

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

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

**Tuesday, April 9, 2024**

**5:00 PM**

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

**Members Present:**

John Mitchell, