

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, June 6, 2024. The Honorable Mayor Jay V. Kahn called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Roll called: Kate M. Bosley, Laura E. Tobin, Michael J. Remy, Randy L. Filiault, Robert C. Williams, Edward J. Haas, Philip M. Jones, Andrew M. Madison, Kris E. Roberts, Bryan J. Lake, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Thomas F. Powers, and Mitchell H. Greenwald were present. Ward One Council seat vacant. Councilor Chadbourne led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Having declared that a quorum was present in the Council Chamber, Mayor Kahn recognized Councilor Catherine I. Workman, who requested to participate remotely due to work travel. Hearing no objections, the Mayor granted remote participation. Councilor Workman was calling alone from her location.

MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING

A motion by Councilor Greenwald to adopt the May 16, 2024, minutes as presented was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Ward One Council seat vacant.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Kahn began by thanking the Councilors who participated in the Memorial Day event at the Recreation Center. Next, the Mayor recognized the Monadnock Resource Alliance's efforts on housing. At the end of May, the Alliance's workshop included a presentation by the Monadnock Interfaith Project on Keene's housing needs; many people came together to brainstorm some of the options available to advance the City's housing agenda. Mayor Kahn also thanked the organizers of Taste of Keene, which was a great event, and he appreciated the community's participation and the leadership that the Young Professionals Network provided. Mayor Kahn also announced that Monadnock Area Peer Support group would hold its annual meeting on June 13. Next, Mayor Kahn shared that the Southwest Regional Planning Commission's annual meeting was scheduled for June 12.

Next, the Mayor announced that the City's Human Rights Committee was organizing (in partnership with other community groups) this year's Juneteenth celebration on June 19. There will be two events: a community dinner/meeting at the Community Kitchen, and a community celebration/concert on Central Square. Later in the meeting, Councilor Workman was recognized to share details about other Juneteenth events.

The Mayor talked about the Master Plan update, with the project name: Keene 20-Forward. There are planning sessions on June 18–21. At the June 20 Council meeting, the Master Plan consultants will present to the City Council.

Lastly, Mayor Kahn shared Council updates. There would be a full Council workshop on June 11 at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers on the downtown project. The Municipal, Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee will make its final recommendation on the downtown project at their regular meeting on June 26. The final vote on the downtown project by the City Council on this project is anticipated for the July 18 regular meeting. Mayor Kahn also announced that there would only be one City Council meeting on July 18th because the July 4 meeting is canceled.

Additionally, the Council's summer vacation is scheduled to start with the cancellation of the August 15 Council meeting and the September 5 Council meeting. The Council Standing Committee meetings of August 7–8 and August 21–22 are also canceled. The Committees will start meeting again on September 11–12, and the Council will start meeting again on September 19.

COMMUNICATION – KATIE CARBONARA AND DR. JULIA GIBSON – RESUBMITTING THE REQUEST THAT THE COUNCIL SUPPORT A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE IN GAZA

A communication was received Katie Carbonara and Dr. Julia Gibson, resubmitting their request that the City Council pass a Resolution that would demand an immediate ceasefire in Gaza by Israel, Hamas, and other Palestinian militant groups, the release of all hostages and political prisoners held by both sides, the provision of humanitarian aid to Gaza, and an end to all U.S. military aid packages and arms distribution to Israel.

Mayor Kahn recalled that a prior letter from Ms. Carbonara was accepted as informational at the May 16, 2024, meeting. The Mayor requested comments from the City Attorney, Tom Mullins, who explained that the City Council's past practice had been to not act on or accept communications of national import, but over which the Council has no authority to act. He recalled that at the May 16, 2024, meeting, Councilor Williams motioned to challenge the Mayor's decision to accept the communication as informational, and that motion failed with no second. The City Attorney explained that per the City Council's Rules of Order, once the Council disposes of a matter, it is not supposed to be heard again during that calendar year. Thus, under the Council's Rules, the City Attorney suggested that this communication not be considered again, in keeping with the May 16 action. However, he acknowledged that it is the Council's decision whether to suspend its Rules.

Mayor Kahn accepted the communication as informational.

Councilor Williams challenged the Mayor's decision. Without a second, the motion to challenge failed. Certain members of the audience voiced their objection to this action. The Mayor warned the individuals to stop the outbursts and when they failed to do so, he called a recess at 7:16 PM and asked that the Councilors clear the room. The Council reconvened at 7:25 PM.

PRESENTATION TO FORMER WARD ONE COUNCILOR RALEIGH C. ORMEROD

Mayor Kahn welcomed former Councilor Raleigh Ormerod. The Mayor celebrated Mr. Ormerod's commitment to public service since moving to Keene, including being elected to the School Board three times and the City Council two times. On the City Council, he served on the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee for one term, and the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee for two terms. Mayor Kahn presented Mr. Ormerod with a gift, and the Mayor and Council wished Mr. Ormerod well in his next endeavors.

Mr. Ormerod said he felt like he had been able to plant himself into the history of Keene. He appreciated this honor, and the honor it had been serving on the City Council. He mentioned the challenges faced by Councilors elected in fall 2019, just before the Covid pandemic. He thanked

the Council for standing with him during that time. He stated that critiques of the Council are completely in order, but said it is also in order for citizens to come forward and help solve the problems. He said he was grateful to live in a community like Keene, where there are so many in the community who care and can contribute.

Mayor Kahn thanked Mr. Ormerod's family and all Councilors' families for their support.

PUBLIC HEARING – FY 2024–2025 FISCAL YEAR OPERATING BUDGET

Mayor Kahn opened the public hearing at 7:31 PM and the City Clerk read the public hearing notice. Mayor Kahn requested introductions from the City Manager and Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee Chair, Councilor Powers.

The City Manager presented the recommended Operating Budget for 2024–2025, which includes the first year of the most recent Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Budget preparation began in February with the City Manager reviewing each department's submissions in February and March. Next, she worked with the Finance Department to bring the budget into compliance with the City's Fiscal Policy (doing so this year required over \$1.6 million worth of changes to either expenses or revenues). Then, in early April, the budget was printed to be delivered to the Council on May 1. During the month of May, the Council's Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee reviewed each section of the budget with department heads. Finally, the FOP Committee made its recommended changes to the budget on May 23: adjustments were made to electrical accounts due to a reduction in rates, an additional \$1,000 was added to the nonprofit CASA in the outside agencies section of the budget, and \$7,000 was added for Council Chromebooks in the City Clerk's budget to provide for more overlap during her retirement transition. The result was the budget presented at this public hearing. The final step would be a vote of the Council on June 20 and the adopted budget would begin July 1. The whole budget process lasts about six months, excluding the CIP process.

The budget can be found on the [City website](#) home page and finance page. The City Manager's memo at the beginning of the document highlights changes in the budget, some of which she discussed. She explained that balancing service levels, long-term investments, and fiscal responsibility is an ongoing challenge. A detailed explanation of the General Fund Operating Budget Factors and Fiscal Policy measures are included on pages 5–33 of the budget book. This proposed budget complies with the City Council's Fiscal Policies and is over \$400,00 below the City's Fiscal Policy limit. The City Manager said the FOP-recommended budget discussed at this meeting was expected to increase the City's portion of the tax rate by 7.25%; this follows three years of minimal increases to the municipal rate with 2.82% in 2023, no change in 2022, and a decrease in 2021.

The chart on page 9 of the budget book illustrates that the primary budget driver is the increased cost in wages. Wage adjustments are tied to contracted bargaining union agreements and non-union wage adjustments, which include a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). \$1.4 million of the \$2.2 million overall operational budget increase is related to wages. The remaining difference (\$787,000) is primarily the increased cost of human services, specifically the

\$400,000 increase in rental assistance. Leaving only relatively small operational adjustments throughout the budget.

The City Manager said that the rising costs associated with homelessness necessitated budget increases aimed at providing essential services, while also seeking long-term solutions through collaboration with community partners. The proposed budget allocated the additional \$400,000 to the Human Services rental line, an increase in the City's part-time outreach position from 12.5 to 28 hours per week, a partnership with Monadnock Family Services' Street Outreach Program at \$35,000, and a \$50,000 contribution to the Monadnock Interfaith Housing fund to support the creation of more housing opportunities in our community. These initiatives support strategies that go beyond managing the immediate needs of individuals and leverage partnerships with other community organizations to connect individuals with pathways to permanent housing and stability. The City participated in the State's InvestNH Per Unit Program and received \$150,000 related to the efficient process of permitting 15 affordable housing units (specifically the Marlboro Street project 15 units at \$10,000 per unit). The proposed budget invests these funds as an offset to \$100,000 of the increased rental costs and \$50,000 for the housing fund contribution.

Next, the City Manager explained that this year, the Greater Monadnock Collaborative requested a \$10,000 contribution to their Promoting the Region campaign. While the City Manager was unable to fund this as a part of her budget review, she was planning to use FY24 end-of-year marketing funds to make the contribution, as she stated at FOP. Next year, it will need to be added to the budget.

In accordance with Council goals related to capitalizing on funding opportunities as they arise and specifically federal funds as they become available, the City Manager had submitted several applications for the next round of congressionally directed funded projects: so far two of those requests had moved forward to the next step in the process, Congresswoman Kuster's Office, for Phase II of the Transportation Heritage Trail Project. Thanks to the support of Representative Kuster, the City received \$3,990,000 for Phase I of the project that was underway, with construction scheduled in 2025. Phase II will complete the work by repurposing three historically significant bridges. The City Manager had also submitted applications to Senator Shaheen's Office for the downtown stormwater resiliency program, which is a \$4.5 million project, and the City had requested 80% of the funds needed with a 20% municipal match. Page 35 of the budget book breaks down debt. At this time, the stormwater work was scheduled to be debt (Resolution R-2024-12 includes a portion of that debt just over \$1.6 million). If the City is successful at getting 80% funded through a congressionally funded request, it will reduce the amount the City needs to borrow as part of this budget and next year's budget. This will positively impact future operational budgets by reducing future debt payments. It is important for the City to aggressively pursue and advocate for grant funding whenever and wherever possible to help ease the burden on taxpayers as costs continue to escalate.

Going into next year's budget process, the City Manager said she was concerned about the City's shift in values from commercial to residential and what that could mean to residential taxpayers. In 2021, the City went through a City-wide property revaluation to bring its real estate assessments to market value. Real estate prices have continued to increase since that time,

particularly for residential properties. The assessment equalization ratio for the City had dropped this past year from 80.9% to 72.8% and the City Assessor believes the City could drop to the 60s this year. At this time, the median sale price in the City was 27.2% more than its assessed value. Concerning property taxes, since all properties are around the same level, fairness and equity remains in the assessments. However, the equalization ratio still has some effects. The overall value of utility property in the City, by state law, must be equalized by the ratio. While utility values are reviewed every year to account for changes—and the value may increase from the previous year—the equalization ratio of 72.8% will still need to be applied. When this is done, the result could be an overall loss in taxable value for utility property, shifting some tax burden to other property owners and affecting the overall tax rate for the year. This budget includes the second year of an estimated \$6 million reduction in utility values. Overall, the tax rate estimates are based on a conservative projection that includes a net increase in value of \$4 million; this is net of the above-mentioned decline in the City's utility value of \$6 million dollars.

The City Manager concluded, saying that this recommended budget considered the first year of the 2025–2031 CIP. The CIP goal is to provide for continued reinvestment in existing assets combined with strategic investments in new assets essential to the City's future success. One of those investments is the downtown infrastructure project. The City has submitted a RAISE grant application for the downtown infrastructure project, and the City Manager expected an answer at the end of June.

Councilor Powers, Chair of the FOP Committee, said that the number of services provided to the community are expensive. Prices were rising, but the City was still trying to provide the best services possible to everybody who lives, works, and travels through Keene. He said that the proposed budget that came from staff was a very good budget, within all the guidelines. While the costs were higher than last year, he was unsure the City was providing as many services at the same level as in the past because it has become so expensive. Still, a reasonable budget was the result, providing a path forward for the City. The FOP Committee met four times during this review period, and heard from each department that proposed the budget, as well as from outside agencies and community-funded events. Every attempt was made to fund those agencies and events in the best fashion. Councilor Powers said that the changes made by the FOP Committee were the result of collaboration amongst departments and the FOP Committee. He said the City was very fortunate to get a reduction in the cost of doing business in terms of electricity, which was spread across all funds. Councilor Powers explained that the proposed budget before the public at this meeting was \$93,000 less than what was first proposed to the FOP Committee by the City Manager. The Councilor called it a good budget that took a lot of work. He thanked the FOP Committee for its careful review and the staff who prepared the budget. He hoped the Council would support the budget as it was proposed at this meeting.

Mayor Kahn opened the floor to comments on the budget.

Chuck Redfern of 9 Colby Street first said that when he saw the rate increase, he did some research, and found that the costs were associated primarily with staffing and personnel matters. He investigated other communities and found that they were all dealing with the same thing: raising salaries substantially to fill vacant positions and to retain talent. He said Keene is

fortunate to have a very dedicated staff force and that budget adjustments kept the tax rate increase to 7.5%, compared to towns like Lebanon with a 9% increase. Second, Mr. Redfern talked about the sensitive matter of Human Services and the rising cost of housing the unhoused in hotels and motels. He asked if there would be a cap on that spending at some point. The City Manager explained that the Human Services Department is required by law to provide assistance to everyone who meets their requirements; the state of NH does not allow the City to cap how much it spends or how many people it assists. If someone comes to the office, fills out an application, and shows they are in need of assistance, then the City must provide the assistance, regardless of the amount and the budget. Third, Mr. Redfern noted that the tax rate for Fortune 500 multinational corporations kept dropping in NH, taking resources from local municipalities. He asked the City to—through the Municipal Association—write a letter addressing this concern of an unfunded mandate placed upon municipalities without state participation. Mayor Kahn said that the Municipal Association and a group of 12 mayors signed a letter to legislative leaders and the Senate like the one Mr. Redfern mentioned. Lastly, Mr. Redfern asked whether the utility assets the City Manager mentioned were phone poles and wires, etc.; do the utilities pay rent to the City for those, and if so, how much? The City Manager did not have the answer on the spot. Mr. Redfern said his point was that with upcoming major projects, like West Street, the City should work to ensure utilities are buried for aesthetic improvements across the City.

Next, three speakers from the Monadnock Interfaith Project (MIP) and others came forward to thank the City for its \$50,000 allocation to the Housing Development Fund:

Derek Scalia (of MIP) of 16 Hillside Avenue said that for the past three years, MIP members had attended countless City Council meetings, regional planning group meetings, Zoning Board meetings, and more. He was grateful that members of this Council—civil servants of the community—had all leaned deeply into this issue, and he thanked them for developing a good budget. He said that diversification of initiatives will address this housing crisis and the Council took bold steps along the way to alleviate suffering. He thought the City's investment was a bold commitment that would lead others to contribute. He called the budget a moral document that shows what Keene values: a good place to live and a good community where people can come, work, and thrive.

Becky Port (of MIP) of 42 Summit Ridge Drive, Chaplain at Covenant Living of Keene, added that there were many aspects of this budget—beyond the Housing Development Fund—that were dedicated to helping people. She shared a personal story of 36 years ago, when working in the mental health field, and her family had to leave their home and jobs without much due to a risk posed to her children because of her job. She lost her housing that had been a part of her employment, and without support from family members, she and her family would have been homeless. She encouraged the Council, reminding them that what they were doing with this fund would make a difference. The City's creative efforts, like accessory dwelling units, were not just about added housing, but helping people to find alternative housing that can make a difference in their lives.

Michael Hall (of MIP) of 9 Kennedy Drive, Minister of the Keene Unitarian Universalist Church, added that this \$50,000 investment will be good for the whole Monadnock Region. He

06/06/2024

thought this strategy was sort of unusual for a political setting, noting that this is a long-term challenge to increase the affordable housing for people of all economic strata and an integrated approach is needed. He encouraged other communities with the resources to contribute, which would help lead to a sustained housing initiative. He was very pleased with this partnership.

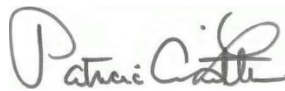
Cody Morrison, Executive Director of Monadnock Economic Development Corporation, added his thanks. He looks forward to working with the City and Council.

Mark Bodin, President of Savings Bank of Walpole, added that the Bank had been involved with this project since the beginning as a business partner. He assured the Council that the Bank would stay involved and contribute financially to the fund at a level greater than what was asked of the City. The Bank is also working with businesses that have been identified throughout Keene to ensure they also make an impact through substantial contributions.

Heidi Schweiger of Munsonville, the newly appointed Development Director at Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention (MCVP), and Nick Hirsch, Executive Director of MCVP, also thanked the Council. Mr. Hirsch explained that MCVP addressed four areas of violence: domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking (both sex trafficking and labor trafficking). He said a lot of people are surprised that MCVP deals with human trafficking a lot. He explained that he only uses his work phone when on call; at this time, he was not the first on call or backup on call, he was the “backup to the backup.” He had already received three calls in the four hours since he had been on call, meaning that the front line was busy, the backup was busy, and he received three calls. His staff work nonstop and MCVP is a homeless initiative as well, housing individuals who are fleeing violence—specifically women who have nowhere else to go—in an emergency shelter. MCVP is the only organization in the region that has a homeless shelter specifically to help women feel safe and be empowered to start their life anew. MCVP only has eight beds, and the three calls he had received this evening meant MCVP could not meet the need. Mr. Hirsch said the only way to meet the need is through partnerships like this. Ms. Schweiger looked forward to a deepened community relationship and civic engagement as well.

Hearing no further public comments, Mayor Kahn closed the public hearing at 8:08 PM, except for written public comments, which would be accepted until 1:00 PM Tuesday, June 11. Written comments must be signed and submitted to the City Clerk by that date and time to be included in the record. Mayor Kahn reminded the Council that their Rules of Order require that they submit a written communication containing any proposed amendments to the budget Resolution. The deadline for receiving Council communications to be placed on the next Council agenda would be 4:00 PM on Tuesday, June 18.

A true record, attest:



City Clerk

ELECTION – WARD ONE COUNCIL VACANCY

Mayor Kahn began by saying that the City Council was fortunate to have the opportunity to select the next Ward One Councilor from three Keene residents with such different backgrounds. The field of candidates for the Ward One Council vacancy included: Jacob Favolise, Michael F. Conway, and Bradford Hutchison. Ethan Frock and Derek Germana withdrew their declarations as candidates.

Mayor Kahn reviewed the election process. Each candidate would be given five minutes to address their candidacy, with the Clerk serving as the timekeeper. The Council would not be permitted to ask questions of the candidates during their remarks. Because there were three candidates, there would be a Primary roll call vote to narrow the field of candidates down to two. The two candidates receiving the highest number of those votes would be declared the finalists. The final vote would also be by roll call; when the Clerk called each Councilor's name, the Councilor would indicate their choice of candidate. If a Councilor wished to not vote for either of the two candidates, they would vote "NO." If no candidate received the required eight votes, a second round of voting would occur. If no candidate received eight votes in this second round of voting, an additional filing period would be set for candidates to file a notice of their intent to seek election to the Ward One Council seat. Mayor Kahn noted that if a tie vote were to occur, the language of Section 8 of the City Charter does *not* allow the Mayor to break the tie. The candidate receiving eight votes of the elected City Council would be declared the prevailing candidate and take the oath of office and be immediately seated.

The Mayor called forward each candidate for their five-minute remarks.

Jacob Favolise discussed his candidacy, adding to the statement he made at the May 2 meeting, when he outlined his background and experiences. He reiterated his interest in filling this Council seat. In the time since May 2, he was able to attend several Council and Committee meetings, as well as the Master Plan update think tanks. He had gained a good perspective on the community's priorities and what some of the big picture potential outcomes for the City of Keene are because of its master planning process. He thanked the Council for its consideration through the first round and into this round.

Michael Conway discussed his candidacy. He said that while he was likely a stranger to many Councilors, he was no stranger to hard work and to commitment. He enjoys a challenge, solving problems, finding a way, and specifically getting things done. He enjoyed a successful career doing exactly that on behalf of his company and clients, and he welcomed the opportunity to apply these traits to the benefit of his adopted community. Mr. Conway grew up the oldest of six kids in a family of very modest means, and the values that he carries today—frugality, curiosity, diligence, persistence, honesty, compassion, and responsibility—stem from the lessons that he learned at a very early age. Those lessons served him well and with them, he believed that he would serve well the City of Keene and the good citizens of Ward One. Mr. Conway explained that he was retired, but stayed active with various interests including cycling, CrossFit, hiking, and sometimes just walking around with Nelly, his beautiful Golden Retriever, retired service

dog, who knows all the downtown people and businesses. He said it did not take long for Keene to feel like home. He lives in the middle of downtown in a mixed-use building shared by businesses and residences; he was drafted to serve on the condo association board and had since been elected treasurer, though it was not a significant time commitment. He had also volunteered with Monadnock Habitat for Humanity over the past few years, starting in construction and transitioning into planning, permitting, and land searching because of his background. He was also the newest member of Habitat's board of directors, with a moderate times commitment. Thus, Mr. Conway said he had no employment, engagement commitments, or conflicts that would interfere with him discharging the duties of a Councilor. As Councilor, he would be committed to ensuring the Council would not regret electing him. He thanked the Council for its consideration.

Bradford Hutchison spoke about matters unrelated to his candidacy before withdrawing from consideration.

There being no need for a Primary vote, the City Clerk called role for the General vote: Mr. Favolise received 11 votes (Councilors Bosley, Tobin, Remy, Filiault, Jones, Madison, Roberts, Lake, Workman, Chadbourne, and Greenwald) and Mr. Conway received 3 votes (Councilors Williams, Haas, and Powers).

The City Attorney administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Favolise, who then took his seat on the City Council. Councilor Favolise was assigned to the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee. Councilor Madison was reassigned to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee.

RESIGNATION OF STEVE BIANCO FROM KEENE HOUSING

A communication was received from Steve Bianco, submitting his resignation from Keene Housing. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to accept the resignation with regret and appreciation was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

NOMINATION – KEENE HOUSING

Mayor Kahn nominated Amy Lehr to serve as a regular member of Keene Housing, with a term to expire December 31, 2026. The Mayor tabled the nomination until the next regular meeting.

COMMUNICATION – KIWANIS CLUB OF KEENE – REQUEST TO USE CITY PROPERTY – TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

A communication was received from Peg Bruce and the Kiwanis Club of Keene, requesting the annual license to conduct the Tree Lighting Ceremony on Central Square on November 29, 2024. Mayor Kahn referred the communication to the Planning, Licenses, & Development Committee.

COMMUNICATION – KEN KOST – IN SUPPORT OF THE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FUND – PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

A communication was received from Ken Kost, who could not attend tonight's public hearing on the proposed Operating Budget, submitted his written comments supporting the appropriation that would establish a Housing Development Fund. Mayor Kahn accepted the communication as informational.

COMMUNICATION – KEENE DOWNTOWN GROUP – REQUEST TO USE CITY PROPERTY – WIZARDING WEEK

A communication was received from Adam Berube and the Keene Downtown Group, requesting permission for the use of City Property and closure of a portion of Church Street on July 27, 2024, in association with the Wizarding Week festivities scheduled for the week of July 22-28, 2024. Mayor Kahn referred the communication to the Planning, Licenses, & Development Committee.

COMMUNICATION – ATTORNEY DANIEL S. RICH/PRETIFLAHERTY BELIVEAU & PACHOIS, PLLP – REQUESTING THAT THE CITY QUITCLAIM ANY INTEREST – FORMER RAILROAD EASEMENT – 120 EMERALD STREET

A communication was received from Attorney Daniel S. Rich, on behalf of 120 Emerald Street, LLC, is requesting that the City quitclaim any interest that it has in this in exchange for a sidewalk easement along the City's existing right-of-way at the corner of Emerald Street and Ralston Street. 120 Emerald Street, LLC currently owns the real property and improvements, commonly called the Arcadia Apartments, located at 120 Emerald Street. Upon reviewing the back title of their property, it was revealed that a former railroad easement shares a border with the main access to the apartment building. Mayor Kahn referred the communication to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee.

COMMUNICATION – ATTORNEY THOMAS R. HANNA/BCM ENVIRONMENTAL & LAND LAW, PLLC – DONATION OF LAND AT 0 ASHUELOT STREET – COMPENSATORY FLOOD STORAGE

A communication was received from Attorney Thomas Hanna, representing JRR Properties, LLC, noting that in July 2022, the City Council voted to accept the donation of 2.5 acres of a 3 acre parcel located at 0 Ashuelot Street, with the remaining acre donated to the Monadnock Conservancy as a location of their regional headquarters. The parcel proposed for development by the Conservancy is in the 100-year floodplain, requiring offsite compensatory flood storage. The only available location for the required compensatory storage is the 2.5-acre parcel gifted to the City. The petitioner requests conditional approval to locate the compensatory storage on a portion of the land that will be donated to the City. Mayor Kahn referred the communication to the Planning, Licenses, & Development Committee.

MSFI REPORT – CHARLES SMITH – REQUESTING AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL ABOUT TOURISM AND HOMELESSNESS

City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon, stated that Charles Smith was in communication with the City Clerk's office and asked to withdraw his letter, so no motion was needed. Mayor Kahn accepted the report as informational.

MSFI REPORT – ORAL UPDATE – EAST SIDE RESIDENTS – TRAFFIC CALMING ON EAST-SIDE KEENE STREETS

A Municipal Services, Facilities, & Infrastructure Committee report read, unanimously recommending accepting the east side Keene update as informational. Mayor Kahn accepted the report as informational.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

First, the City Manager announced Community Night on June 18 from 4:00 PM–7:00 PM at the Public Works Department complex on Marlboro Street. There will be equipment available from various departments (cruisers, firetrucks, large airport snow removal equipment) as well as an opportunity for a lot of staff interaction. This has been a very popular event for families in the past. Public Works will be serving burgers and hotdogs.

Next, the City Manager talked about NH State’s low to moderate income homeowners’ property tax relief. The City recently had social media posts reminding people of an upcoming deadline for the State program for property tax relief for moderate to low-income homeowners. The program deadline is June 30. Those who qualify can apply for a credit of a portion of the statewide education property tax. The Assessing Department has paper copies of the application for anyone who prefers not to apply online through the NH Department of Revenue website.

The City Manager also announced the City’s new Parks and Recreation Director, Carrah Fisk Hennessey, who will begin her new role on July 1. Ms. Hennessey has 20+ years of experience in the related fields of intercollegiate coaching and athletic administration, teaching in local schools as a certified elementary and special educator. Before this role, was employed by Keene State College in Athletics and Education as the Head Softball Coach and Student Athlete Committee Advisor. She has a master’s degree in education, Literacy, and Language Arts, and a Bachelor of Science in both Elementary and Special Education, and Sociology. She is a graduate of Keene High School and a long-time resident of the community. Ms. Hennessey has served on various boards for community organizations and is very invested in the community. The City Manager welcomed her.

The City Manager also announced the City’s new Public Works Director, Don Lussier, former City Engineer. Mr. Lussier, a seasoned professional with decades of experience in civil engineering, joined the City in 2016. Mr. Lussier holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, is a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of NH and holds FEMA Emergency Management Institute certifications. He served 10 years in the US Army and subsequently accumulated over two decades of experience in civil engineering. He has played a key role in the successful completion of numerous complex infrastructure projects (most recently the Winchester Street project) including streets, sidewalks, roundabouts, bridges, and grants management. All of this makes him uniquely qualified for this position. The City Manager said Mr. Lussier is well liked and respected in and outside of the City organization. She congratulated him.

Lastly, the City Manager shared good news that at a recent NH Tourism Summit, Taylor Caswell, Commissioner of the Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA) announced that he was giving the first ever BEA Collaborator of the Year award to the Greater Monadnock Collaborative.

Mayor Kahn added that the City had done well with appointments to commissions and committees of the City, with a remaining appointment to the Southwest Regional Planning Commission (one of three City appointments) and recommendations/referrals should be sent to the Clerk's office. Those interested must submit a statement of interest. The Heritage Commission, Historic District Commission, and Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board also needed new members.

WARRANT FOR UNLICENSED DOGS – CITY CLERK

A memorandum read from the City Clerk, Patty Little, recommending that the City Council issue a warrant for unlicensed dogs pursuant to NHRSA 466:14, and that the City Clerk's office and the Keene Police Department be directed to issue civil forfeitures to those dog owners who have failed to license their dog by April 30, 2024. Mayor Kahn referred the memorandum to the Planning, Licenses, & Development Committee.

The City Clerk, Patty Little, noted that this was the second year doing two versions of the warrant: one list of those who did not renew dog licenses, and a second list of new dog owners for whom the Clerk's office received proof of rabies vaccination. Both lists have been contacted alerting them of the need to license. There are 466 owners and 573 unlicensed dogs that need to be renewed, which is a typical number.

ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING – RELATING TO THE CITY OF KEENE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART – ORDINANCE O-2024-10

A memorandum read from the City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon, recommending that Ordinance O-2024-10 be referred to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee for review and a recommendation back to the full City Council. Mayor Kahn referred Ordinance O-2024-10 to the Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee.

ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING – RELATING TO CLASS ALLOCATIONS AND SALARY SCHEDULES – ORDINANCE O-2024-08

A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Ordinance O-2024-08. Mayor Kahn tabled Ordinance O-2024-08 until the June 20, 2024 regular meeting, after adoption of the Operating Budget Resolution.

IN APPRECIATION OF MICHAEL J. ABBOTT UPON HIS RETIREMENT – RESOLUTION R-2024-22

A memorandum read from the HR Director/Assistant City Manager, Elizabeth Fox, recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2024-22. A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt Resolution R-2024-22 in appreciation of Mr. Abbott's 31 years of service was duly seconded by

Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

IN APPRECIATION OF AARON F. COOPER UPON HIS RETIREMENT – RESOLUTION R-2024-23

A memorandum read from the HR Director/Assistant City Manager, Elizabeth Fox, recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2024-23. A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt Resolution R-2024-23 in appreciation of Mr. Cooper’s years of service was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

RELATING TO THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM – CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE – RESOLUTION R-2024-24

A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2024-24. A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt Resolution R-2024-23 was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

RELATING TO THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR THE FY 2024-2025 BOND ISSUES: CITY HALL STRUCTURAL REPAIRS – RESOLUTION R-2024-10; LOWER WINCHESTER STREET – RESOLUTION R-2024-11; STORMWATER RESILIENCY PROGRAM – RESOLUTION R-2024-12; LOWER WINCHESTER STREET SEWER UTILITIES – RESOLUTION R-2024-13; MARTELL COURT BYPASS – RESOLUTION R-2024-14; WWTP HVAC REPLACEMENT – RESOLUTION R-2024-15; WWTF SERVICE WATER SYSTEM UPGRADE – RESOLUTION R-2024-16; LOWER WINCHESTER ST WATER UTILITIES – RESOLUTION R-2024-17; WATER DISTRIBUTION IMPROVEMENTS – RESOLUTION R-2024-18

A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2024-10. A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2024-11. A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2024-12. A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2024-13. A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2024-14. A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2024-15. A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2024-16. A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2024-17. A Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2024-18. Mayor Kahn tabled Resolutions R-2024-10, R-2024-11, R-2024-12, R-2024-13, R-2024-14, R-2024-15, R-2024-16, R-2024-17, and R-2024-18 until the June 20, 2024 regular meeting, after adoption of the Operating Budget Resolution.

06/06/2024

RELATING TO THE 2024/2025 FISCAL YEAR OPERATING BUDGET – RESOLUTION R-2024-20-A

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of the fiscal operating budget Resolution R-2024-20-A, as amended. Mayor Kahn tabled Resolution R-2024-20-A until the June 20, 2024 regular meeting.

Mayor Kahn thanked the City Manager, Finance Director, and FOP Committee for all their work on the budget.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

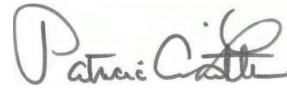
A motion by Councilor Greenwald to enter non-public session for advice from legal counsel under RSA 91-A:3, II (1) was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor. The non-public session began at 8:53 PM.

The non-public session ended at 9:07 PM. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to keep the minutes of the non-public session, non-public as disclosure would render the proposed action ineffective was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Kahn adjourned the meeting at 9:07 PM.

A true record, attest:



City Clerk