

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, February 6, 2025. The Honorable Mayor Jay V. Kahn called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Roll called: Kate M. Bosley, Laura E. Tobin, Randy L. Filiault, Robert C. Williams, Edward J. Haas, Philip M. Jones, Andrew M. Madison, Kris E. Roberts, Jacob R. Favolise, Bryan J. Lake, Catherine I. Workman, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Mitchell H. Greenwald, and Thomas F. Powers were present. Michael J. Remy arrived at 7:15 PM. Councilor Favolise led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES FROM PRECEDING MEETING

A motion by Councilor Greenwald to adopt the minutes of the January 16, 2025, meeting as presented was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Remy was absent during this vote.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Kahn introduced the new Executive Director of the Colonial Theater, Keith Marks, and congratulated him on his appointment.

Next, Mayor Kahn introduced Karen Liot Hill, the newly elected and seated Executive Councilor for NH District 2, which covers 81 cities/towns in the Capital District and western NH. Ms. Hill was a 20-year City Councilor and former Mayor in the Town of Lebanon, served four terms (2016–2024) as the Grafton County Treasurer. She has dedicated herself to public/community service in Lebanon and the Upper Valley Region, served on the board of the Local Government Center, served on the Municipal League of New Hampshire cities and towns, served WISE (supports victims of domestic and sexual violence), and was on the Lebanon Middle School Parent Teacher Organization, among others. Ms. Hill was named one of NH's Top 40 Under 40 in 2010 by the Union Leader, and was a Dartmouth Class of 2000 alumni, where she graduated with honors in government. Ms. Hill is the mother of two children who graduated from Lebanon public schools, and she works as a DJ and a church musician.

Ms. Hill said it was her honor to serve as Executive Councilor for District 2, to introduce herself, and share how she could be of assistance to the City. She appreciated the Mayor's gracious introduction. Having served as a City Councilor in Lebanon for 20 years, Ms. Hill said she felt a sense of kinship with the Keene Councilors she was speaking before. She said the Executive Council is called, "The most important office you've never heard of." It is unique to NH, serves as a check and balance on the Governor, and is like a big City Council for the entire State. The Executive Council of five members meets twice monthly with the Governor. For example, at its most recent meeting, there were 133 agenda items. She said the Executive Council focuses on four things: contracts, appointments, roads, and services. Ms. Hill said that the Executive Council votes on all contracts and State spending over \$10,000, appointments by the Governor, and roads. The Executive Council is also responsible for maintaining the State's infrastructure, roads, and bridges through the State's 10-year Highway Plan. Lastly, the Executive Council serves constituents who have questions or need connections in City government or State government.

Ms. Hill provided updates from the Executive Council's meeting on February 5, which was its second full meeting with Governor Ayotte. Ms. Hill was one of two new Executive Councilors at this time. She said that a few contracts of particular relevance to the City of Keene were approved: a grant to the Keene Chamber Orchestra for \$7,600 through the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and two Land and Water Conservation Fund grants—one to extend the time to complete work at Pat Russell Park and \$500,000 for work at Robin Hood Park. Additionally, Ms. Hill said the Governor had announced several important appointments. The Commissioner of the NH Board of Education, Frank Edelblut, would be up for reappointment in March 2025, but Ms. Hill said there was no sign from the Governor yet on her plans. The Governor had renominated three members of the NH Board of Education, including Chair Drew Cline. Ms. Hill noted that at this time, there was no State Librarian. Former Governor Sununu had nominated the Assistant Librarian, Mindy Atwood—who Ms. Hill called highly qualified—but Mr. Sununu withdrew that nomination before his term as Governor concluded. So, at this time, there was no active nomination for State Librarian and there was no indication of whether Governor Ayotte would nominate someone else soon. Ms. Hill welcomed the City Council's thoughts on nominations or feedback from Keene constituents. When ready, the Governor would announce nominations at an Executive Council meeting and then the vote to approve would ensue at the next meeting. Ms. Hill also mentioned that the State's 10-year Highway Plan would be kicking-off again with hearings later in 2025. Ms. Hill would be contacting the City Manager about it and other projects of particular interest to the City in western NH and the Monadnock Region.

Next, Ms. Hill discussed her role in providing constituent services. After every Executive Council meeting, she would send a report with the agenda items of relevance to District 2 to all City of Keene officials. Ms. Hill's contact information can be found on the Executive Council District 2 website at <https://www.council.nh.gov/district-2/councilor-liot-hill>, and Councilors could reach out to her for a separate email to receive a newsletter with pictures and information about all of the different events that she would attend. She was very eager to do a good job supporting the City of Keene, so she encouraged the City staff and Councilors to contact her if she could help them or their constituencies with anything big or small.

Lastly, Ms. Hill commented that these were challenging times. During the previous week, the nation heard about a potential pause in Federal grants, as well as tariffs. Additionally, we have heard about new guidelines from the US Department of Transportation (DOT) that would favor communities that have higher than national average birth and marriage rates. She said there were big changes happening and a lot of anxiety throughout the communities she was serving. While she did not know how much she would be able to do about any of it, she was trying to learn as much information as possible. At the February 5 Executive Council meeting, she asked the State Commissioners what they thought some of these Federal impacts would be. She said the common refrain was there is a lot of uncertainty. Ms. Hill said she was ready to be of service to the District and hoped anyone would reach out to her, especially to inform her if there are events in the community that they think she should attend to connect with people.

Mayor Kahn thought Ms. Hill's comments about the DOT piqued some interest in the room. The Mayor did not think the DOT's changes would fit NH's demographic's well. Ms. Hill agreed, stating that at this time, NH had some of the lowest birth and marriage rates in the country because the population skews older. So, with those DOT changes, NH could be significantly disadvantaged. Ms. Hill said the Executive Council will do its best to ensure people's needs are met.

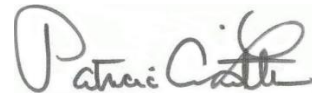
PUBLIC HEARING - INTERIOR SIDE AND REAR SETBACK REQUIREMENTS IN THE DOWNTOWN EDGE ZONE - ORDINANCE O-2024-24-A

Mayor Kahn called the public hearing to order at 7:16 PM and the City Clerk read the notice of hearing. The Mayor welcomed Senior Planner, Mari Brunner, for an introduction on behalf of the Community Development Department.

Ms. Brunner explained that this Ordinance was initially introduced to the City Council for first reading on November 21, 2024, when it was referred to the Joint Planning Board & Planning Licenses and Development (PLD) Committee for a public workshop on December 9, 2024. The petitioner, Jared Goodell, originally requested to remove the 20-foot minimum interior side setback requirement for parcels in the Downtown Edge Zoning District that directly abut parcels in the Downtown Transition District. Ms. Brunner said that both of these downtown districts are on the edge of downtown, so this request would impact a very limited number of parcels. At the public workshop, the Joint Committee discussed the request and, for the sake of consistency, voted to amend the Ordinance (creating the "A" version) to also address the rear setback component. So, Ms. Brunner said the resulting Ordinance O-2024-24-A would remove the 25-foot minimum rear setback requirement for parcels in the Downtown Edge District that directly abut the Downtown Transition District, in addition to the 20-foot minimum interior side setback. Ms. Brunner said that if the Council were to adopt Ordinance O-2024-24-A, four parcels in the Downtown Edge District that the Downtown Transition District abuts would have a 0-foot side setback. That would be consistent with the setbacks between the Downtown Edge and any other downtown district.

Mayor Kahn opened the floor to public comments. Hearing none, he closed the public hearing. Written comments will be accepted up until 1:00 PM on Tuesday, February 11, 2025.

A true record, attest:



City Clerk

NOMINATIONS - HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE, ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Mayor Kahn re-nominated the following individuals to the Human Rights Committee, all with terms to expire December 31, 2027: Debra Bowie, to change from an alternate to a regular member; David Morill, to change from an alternate to a regular member; and Mohammed Saleh, to change from a regular to an alternate member. Mayor Kahn also re-nominated Adam Burke to

the Zoning Board of Adjustment, to change from an alternate to a regular member, with a term to expire December 31, 2027. Mayor Kahn tabled the nominations until the next regular meeting.

CONFIRMATION - ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD

Mayor Kahn re-nominated Kelly Cook to the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board, to change from an alternate to a regular member, with a term to expire December 31, 2027. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to confirm the nomination was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

COMMUNICATION - MICHAEL REMY/KEENE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS - REQUEST TO USE CITY PROPERTY - TASTE OF KEENE FOOD FESTIVAL - JUNE 7, 2025

A communication was received from Michael Remy and the Keene Young Professionals Network, submitting their annual request for a license to conduct the Taste of Keene Food Festival on Saturday, June 7, 2025. Mayor Kahn referred the communication to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee.

COMMUNICATION - JON LOVELAND, PE - DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT - RAISE GRANT

A communication was received from Jon Loveland, PE, providing his observations relating to the City's eligibility to receive funding via the Federal RAISE Grant. Mayor Kahn accepted the communication as informational.

MSFI REPORT - REQUEST FOR NO PARKING ON EITHER SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE AT 312 MARLBORO STREET

A Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee report read, unanimously recommending that the request for no parking at 312 Marlboro St. be referred to staff for implementation as part of the Marlboro St. and Cheshire Rail Trail Project. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault. Councilor Greenwald deferred to Councilor Filiault to report on behalf of the Committee. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

MSFI REPORT - REQUEST FOR NO TRACTOR-TRAILER TRAFFIC SIGN - INTERSECTION OF WATER AND WOODLAND STREETS

A Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee report read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be directed to install a sign alerting drivers to the existing truck route Ordinance (i.e. "No Thru Trucks"). A motion by Councilor Greenwald to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault. Councilor Greenwald deferred to Councilor Filiault to report on behalf of the Committee.

Councilor Haas thanked the City engineering staff for being considerate to where the sign would be placed, noting that after they staked it out in one place, they moved it to a more visible location. Overall, the Councilor said the idea of thru trucks into neighborhoods was difficult because destination single-destination deliveries were permitted under NH law. So, he said the

City would have to find other ways to deal with this happening around the City. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

MSFI REPORT - REDUCTION OF SPEED LIMIT - UPPER ROXBURY STREET

A Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee report read, unanimously recommending accepting the report as informational. Mayor Kahn filed the report as informational.

MSFI REPORT - PROPOSAL TO ALLOW OVERLAY OF ASPHALT SIDEWALKS

A Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee report read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be authorized to develop and implement a program to overlay existing asphalt sidewalks that are in fair or poor condition using City forces. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault. Councilor Greenwald deferred to Councilor Filiault to report on behalf of the Committee.

Mayor Kahn said this would certainly move things along quicker, but not quickly enough for some.

Councilor Haas thought the proposal from the Public Works Department was to acquire a machine to help facilitate the repair of the asphalt sidewalks, which he supported, and he looked forward to seeing what they could find for used equipment. The Councilor thought it was good to get back to basics with stop signs, truck signs, and sidewalks. He said there was funding in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to address sidewalks and he wanted to ensure that money would be spent on concrete sidewalks in the future for neighborhood character. He said that while asphalt sidewalks serve the purpose, they end up being parking spaces that cars tear up, so they are even less long-lived. Councilor Haas was unsure how to accomplish those concrete sidewalks without costing a lot of money, noting that they are incredibly more expensive than asphalt. Still, he said he looked forward to spending the money out of the CIP and getting the concrete sidewalks when possible.

Councilor Williams thanked City staff for finding an in-house solution that would save a significant amount of money. He understood that they would not be as good as concrete sidewalks, but Councilor Williams said the most important quality of a sidewalk is that it can be used. He said getting a concrete sidewalk 20 years from now does not do as much as having a repaired sidewalk now and urged getting the sidewalks fixed now. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT - DONATION - BRIAN A. MATTSO RECREATION CENTER - ADA RAMP

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept the donation of \$10,000.00 from Savings Bank of Walpole and that the money be used for the construction of an ADA ramp at the Recreation Center. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee

report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. Mayor Kahn thanked the Savings Bank of Walpole for the generous gift. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT - EXECUTED GEORGE STREET BRIDGE FINAL DESIGN CHANGE ORDER

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be authorized to execute a change order with McFarland-Johnson and DOT in the amount of \$52,931.81 as part of the additional scope of work required for the George St. Bridge Project (75M020A). A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy.

Councilor Madison asked about the specific constituents of concern at this site. The Public Works Director, Don Lussier, replied that the constituents of concern were chlorinated solvents (dry-cleaning chemicals) and confirmed that those were from the dry-cleaning business. So, Councilor Madison asked if the business would be responsible for the costs. Mr. Lussier said the clean-up cost was not under discussion in this report. He said that this report and vote was about evaluating the contamination plume and determining the extent of it. Specifically, the potentially responsible party had delineated the plume on the west side of Beaver Brook and the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) was concerned with whether it could spread to the east side. So, DES requested the additional delineation of the plume and that was why the additional cost was requested.

With the rainy season coming, Councilor Haas asked when this project would move forward, noting that this is a difficult flood-exposure location. Mr. Lussier replied that the project was scheduled for advertising in late spring/early summer 2025. He said the design was well advanced, but questions remain to be resolved on the limits of the contamination in addition to some easement issues to be resolved. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT - 2024 FEMA SAFER GRANT

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to apply for, accept, and expend the 2024 FEMA SAFER Grant and, if successful, maintain this staffing level. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy.

Councilor Bosley began by stating that she would clearly support applying for this grant. Having reviewed the Finance, Organization, & Personnel presentations from Fire Chief Martin and Deputy Chief Seymour, Councilor Bosley said it was overwhelming to think about the strain and the stress on members of the Fire Department. She wanted to ask a question that had not been asked. Councilor Bosley pointed out that a significant amount of additional revenue had been coming into the Fire Department from increased billable services, and a lot of trips were going to nursing homes, which was revenue that the City could collect. Councilor Bosley asked if the City

Manager could return to the Council to answer whether any of that revenue could be earmarked for positions—as a stopgap measure—while waiting for the grant? She thought it would be a great place to start. She also pointed out that one of the City Council’s most recently adopted goals was to have all City departments fully staffed; many had open positions. . To her, fully staffed means adding positions if the workload deems appropriate. So, she supported the Fire Department, and everything that was needed to make this move forward.

Councilor Filiault said he was one of two Councilors who were certified firefighters—Councilor Powers and himself (he later corrected himself and apologized to include Councilor Madison who is also a certified firefighter. Councilor Filiault said he appreciated Councilor Bosley’s comments, because Councilor Filiault served as a call firefighter in the early 2000s and it was busy then. He said it is one thing to go into a burning building fully staffed, and he recalled times doing so not fully staffed. He explained that it was one thing to read about it on paper, but quite another thing to experience it, crawling through the burning building when you hear somebody trapped inside, stating that firefighters do not have reckless abandon. Councilor Filiault not only agreed that the City should absolutely go for this great grant but said the City should also be ready in case the grant does not go through. He said the City needed to be ready to add firefighters immediately and he asked how to budget it. Councilor Filiault reiterated that the City had to be looking beyond this grant and could not get caught like this again—significantly understaffed in the Police and Fire Departments, which did not show on paper because the positions were budgeted for. So, beyond wholeheartedly supporting this grant, Councilor Filiault wanted to determine how to finance significantly more firefighters to at least meet the minimum national recommended levels.

Mayor Kahn asked for comments from the City Manager about the use of current and future revenue sources. The City Manager, Elizabeth Ferland, stated that City staff were looking at revenue trends and that she checked while Councilor Filiault was speaking, and the City’s current numbers were very near those budgeted. The City Manager explained that annually, staff anticipate changes in billing and creates a realistic estimate for contracts. She said that what had been primarily driving up calls for service was the need for skilled nursing facilities/nursing homes. With the closure of Diluzio Ambulance, Keene had to pick up those calls, which the City Manager said was a good thing because those facilities typically have some sort of insurance that the City can collect on. Between this meeting and September 2025—when the City anticipated hearing the results of the grant application—City staff would analyze the calls it has been receiving from the nursing facilities vs. the revenue The City Manager went on to explain that at this time, the City of Keene Fire Department has five contract towns and firefighters are split between fire and ambulance services based on activity in the Department. The City Manager will report back to the City Council with the analysis in September. She said staff will also review whether the Department is billing aggressively enough and whether any funds can be regained for these positions. With private ambulance companies closing, she did not expect to fully offset the expense of onboarding these firefighters but felt comfortable that she could offset some. The City Manager also clarified that this application would cover four firefighters per shift, so 16 in total. The Department has 24-hour shifts, and this is a four-year grant, which would fully fund these positions if successful. The City Manager said that before that fourth year, the City would

need a good understanding of revenue and a plan for these expenses if they become fully the City's responsibility.

Mayor Kahn thought this was an opportunity to address NH Executive Councilor Karen Hill in the audience and tell her that the NH Department of Insurance analyzed the charges allowable under Medicaid and private insurers for ambulance chargebacks. The Mayor said that if that would be acted upon, it would be a good step to allow the municipal departments to begin to recover more of the actual cost. He agreed with Councilor Filiault about following up on the revenue question regardless of this grant.

Councilor Jones was proud the City was applying for this grant. As a part of the application process, he thought the Fire Department personnel could use an algorithm that considers demographics (e.g., City age, industry, hazmat potential, hospital location, etc.). He said the rating report from ISO, could be of benefit in the application process.

Councilor Madison agreed with Councilor Filiault that if the City did not get the grant, it would still need to find the money to hire four firefighters. He commented on the challenging climate working as a State first responder, having personally responded to a hazmat oil spill the weekend before this meeting while on call. He noted how exhausted firefighters are who are do that every day. So, Councilor Madison said those four new firefighters were needed to help support those already on the job. If this grant was not successful, the City would need to find the money elsewhere because he said the first job of the Council is to oversee the health, welfare, and safety of the citizens of the City. He thought there would be no better way to do so than hiring more firefighters.

Councilor Remy said he heard many good points. If anyone was still on the fence, he told the convincing factor for him was considering the distant location of the professional firefighting organizations around Keene. He called Keene an island and said only maybe a volunteer would come to town if Keene did not have appropriate staffing. That was what convinced Councilor Remy to support this grant.

Councilor Tobin said she appreciated the presentation and said that a lot of the videos were terrifying to watch. From her perspective as a person who had needed an ambulance, she said she felt more appreciative and overwhelmed by the compassion that she had received from every firefighter who had ever shown up when she needed to call. So, Councilor Tobin was excited to hear so much support from her fellow Councilors.

Councilor Favolise thought Councilor Madison alluded to the fact that the choice was not really between the current level of staffing at the Fire Department and additional staffing at the Fire Department. Councilor Favolise stated that the Fire Department would lose firefighters if the City did not find a way to increase staffing there, with or without the grant. He thought that was really important and what the Council had heard from Fire Chief Martin and his team in terms of stress on firefighters that were there and the potential for increased burnout. Councilor Favolise said the City would lose people who want to go into this profession in the City of Keene, which he stated would have a real significant impact on the daily lives of residents here. He did not imagine any Councilors were on the fence, but if they still were, then Councilor Favolise said

this was not a status quo (or more is more) situation, it would perhaps be significantly less over the next few years.

Councilor Jones cited a presentation from the City's Emergency Management Administrator, Kürt Blomquist, on Hazard Mitigation. was related to this grant. He asked all Councilors to look at the video of that presentation, which he called a scary look at things that could be happening in Keene down the road.

Mayor Kahn said he was glad the public was getting to hear the Council's support for this addition to the Fire Department and he was glad the City was pursuing this funding source to launch it. He thanked the significant group of firefighters who were present at the meeting this evening for their service, expertise, and professionalism. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

The City Manager began by thanking the Council for supporting the FEMA SAFER grant. The Fire Department has been dealing with a significant increase in calls that has impacted the firefighters' lives. The City has hired a grant writer, who has been successful at receiving this grant in the past. She continued the City Manager said the Fire Chief and Deputy Chief have done a great job putting together the statistics to back it up. So, the City Manager was optimistic.

Next, the City Manager said it was time to bid again for the City's Community Power Plan. The existing contract goes through December 2025. In preparation, staff needed to revise the Plan and would bring those revisions to the Council's Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee on February 13.

The City Manager also updated the Council on the downtown project funding. During the week of February 3, City staff submitted the application for the BUILD Grant (previously the RAISE Grant). It is a very competitive application process, but she said the City's application was strong. It could provide up to \$13.7 million in Federal dollars if successful. However, because it is such a competitive application process, staff are also planning to submit for a portion of the project to be funded as a part of the Congressionally-directed spending request due at the end of February. This annual allocation of funds is for Federal discretionary programs. Staff intended to apply for just over \$3 million of the Congressional funds for surface treatments throughout the downtown including pavement, curbing, bike lanes, and sidewalks.

The City was recently awarded a Northern Border Regional Commission 2025 Timber for Transit Program grant for just over \$1.7 million to build a covered Structure on Gilbo Avenue, which would provide solar power for the downtown project. This would cover a large portion of the \$2.1 million Covered-Structure project (the City match is 20%). The City Manager acknowledged the Public Works Director, Don Lussier, and City Engineer, Bryan Ruoff, for their hard work on tight timelines for both grant efforts to get as much money for the downtown project as possible. The City Manager said the City had previously been awarded a Drinking Water State Revolving loan principal forgiveness for approximately \$2 million for the downtown project, and a Clean Water State Revolving loan principal forgiveness of \$137,000.

Additionally, the City Manager reported that the City began advertising for the downtown project Ombudsman position. This person would serve as a liaison between residents, property owners, business owners, City departments, and the construction team for the project. Recommendations for a candidate can be forwarded to the City and given the construction timeline, the City hoped to get someone onboard early to assist with downtown business communications.

The Mayor had asked the City Manager to update the Council on Human Services and homelessness trends in the City, and she did not think anyone would be surprised by the statistics:

- Rising Rental Costs & Housing Instability (largest increased cost to the City):
 - Rent increases of 33–45% has priced many residents out of the market.
 - Vacancy rate was 0.6%, leaving few affordable housing options.
 - Increased reliance on monthly assistance as clients struggled to cover rent.
- Homelessness & Shelter Capacity:
 - Shelters remained at full capacity, with limited movement into permanent housing.
 - Hundred Nights was operating a 24/7 Resource Center but had a waitlist for beds.
 - Southwestern Community Services (SCS) shelters were making efforts to transition individuals into housing.
 - Only 46%–47% of shelter residents are identified as Keene residents.
 - Out-of-town residents fluctuated between 38%–43% and out-of-state between 11%–13%
 - More than half of the people being served by shelters in Keene are not from Keene, which will continue as the 211 System places homeless individuals anywhere an open bed exists. This is a disincentive for building more shelter capacity locally.
- Hotel/Motel Housing Costs & Capacity Issues (the City uses them when needed):
 - Lower-cost motels were experiencing staffing shortages, reducing available rooms.
 - The City's FY-2024 total hotel cost: \$605,272.40, compared to \$159,000 to date in 2025 and was projected to be \$397,000 (a trend the City Manager said was in the right direction thanks in large part to the staff in Human Services, the additional part-time Outreach/Case Management position, and the Hundred Nights Resource Center).
 - For this Fiscal Year, both hotels and rental assistance were projected to be just over \$800,000 if trends hold.
- Homelessness Applications:

- So far in 2025, the City had received 212 applications and is projected to receive 325 by the end of the fiscal year, as compared to 279 in 2024, which the City Manager called a significant increase.
- Successes & Developments:
 - Cost-Saving Measures & Outreach Efforts:
 - Reduced motel occupancy to manage costs.
 - The Outreach Worker program was proving effective, helping move people from motels to permanent housing and assisting with housing applications.
 - Community Kitchen partnership was delivering food to those unable to drive, saving the City some expenses.
 - Hundred Nights Resource Center Impact:
 - Operating 24/7 for those needing a warm space.
 - This initiative has reduced hotel costs for single individuals needing assistance.
 - Continued Efforts by SCS Shelters:
 - SCS was making strong efforts to house homeless individuals coming through Human Services.
- Next Steps & Considerations:
 - Continued monitoring of shelter and rental market conditions.
 - Continue monitoring the percentage of Keene residents vs. those from other communities.
 - Ongoing support for outreach and case management efforts, which were proving cost-effective and beneficial.
 - Continued push for State reform.
 - The City was successful with SB 110, which helped to recover expenses the City incurs from outside of the community. This year, the City would seek to address how to calculate a fair amount for rental costs, so the City hoped to put forward another Bill with Senator Fenton.

Next, the City Manager updated the Council on the City's Winter Weather Parking Bans. She said the Public Works Director had reported that compliance was improving with the new system and only approximately five cars were towed in the previous storm. However, there were still some problems and people who were parking for the \$20 ticket because they prefer not to move their cars; it was the same people repeatedly, so soon they would be towed, and the City Manager hoped that would resolve the issue. The City Manager still has some concerns, in front of Lindy's Diner, for example. She also said that staff were working to place permanent signs in the municipal parking lots to help explain which ones are available overnight.

The City Manager introduced the new Finance Director, Kari Chamberlain, who brought a wealth of expertise in financial planning, budget analysis, and healthcare finance. Her deep experience in managing complex financial projects at Cheshire Medical Center, coupled with her strong analytical skills, will be invaluable to the City's financial management. Ms. Chamberlain's master's in healthcare administration and a bachelor's in business management and accounting, as well as her long track record in financial operations, will make her a great addition to the team. The City Manager also introduced the new Community Development Director, Paul Andrus, who has brought extensive experience in community development, economic planning, and housing policy. As the former Community Development Director for Los Alamos County, New Mexico, he has successfully led multi-million-dollar initiatives, spearheaded affordable housing projects, and streamlined development processes; that excited the City Manager. His leadership in urban planning and regional economic growth will be instrumental in shaping the City's future.

Lastly, the City Manager shared that the City Council received a Certificate of Appreciation from Let It Shine for the City's support of the Pumpkin Festival.

Mayor Kahn congratulated the Public Works Director, Mr. Lussier, and thanked him for enlisting the Mayor to request letters from elected officials for the RAISE grant. Mayor Kahn pointed out to Executive Councilor Karen Hill, who was in the audience, that the entire Congressional Delegation signed letters of support. Governor Ayotte also delivered a letter of support on time, which the Mayor appreciated.

The Mayor also thanked Hundred Nights for opening the Resource Center that had made a difference and impact on the City's Human Services spending. He explained to Executive Councilor Hill that at this time, municipalities the welfare cost responsibility, and the State was participating in sheltered homeless reimbursement rates; that is what he said the City's legislation has turned into. He said the City's original proposal was trying to seek funding for the unsheltered homeless population that Hundred Nights was now taking on without the added benefit of reimbursement.

Councilor Filiault asked, of the number of homeless individuals who came to the City for help in the past year, how many are Keene residents. Second, he knew that the City billed other towns whose homeless residents' were being housed in Keene, and he asked if the City had problems with any towns not paying. The City Manager said they were great questions. Anyone receiving funding at the City of Keene Human Services office is a Keene resident. If they are not, those services are billed to the community from which the individual originates. She said the City is having success with billing most towns, but there had been pushback from a few towns. The City has created a partnership with SCS, which was also struggling to get financial contributions from some of the communities that are sending them clients. For example, she said Manchester is a big community with a lot of shelters, but she said it felt like it was doing its share and has not been excited about participating. She also mentioned another small town that denied (sending payment when the City was assisting a client from that town, which led the City to find a way to close a loophole. However, she said that some communities have appreciated it when the City reached out to them because they do not have a place to put those individuals in their own

communities and want to do their part. The City Manager said the City staff would continue finding ways to fix the loopholes. To Councilor Filiault's first question, the City Manager said that 46% of the homeless individuals are Keene residents.

Councilor Roberts recalled the City Manager stating that approximately 11% of the homeless individuals are from out-of-state. He asked if there is any way to get reimbursement from an out-of-state community. The City Manager said that when a homeless individual comes to the City from out-of-state, the City reaches out to that community and the results have been mixed. The legislation is only for New Hampshire communities, but the City still tries.

Councilor Favolise recalled the City Manager mentioning some progress being made on compliance with the Winter Parking Ban. The Councilor wondered if the City Manager or Public Works Director had an update to share on whether there would be a Parking Ban overnight the night of this meeting. The City Manager said yes, there would be a Parking Ban in effect from 1:00 AM–6:00 AM.

RESIGNATION - STEVE TARBOX - ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT; MICHAEL WINOGRAD - ENERGY & CLIMATE COMMITTEE; JANELLE SARTORIO - BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE; RUZZEL ZULLO - ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD; & DEBORAH LEBLANC - CONSERVATION COMMISSION

A memorandum was received from Planner, Evan Clements, recommending that the Council accept Steven Tarbox's resignation from the Zoning Board of Adjustment. A memorandum was received from Planner, Megan Fortson, recommending that the Council accept Michael Winograd's resignation from the Energy & Climate Committee. A memorandum was received from GIS Coordinator, Will Schoefmann, recommending that the Council accept Janelle Sartorio's resignation from the Bicycle & Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee. A memorandum was received from Parks & Recreation Director, Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, recommending that the Council accept Ruzzel Zullo's resignation from the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board. A memorandum was received from Senior Planner, Mari Brunner, recommending that the Council accept Deborah LeBlanc's resignation from the Conservation Commission. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to accept the resignations with thanks for their service was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

MORE TIME - PROPOSAL TO IMPLEMENT A "PROTECTION OF STREETS" PROGRAM - PUBLIC WORKS; & RELATING TO MASTER BOXES ORDINANCE O-2025-03

Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee reports read, unanimously recommending placing the items on more time. Mayor Kahn granted more time.

ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING - RELATING TO FLOODPLAIN APPEALS AND VARIANCE PROCESS - ORDINANCE O-2025-05

A memorandum read from Flood Plain Administrator, Michael Hagan, recommending that Ordinance O-2025-05 be referred to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee for

their review and recommendation. Mayor Kahn referred Ordinance O-2025-05 to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee.

ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING - RELATING TO INSTALLATION OF A STOP SIGN ON GILSUM STREET - ORDINANCE O-2025-06

A Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee report read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be directed to draft an Ordinance adding a stop sign at the intersection of Gilsum St. and Washington St. Mayor Kahn referred Ordinance O-2025-06 to the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee.

ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING - RELATING TO INSTALLATION OF A STOP SIGN ON JENNISON STREET ORDINANCE O-2025-04

A Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Ordinance O-2025-04. Mayor Kahn filed the memorandum. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to adopt Ordinance O-2025-04 was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault. Councilor Greenwald deferred to Councilor Filiault to report on behalf of the Committee. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and vote in favor.

ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING - RELATING TO DESIGNATED LOADING ZONES AND BUS LOADING ZONES ORDINANCE O-2024-16-A

A Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee report read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Ordinance O-2024-16-A. Mayor Kahn filed the memorandum. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to adopt Ordinance O-2024-16-A was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault. Councilor Greenwald deferred to Councilor Filiault to report on behalf of the Committee.

Councilor Greenwald stated that sometimes, a request comes in and it is unclear why or in this situation, the requestor is no longer in the community. He noted that while there is a lot of activity at this location in front of Central Square Terrace, it is not just the Friendly Bus using that zone. He said the Committee also talked about the disabled individuals who need the zone because they cannot walk from the parking lot across the street, the businesses that use the zone for deliveries and mail, and the Fire Department may use it. He did not think it would work for the Friendly Bus to have it for their sole use. Councilor Greenwald said that with all of the people in-and-out, it would not make sense for the Police to monitor the space. So, while the situation might have been somewhat inconvenient, the Councilor did not think it was a problem. He compared it to the West Street loading/bus zone that he said was working conveniently for people with no problems; he said it was similar on Gilbo Avenue, where the rationale was to change it for the Trailways Bus use every other day. He added that Gilbo Avenue would be a part of the downtown redesign. So, Councilor Greenwald urged the Council to leave these loading zones alone and defeat this Ordinance.

The City Manager, Elizabeth Ferland, stated that usually she and Councilor Greenwald agreed, but on this topic they do not. The City Manager stated that there is a problem in front of Central

Square Terrace on Roxbury Street when the Friendly Bus tries to pull in because cars are parked there. That poses challenges for those using the bus who are handicapped or have mobility challenges. The City Manager said that this Ordinance proposed taking 50 feet of the 99 feet in front of Central Square Terrace for the bus loading zone, which is where it has been for a long time, but it was not put back that way during the Roxbury Street project. Doing so would leave approximately two car spaces at that location, which seemed like a good compromise to the City Manager. On Gilbo Avenue, she said the same compromise was recommended, where staff proposed preserving 50 feet of the 95-foot-long area for a bus loading zone, leaving parking space for two regular cars or a small truck. The City Manager said it was true that the petitioner who initiated this regarding Central Square Terrace because of their mobility challenges with the Friendly Bus was no longer in the community. However, she said there still many people in the community with mobility issues, and this Ordinance would help to provide the space needed for the bus to pick them up. So, she recommended that the Council approve this Ordinance.

Councilor Bosley said she had recently sent Councilor Greenwald a photo of a car parked in front of Central Square Terrace. Councilor Bosley's concern was ensuring that caregivers who work independently with clients and need to get them in and out of the building would be able to use that space, so they do not have to walk from parking lots. She said that if the entire space were reserved for buses, it would create problems for the other services for those who live in Central Square Terrace. Councilor Bosley thought that a commitment to reserving two parking spaces for that purpose would be sufficient.

Councilor Workman said that Councilor Bosley's concerns were addressed at the MSFI meeting as well. Councilor Workman's understanding from the Committee level was that Keene Housing has asked and advised their residents to use the back parking lot for drop off and pick up, and their caregivers should use that driveway to load those tenants and there is a designated spot there. While Councilor Workman understood the Council and City Manager would not have a lot of weight in this, the Councilor's hope was that the City Manager could call Keene Housing and the local caregiving agencies to inform them and their staff of the changes, so everyone would be on the same page.

Councilor Williams was glad this was being addressed. He noted that the original request was for a curb cut because there used to be a pedestrian crossing that was removed with some of the redevelopment, which he thought was a mistake. Councilor Williams still wanted there to be a curb cut at that location in the event that this Ordinance does not pass, or if it did pass and did not solve the problem.

A motion by Councilor Haas to amend the Committee report to delete the Gilbo Avenue bus stop was duly seconded by Councilor Greenwald.

The Mayor questioned if it would be better to have a motion to separate the issue of Gilbo Avenue. The City Attorney, Tom Mullins, pointed out that there was already a motion to amend on the floor. The City Attorney explained that the initial proposal was to only do this on Roxbury Street, but he had raised the concern as to whether it should be enforced consistently and whether

it would set up ambiguity within the City that was unfair to the Police Department and public. So, that was why the other locations were included at this point.

Councilor Filiault said that sometimes the simplest things get convoluted, like this was becoming with trying to stack motions to amend an Ordinance.

A motion by Councilor Filiault to refer Ordinance O-2024-16-A back to the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee was duly seconded by Councilor Haas.

Councilor Favolise said this Ordinance had gone through two rounds in Committee already. He said the current language around the split on Gilbo Avenue resulted from the first conversation at Committee, where Councilor Greenwald expressed concerns about taking that whole space for the bus. City staff went out, did a measurement, and came back with a compromise that the Committee was happy with. Councilor Favolise did not see a lot of benefit in sending this back to Committee. He was not sure what the Committee would discuss that it had not already discussed. He understood that it could sometimes be messy to amend the things that seem simple on the Council floor, but said it could be messy now and be done with, or it could go back to Committee and have some of these same conversations when it comes back to Council a month from now. So, he urged a no vote on this motion to refer.

Councilor Chadbourne clarified to Councilor Williams that the curb cut was moved, not removed, which Councilor Chadbourne thought was significant.

Councilor Madison called the question.

The motion to refer to the MSFI Committee failed on a vote of 5–10. Councilors Filiault, Haas, Jones, Powers, and Greenwald voted in the minority.

Councilor Filiault raised a point of order that if the amendment on the floor carried, the Ordinance would become a “B” version. The City Attorney agreed, and the Mayor asked what that would require. The City Attorney said that because this would be a substantive change to the Ordinance (vs. a Scrivener’s error, for example), it would become the “B” version as a final act upon amendment and no further actions would be required.

On a vote of 4–11, the motion to amend the Committee report to delete the Gilbo Avenue bus stop failed. Councilors Haas, Jones, Powers, and Greenwald voted in the minority.

Discussion continued on Ordinance O-2024-16-A.

Councilor Tobin said she shared Councilor Bosley’s concerns about vehicles. Councilor Tobin checked the language and found that NH RSA 239-B:1-a stated, “In this chapter, ‘community transportation’ means services that address all transit needs of a community, including general and special populations, such as persons with disabilities and seniors.” So, her understanding was that would be included. Mayor Kahn asked if that was a permitted use in the transportation pickup zone. The City Manager said that she could not say for sure, stating that it sounded like a legal interpretation. However, the City Manager thought that Councilor Bosley was comfortable with there still being two spaces available for that type of use, and there would be per this Ordinance. Councilor Bosley stated that Keene’s Ordinance read: “It shall be a violation for any

vehicle other than an emergency vehicle as defined in NH RSA 259:28 or community transportation vehicle as defined in NH RSA 239-B:1-a.” So, it appeared to Councilor Bosley that a vehicle assisting a senior would be legally allowed to use a bus zone.

Councilor Jones asked if the Ordinance was still the “A” version and the Mayor said yes.

Councilor Madison called the question.

On a roll call vote of 13–2, the motion to adopt O-2024-16-A carried. Councilors Powers and Greenwald voted in opposition.

RESOLUTION - RELATING TO THE OFFICE OF CITY TREASURER - RESOLUTION R-2025-03

A memorandum read from the HR Director/ACM, Elizabeth Fox, recommending that the City Council adopt Resolution R-2025-03. Mayor Kahn filed the memorandum. A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt Resolution R-2025-03 was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

RESOLUTION - RELATING TO APPROPRIATIONS FOR ADA RAMP AT RECREATION CENTER - RESOLUTION R-2025-04

A memorandum was received from the Deputy City Manager, Andy Bohannon, recommending that Resolution R-2025-04 be referred to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee for their review and recommendation. Mayor Kahn referred Resolution R-2025-04 to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee.

RESOLUTION - RELATING TO APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS - SEWER MAIN LINING - RESOLUTION R-2025-05

A memorandum was received from the City Engineer, Bryan Ruoff, recommending that Resolution R-2025-05 referred to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee for consideration and recommendation back to City Council. Mayor Kahn referred Resolution R-2025-05 to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee.

RESOLUTION - RELATING TO APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS - SEWER MANHOLE LINING - RESOLUTION R-2025-06

A memorandum read from the City Engineer, Bryan Ruoff, recommending that Resolution R-2025-06 referred to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee for consideration and recommendation back to City Council. Mayor Kahn referred Resolution R-2025-06 to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee.

TABLED ITEM - RULES OF ORDER AMENDMENT - SECTION 26. “REVIEW OF ITEMS OF BUSINESS”

A motion by Councilor Bosley to remove from the table the Rules of Order Amendment for Section 26, “Review of Items of Business,” was duly seconded by Councilor Jones.

Councilor Bosley recalled that the language initially submitted to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee referred to an amendment to the Rule that would define how non-germane (to the City or State of NH) communications—or those over which the Council lacks the authority to act—submitted to the Council are handled. When the Committee reviewed the original language submitted, a split membership of the Committee asked the City Attorney to draft additional language that was presented to the Council and then reviewed by the PLD Committee. When the request was presented to the Council, Councilor Bosley said the Council discussed whether to go in the direction of Councilor Williams’ amendment, and there was an amendment by Councilor Remy to revert to the original Rule language that was presented to the PLD Committee. Councilor Bosley reminded the Council that they would be discussing Councilor Remy’s amendment again at this meeting, and if it passed, the Council would vote on whether to adopt the original language submitted to PLD. If that amendment did not pass, the Council would vote on the original motion out of PLD to request that the City Attorney draft additional revised language for this Rule. If that vote failed, the Council would remain working with the Rule that it had been for the prior several years. Councilor Bosley thought the Council needed to get through the Rules of Order Workshop (01/28/2025) to have a better understanding of the different motions, the process for making motions, and how to bring attention back to things that individual Councilors think are important (and are being accepted as informational or acted on by consensus). She hoped everyone felt more comfortable now and would consider that in their decisions at this meeting.

On a motion of 9–6, the motion to remove Section 26 of the Rules of Order from the table carried. Councilors Filiault, Williams, Madison, Roberts, Chadbourne, and Powers voted in the minority.

Councilor Remy clarified and reminded his colleagues of his opinion on his amendment and why he liked the language the Council was presented with for first reading on October 17, 2024; it would not actually change anything about the Council’s process. He said all it did was clarify the process for a member of the public if they were to read it. The Council would still accept things as informational just as it has been. Councilor Remy said it would add language:

“Communications requesting that the City Council consider matters that are not germane to the State of New Hampshire or the City, or over which the City Council may lack authority to take action, shall be placed on the City Council agenda for a determination by the City Council as to whether or not to accept the communications as informational.” He reiterated that it would be the same policy as the existing one. It would just make it clearer to the public that the Council can take non-germane items as informational, which was why he liked the amendment. He did not want to vote on every single decision to accept as informational if this amendment did not pass; so, he planned to vote against the main motion if the amendment failed.

Councilor Williams stated that he thought that Council should let this Rule change die. He said the public did not want it. So, he asked why the Council was doing it. He said there was a lot of bad blood behind it and he wanted it to go away. Councilor Williams stated that he thought this was the result of what he considered, “a mistake that you made, Mr. Mayor, about 10 months ago, to not listen to some constituents who had something to bring to the Council.” Councilor

Williams thought that if the Council had listened then this issue might not have persisted this long. He said there was still not a consensus about what “germane” meant. Still, Councilor Williams said that human rights would always be germane to him. So, when the Mayor asked, he urged everyone to vote against the amendment and let the Rule change die.

Councilor Filiault said he had mentioned many times that the Council had gotten itself into a quagmire with this despite good intent. He said this would not be an issue if everyone knew the Rules of Order well enough. He pointed out that as the Rules of Order were written at this time, eight votes would determine anything, including whether anything is germane. Even the Rule of Order depends on eight votes. So, he felt the Council was complicating something that was not broken. With all due respect to Councilor Williams, Councilor Filiault said this all went back to people being perturbed that there was no second on the night that Councilor Williams’s died for the lack of a second. Councilor Filiault said all it would have taken was one of the 14 other Councilors to second the motion. Then Councilor Williams could have debated the merits of the issue with the Mayor, and eight votes would have determined whether it was germane to the City. Councilor Filiault urged not to change the Rule. He stated that if his fellow Councilors were not sure about the Rules of Order, they should learn them better because the Rules work and exist for the Council to make them work.

A motion by Councilor Remy to adopt the Rules of Order Amendment for Section 26, “Review of Items of Business,” as originally presented for first reading on October 17, 2024, was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion failed on a roll call vote of 2–13. Councilor Remy and Lake voted in the minority.

The Mayor explained that now, the Council was back to considering the main motion to direct City Attorney to prepare changes to Section 26. Councilor Filiault reiterated that the Council should leave the Rule alone and stop burying the City Attorney in needless work.

Councilor Madison called the question.

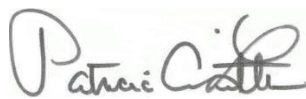
On a vote of 0–15, the motion failed to request that the City Attorney present to the City Council for first reading proposed changes to Section #26 of the City Council’s Rules of Order, “Review of Items of Business,” with respect to motions submitted by a City Councilor regarding matters that are germane or non-germane.

Councilor Haas said that this exercise was worth it as everyone learned more about the Rules of Order and he thought everyone would behave better next time.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Kahn adjourned the meeting at 9:01 PM.

A true record, attest:



City Clerk