

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

5:00 PM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Councilor Michael Giacomo
Mari Brunner
Kürt Blomquist
Doris McCollester
Gregg Kleiner

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

Dawn Thomas-Smith
Mayor George Hansel

1) Call to Order

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

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted. Ms. Mattson stated that Derek Blunt, present today, will officially be confirmed as a member by the March meeting.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – January 10, 2023

Mr. Blomquist made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 10, 2023. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

A. KSC Music Exchange – March and May – Update from Sandra

**B. PCC Volunteer to Greet Einbeck’s Choir, Sat. 3/25 at 6:00 PM – Courtyard
Marriott**

Chair Mitchell asked Sandra Howard from Keene State College (KSC) to fill the PCC in on what she is looking for.

Ms. Howard stated that Ms. Mattson sent an email to the PCC with a Google spreadsheet. She continued that the KSC Music Exchange has the funding it needs, and she thanks the PCC for adding some funding to that effort. She has enough host families, thanks to the generous community. She has some requests for PCC members' participation throughout the three days that Einbeck visitors are in Keene, especially when they arrive on Saturday 3/25 at 6:00 PM at the Courtyard Marriott. Ten Einbeck visitors are staying there. She would like two or three PCC members to be there for the greeting and help with snacks. Discussion ensued, and Chair Mitchell, Mr. Schoefmann, Councilor Giacomo stated that they will be there. [Later in the meeting, Doris McCollester added her name as well]. Chair Mitchell stated that there will be light baked goods/snacks and water. Ms. Howard thanked them and added that anyone else from the PCC is welcome to be there as well even if they did not sign up today.

Ms. Howard stated that host families will feed their guests dinner. She asked what kind of support can be provided for the ten hotel guests' dinner (two families of five). Discussion ensued about the options, and the PCC decided to have Ms. Brunner reach out to her contact at the Monadnock Food Co-op to inquire about the possibility of gift cards, and to keep in touch with Ms. Howard about this.

Ms. Howard stated that Sunday morning, the UCC is hosting, and the choir will rehearse. She continued that her contact there is the Music Director. The UCC will feed the Einbeck visitors lunch. She asked if Chair Mitchell can be the PCC representative that morning. Chair Mitchell replied yes.

Ms. Howard continued that she needs to email all the hosts to go over transportation, and is not sure yet if she needs PCC representatives to help transport from the UCC to the YMCA and/or from the YMCA to KSC. She will let them know. March 26 is the concert, with PCC members there to greet and welcome. Students K-12 get in free, and adult tickets have a fee, because she wants to use the concert as a fundraiser for the PCC. PCC members who want to attend the concert can let her know within the next week to receive comped tickets. On Monday the 27th, the Einbeck visitors will get a tour of the area, via vans rented from Enterprise, and she thanks the PCC for contributing to support that. She invites the PCC to join the group photo at 3:15 PM at the fountain, and/or the farewell pizza party at 5:00 PM at the Thorne Sagendorph Art Gallery on campus. She continued that she is trying to keep the requests of the PCC light, but their presence is always welcome.

Ms. Howard asked if there were any questions. PCC members thanked her and expressed appreciation for her work. Ms. Howard stated that she has been in touch with the choir contact in Einbeck, and Einbeck folks are working on the program for 30 people from KSC going to Einbeck in May. Plans are going well, and she will keep in touch with the PCC about it.

Mr. Blomquist asked Ms. Howard to share photos of the March visit with Ms. Mattson afterwards, so the PCC has a record, and maybe for sharing on social media, sharing with the Council sometime, and so on and so forth. Ms. Howard agreed.

C. Discuss Upcoming Exchange with Einbeck in Keene – September 29 to October 7, 2023

Chair Mitchell suggested the PCC start a working group to plan the upcoming exchange. He continued that the working group could sift and sort the ideas from the PCC and bring those ideas (not decisions) forward at the next PCC meeting. Discussion ensued about working group membership, and the PCC determined that the members will be Mr. Schoefmann, Mayor Hansel, Ms. Brunner, and Councilor Giacomo. Mr. Schoefmann stated that they need to formulate an itinerary, and he will set up a Google form for people to share their general ideas. He continued that the theme will be just renewing the partnership, unless Mayor Hansel has a more specific idea. Mayor Hansel replied that it depends partially on who from Einbeck is coming. Chair Mitchell stated that the renewing the partnership theme is good. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will schedule a meeting for the working group and put together the Google form. Mr. Blomquist suggested looking through the electronic files from the last visit, which Ms. Mattson has. Discussion continued about ideas and past activities that could possibly be repeated or reworked.

Chair Mitchell stated that they have to start thinking about hosts. He continued that so far they have five people/families who have committed to hosting one or two guests each, for a total of ten. Discussion ensued about hosting. Councilor Giacomo stated that his family can definitely host one set of people and potentially have the capacity for hosting two sets of people if needed/as “emergency backup.” Mr. Blunt stated that he can host as well. Ms. Mattson listed some people the PCC wanted to invite to a meeting to be part of the conversation, who are interested in participating in activities and/or hosting. Chair Mitchell stated that they need to keep looking, because it sounds like they only have 16, and they need at least two emergency backup places. Discussion continued.

Chair Mitchell stated that he received a message from the chair of Einbeck’s partner city group, Jürgen Herbst. He continued that they are holding their big organizational meeting on February 27 and they are anxious to hear how many people Keene is inviting. Discussion ensued. The PCC agreed on up to 16. Chair Mitchell stated that he will send that information to Mr. Herbst. Discussion continued.

D. PCC Exchange Survey/Facebook Updates

Mr. Schoefmann asked if anyone had information to share. (No).

E. Update on Future Exchange Ideas – Student Exchanges and Others

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Blunt for an update. Mr. Blunt stated that they The MC2 School are in the fundraising stage and recently received funding from Let it Slide. He continued that they are organizing their students, who are writing their profiles to send to the BBS School. They are setting up a Zoom call soon with BBS so students from the two schools can connect. Students

from BBS will come to Keene in October, the weekend after the Einbeck visitors leave, for about a week and a half. The week is nailed down but the arrival date is not. Students from MC2 will go to Einbeck in March, but the dates are not set yet. Discussion ensued. Chair Mitchell stated that he thinks MC2's plans are in good shape. He continued that Mr. Blunt can let the PCC know what they can do to help. Mr. Blunt added that they are also working on the legal things necessary for sending teenagers across the ocean. Councilor Giacomo spoke positively about Mr. Blunt's presentation about/explanation of this exchange at the Let it Slide event. Mr. Blunt stated that MC2 currently has seven students for the exchange and wants to have eight or nine, and the school in Einbeck will match whatever MC2 can put together.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that an Einbeck committee member Wulf Miesling arranged a discussion today between him (Mr. Schoefmann), as a representative of the Monadnock Rugby Football Club, and someone from the Gutengun rugby football club. He continued that they have had communication about what an exchange might look like between the two rugby football clubs, and Mr. Miesling was part of that discussion to represent Einbeck's interest in that connection. They are working on bringing the concept to both clubs to see what they might be able to do in the next year or two and what each group is hoping to get out of it. They will talk again in March. He will keep the PCC updated.

Ms. Brunner stated that when she was in Einbeck she learned that they have a Tango (dance) community. She continued that she is not sure if anyone from that community is interested in doing an exchange. Surrounding towns have a strong Tango community. Discussion ensued about dance communities in the Keene area. Ms. Brunner stated that maybe there could be a general dance exchange. She personally has an interest in Tango, so if people in Einbeck's Tango community are interested, she would be happy to work on this.

Mr. Blomquist stated that another potential exchange could be with the Rotary Club or Lions Club. Chair Mitchell stated that the Rotary Club has connected. Mr. Blomquist replied that if he could find a Lions Club connection in Einbeck, he could talk with the Keene Lions Club.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mr. Miesling was also interested in bicycle tourism. He continued that he will talk with some contacts in Keene about that, including a bike shop, to hopefully get a pool of bikes available for when Einbeck visitors come in the fall. The City could support this going forward, because there is no bike share or bike rental service in town. Discussion ensued about possible activities and ideas for the Einbeck visit in the fall.

Chair Mitchell stated that the pen-pal program at Fuller School now has 27 fourth graders participating, between Einbeck and Keene. He continued that 27 fourth graders are sending each other hand-written letters back and forth; teachers take photos of the handwritten letters and email them to the pen-pals. The German teacher and the Keene teacher both have a waiting list because there is so much interest. That is a good sign.

5) **Communications**

6) **Reports**

A. Treasurer Report

Mr. Kleiner reported that the appropriation account is still the same at \$12,000, but the PCC's normal, everyday account is \$18,206.90. He continued that the only difference is the check to KSC for \$580 for the funding for the van rental [that Ms. Howard mentioned earlier].

Councilor Giacomo made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Mr. Blomquist seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

7) **New Business**

Chair Mitchell asked if the PCC has ever considered trying to arrange a Zoom meeting for the PCC and the Einbeck committee. Mr. Schoefmann replied that they talked about it earlier, quarterly meetings between the Mayor, the Chair, himself, and so on and so forth. Chair Mitchell asked if it is practical to do and if they want to do more. Discussion ensued. Mr. Blomquist suggested a twice-yearly joint committee conversation. Others agreed and discussion continued about the benefits and logistics of it.

A. Discuss Additional Guidelines/Expectations to be added for people traveling from Keene to Einbeck

8) **Next Meeting – March 14, 2023**

9) **More Time**

A. Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone has fundraising ideas or information. Mr. Schoefmann replied that Taste of Keene is coming up. He asked if their participation at Stonewall Farm's event in October is for outreach, or fundraising. Chair Greenwald replied fundraising. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Kleiner stated that beyond events, if the PCC wants to get serious about fundraising, they would have to create a "Friends of the Einbeck Exchange" group outside of the City. Doing events is one thing, but if they wanted to do an appeal letter or other things, it may be beyond the scope of this group. Discussion ensued. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he would be happy to investigate it with Mr. Kleiner.

B. Pumpkin Fest Participation for Next Year

Councilor Giacomo stated that the Pumpkin Fest organizers have created committees, and the Vendor Committee will look into what the status looks like. He continued that for the first year, they will not be bringing a ton of vendors in. Food vendors, especially, will probably be rather limited the first year. There will be an order for who gets reached out to, starting with groups like

the Swampbats, the earliest on board. He cannot promise that the PCC will make the cut. He is not on the Vendor Committee and it is the one committee that does not yet have a chair.

C. Planning for “Taste of Keene” for Next Year. Brats and Kraut sales – potential free use of grill and donation for brats and kraut, volunteers

10) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison