

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

5:00 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
Michael Giacomo, Councilor
George S. Hansel, Mayor
Mari Brunner
Kürt Blomquist
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Lena Kridlo
Dr. Delene White

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison

Members Not Present:

William Schoefmann, Vice Chair

Chair Mitchell read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared COVID-19 State of Emergency.

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:03 PM.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – January 12, 2021

Ms. Thomas-Smith noted that on line 76 of the draft minutes, the minute-taker had a question about who sent the email that Mayor Hansel received from Einbeck regarding the struggle at the Capitol. Chair Mitchell stated that it was from Albert Thormann.

Ms. Thomas-Smith made a motion to approve the January 12, 2021 meeting minutes as corrected. Ms. Brunner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

a. Planning for Future Exchanges with Einbeck

1. Future Exchange Ideas – YMCA, Dance, Rugby

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had anything to say regarding future exchange ideas. Hearing none, he moved to the next agenda item.

2. Student Pen-pal Ideas

Chair Mitchell stated that at the Fuller School there are a couple teachers interested in the pen-pal option with a small group of their students. He continued that it will be difficult to make progress until students are back in the classrooms.

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she saw Chair Mitchell's email about the pen-pal potential for Keene Middle School (KMS). She continued that logistics-wise, because KMS teachers have so many more students, it might make sense to start this pen-pal program at the elementary level and see how that goes, and if it is successful, share best practices to move to KMS as phase II. Chair Mitchell agreed.

Ms. Kridlo asked if the group would be interested in involving the Surry Village Charter School, which has a Keene campus. Chair Mitchell asked if she would be able to speak with someone there. Ms. Kridlo replied yes, she is on the parent council and can reach out to them. Students are back in class full time. Chair Mitchell replied that it would be terrific if she followed up on that.

b. Discuss Promotional Activities/Media Opportunities to help promote PCC events and exchanges – Dawn

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she has nothing new to report, based on missing last month's meeting. She continued that it is great that the PCC can now accept online donations and that the survey is getting close to being ready.

Ms. Mattson stated that she spoke with IT Director Rebecca Landry this morning. She continued that Ms. Landry has been a little held up, regarding getting the survey ready. It should be ready next month or sooner.

Ms. Brunner stated that if the survey is through Survey Monkey, she could help, because she has access to the City's Survey Monkey accounts. Brief discussion ensued about the survey. Mr. Blomquist stated that the IT Department has its own way of doing surveys that is more secure. Ms. Mattson stated that Survey Monkey could not be used with the donate button, but they could maybe use Survey Monkey for other things.

Ms. Thomas-Smith asked – from a content perspective, do they want to do it at the same time? She continued that initially the purpose of the survey was to get feedback from folks who had participated in exchanges, for story-gathering. Are they combining this? Or is this in two parts? Are they inviting folks [to donate] as they ask them for their stories as well? Ms. Mattson replied that they put the ‘donate’ button at the bottom of the survey. She continued that they generated a survey that Dr. White made and then she (Ms. Mattson) sent that to Ms. Landry, who is going to duplicate that in the City’s software and put the ‘donate’ button at the bottom. She thinks that is acceptable. When Dr. White created the survey it was circulated amongst the PCC for feedback and it was all good, and it is now in Ms. Landry’s hands.

Ms. Brunner asked if that is the only location the donation button will be, or if it will be anywhere else. Ms. Mattson replied that she does not know if it is something that can be put on their Facebook page, but it would be great if it could. She continued that she can check with Ms. Landry. Dr. White replied that it would make sense to have it on the City website and invite folks from Facebook to it; she is not sure what the capabilities are there, from an integration perspective. Discussion continued about this possibility and the logistics. Mr. Blomquist stated that they need to keep in mind that donations need to be accepted by the City Council. Ms. Mattson replied yes, and they had agreed that she would do a memorandum once a month with the donations grouped together, not going to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee with every donation. She gets an email every week with information about donations. She has not seen anything yet, but the link was tested and found to be working.

5) Communications

Chair Mitchell stated that he got an email from Vanessa Seifert, the coordinating teacher for the Einbeck School for the high school exchange. He continued that she had a daughter on December 30, 2020, named Nele Hansen. There is a photo. Ms. Mattson stated that she can scan and share the photo with the committee.

Chair Mitchell asked if there are any other communications. Mr. Blomquist stated that Einbeck has been getting some snow and had to get their plows out. Chair Mitchell asked if Mr. Blomquist knows of any regular communication happening between Keene’s and Einbeck’s Fire Departments or Public Works Departments. Mr. Blomquist replied that he is not aware of anything with the Fire Departments. He continued that there has been no communication between the Public Works Departments in a couple of years. Chair Mitchell asked if that could be a pen-pal program for adults. Mr. Blomquist replied that one of the interesting things about Einbeck, from the Public Works standpoint, is that their water is a separate company, and their wastewater is a regional organization, and their Public Works also does cemeteries and parks along with streets, to a certain degree. He had some conversations for a while with someone from the City Works in Einbeck, but that person left. It is a challenge when contacts they had are people who are no longer working there or did not reply back.

6) Reports

a. Treasurer Report – Delene

Ms. Mattson stated that the treasure's report is the same as before.

Mr. Blomquist made a motion to accept the treasure's report. Mayor Hansel seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

7) New Business

a. Fundraising Ideas

b. Einbeck's Street Art – Update/Distribution

Ms. Mattson stated that she only has 13 Street Art packets left. She continued that they have done quite well. The Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Department took 20 and the Library took 22. Chair Mitchell has taken 20 (and will be taking 5 more), and someone from KMS took 25. She hopes the PCC gets the majority of them back, but they will have to see. Chair Mitchell suggested Ms. Kridlo take some more for students. Brief discussion continued. Mayor Hansel stated that it would be great if they could get some photos of Keene students enjoying these art packets, to send back to Einbeck.

Chair Mitchell asked if there was any other new business. Hearing none, he thanked everyone for their work and their time.

8) More Time

a. Review Rules of Order and Compare with Other Advisory Boards – samples attached

b. Student Exchange – Update on Postponement

9) Adjourn – next meeting is March 9, 2021

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison