

11/02/2023

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, November 2, 2023. The Honorable Mayor George S. Hansel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Roll called: Bryan J. Lake, Michael J. Remy, Randy L. Filiault, Robert C. Williams, Philip M. Jones, Andrew M. Madison, Catherine I. Workman, Mitchell H. Greenwald, Kate M. Bosley, and Thomas F. Powers were present. Michael Giacomo, Kris E. Roberts, Raleigh C. Ormerod, and Bettina A. Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant. Councilor Greenwald led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES FROM THE PRECEDING MEETING

A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt the October 19, 2023, meeting minutes was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Hansel announced that he was tentatively scheduling a special meeting of the City Council for the purpose of having a non-public session on Thursday, November 9 at 5:30 PM. The Clerk will confirm the necessity of this special meeting as the date approaches. Mayor Hansel also reminded that there would be a special meeting of the City Council on Thursday, November 9 at 5:45 PM to canvass the votes cast at the Municipal General election. This will be a very brief meeting that will occur before the 6:00 PM start of the FOP Committee meeting. He shared another reminder that the Wednesday, November 22 MSFI meeting was moved to Tuesday, November 21; there are two issues that will require the MSFI Committee to meet this week. There will also likely be a need for the MSFI Committee to meet in December, so the December 27 MSFI meeting was rescheduled to Tuesday, December 12 at 6:00 PM. The FOP Committee meeting on December 28 is canceled.

PUBLIC HEARING – FEDERAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM – ACQUISITION AND RENOVATION OF PROPERTY AT 40 AVON STREET IN KEENE, NH TO SERVE AS THE CENTRALIZED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FACILITY OF MONADNOCK FAMILY SERVICES (MFS)

Mayor Hansel opened the public hearing at 7:03 PM and the City Clerk read the public hearing notice. The Mayor welcomed Jack Ahern, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Administrator at Southwest Regional Planning Commission.

Mr. Ahern explained that the Federal CDBG program requires a public hearing while the project is underway to allow the public an opportunity to comment and ask questions. He provided an update on the Monadnock Family Services (MFS) relocation. The Housing and Public Facilities grant of \$500,000 in CDBG funds—less administrative costs—was sub-granted to the Monadnock Community Services Center to support the acquisition and renovation of the

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property at 40 Avon Street in Keene, NH. The property is to serve as the centralized Behavior Health Facility of MFS, a non-profit affiliate of Monadnock Community Services, Inc. The \$4,200,000 acquisition of the property was completed on June 29, 2022. MFS reported that the renovation is behind schedule due to the discovery of over one mile of heating and cooling pipes that required replacement due to corrosion. 95% of the pipes have been replaced thus far. Additional remaining work includes a rooftop chiller, replacement ceilings, carpeting, and minor painting. Installation of rooftop solar panels will begin in spring 2024. Total project completion is estimated to be at 85% and all CDBG funds for construction activities have been drawn down. Acquiring a Certificate of Occupancy is anticipated for early November 2023, which will not delay the closing of the grant by the scheduled date of June 30, 2024.

Hearing no comments or questions from the Council or the public, Mayor Hansel closed the public hearing at 7:06 PM.

A true record, attest: 
City Clerk

CONFIRMATION – PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE

Mayor Hansel nominated Councilor Andrew Madison to fill an unexpired vacant term as a regular member of the Partner City Committee, with a term to expire December 31, 2024. A motion by Councilor Powers to confirm the nomination was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

NOMINATION – ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Mayor Hansel nominated David Weigle to serve as an alternate member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment, with a term to expire December 31, 2026. The Mayor tabled the nomination until the next regular meeting.

COMMUNICATION – STEPHEN BRAGDON AND CHERLY BELAIR – SAFETY ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE DRIVEWAY AT 82 COURT STREET

A communication was received from Attorney Stephen Bragdon and Cheryl Belair, requesting that the City consider codifying an Ordinance amendment that would designate approximately 22 feet to the south of the 82 Court Street driveway entrance and an area 30 feet to the north of the driveway entrance as no parking due to visibility issues exiting the driveway. Mayor Hansel referred the communication to the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee.

