

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, February 25, 2021**

**6:30 PM**

**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**Members Present:**

Thomas F. Powers, Chair  
Stephen L. Hooper, Vice Chair  
Terry M. Clark  
Michael J. Remy  
Raleigh C. Ormerod

**Staff Present:**

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager  
Thomas P. Mullins, City Attorney  
Director Economic Development and Special  
Projects, Med Kopczynski  
Public Works Director, Kurt Blomquist  
HR Director, Beth Fox  
City Assessor Dan Langille  
Community Development Director, Rhett  
Lamb

**Members Not Present:**

Chair Powers called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

**1) Acceptance of Donation - Bee City Application - Community Development Director**

Community Development Director Rhett Lamb addressed the committee and referred to the \$200.00 donation from John Therriault who is a member of the Conservation Commission. Mr. Lamb stated Mr. Therriault has been the driving force behind the City becoming a Bee City and has offered to pay for the first years dues. The Conservation Commission is in favor of this donation.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Remy.

On 4-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept a donation of \$200.00 from John and Claire Therriault for the purposes of submitting a City of Keene Bee City Resolution.

**2) Keene Young Professional Network Summer Food Festival Funding Request – Public Works Director/Emergency Management Director**

Councilor Remy indicated he is on the Board of Keene Young Professionals and stated he wasn't sure if this would cause a conflict for him to be able to vote on this time. He indicated the group won't be making money off the event and the group is not asking for money from the City but are asking not to be charged for City services. Attorney Mullins felt there was no conflict and the committee agreed.

Public Work Director Kurt Blomquist addressed the committee next. He indicated the Keene Young Professional have requested the City cover expenses related to this event. This group went before the PLD last night for a license request and received a positive recommendation.

Mr. Blomquist indicated this event is scheduled for June 5. The plan is to close down Central Square with event being scheduled from 12 PM to 5 PM (there will be time before and after for set up and take down). The group has met with City staff and have gone through the protocol process and there will be other meetings prior to the event. City departments have provided their estimates (Fire, Police, PW and Health) and the cost is estimated to be \$16,953 for the day.

Mr. Blomquist went on to say the City maintains a community events budget for events that qualify for community event funding. He noted that with the exception of the tree lighting ceremony, the other events did not proceed in 2021. The original appropriation for community events was \$30,400, and after taking out the cost for tree lighting, there is still a balance of \$29,600 in that cost center. Staff is recommending money for this event come from that account.

Director Economic Development and Special Projects, Med Kopczynski addressed the committee next. Mr. Kopczynski stated he was also representing City Manager. Mr. Kopczynski stated this event came out of the Keene Rebound meetings and the Manager's Office has been involved with its planning since day one. The intention is to stimulate activity in the city especially in the downtown. Mr. Kopczynski went on to say the continued discussion of staff has been how to activate the streets in the downtown and because of that expanded use of the right of way for that reason is being recommended.

Staff feels this event would be a safe return to Keene events and the Manager's Office is in full support of this event and encouraged the committee's support as well.

Councilor Remy was the next speaker and began by showing the committee the preliminary logo for this event. The Councilor explained Keene Young Professionals is affiliated with the Hannah Grimes Center for Entrepreneurship. The goal of this group is to bring people out into the community. The downtown will be closed from around 9 AM to 8 PM on June 5 with the event scheduled between 12 PM and 5 PM.

The Councilor stated 15 Keene restaurants will be set up around the Central Square selling food in exchange for tokens. The profits will be shared between the participating businesses. The bandstand will be setup for cooking demos. The event will culminate with a hot pepper eating contest. There will be live music being performed at the Hannah Grimes Center. Local breweries are being invited to participate. The cost of a wristband will be \$20.

Councilor Ormerod asked about parking and if streets are shut down how people would be able to access the event. Councilor Remy stated Central Square will be shut down, traffic will be able to get as far north as the turnaround on Main Street. Free parking is not being requested from the City for this event as they are looking for turnover in the parking spots; parking maps will be provided in advance of the event. He added there will also be signs posted to provide directions from the parking lots to the event.

Mr. Luca Paris from Luca Paris Restaurant thanked the City for what they have done for the restaurants and businesses throughout the pandemic. Mr. Paris stated this event will celebrate the end of getting through the pandemic. He noted to the many safety measures the Keene Young Professionals are taking to make sure this event is conducted in a safe manner

Councilor Hooper thanked Mr. Paris and the Keene Young Professionals for what they are doing for the downtown and agreed it is time to start celebrating Keene.

Councilor Ormerod thanked staff, Mr. Paris and Keene Young Professionals for this event and stated he anticipates a question from general counsel would be how the City can be sure this event is going to be safe; what are the trigger points and what are the backup plans. Mr. Blomquist replied from his role as the Emergency Management Director and stated the event will be held based on what the guidelines are at that time. He indicated at the present time the State and region are seeing a decrease in COVID even though the Monadnock Region might be lagging behind by a little, it is still seeing a decrease in positive cases. Mr. Blomquist went on to say the State is projecting vaccine for group 2A to begin in April and 2B to begin in May.

Mr. Blomquist stated the Emergency Management team along with Keene Hospital and Keene State not only look at positivity rates, but also they look at the ICU numbers at Cheshire Medical on a weekly basis. There is a weekly meeting with the school district, county, hospital and staff to look over numbers. Dr. Caruso from the Cheshire Medical provides those numbers and compares Keene to the rest of the State. Councilor Remy indicated one of the requirements from the PLD Committee is that the event will keep in compliance with all CDC Guidelines. Mr. Kopczynski stated the Emergency Management team is very diligent in general, and especially when it comes to an event such as this. Most of this team is involved in the weekly meetings as it relates to COVID 19.

Councilor Ormerod stated he has no doubt this will be a safe event, but he felt it is important to have firm dates so the event can be properly planned.

Councilor Hooper asked whether the motion should have the specific amount of \$16,953 included in it. Mr. Blomquist stated \$16,953 is only an estimate and the number could change but the city can only spend up to \$30,000 which is what available in the budget; anything over that amount will be up to the Keene Young Professionals.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Ormerod.

On 4-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that unspent funds from the City's FY21 Community Event Budget be used for the cost of City services for the Keene Young Professional Network Downtown Summer Food Festival on June 5, 2021.

**3) Sale of Tax Deeded Property- 62 Elm Street - City Assessor**

City Assessor Dan Langille was the next speaker. Mr. Langille stated this item is for approval to sell a city owned property located at 62 Elm Street. This property was taken by tax deed on November 30, 2020. No taxes have been paid since 2017. Mr. Langille stated A number of communications has been made to the owner in an effort to bring taxes current. Since taking the

property, the City has given the owner 90 days to purchase the property back, but the owner has made no effort to pay the taxes.

Mr. Langille stated the City feels it is in the best interest of the City to sell property at this time. The property will be sold by sealed bid to the highest bidder. It will be advertised for about three to four weeks and will be shown to anyone who is interested.

Councilor Ormerod asked whether there was an eviction involved. Mr. Langille stated when the property was taken by the City it was vacant.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Remy.

On 4-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to do all things necessary to sell the following tax dedeed property by sealed bid: 62 Elm Street, Map 554 Lot 24.

#### **4) Continued Discussion - Evaluation Process for Charter Employees**

Chair Powers explained Councilor Manwaring had requested the Committee look at the current system as to how Charter employees evaluated. It was suggested both by the committee and the Council that a survey be undertaken based on the questions raised by Councilor Manwaring. There were 14 responses received – everyone participated. The majority of the responses (six) have chosen the newly suggested process. That process is for the charter employee to meet with the Council, following that the Finance Committee will put together a document which the Chair will present to each of the Charter employees.

An assumption was made that the self-evaluation process will be improved as well. The Chair explained a different form will be formulated for each employee to present to the Council and stressed it is important that all Councilors respond.

Councilor Powers stated there was a question raised about the timeframe for these evaluations – he stated these evaluations will follow the same format as other city employees and will fall on their anniversary date and it is the hope the Mayor will continue to be involved in this process.

The next step would be for the HR Department to assist in getting sample forms from other communities for the three positions. The charters employees will be asked to provide topic areas they feel will be important for each of their positions.

Councilor Hooper asked whether there is a timeframe for keeping this item on More Time. Chair Powers stated his intention is to make progress during each cycle but was open to suggestions. City Attorney Mullins stated his recommendation would be to keep the item on More Time so that collectively a process to move the item forward can be decided. Chair Powers stated there will be an email going out tomorrow. Attorney Mullins cautioned not to respond “Reply To All” on the email, but to reach out to the specific person for a response.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Ormerod.

On 4-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the item regarding Evaluation of Charter Employees be put on more time.

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker