

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

5:00 PM

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

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Councilor Michael Giacomo
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Doris McCollester
Derek Blunt
Gerald Lin, Alternate

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

Mari Brunner
Kürt Blomquist
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.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting: May 9, 2023

Chair Mitchell asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. Mr. Lin stated that he was present at the last meeting, but the meeting minutes have his name in the “Members Not Present” column.

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 9, 2023, as amended. Councilor Giacomo seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

A) Activity Planning for Upcoming Exchange with Einbeck in Keene – We are now planning to host from September 22 to September 30, 2023

Chair Mitchell stated that he distributed copies of a packet that was emailed to him, containing information about the people traveling from Einbeck. He continued that these are the most up-to-date travel dates and times. As he gets more information, he will share it with the PCC.

Mr. Blunt arrived at 5:05 PM.

Chair Mitchell continued that the travelers are anxious to be contacted, so he encourages PCC members to do so. The packet contains preliminary host assignments. Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Schoefmann and Councilor Giacomo if they are all set with hosting, and they replied yes. Discussion ensued about other hosts and backups. Chair Mitchell noted that there is always room for people who want to help with transportation, and all PCC members and hosts are welcome at the events. Ms. McCollester asked if they need a translator. Chair Mitchell replied absolutely. Ms. McCollester replied that they can count her in.

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Schoefmann to talk about the schedule and activities. Mr. Schoefmann stated that now that they know more about the travelers' arrival time, he can update the draft with that information that Chair Mitchell provided today and send a revised draft out to the PCC. He continued that not included in the draft schedule is dancing, which Yves Gakunde and Mari Brunner are trying to coordinate. Councilor Giacomo stated that dancing in Nelson is live every Monday. Discussion ensued about whether there would be too much on Monday's schedule, and whether to rearrange it a bit. Mr. Schoefmann stated that pickle ball is the other activity not in the schedule. He continued that they were talking about it being a possible activity for Sunday morning. Discussion continued.

Councilor Giacomo stated that the Saturday activities are a bit up in the air. He continued that Mayor Hansel pointed out that the humor of "Let it Slide" might not be relevant/understandable to all folks from Einbeck; it will be an optional activity with a clear description. He and Mr. Schoefmann gave more information about the schedule, including trying to incorporate something with "Radically Rural." Wednesday and Thursday are travel days. Saturday's rugby game needs confirmation, which Mr. Schoefmann will have by the end of June. Sunday's options include pickle ball, a bike tour, or hiking Mt. Monadnock, which Councilor Giacomo noted requires proper hiking footwear and a jacket. Mr. Schoefmann continued that Monday is the trip to the Pioneer Valley and the Berkshires, and the time spent at Yankee Candle might be reduced. Councilor Giacomo stated that it is difficult to fit in dinner and the dance. Discussion ensued about the Monday activities and what changes to make. Mr. Schoefmann stated that the working group will try and finesse it. He continued that Tuesday is the local day, starting with a breakfast "meet and greet," followed by tours in the City, which he gave information about. Wednesday is a trip to the State Capitol and the White Mountains. Thursday is the trip to the seacoast. Discussion continued. Mr. Schoefmann noted the itineraries for those travel days need to be fleshed out a little more. Friday is a "free day" where guests can choose their own activities, and Saturday is departure.

Chair Mitchell stated that the schedule the working group has put together looks very good. He continued that the departure flight is Saturday night. He continued that last time, the travelers checked

in at the airport then left the airport and were able to explore Boston for a while. They were wondering if they could do that this time, too. Discussion ensued.

Councilor Giacomo left at 5:25 PM.