**PLD REPORT – KIWANIS CLUB OF KEENE – REQUEST TO USE CITY PROPERTY –
2023 TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY**

A Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee report read, recommending that the Keene Kiwanis Club be granted permission to use downtown City rights-of-way on Friday, November 24, 2023, to conduct the annual Tree Lighting Festival conditional upon the following:

- The furnishing of a certificate of liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 naming the City of Keene as an additional insured;
- The signing of a standard revocable license and indemnification agreement;
- That the Petitioner agrees to absorb the cost of any City services over and above the amount of City funding allocated to the event, and agrees to remit said payment within 30-days of the date of invoicing;
- That the agreed upon footprint and layout for the event shall encumber Central Square, including the traveled portion of the road requiring the following road closures: Central Square, West Street at Central Square, Roxbury Street from west of the Hannah Grimes Parking lot to Central Square, Washington Street from Vernon Street to Central Square, and Court Street from Winter Street to Central Square;
- That the Petitioner is permitted to place porta-potties in City parking spaces located at the base of Washington Street from Wednesday, November 23, 2023, to Monday, November 27, 2023, which will be chained together and affixed to ensure they are not vandalized while unattended overnight;
- That the actual event will be held from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM with the times for set up and clean up to be established with City staff;
- That free parking be granted under the provisions of the free parking policy for the following: use of spaces with dates, times and locations to be determined in coordination with the Parking Division for volunteer parking during set-up activities; use of up to four spaces on Washington Street from Wednesday, November 23, 2023, to Monday November 27, 2023 for placement of materials; and spaces within the event footprint on the day of the event.

Said permission is granted subject to obtainment of any necessary licenses or permits and compliance with all laws; and compliance with any recommendations of City staff.

A motion by Councilor Bosley to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Jones. The motion carried unanimously with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

**PLD REPORT – KEENE SNO-RIDERS – REQUESTING PERMISSION TO RUN
SNOWMOBILES IN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY ALONG KRIF ROAD FROM THE ASHUELOT
RAIL TRAIL TO WINCHESTER STREET**

A Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee report read, recommending that the Keene SnoRiders be granted permission to use the following locations on City property for a

snowmobile trail: the right-of-way along the north side of Krif Road from Krif Court to Winchester Street; City property identified by tax map numbers 116/040/000/000/000, 214/003/000/000/000 and 118/001/000/000/000; the crossing of Winchester Street at Krif Road; and, The crossing of Production Avenue approximately 200 +/- feet south of NH Route 9. As well as access to the Class VI Portion of the Old Gilsum Road starting approximately one mile from the Gilsum Town Line and going north, (“Premises”) for the following purpose: for a snowmobile trail, and under the following conditions: Said use shall commence on December 15, 2023, and expire on March 30, 2024, and is subject to the following conditions: the signing of a revocable license and indemnification agreement; and the submittal of a certificate of liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000, naming the City of Keene as an additional insured. In addition, the Keene SnoRiders, Inc. will be responsible (including cost) for the installation and maintenance of all signage/markings, which will be in accordance with Snowmobile Trail Standards published by NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs; that all signage/markings installed shall be removed from the City right-of-way and City property when there is no longer any snow cover, no structures, including buildings, shelters, lights, displays, walls, etc. shall be permitted with the City right-of-way or on City property; no parking of motor vehicles or trailers and no catering servicing activities of any kind shall be permitted within the City right-of-way or on City property; grooming shall not extend outside the right-of-way of Krif Road, snow windows shall be groomed to provide adequate sight distances and a gentle sloping approach at all road and driveway intersections; no part of the City Street (paved surfaces) may be used by off-highway recreational vehicles (OHRV) or their operators for any purpose, other than direct crossing; and that Keene SnoRiders, Inc. shall be responsible for the repair of any damage (including costs) and the City right-of-way and property shall only be used when there is snow cover.

A motion by Councilor Bosley to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Jones. The motion carried unanimously with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

PLD REPORT – CHUCK REDFERN – CALL FOR ACTION – DRUG ABUSE IN PUBLIC SPACES

A Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to submit a letter to Senator Fenton requesting that he initiate legislation that would expand the geographical area of a drug-free zone to include public parks, with emphasis on restorative rather than punitive justice. A motion by Councilor Bosley to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Jones. Discussion ensued.

Councilor Bosley was the dissenting vote at the PLD hearing. She read a statement to clarify her position. This request was for the City Council to support the City Manager submitting a letter to Senator Fenton to initiate legislation that would expand the geographical area of a drug free zone to include Keene’s public parks. Councilor Bosley thanked Mr. Redfern for bringing this matter

forward. Councilor Bosley saw the spirit of this request and recognized that Mr. Redfern was only trying to help move Keene in a direction that would create a better environment for its children and park patrons. There was a lot of conversation at the PLD Committee meeting concerning the effectiveness of Mr. Redfern's request. PLD heard testimony from NH Representative Newell and Councilor Williams that outlined some of Councilor Bosley's concerns. For example, Representative Newell explained in her own words that all of these challenges are compounded by the lack of available services and resources. So, if the law was enhanced, Representative Newell thought it would lead to further punitive penalties because mental health services are not readily available. Representative Newell also explained that the latest Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the American Psychiatric Association says that addiction is pursuing substances despite negative consequences. So, enhanced punishments could have the opposite effect and not help individuals out of addiction. Councilor Williams also addressed criminology studies, which showed that the fear of increased consequences does not deter people from substance abuse. Because of these testimonies, the PLD Committee discussed whether someone misusing drugs would likely not care about posted signage—indicating a drug free zone—and whether the signs might create a false sense of safety for others in the community. There was a lot of conversation regarding whether the court system could require Mr. Redfern's suggestion of mandatory mental health services. Councilor Bosley stated her belief that those treatments are mostly successful when individuals have decided that they need the treatment, and she was unsure that forcing someone into treatment would result in the intended outcome. The Assistant City Attorney told the PLD Committee that she was unsure whether legislation exists that could be changed to expand mental health requirements with drug convictions. This matter is discussed in multiple sections of the law, and Councilor Bosley thought it would behoove the Council to review and understand the subtle nuances to get these enhanced penalties correct.

Councilor Bosley continued, explaining that Police Chief Stewart said that the only places designated currently as drug free zones are within 1,000 feet of schools and that he could not recall ever seeing an enhanced penalty provision triggered during his tenure. The Chief also said that "drug free zones" can be a misleading term and someone under the influence of drugs would most likely not be prosecuted. The Chief thought that it would be hard and not cost effective to try to prove if someone was under the influence. So, Councilor Bosley imagined that this would only be an in-possession offense. The PLD Committee also discussed the current process of our drug court system as an option when an individual is being seen for substance abuse issues; those opportunities are slowly being increased under our current system. The Councilor thought the bigger discussion that needed to happen was about how to be clear on what the Council is asking Senator Fenton for in this change. If the goal is to be effective for drug users, it seemed to Councilor Bosley that the City needs to use the resources it already has, such as the current policing systems, drug court systems, and active community groups to push forward ideas that will have an impact on the real nature of the problem. She thought that was at the heart of Mr. Redfern's request. To create clean, safe parks and provide mental health care and substance use therapies to individuals who are ready to access them, Councilor Bosley urged attracting those organizations to Keene and creating a more robust mental health care community. This is why

Councilor Bosley voted in opposition of the letter despite fully supporting this Council working toward a holistic resolution to this problem.

Councilor Williams echoed Councilor Bosley's comments. Councilor Williams agreed that Mr. Redfern's suggestion was in a positive spirit that the Councilor appreciated. Ultimately, Councilor Williams thought more discussion was needed before designing legislation. He would not support sending the letter.

Councilor Madison supported the positions of Councilors Bosley and Williams. Councilor Madison did not think this was an issue that Keene could "jail its way out of." He agreed that Mr. Redfern's suggestion was in the best faith to address a problem that is devastating this community. Still, Councilor Madison did not support sending this letter.

Councilor Workman thanked Mr. Redfern for bringing this matter to the Council. That said, Councilor Workman was concerned about how these drug free zones would be implemented and enforced. She thought this issue was bigger than the municipality and required involvement of the state and nation. She said there were questions to answer, like why our population seeks drug use to begin with. She thought that there were insufficient mental health resources to treat the underlying problem and that the drug court system needed expansion. Councilor Workman supported working with Senator Fenton to move things forward, but she did not support this specific initiative and thought more work was needed.

Councilor Remy said he would be supportive if the letter was phrased in a way that allowed the municipality to define its own drug free zones to establish some local control. He thought that saying all public parks would become drug free zones would take some control from the City. Councilor Remy could not support this initiative but appreciated the thought that went into it.

Councilor Jones voted in favor of this letter at the PLD meeting in an effort to bring this full discussion to the Council. Since the PLD meeting, he talked with some law makers and lobbyists in Concord, where many were working toward things that Councilors Bosley and Williams mentioned, with a focus on restorative versus punitive justice. Councilor Jones recalled that technically, the whole City and state are drug free zones; the difference is that within 1,000 feet of schools, there is a higher punishment, and the City should not be demanding more punishment. He did not think this was the right time for this kind of bill. While he appreciated Mr. Redfern's intent, Councilor Jones would not support this letter.

Councilor Filiault said that while he could see where the votes were leaning, he thought that doing nothing was not an acceptable option. He considered a motion to send this back to the PLD Committee so they could discuss it further because this is too important an issue. Mayor Hansel noted that the legislative deadline had passed. The City Manager agreed, explaining that the opportunity to submit legislation to both the House and Senate had passed, but she talked to Senator Fenton in advance of those deadlines, and he created a confidential placeholder (without a name) until after this Council meeting, so the City Manager could determine if there was

Council interest in moving forward changing the drug free zone. Councilor Bosley addressed Councilor Filiault's concerns. Councilor Bosley said the PLD Committee discussed that this is an issue that demands further focus. There was discussion of an ad hoc committee, but that Staff time was demanded a lot recently for ad hoc committees, and that process would take time. The City Manager added that there are several local groups working on this regularly: the City Manager's Task Force comprised of City Department heads, the Homeless Coalition of regional partners that meets monthly, and the Housing Stability ad hoc committee also made recommendations.

Councilor Bosley added that while this is an issue the east Keene neighbors have been bringing forward, this is an issue facing everyone in the City that is not going away and is related to issues like homelessness and mental health care. She said there are community partners, and she did not think this conversation would end at this meeting. Councilor Bosley was clear in urging forward progress to the City Manager, and all community partners (e.g., Serenity Center and Monadnock Family Services) need to be discussing these issues together (e.g., sober housing and mental health resources). She hoped that Councilor Filiault would bring this up again so it is not forgotten, and Councilor Bosley said she would too. Still, she did not think this legislation was the solution.

The City Manager added that she would be updating the MSFI Committee about the various current efforts. She had been on the Opioid Abatement Commission, where some settlement funds were coming from. In this role, she had been advocating for supportive housing in this region and in rural communities. At the last Opioid Abatement Commission meeting, a focus was on potentially allocating \$10 million per year of funding for supportive housing. In addition, the City Manager had many conversations with the Serenity Center and The Doorway, which were working with the City Manager on the Police Department social worker, which she would bring forward in the next Committee round. The social worker would follow-up on drug-related, homelessness, and domestic violence calls after the Police leave to try to connect people with services they need. The City Manager had been working toward this proactive approach for the last year.

Councilor Greenwald thought the conversation was getting conflated with homelessness and other issues, while this matter was clearly about the concept of drug-free zones in Keene's parks. He did not understand why that was so complicated. He thought it was important to communicate with law makers in Concord and communicate that this issue is important to Keene. He thought the City and Council should be clear about keeping drugs out of parks and away from Keene children.

Councilor Williams commented on the concept of drug free zones. He cited many studies, which showed that drug free zones are not a particularly effective concept, but more of a feel-good solution. He cautioned against layering punishments that are not an effective way to deter the behavior. Councilor Williams said it would be more effective to have a Police presence in the parks. He added that there was no rule against the City posting drug-free signs to make the

statement in parks. He was among many who had been calling for a wider community conversation on this topic, including how the Opioid Abatement funds should be used. While he knew the City might not sponsor this, he suggested finding a non-profit partner to facilitate this community discussion, which should include those most affected by drug use, so the City understands their needs.

Councilor Jones shared that approximately three years ago, he acted as the emcee for a drug abuse summit hosted by Healthy Monadnock and sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. Johann Hari from the UK spoke about treatment versus punishment, which Councilor Jones thought was the right way forward. Generally, punishment just brings people back to drug use, so he did not think more penalties was the right way forward.

On a vote of 2–8, the motion to carry out the intent of the Committee report failed. Councilors Filiault and Greenwald voted in the minority. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

FOP REPORT – ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS – HOLIDAY FAMILY SPONSORSHIP

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept donations associated with the City's 2023 Holiday Sponsorship Program. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. The motion carried unanimously with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

FOP REPORTS – 2021 HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM – HAZMAT FRISKER EQUIPMENT; 2023 HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM – HAZMAT EQUIPMENT; AND 2023 HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM – CBRNE EQUIPMENT

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to apply, accept, and expend the 2021 Homeland Security Grant Program – Hazmat Frisker Equipment grant in the amount of \$2,000.00. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. The motion carried unanimously with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and expend the 2023 Homeland Security Grant Program - Hazmat Equipment grant in the amount of \$60,715.00. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. The motion carried unanimously with 10 Councilors present and voting in

favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and expend the 2023 Homeland Security Grant Program - CBRNE Equipment grant in the amount of \$157,920.00. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. The motion carried unanimously with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

JARED GOODELL – PLACE OF ASSEMBLY PERMITS – RECENT CHARGE BY FIRE DEPARTMENT – BENDER’S BAR & GRILL

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending accepting the communication regarding assembly permits as informational. Mayor Hansel sent this matter back to the FOP Committee to allow the petitioner to be present.

DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT – PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT PRELIMINARY DESIGN

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending that the City Council (per Section 2-1336. - Waiver of Requirements), award a sole-source professional services contract to Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. for an amount not to exceed \$995,000 and that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a professional services contract with Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. for the next phase of the Downtown Infrastructure Improvement and Reconstruction Project. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. Discussion ensued.

Councilor Jones noted that he had been opposed to the project since the beginning and so he would vote in opposition.

Councilor Greenwald was unhappy with the project, but at this point, he said there was a compromise to move forward. His personal strategy in the next stage would be to ensure the best design possible, including saving trees and public safety. Councilor Greenwald opposed the “sole source” concept and thought the project should go out to bid since there was not a frantic rush. He was confident that a different consultant could be brought up to speed. He thought that a lot of what occurred with Stantec in the last round could have been avoided and he wanted to know if there was someone that could work better in this second phase.

Councilor Workman said she would support this because she thought that Stantec understood what the City needs and wants. She thought a compromise had been reached and that approving this would continue moving the project forward.

Councilor Filiault echoed Councilor Greenwald. Councilor Filiault reiterated his displeasure with how this project had been handled and progressed to date.

On a vote of 7–3, the motion to carry out the intent of the report carried. Councilors Filiault, Jones, and Greenwald voted in opposition. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

Mayor Hansel commented on this project, which he called the greatest challenge during his tenure as Mayor. He thought many were feeling the ramifications of a compromise; he did not think anyone was 100% happy with the recommended design. Still, he commended the community and Council for reaching a decision and encouraged them to keep going and fight for opportunities to weigh-in.

FOP REPORT – LWCF GRANT ROUND 33 ACCEPTANCE – SKATE PARK

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept, execute, and expend a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Round 33 award for \$225,000.00 for the Skate Park Project. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. The motion carried unanimously with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

FOP REPORT – LWCF GRANT ROUND 33 ACCEPTANCE – RUSSELL PARK

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept, execute, and expend a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Round 33 award for \$500,000.00 for the Russell Park Renovation Project. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. The motion carried unanimously with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

FOP REPORT – LWCF GRANT ROUND 34 NOTICE OF INTENT – ROBIN HOOD PARK

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute the submission of the application for LWCF Grant Round 34 for the Robin Hood Park renovation project. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy.

The motion carried unanimously with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

The City Manager began by recognizing Andy Bohannon—Director of Parks, Recreation, and Facilities—for working hard on the various park projects mentioned earlier in the meeting. Mr. Bohannon got the funding for facility improvements at the Recreation Center, made the Pat Russell Park project happen by moving things around and applying for additional funds, and was already applying for funds for Robin Hood Park.

The City Manager also shared that Keene Housing was awarded \$750,000 in CDBG funds for the Roosevelt School housing project.

Next, the City Manager recognized service milestones of City Staff: Kürt Blomquist, Public Works/Emergency Management Director/ACM (30 years); Natalie Darcy, Human Services Manager (15 years); Carly Crawford, Police Officer (5 years); and Sonja Martineau, Library Aide (5 years).

The City Manager also provided an update on the Island Street bridge, for which Councilors received an email update. The original schedule for opening the bridge to traffic was December 22. Last week, the City Manager was informed that they would not meet that date and that they now expected the opening to occur in early March 2024.

Next, the City Manager updated on solar energy and savings from the solar projects on the Public Works and Police Station buildings, as well as on the Airport property connected to the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). In almost 2 years, the WWTP project had saved \$273,000 on energy costs. The smaller array on Marlboro Street produced a savings of \$123,000 in the same two-year period. Staff were currently working with Revision Energy to evaluate adding a second array on Airport property, which could be the City's biggest array yet.

The City Manager also shared that at the next FOP Committee meeting, she would be starting the process of adding the new social worker position at the Police Department. There might be an opportunity in the future to request grant funds through the Opioid Abatement Commission to expand the program, but the City cannot wait any longer to begin. This position is needed to follow-up on drug-related and homelessness calls to help connect people to services.

Lastly, the City Manager announced the return of the employee recognition and holiday luncheon on December 14 from 11:30 AM–1:00 PM in the Blastos Room. Three years of employee awards would be presented because this event was canceled due to Covid.

**MORE TIME – PLD REPORT – KEENE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK –
REQUEST TO USE CITY PROPERTY – 2024 TASTE OF KEENE FOOD FESTIVAL**

A Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee report read, unanimously recommending that this item be placed back on more time to allow protocol meetings to be held. Mayor Hansel granted more time.

**ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING – RELATING TO PURCHASING – ORDINANCE
O-2023-15**

A memorandum from Yves Gakunde, Purchasing and Contract Services Manager, was received recommending that Ordinance O-2023-15 be referred to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee for their review and recommendation. Mayor Hansel referred Ordinance O-2023-15 to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee.

**ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING – RELATING TO AN AMENDMENT TO THE
ZONING MAP – 0 ASHUELOT STREET – HIGH DENSITY TO COMMERCE**

A Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee report read, recommending the adoption of Ordinance O-2023-13. Mayor Hansel filed the report. A motion by Councilor Bosley to adopt Ordinance O-2023-13 was duly seconded by Councilor Jones. Discussion ensued.

Councilor Williams said he would be voting against this because while more park space is nice, he thought housing was needed more at that centrally located property, which could provide apartments for 40–50 families, with the existing Ashuelot River Park in their front yard. He did not support pushing all new housing to the edges of the community. Over time, he thought the City had not taken opportunities to build housing in quality areas. He said efforts, like building Pat Russell Park, would not solve the City’s housing needs.

Councilor Filiault reminded the Council that this property was “an eyesore” for years and any developer could have bought it for housing, but no one had. He thought that the Monadnock Conservancy was doing something productive with the lot.

Councilor Jones said he would support this. Still, he hoped there would be no negative outcomes, such as the new owner deciding to quickly sell it to something like a big box store, but he cautioned that was a possibility.

The motion to adopt Ordinance O-2023-13 carried on a roll call vote with 9 Councilors present and voting in favor and 1 Councilor voting in opposition. Councilor Williams voted in the minority. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

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ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING – RELATIVE TO CONGREGATE LIVING AND SOCIAL SERVICES LICENSE – ORDINANCE O-2023-18

A Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee report read, recommending the adoption of Ordinance O-2023-18. Mayor Hansel filed the report. A motion by Councilor Bosley to adopt Ordinance O-2023-13 was duly seconded by Councilor Jones. The motion carried unanimously with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS ON WOODBURY STREET – RESOLUTION R-2023-37

A memorandum read from the City Attorney, Don Lussier, recommending that Resolution R-2023-37, Relating to the Appropriation of Funds for Safety Improvements on Woodbury Street, be referred to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee for deliberation and a recommendation to the City Council. Mayor Hansel referred Resolution R-2023-37 to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

At 8:12 PM, a motion by Councilor Powers to go into non-public session to discuss land matters under RSA 91-A:3, II (d) was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 10 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant. Discussion was limited to the subject matter. At 8:50 PM the session concluded. A motion by Councilor Powers to keep the minutes of the non-public session, non-public as disclosure would render the proposed action ineffective was seconded by Councilor Bosley. On roll call vote, 10 Councilors were present and voting in favor. Councilors Giacomo, Roberts, Ormerod, and Chadbourne were absent. Ward Four Council seat vacant.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Hansel adjourned the meeting at 8:52 PM.

A true record, attest: 
City Clerk