told the monies went to Mr. Speck. He added an individual speaking at a City requested event is one thing but when it becomes a book signing event, that is something totally different than what was interpreted or anticipated. Councilor Remy stated he purchased one of the books at the event and he had to pay Toadstool for it.

Councilor Madison stated he was not totally unsympathetic to Councilor Filiault's point and does find issue with public dollars being used for private profit. However, the Council voted for this individual to speak at the event and the Council did not include a stipulation about books not to be sold at this event. Hence, this is the City's issue for not including such language. He added the City of Keene negotiates in good faith and does not go back on deals that are made. He stated he agrees with the Councilor, but the City made a deal but did not include such a stipulation, and should be something to think about in the future. Councilor Chadbourne stated the majority of the Council vote prevails but she does understand Councilor Filiault's point.

Councilor Remy made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Madison.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends accepting this item as informational.

**8) Airport Land Leases for Hangar Development - Airport Director**

Airport Director Dave Hickling stated, as he has mentioned in the past there is still much interest for hangar development with a hangar shortage at the airport. He said that sometimes those conversations tend to lead to negotiating leases, and at that point he comes before City Council to receive approval for the City Manager to negotiate and execute a lease.

Mr. Hickling stated what staff is looking for is a recommendation to authorize the City Manager to negotiate land leases. He stated if staff gets through those negotiation process and gets to a point where they feel they have a good chance of executing a lease staff at that point could come before the City Council to get approval to execute that lease. This will avoid staff bringing multiple proposals to negotiate when many negotiations might not culminate in a lease.

Councilor Lake asked the City Attorney if this motion was approved would this be binding going forward or would there be certain timeline. Attorney Mullins stated it would be fairly open ended, but indicated the City Council can change this at any time that it. He indicated this authorization would give the Manager an opportunity to look at various options but at some point should the Council decide not to do that, it can always be changed. He added this item was reviewed by the attorney's office and it did make sense to him as some of these negotiations can take some time.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Remy.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate Keene Airport land leases with potential hangar developers consistent with the Airport Land Leasing Policy.

**9) Change Order: Wells Street Parking Structure - Assistant Public Works Director**

Mr. Blomquist addressed the Committee next and stated that this item was in reference to a change order for the Wells Street parking deck. He stated this project is to remove the existing membrane on the second deck, make the necessary repairs and install a new membrane. During the design process when the consultant was looking at the deck surface the sealant membrane

was in poor condition. Hence, it is being recommended the sealant be replaced on the deck. This change is at a cost of \$44,550. The project budget for this work is \$678,800. To date \$419,814 has been spent which includes original design, construction inspection and current construction contract. After this change order there would be approximately \$258,000 left in the project. Staff does not anticipate any more substantial issues.

Councilor Chadbourne asked how long Mr. Blomquist feels this repair would last. Mr. Blomquist stated it should last about ten years and added the last major work was done eight years ago and the membrane material does wear out and if it is not maintained then the deck would require substantial repair.

Councilor Lake made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Madison.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary negotiate and execute Change Order #1 with Pierce Property Services to add tee-joint sealant replacement to the Wells Street Parking Structure Repair Project for an amount not to exceed \$44,550, with a revised contract total of \$431,514.

**10) Agreement for Contract Ambulance Service with the Town of Sullivan Donald Farquhar, Fire Chief**

Fire Chief Farquhar was the next speaker, Chief Farquhar stated this item is to request an agreement to enter an ambulance service contract with the Town of Sullivan. The Chief indicated it has been the City's position from the onset to be supportive to the overall countrywide effort to stabilize EMS. It was the City's position not to offer contracts rather to use its position as a well-established and well respected EMS agency in the community to try and bring everyone together into a cooperative model versus one of competition. The City was very close to putting an agreement in place which unfortunately did not come to fruition.

Because the City could not finalize a cooperative model, each municipality went with an EMS agency of their choice. The Chief indicated as a significant compliment to the City many towns reached out to the Fire Department and asked to enter an EMS Agreement with them, and almost all cases except for one. Looking at the current resources and the department's ability to provide for its own citizens and current contract towns the department is in a very difficult spot to absorb any additional call volume.

He added the Town of Sullivan presents somewhat of a unique outlier to the overall landscape, and after some analysis, the department feels it can enter into an agreement with the Town of Sullivan. The Chief used Westmoreland as an example which has a population of about 700 people and the City responded to about 90 -100 calls annually and had a standby fee of \$54,000 and EMS revenue of approximately 100,000. The City no longer has a contract with Westmoreland and hence has the capacity to assist Sullivan, and there is also the added benefit of Sullivan being located closer to Westmoreland. He indicated the Town sent the department a proposal which the Chief indicated was an excellent proposal. Sullivan has a population of less than 700 and a call volume of nearly 58 annually. Their annual standby fee would be approximately \$24,000, and approximately \$60,000 in fee recovery from EMS billing. The Chief

stated the proposal in front of the committee this evening is for the City to extend an EMS service contract to the good citizens of Sullivan.

Councilor Madison thanked the Fire Department for all its work during the recent flood events in Alstead.

Councilor Madison made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Remy.

On a vote of 5-0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager to do all things necessary to execute an agreement for Contract Ambulance service with the Town of Sullivan.

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 6:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,  
Terri M. Hood, Assistant City Clerk