Chair Mitchell stated that they should look into this some more, and find out where the travelers went in Boston last time. Mr. Schoefmann asked Chair Mitchell to email him after he talks with Wulf about it.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that one more thing is that he got in touch with Branch & Blade about the welcome dinner, 4:30 to 7:00 PM. He continued that he told them they were expecting no more than 50 people. They will need a way for people who are not on the committee, and not part of the exchange, to RSVP. He can take care of that. He will get the “drop dead date” by which Branch & Blade will need to know how many people to expect. Chair Mitchell asked if he knows the per-person cost. Mr. Schoefmann replied not yet; it depends on the time and number of people. Discussion continued about numbers. Mr. Schoefmann stated that they do not need the exact numbers today. Chair Mitchell replied that the number of people will probably be close to 50. Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mayor Hansel is handling the costs/details regarding the Pioneer Valley day trip. They may need PCC members’ help with research and phone calls when they figure out more. Discussion continued.

Ms. Thomas-Smith asked about the cost of the bus, noting that transportation is usually one of the biggest expenses. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he believes the Parks & Rec Department will let the PCC use their bus at no cost, but the PCC will need to pay for fuel. Ms. Thomas-Smith replied that that is great news and would significantly reduce their expenses. Ms. Mattson asked about when the bus will be used, and Mr. Schoefmann replied that the draft schedule lists the days when the bus is needed. Ms. Mattson replied that she can help drive if needed.

Chair Mitchell asked about the breakfast Mr. Schoefmann had mentioned. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it is planned for the day of the local events, Tuesday, and will be a reception of sorts. Ms. Mattson replied that it will be in the Blastos Room and they can invite the City Council. Chair Mitchell replied that someone needs to work on a guest list for that. Ms. Mattson replied that she can collect the names, and Councilor Giacomo had said he would help with it, too. Discussion continued about who to invite.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mayor Hansel said he would handle the (details for) the Statehouse visit. Chair Mitchell asked about Keene State College – maybe Sandra (Howard) would give a tour? Discussion ensued about whether/when there would be time for that in the schedule.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he may revise the schedule a bit more, but it is (in good shape). He continued that he will get information about how many people the bus carries and do some math to figure out what other transportation is needed and on which days. Ms. McCollester stated that if she will be there every day as a translator, she can help drive, and can fit up to three people in her car. Ms. Mattson replied that she can help drive, too.

Ms. Mattson asked, regarding (the breakfast on) Tuesday the 26th, if they want to invite people who were involved with the PCC/exchanges in the past. Mr. Schoefmann replied probably not, because if people get too involved in socializing, it will be hard to motivate them to go off on the tours. Chair Mitchell replied that on the other hand, it could be a good opportunity to bring in 10 or 12 people who have been big supporters of the PCC in the past, to encourage their involvement again. Ms. Mattson replied that they will need to figure out who those people are; the list of contacts she has is quite old. Chair Mitchell asked her to email the PCC and ask for names of people to invite. Mr. Schoefmann stated that breakfast and socializing can be 8:15 to 9:45 AM. Discussion continued about potential invitees. Mr. Schoefmann noted that they can invite people to the farewell dinner as well. He continued that the previous farewell dinner at the Mayor's house was very well attended. He will get more information from Councilor Giacomo. Ms. Mattson stated that she will send out the list of contacts that she has, and the PCC members can look it over and email her to let her know who they think are still around and would appreciate an invitation. She continued that her list does not include many email addresses, however. Maybe PCC members will know some of the people and have updated contact information for them.

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Schoefmann when the costs will start getting added to the schedule. Mr. Schoefmann replied as soon as they start making phone calls (to get the details figured out). Ms. Mattson asked if they should have each person pick a day and determine the information/answers needed for that day. Mr. Schoefmann replied that when he digs into some of the itineraries for certain days, he will have more of an idea and will ask people to make some calls.

B) PCC Exchange Survey/Facebook Updates

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she does not have anything from Facebook.

C) Update on Student Exchange – MC2 – October 9 to 22, 2023

Mr. Blunt stated that MC2 has a decent itinerary put together for the student exchange. He continued that they are looking at costs and hammering out the details on a couple daytrips. It is coming together, and students have been helping. July 15 and 16 will be a yard sale fundraiser, and Ms. Brunner is helping with promotion on Facebook. They are also doing a 50/50 raffle. Recently, a few students dropped out. The goal is eight students and they are at seven. They welcome recommendations for potential donors to reach out to, to help with the fundraising end.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if the students who dropped out did so for financial reasons. Mr. Blunt replied no, MC2 is looking to cover 100% of their students' costs.

Mr. Blunt stated that they are looking to have the list of truly committed host families solidified in the next four weeks. He continued that there will be eight students from Einbeck, so they need eight host families, and currently have strong commitment to cover three or four students. Discussion ensued. Mr. Lin stated that he and his wife might be able to host; he will get back to Mr. Blunt on that.

Mr. Blunt stated that as a charter school, MC2 is lucky to have the flexibility they do. They have a full studio class next quarter dedicated to the Einbeck trip, so it will be a running class in the school schedule. Some of those students are participating in the exchange and some are not. The class will be about fundraising, learning about the culture (in Einbeck), and more, and is a great educational opportunity for students.

Chair Mitchell stated that the PCC has resources to share with MC2 – for example, they can make sure the Mayor shows up to MC2’s welcome dinner, and maybe help finance a farewell dinner, or something along those lines. The Blastos family and The Pub have been very generous about catering and supporting the PCC, which he can talk more about with Mr. Blunt. Regarding host families, MC2’s best bet is to (host Einbeck students) with (MC2) students, although he knows it can be challenging. If they cannot find enough hosts, the PCC can help, but most youth coming from Einbeck want to stay with other youth. Mr. Blunt agreed and stated that that is what MC2 wants, too, and they are working to find host families among their students.

Chair Mitchell thanked Mr. Blunt for the update and asked him to keep the PCC in the loop. He continued that even a rough draft of the itinerary would be great. Ms. Mattson replied that Mr. Blunt did send that already. Mr. Schoefmann replied that it was emailed but not yet printed out (for the PCC). Ms. Mattson stated that she will email it to the PCC. She continued that she will also email the PCC the list (of past contacts she has), and anyone with information to add and/or additional names can reply to the email.

D) Update on Other Future Exchange Ideas – YMCA/Youth Centers – Pickle Ball – Dance

Chair Mitchell asked if there was anything to discuss for this item, or if they should put it off, given that they are planning for the upcoming exchange. Mr. Schoefmann stated that this could go under “More Time” items, unless there is any news. Chair Mitchell agreed.

5) Communications

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had communications to report about. (There was no response).

6) Reports

A) Treasurer Report

Ms. Mattson stated that the finance report stands as is. She continued that the regular PCC account has \$18,260.90. The appropriation account has \$12,000. Ideally, on July 1, they should be getting another appropriation added to that.

Chair Mitchell stated that just because they have money in the bank does not mean they do not have to fundraise. Ms. Mattson agreed, stating that they will be using funds for the upcoming exchange and to help MC2.

Ms. Thomas-Smith made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

7) **New Business**

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

8) **Next Meeting – July 11, 2023**

Chair Mitchell stated that he will not be here for the July 11 meeting. He asked if Mr. Schoefmann will be there to take his place. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he should be.

9) **More Time**

A) **Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities**

Chair Mitchell stated that when he was talking with the woman at Stonewall Farm, she mentioned to him in passing that Stonewall Farm might be looking for "a little taste" the PCC doing the braut sales/food coverage (at Oktoberfest). Ms. Mattson asked if he means Stonewall Farm wants a percentage. Chair Mitchell replied that he is not sure, but Stonewall Farm wants something. He continued that he told her he was not sure if they can do that, because it has never worked that way in the past, and he did not give her a real answer. Discussion ensued about what this means or could mean. PCC members wondered if Stonewall Farm is seeking a portion of the money the PCC raises at Oktoberfest, or seeking to charge the PCC a table fee, or something else. Discussion continued about how the PCC is not a 501c3, since it is a City committee and the City is not a non-profit, but PCC members recall that in the past, donations to the PCC have been tax deductible. Ms. Mattson stated that she will check with (City Attorney) Tom Mullins, but she believes the PCC is allowed to give donors the City's tax ID number for donors to put on their tax returns.

B) Pumpkin Fest, potential fund-raising opportunity. Brats and Kraut sales – potential free use of grill and donations for brats and krauts, volunteers

10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison