

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

**PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, February 13, 2024**

**5:00 PM**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

John Mitchell, Chair  
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair (remote)  
Councilor Andrew Madison  
Michael Giacomo  
Derek Blunt  
Doris McCollester  
Gerald Lins, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

**Members Not Present:**

George Hansel  
Dawn Thomas-Smith  
Mari Brunner  
Gregg Kleiner

**1) Call to Order**

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:14 PM.

**2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)**

Roll call was conducted. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he is participating remotely from home.

**3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – December 12, 2023**

Mr. Lins made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 12, 2023. Mr. Giacomo seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Chair Mitchell stated that although it was not an official meeting, he would like to note some of the things they discussed last time, from his notes and Ms. Mattson's notes: expectations for travelers, acknowledgment, address other issues, representatives to maybe take on the next exchange, and the exchange itself, particularly how to do the traveling.

**4) Board Business**

**A) Update on Student Exchange – Derek**

Mr. Blunt stated that the student exchange in October went very well. He continued that MC2 had great feedback from Einbeck students and teachers. He thinks everyone had an enriching experience, and everything went smoothly. He spoke more about some of the activities that occurred. He continued that MC2 just booked tickets for their upcoming trip to Germany. They will take six MC2 students, one non-MC2 squared student (homeschooled), and two MC2 staff members. The trip is June 15 to 28, 2024. They have been communicating regularly with folks in Germany, regarding housing and the itinerary, and everything is going well.

Chair Mitchell stated that it was a positive experience and went very well. He asked how they will get to the airport and back again (in June). Mr. Blunt replied that the two MC2 vans will probably take most of them, and a couple parents will help. He continued that they have not fully planned the details but it should be no problem. Chair Mitchell replied that the PCC can help if needed. Mr. Blunt replied that he will reach out if needed.

**B) Media Outreach – PCC Facebook Link to Chamber of Commerce – Dawn**

Chair Mitchell stated that Ms. Thomas-Smith is not here. He asked if anyone else had anything on this topic. (No.)

**C) Soccer Exchange – John**

Chair Mitchell stated that he has not yet reached out a second time to Kate. He continued that it is on his list to do this week. He talked about it with Mr. Schoefmann earlier today. Mr. Giacomo replied that Kate is very excited; he talked with her in December.

**D) Update – Guidelines/expectations for people from Keene traveling to Einbeck – Mr. Giacomo, Mr. Lins, Ms. McCollester, and Councilor Madison**

Chair Mitchell stated that they (the working group) met a couple meetings ago, and have not met in February. He suggested they set a date today. Discussion ensued. They decided on Monday, February 26, at 6:00 PM, in this same room if it is available.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that if there will be a quorum present, they need to formally notice the meeting. Ms. Mattson agreed. Discussion ensued. The group determined that the meeting does not need to be officially noticed, because the four people who will attend do not create a quorum.

**5) Communications**

Chair Mitchell stated that he received a phone call from Mayor Jay Kahn, who is very enthusiastic about the PCC. He continued that the Mayor seems very supportive and was himself a member years ago. He is likely to be traveling (to Germany) with his wife.

Chair Mitchell stated that Einbeck would like 16 guests. He continued that currently, the PCC has a list of about 13. They need to keep an eye on the other travelers, representatives from the community. Discussion ensued. Councilor Giacomo asked if Einbeck has a theme in mind for the next trip. Chair Mitchell replied no, not yet. Discussion continued.

Chair Mitchell stated that although the trip seems far away, he thinks the PCC needs to give some thought to their travel, and in particular, responding to Einbeck's strong request that travelers from Keene arrive together. He understands that is not the most economical or most liberating way of traveling, but he thinks they should travel as a group, at least for the arrival in Germany. Mr. Giacomo stated that he is one of the people who has been strongly against arriving as a group. He explained why and what he means. Discussion ensued about what exactly "arrive together" means, the logistics of it, people's reasoning for or against it, and what the Einbeck hosts have communicated. Chair Mitchell spoke in favor of purchasing all of the airplane tickets in advance, as a group, so everyone's commitments are known in advance. Mr. Giacomo asked for clarification about what, exactly, the Einbeck hosts' request is. Chair Mitchell replied to arrive at the airport together as a group. Mr. Giacomo expressed his disagreement with the idea, stating that it should be enough that everyone arrives at the same location at the same time.

Chair Mitchell asked if Mr. Schoefmann has an outline for the timing for this, if they are supposed to travel on October 10. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he would say two months of a heads up is a decent amount of time. He continued that Einbeck would thus need to know by August who is going. Chair Mitchell asked if that gives Einbeck enough time, or if Einbeck gave Keene three months' notice before traveling here. Discussion ensued. Chair Mitchell asked if it is reasonable to ask people from Keene who are traveling to Einbeck to commit and pay by July 10. Mr. Schoefmann noted that they can still expect that the list might change a bit, as it did for the travelers from Einbeck, because sometimes things are out of people's control. He thinks the beginning of August might be okay. Chair Mitchell stated that July 10 would be the day to have a group purchase accomplished by, if they are going to have a group purchase. He continued that there should be some sort of deposit/commitment earlier than that. Discussion continued about the logistics of group booking, travel agents, options, and so on and so forth. Mr. Schoefmann offered to call one or two airlines to get some information, and bring the information to the March PCC meeting. Chair Mitchell replied that they could then ask (travelers) for a commitment by May. Discussion continued. Chair Mitchell thanked Mr. Schoefmann and asked Mr. Blunt, too, to bring the PCC any information he might have about traveling.

**6) Reports**

**A) Treasurer Report**

Ms. Mattson stated that the treasurer was unable to attend today. She continued that the current balance in the PCC's appropriation fund is \$13,592.67. The other account has \$14,488.90. That is a good sum for their next visit, and if they do a soccer exchange, they will need those funds.

Chair Mitchell asked if it is correct that their other bills are paid. Ms. Mattson replied yes. Mr. Schoefmann stated that they will end up with even more, because they still need to send invoices to the participants from the fall exchange, for some activities. Chair Mitchell encouraged Mr. Blunt to come to the PCC if support is needed for the upcoming youth exchange.

7) **New Business**

Chair Mitchell asked if Mr. Schoefmann had any news about rugby. Mr. Schoefmann replied no. He continued that he thinks he will pivot his focus to helping Chair Mitchell with the soccer exchange launch.

8) **Next Meeting – March 12, 2024**

9) **More Time**

**A) Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities**

Mr. Giacomo stated that Pumpkin Fest will be happening during the exchange (in 2024). He continued that the PCC has “pretty much a guaranteed spot as a vendor.” It is a good opportunity. He suggests they secure volunteers as soon as possible. He does not know what will happen in future years, regarding the PCC having a vendor spot. Mr. Schoefmann spoke of how the PCC has not really been soliciting requests for funding. He asked if they should think about contacting the usual suspects who come to them throughout the year, so the PCC can work on budgeting. If so, working the Pumpkin Fest booth would be an opportunity to engage some of those folks who are seeking funding from the PCC to volunteer their time. Others agreed. Discussion continued.

**B) Update on other future exchange ideas – Rugby/YMCA/Youth Centers – Pickle Ball – Dance**

10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker