

**CITY OF KEENE
PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

5:00 pm to 6:00 pm

2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall



1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)**
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** approval of meeting minutes: January 14, 2025
4. **Board Business:**
 - a.) Next Exchange- program planning/itinerary
 - b.) Fundraising ideas and opportunities
5. **Communications:**
 - a) Update on Choral Exchange Sponsorship
6. **Reports:**
 - a) Treasurer Report – *Eric*
7. **New Business:**
 - a.)
8. **Next Meeting:** Next meeting is March 11, 2025
9. **More Time:**
10. **Adjournment**

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

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5 PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

Tuesday, January 14, 2025

5:00 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Councilor Andrew Madison
Gerald Kuhn (arrived at 5:02 PM)
Mari Brunner (arrived at 5:03 PM)
Doris McColleston
Gerald Lins
Eric Weisenberger
Derek Blunt

Staff Present:

Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant

Mayor Jay Kahn

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10 1) Call to Order

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

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14 2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

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16 Roll call was conducted.

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18 3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – December 10, 2024

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20 Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 10, 2024. Mr.
21 Lins seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

22
23 4) Board Business

24 A) Choral Exchange Sponsorship – questions and discussion with Sandra
25 Howard

26 Chair Mitchell welcomed guest Sandra Howard and invited her to speak about the Choral
27 Exchange. He continued that the PCC is expecting about 20 guests from Einbeck on October 16

28 to 25. They hope to (connect the two groups) somehow. Ms. Howard replied they absolutely
29 (can connect), and she brought the choral exchange's itinerary, so they might identify some
30 activities they could connect on.

31
32 Ms. Howard stated that for anyone unfamiliar with this segment of the PCC's work, they have
33 been doing choral exchange since 2012. She continued that the sixth choral exchange will be
34 (this fall). Exchanges have involved community singers, the UCC, collegiate members, and
35 faculty.

36
37 Gerald Kuhn arrived at 5:02 PM.

38
39 Ms. Howard continued that guests are arriving Monday, October 13. The Tuesday plan involves
40 a greeting from Mayor Kahn, a tour of the Keene Public Library and the Fire Station, a tour with
41 the Historical Society, and a dinner and rehearsal with community ensemble singers.
42 Wednesday will be activities on campus. Thursday will be a tour of the YMCA and use of the
43 pool, a lunch and performance at Covenant Living of Keene, free time and shopping, and contra
44 dancing or folk dancing.

45
46 Mari Brunner arrived at 5:03 PM.

47
48 Ms. Howard continued that Friday night, the PCC's guests might be interested in attending a
49 performance on campus. She spoke more about the planned activities for the choral exchange
50 guests, including a trip to Bennington (Vermont), a performance at the UCC, a combined
51 international concert, and a gathering at Wilson Pond on campus. She continued that the Wilson
52 Pond gathering would be another good time to merge the two cohorts. Monday is a full day in
53 Boston, and then people will either go to NY or Germany.

54 Ms. Howard stated that she is pleased to have received about \$7,400 from the Ewing Foundation.
55 She continued that she is asking the PCC for funding for the Wilson charter bus. It is about
56 \$2,000 to hire a charter bus from Keene to Logan Airport in Boston and back. In the past, the
57 PCC has generously offered financial assistance with picking up and returning to the airport.
58 The trip to Bennington, through the Wilson charter bus, is about \$2,000. It would be cheaper to
59 rent six vans from Enterprise. A day trip like that in a small van would be okay, but for coming
60 from the airport with luggage, a big bus is helpful.

61 Mr. Lins asked how many people they are expecting. Ms. Howard replied about 25. She
62 continued that she has not yet started soliciting host homes, but about eight travelers have told
63 her they have previous relationships and have thus "housed themselves" already. A few people
64 would like to pay their own way and stay in a hotel, per their preference. She is not sure if the
65 (PCC) pays for hotel stays. Chair Mitchell replied that historically, the PCC has thought an
66 "exchange" meant the live-in experience. Ms. Howard replied that she can usually get a
67 discounted hotel rate through the Redfern, which she can offer to the few people who prefer the
68 hotel.

69

70 Ms. Howard stated that another potential crossover event with the choral exchange guests and
71 the PCC's guests is an afternoon nature walk with someone from New England Forestry. She
72 continued that that is Friday, October 17.

73 Mayor Kahn told Ms. Howard about a local high school student who is a local talent, schooled at
74 Apple Hill, who could be worked into the performance. Ms. Howard replied that she will check
75 that out. Mayor Kahn stated that the other thing he wants to add is that Pumpkin Fest is likely to
76 be October 18. Ms. Howard replied that that might be more interesting than a drive to
77 Bennington.

78 Ms. Howard asked if there are events during the week that the PCC's cohort might enjoy
79 participating in. She continued that knowing ahead of time would help her plan the logistics.
80 Chair Mitchell replied that the PCC is going to start their planning, so they will have a better idea
81 of that as they go forward. He continued that it looks like Ms. Howard has put together an
82 excellent program. Others agreed. Ms. Howard replied that it was put together with input from
83 the choral exchange travelers, to ensure that it matches their interests.

84 Mayor Kahn asked if it is correct that the charter bus costs \$2,100 twice. Ms. Howard replied
85 yes, the pickup and the return. She continued that that is something for the PCC to consider.

86 Ms. Brunner stated that she will probably go to the UCC church service, which she enjoyed last
87 time. She continued that if she is able, she would also like to join the Contra dancing.
88 Discussion ensued. Ms. Howard stated that PCC members are welcome to join any of these
89 activities.

90 Chair Mitchell asked if the PCC had any further questions for Ms. Howard, or thoughts on the
91 funding. Ms. Howe replied that at the PCC's last meeting, they talked about whether Wilson
92 Transportation was being used for a particular reason, or if they could get quotes elsewhere for
93 transportation costs. Ms. Howard replied that she went with Wilson just because it is the
94 contract through the college. She continued that she hopes that leads to a discount, but if folks
95 have recommendations, she is happy to look elsewhere. Ms. McCollester stated that she would
96 be glad to help drive (a few people around town), and others will volunteer for that, too. Ms.
97 Howard thanked her and replied that once she gets the housing put together, she will put out the
98 request for volunteer drivers.

99 Discussion ensued about transportation options. The Rec Center bus is no longer an option, but
100 Thomas Transportation might be. Chair Mitchell stated that this is something the PCC can look
101 into. He continued that he thinks by the next meeting, they will have an idea of what they can
102 do. Ms. Howard thanked the group and left the meeting.

103 Mr. Blunt stated that it looks likely that (MC2 School's) student exchange will be in the range of
104 (October) 13 to 25. Discussion ensued about how that is lot of a German visitors at once, and the
105 timing and the events. Chair Mitchell stated that they could have about 60 people here from
106 Germany at the same time. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it would be amazing if they could get
107 everyone in the same place at the same time for something. Chair Mitchell spoke about bringing

108 up the German Consulate General from Boston, and how they will be impacting so many
109 different subcommunities within the city. It is great to have these three good programs
110 happening.

111 Chair Mitchell asked the PCC if they want to vote on the financial support for the choral
112 exchange. Discussion ensued. Ms. Howe stated that at the last meeting, the PCC decided to
113 support paying for the transportation from the airport to Keene, and \$2,000 was the amount they
114 chose. Discussion ensued about how the transportation costs might not include the Bennington
115 trip, if the group goes to Pumpkin Fest instead, but they do not know. Ms. Brunner stated that at
116 the last meeting, the PCC decided to pay for the trip to Keene plus the welcome reception.
117 Others agreed and discussion continued.

118 Councilor Madison made a motion for the PCC to approve a donation of \$2,200 to the Keene
119 State College Choral Exchange. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by
120 unanimous vote.

121 **B) Next Exchange – confirm dates**

122 Chair Mitchell stated that the exchange will be October 16 to 25. He continued that there will be
123 20 people. The next step is to start blocking out what that time frame will look like. He asked
124 Councilor Madison for an update on what might be the center activity. Councilor Madison
125 replied that he spoke with the person who runs Sunapee Cruises, who said yes, they are still
126 operating at that time and would be able to do a charter. He gave more information about what
127 that would entail. Discussion ensued. Mr. Schoefmann asked if Councilor Madison would
128 spearhead this, and Councilor Madison replied yes. Discussion continued about the Sunapee
129 Cruise, a nearby Native American history museum and nature walk, and other possibilities such
130 as an outdoor sculpture park, the American Machinists Museum, a bread museum, a glass
131 blowing place, and more.

132 Chair Mitchell stated that they also need to plan a welcome and departure. He asked the PCC for
133 their thoughts on that. He mentioned the Blastos Room and the Library annex. Discussion
134 ensued about the possibility of doing a combined event, if there is crossover with the different
135 exchange groups, and potential venues, such as the Showroom. Chair Mitchell asked if Mr.
136 Weisenberger could spearhead looking into the possibility of having the welcome reception at
137 the Showroom, with maybe 65 or 70 people. Mr. Weisenberger replied yes.

138 Chair Mitchell stated that Mr. Lins has offered to host a departure party. He asked him to speak
139 to that. Mr. Lins stated that he and his wife have a big hillside place, an open area with a barn.
140 He continued that PCC members can come look at the space and see if they think it would work.
141 Discussion ensued, and Chair Mitchell suggested a PCC member go see the space/meet with Mr.
142 Lins and consider this possibility. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes, they can coordinate that after
143 this meeting. Chair Mitchell spoke positively about a nice event Keene travelers attended in
144 Einbeck last time, a dinner with picnic tables at an old-fashioned farm, and how nice it was,
145 relaxing with good socializing.

146 Chair Mitchell stated that when their Einbeck guests arrive, they will meet in the Blastos room
147 for light refreshments, then go home with their hosts. He continued that Mayor Kahn can help
148 them with how he would like to receive them the next day. Discussion ensued about a
149 downtown breakfast and maybe a look at the functions of City Hall and the court, local versus
150 State government, a possible trip to Concord, and so on and so forth. Mr. Schoefmann stated
151 that they should make sure to give at least half a day for outlet shopping. Chair Mitchell stated
152 that he hopes by the next PCC meeting, they can have a report on a welcoming dinner, a report
153 on what they could do for City governance in the welcoming (events), and a report on the
154 departure event.

155 Mr. Schoefmann stated that he would be happy to draft something like he did last time. Ms.
156 Brunner stated that a few PCC members had helped put together a draft schedule last time, to
157 bring back to the group. She asked if that would be helpful again. Chair Mitchell replied that he
158 thinks they are not there yet. He continued that he thinks they should figure out the beginning,
159 the end, and a couple of the big things in the middle. Mr. Schoefmann offered to look at the
160 choral exchange plans and see if there are possible places of overlap. Discussion continued
161 about possible activities and venues. Ms. Howe stated that at the last meeting, she took notes on
162 the ideas people had, so she can pass out copies of that next time. Chair Mitchell replied that
163 that would be great.

164

165 **C) Fundraising ideas and opportunities**

166

167 Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had anything new about fundraising ideas and opportunities. Ms.
168 Howe replied that she has, in her desk, something that was left by Helen (Mattson) - beer trays,
169 bar towels, lanyards, and Einbecker items, if that is anything the PCC wants to do something
170 with.

171

172 Mr. Lins stated that one idea people were discussing was (creating) an Einbeck/Keene cookbook.
173 He continued that they could sell copies at Pumpkin Fest. Discussion ensued about fundraising
174 at Pumpkin Fest.

175

176 Chair Mitchell asked what the legality is of raffles. Mr. Schoefmann replied that after
177 purchasing a raffle license from the City Clerk's Office, you have to get specific tickets and
178 report the winners. Discussion continued, and Chair Mitchell asked if the PCC is allowed to sell
179 items at Pumpkin Fest. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes. Ms. Brunner stated that she would be
180 willing to look into what it would take to get a raffle license. Ms. Howe stated that she could
181 talk with the City Clerk's Office about the official rules. Discussion continued about the raffle
182 possibilities, such as maybe doing a raffle at the welcoming dinner or departure dinner, or at
183 Pumpkin Fest, and about the differences between long-term raffles and same-day raffles. Mr.
184 Kuhn asked about the possibility of doing a 50/50 raffle. Ms. Howe replied no, they looked into
185 that recently and there are some weird rules they ran into.

186

187 Mayor Kahn spoke about the Keene International Festival in September, as an event the PCC
188 should think about as a fundraising opportunity. Discussion ensued about the event and the food

189 trucks and food stands that have been there in the past. Mr. Schoefmann brought up the Taste of
190 Keene event, too, and Mayor Kahn brought up the Jumanji Anniversary event.

191

192 **5) Communications**

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194 **6) Reports**

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A) Treasurer Report – Eric

196

197 Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Weisenberger if there was anything the PCC should know about the
198 treasurer report. Mr. Weisenberger replied not to his knowledge. He continued that the general
199 operating account is at \$16,982, and the fundraising account has \$17,506, as of January 8.

200

201 Mayor Kahn stated that the City’s budget process kicks off sometime this month. Mr.
202 Schoefmann replied yes, later this month. Ms. Howe stated that the PCC typically receives
203 \$5,000 from the City budget. Chair Mitchell stated that he would be glad to go speak about it (at
204 the meeting), if someone tells him when it is. Mayor Kahn replied that that will not happen for a
205 few months. Discussion ensued about the process. Mayor Kahn stated that that will be later in
206 the process, but this front end of the process is for if the PCC is looking for additional dollars.
207 Mr. Schoefmann replied that he does not think they would be. Councilor Madison replied that he
208 would not advise it.

209

210 **7) New Business**

211

212 Mayor Kahn stated that due to the Mayor’s Youth Council, he has been at the high school a lot
213 and has had conversations with the principal and the superintendent. He continued that Matt
214 Leese, KHS’s choral director, indicated an interest in joining the PCC, and he thinks there is a
215 vacancy.

216

217 Chair Mitchell asked if there was other new business. Mr. Schoefmann replied that for the next
218 meeting, he will have an update on soccer.

219

220 Mr. Schoefmann stated that that he was perusing the Ordinance for the PCC and sees that they
221 are supposed to have an ex officio member from Public Works, Police, or Fire. They do not
222 currently have that. There is a Public Works staff member who speaks fluent German, which
223 might be a good option. If that person is interested, he could talk with Mayor Kahn. Chair
224 Mitchell replied that a couple Fire and Police officers have also expressed interest. Discussion
225 continued.

226

227 **8) Next Meeting – February 11, 2025**

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229 **9) More Time**

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231 **10) Adjournment**

232

233 There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:59 PM.

234

235 Respectfully submitted by,

236 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

237

238 Reviewed and edited by,

239 Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant

