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A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, April 6, 2023. The Honorable Mayor George S. Hansel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Roll called: Bryan J. Lake, Michael J. Remy, Gladys Johnsen, Michael Giacomo, Randy L. Filiault, Robert C. Williams, Philip M. Jones, Andrew M. Madison, Andrew M. Madison, Kris E. Roberts, Raleigh C. Ormerod, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Catherine I. Workman, Mitchell H. Greenwald, Kate M. Bosley, and Thomas F. Powers were present. Councilor Remy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Hansel announced that the next Council workshop on the downtown infrastructure and improvement project will be Wednesday, April 26, at 6:00 PM. A public comment period will start at 7:30 PM. The workshop will conclude at 8:30 PM. This workshop will replace the normal MSFI Committee meeting that would have occurred that evening.

MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING

A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt the minutes of the March 16, 2023 regular meeting as printed was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors voting in favor.

PROCLAMATION – FRIENDS OF THE KEENE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Mayor Hansel welcomed Councilor Williams to the front, to receive a proclamation declaring April 21–23, 2023, as Friends of the Keene Public Library Days. The Mayor urged citizens of the Monadnock region to visit the spring book sale at the Keene Public Library in support of the continued excellent Library programs. Councilor Williams noted that he is the Council liaison to the Library Board of Trustees. The Councilor said he had been very impressed by all the Friends of the Keene Public Library’s programs. One way they fund their programs is through this book sale, which Councilor Williams called impressive.

NOMINATIONS – HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Mayor Hansel nominated Gina Burke and Jennifer Nescimento to serve as alternate members of the Human Rights Committee, both with terms to expire December 31, 2025. The Mayor tabled the nominations until the next regular meeting.

CONFIRMATIONS – BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE; ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE; PLANNING BOARD

Mayor Hansel nominated Samantha Jackson and Autumn DelaCroix to serve as alternate members of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee, both with terms to expire December 31, 2025. The Mayor also nominated Rowland Russell to serve as an alternate member of the Energy and Climate Committee, with a term to expire December 31, 2025. Lastly,

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Mayor Hansel nominated Ryan Clancy to serve as a regular member of the Planning Board, with a term to expire December 31, 2025. A motion by Councilor Powers to confirm the nominations was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

APPOINTMENT OF AN AD HOC CHARTER AMENDMENT COMMITTEE

Mayor Hansel appointed the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee as the Ad Hoc Charter Amendment Committee, with the charge of reviewing Section 11 “Primaries” of the Keene City Charter in response to concerns from the City Clerk relative to the provisions of this Section. A motion by Councilor Powers to confirm the appointments was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

SCRIVENER'S ERRORS IN THE MARCH 16TH CONFIRMATIONS – CONSERVATION COMMISSION; PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE

The City Clerk, Patty Little, reported that when updating the official roster of Board memberships from the March 16 City Council meeting, she noticed that she had mistakenly assigned an expiration date of December 31, 2025, to Deborah LeBlanc’s term on the Conservation Commission. Deborah is serving out an unexpired term that actually ends December 31, 2023. In addition, the City Clerk said she incorrectly showed the nomination of Gerald Lins to the Partner City Committee as an alternate position. There is a current vacancy on the Partner City Committee, with a term that expires December 31, 2025 and that this nomination should have been for a regular position. Mayor Hansel accepted the City Clerk’s report as informational.

COMMUNICATION – KEENE FAMILY YMCA – REQUEST FOR ROAD CLOSURE – SUMMIT ROAD – JUNE 4, 2023

A communication was received from Kelly Fleurette on behalf of the Keene Family YMCA requesting the full closure of Summit Road on Sunday, June 4, 2023, from 8:00 AM–12:00 PM for a Youth Triathlon Race. Mayor Hansel referred the communication to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee.

COMMUNICATION – KEENE SWAMPBATS – REQUEST TO DISCHARGE FIREWORKS – JULY 3, 2023

A communication was received from Kevin Watterson, President of the Keene SwampBats, with their annual request for the Independence Eve Fireworks display at Alumni Field, occurring immediately after the SwampBats game scheduled for that evening. Mayor Hansel referred the communication to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee.

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COMMUNICATION – PATHWAYS FOR KEENE – REQUEST FOR LICENSE – 4 ON THE 4TH ROAD RACE – JULY 4, 2023

A communication was received from Sarah Greene, President of Pathways for Keene, requesting approval to conduct the 21st annual 4 on the 4th Road Race on July 4, 2023. Mayor Hansel referred the communication to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee.

COMMUNICATION – FIREWORKS RESTAURANT – REQUEST TO SERVE ALCOHOL – SIDEWALK CAFÉ

A communication was received from Adam Berube, the new owner of Fireworks Restaurant, requesting permission to serve alcohol at their Sidewalk Café. Mayor Hansel referred the communication to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee.

MSFI REPORT – REQUEST FOR A TREE REMOVAL – MARLBORO STREET – 310 MARLBORO STREET, LLC

A Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee report read, recommending granting the request of Randall Walter to remove the tree in front of 310 Marlboro St. at the expense of the requestor. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

MSFI REPORT – PRESENTATION – INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND THE CIP PROCESS

A Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee report read, recommending that the Infrastructure Planning and CIP Process presentation be accepted as informational. Mayor Hansel filed the report as informational.

MSFI REPORT – GEORGE STREET BRIDGE – IMPLEMENT PROPOSED DESIGN

A Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the George St. Bridge Replacement Project, with an alternative bridge rail design, to maintain the rural character of the neighborhood. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault.

A motion by Councilor Greenwald was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault to amend the Committee report to add the phrase, “if such alternate design is approved by the State,” at the end of the prepared motion. The amended motion would read that “the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the George St. Bridge Replacement Project,

with an alternate bridge rail design, to maintain the rural character of the neighborhood, if such alternate design is approved by the State.”

The motion to amend passed unanimously, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor. The motion to carry out the intent of the Committee report as amended was carried unanimously, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – HAZARD MITIGATION ASSISTANCE GRANT – UPDATING THE HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept, execute, and expend a Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant in the amount of up to \$16,667 from the New Hampshire Department of Safety Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management for the updating of the City’s Hazard Mitigation Plan. A motion by Councilor Remy to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Powers. The motion passed unanimously, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – TRANSPORTATION HERITAGE TRAIL, PHASE 1 – PROJECT AGREEMENT

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a project agreement along with future amendments with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT) to implement phase one of the transportation heritage trail project. A motion by Councilor Remy to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Powers. The motion passed unanimously, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH KEENE DOG PARK, INC.

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a memorandum of understanding with Keene Dog Park, Inc. for the purposes of building and maintaining a dog park in Wheelock Park. A motion by Councilor Remy to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Powers. Councilor Jones congratulated both of these organizations (this agenda item and the next one) for actually raising money and not just asking the City for funds. He said he had reservations from the very beginning about this location in Wheelock Park, but he said that since it was moving forward, so he would vote in favor.

The motion passed unanimously, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH KEENE DISC GOLF CLUB

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a memorandum of understanding with Keene Disc Golf Club for building and maintaining a nine-hole disc golf course in Wheelock Park. A motion by Councilor Remy to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Powers. The motion passed unanimously, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – OPIOID GRANT APPLICATION/ KPD SOCIAL WORKER

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the update on the Opioid Grant application be accepted as informational. Mayor Hansel filed the report as informational.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager reported that the new electricity supply options from Keene Community Power would begin with a customer's June meter read. Prior to the start of the program, the City would be conducting a notification and education process to make residents and businesses aware of their options:

- April 10: a postcard announcing the upcoming program would arrive to any customer eligible for automatic enrollment.
- April 15 (start of the 30-day customer consideration period): a detailed Customer Notification Letter would arrive to all electricity customers informing them of the upcoming program and its pricing. It would also inform them how to choose a different program option or, if eligible for automatic enrollment, how to opt-out.
- April 25: the first community meeting to provide an overview of the program and answer questions. This meeting will take place on Tuesday April 25, 2023, at 6:00 PM at the Keene Public Library, Heberton Hall, 60 Winter Street.
- May 2: the second community meeting will take place on Tuesday at 6:00 PM virtually or at City Hall, Council Chambers (2nd floor), 3 Washington Street.
- May 15: this is the end of the 30-day consideration period. Any customer that opts out by this deadline will not be enrolled in the program.

On the Community Power Program, the City Manager said she had heard questions about whether this applies to commercial businesses and the answer is yes. However, many already have agreements with third-party suppliers. The City Manager said this applies to anyone with a utility bill right now, including renters. If not currently with a third-party supplier and they do not opt-out, people would be automatically enrolled.

Next, the City Manager provided an update on body worn cameras. The week before this meeting, the City Manager executed the contract for the body worn and in-car video program. Navigating the process to access the funds from the Congressionally directed spending award took a great deal of time while they sorted out how the funds would be distributed. Keene was fortunate to receive \$415,000 of Congressionally directed funds along with a State grant of \$50,000 to offset the majority of the cost of the program for the first five years. The contract for 44 body worn cameras and 16 in-car video systems is \$445,000. Training is \$13,925 and support equipment is \$24,765 (total cost \$484,715). The City was working to modify uniforms and would be working with the vendor on delivery and training. The very preliminary schedule-contract guaranteed installation 45–60 days from the time the City signed the contract (end of March). They will provide basic level of training around that same time. The City would piggyback its own training surrounding policy and law. So, assuming no issues with getting the uniforms back, the City Manager said the cameras should be up and running by early to mid-June.

Next, the City Manager discussed the Pat Russell Park reconstruction, stating that spring is here, and construction season had begun.

The City Manager continued her report on the topic of the housing study work. She reported that the Community Development Department would hold an open house on April 20 from 3:30–5:30 PM at Hannah Grimes Center to gather public input on housing strategies. This is part of the six-month effort to develop a comprehensive housing assessment articulating our current and future housing needs. The proposed strategy in the report include a variety of actions the City could take, and the public input process would help to prioritize strategies to put forward to the Council. There is a link to the housing needs analysis report on the City’s website on the Community Development page. The Community Development Department will be presenting to the City Council the results of this work at the April 20 Council meeting.

Next, the City Manager discussed the City’s brand. She said that employee’s email signature block now incorporated the City’s new logo, and communications like City press releases would also begin using the new logo. The new mark would gradually be adopted throughout the organization.

The City Manager reported on wayfinding/temporary sidewalk markings. She said the Public Works Department had been working with Arts Alive and Keene State College on a project that involves placing a temporary (wheat paste) elm tree mural on either the Colonial or the Showroom. It will have instructions to “find the missing leaves.” Elm leaves would be placed on the sidewalk in front of each identified arts destination. These are temporary in nature and are only expected to last only one season. This is a fun wayfinding project to bring greater awareness to all the wonderful art locations in our community. The City Manager thanked the Public Works Director for working with this group to help make this a reality.

The City Manager also reported that she asked Beth Fox, HR Director/Assistant City Manager, to cover for the City Manager at the next Council meeting. The City Manager would be attending a university system board of trustees event on April 20 (this is the same time as the next meeting) to support Keene State College and the partnerships created that continue to benefit both the City and the College.

Lastly, the City Manager announced that she would be participating on a couple of upcoming panels about community power and green energy projects (April 18 hosted by Plan NH and May 1 as part of NH Energy Week).

Mayor Hansel added that he looked at the Community Power figures and said the rate the City was able to negotiate was very impressive, noting that the offers approved for residential rate payers are nearly the best possible.

RESIGNATIONS – PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE; HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

A memorandum read from Executive Secretary, Helen Mattson, recommending that the resignations of Lena Kridlo from the Partner City Committee and Shaun Filiault from the Human Rights Committee be accepted with regret and appreciation of their service. A motion by Councilor Powers to accept the resignations with regret and appreciation of service was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

79E COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION TAX RELIEF APPLICATION FOR 310 MARLBORO STREET

A memorandum was received from Daniel Langille, City Assessor, recommending that the Mayor set a public hearing regarding the 79-E Community Revitalization Tax Relief application submitted by Randall Walter for the property at 310 Marlboro Street owned by 310 Marlboro Street, LLC. Mayor Hansel referred the memorandum to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee and set a Public Hearing for Thursday, April 20, 2023, at 7:00 PM.

INVEST NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPAL DEMOLITION GRANT – BUILDING AT 160 WATER STREET

A memorandum read from the Director of Parks, Recreation, and Facilities, Andy Bohannon, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to execute the submission of the application for Invest NH Municipal Demolition Grant for the purposes of removing the Findings Inc. building at 160 Water Street. Mayor Hansel said this was a time-sensitive issue that needed the Council's action at this meeting. A motion by Councilor Powers to Suspend Section 26 of the Rules of Order to act upon the time-sensitive grant was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. On roll call vote, 15 Councilors were present and voting in favor. The Rules were declared suspended.

The City Manager noted that this Invest NH demolition grant was available to municipalities for up to \$500,000, and the City was applying for \$130,000, based on an estimate for the demolition of the former Findings building. The City Manager said the City applied for this grant several months ago, and Staff had been following-up on the matter consistently because work is set to commence for the Skate Park. The City Manager said she received a response from the State, which said a Certificate of Vote was needed. She said this was time sensitive because the State is running out of demolition funds and it is “first come - first served.” The City Manager would still have to come back to the Council to accept the funds if awarded, but this Council vote was needed so the City Manager could move on to the next step.

A motion by Councilor Powers to authorize the City Manager to execute the submission of the application for Invest NH Municipal Demolition Grant for the purposes of removing the Findings Inc. building at 160 Water Street was duly seconded by Councilor Remy and passed unanimously.

**PB-PLD REPORT – RELATING TO AMENDMENTS TO THE RURAL DISTRICT
MINIMUM LOT SIZE – ORDINANCE O-2023-02**

A report was received from the Joint Planning Board/Planning, Licenses and Development Committee. The report indicated a unanimous vote of the Planning Board that Ordinance O-2023-02 was consistent with the City’s Comprehensive Master Plan. The report also indicated a request from the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee that the Mayor set a public hearing on Ordinance O-2023-02. Mayor Hansel filed the report and set a Public Hearing for Thursday, May 4, at 7:00 PM.

**MORE TIME – PROPOSED PUBLIC ART PIECE – HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF CHESHIRE
COUNTY**

A Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee report read, recommending placing this item on more time. Mayor Hansel granted more time.

**ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING – RELATING TO AMENDMENTS TO THE
PLANNING BOARD SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS – ORDINANCE O-2023-08**

A memorandum read from Pamela Russell-Slack, Planning Board Chair, recommending referring Ordinance O-2023-08 to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee for their review and recommendations. Mayor Hansel referred Ordinance O-2023-08 to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee.

**ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING – RELATING TO CLASS ALLOCATION AND
SALARY SCHEDULE – ORDINANCE O-2023-09**

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A memorandum was received from HR Director/Assistant City Manager, Elizabeth Fox, recommending that the City Council refer Ordinance O-2023-09 to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee. Mayor Hansel referred Ordinance O-2023-09 to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee.

ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING – RELATING TO PERSONNEL SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES – ORDINANCE O-2023-10

A memorandum was received from HR Director/Assistant City Manager, Elizabeth Fox, recommending that the City Council refer Ordinance O-2023-10 to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee. Mayor Hansel referred Ordinance O-2023-10 to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee.

ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING – PARKS, RECREATION, AND CITY UNIMPROVED LAND – ORDINANCE O-2023-04

A Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee report read, recommending the adoption of Ordinance O-2023-04. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to adopt Ordinance O-2023-04 was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault. The motion carried on a unanimous roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

IN APPRECIATION OF SUSAN M. HANSMEIER UPON HER RETIREMENT – RESOLUTION R-2023-17

A memorandum was received from HR Director/Assistant City Manager, Elizabeth Fox, recommending that Resolution R-2023-17, honoring Susan Hansmeier for 28 years of service, be adopted by the City Council. A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt Resolution R-2023-17 was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion passed unanimously, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – RELATING TO THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FROM THE GENERAL FUND UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE (FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFFING) – RESOLUTION R-2023-18

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be directed to draft a Resolution to allow the hiring of four firefighters for the remainder of the fiscal year. Mayor Hansel referred Resolution R-2023-18 to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee.

FOP REPORT – RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF UNANTICIPATED HIGHWAY REVENUE – RESOLUTION R-2023-10

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A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2023-10. A motion by Councilor Remy to adopt Resolution R-2023-10 was duly seconded by Councilor Powers. The motion passed unanimously, with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Hansel adjourned the meeting at 7:43 PM.

A true record, attest: 
City Clerk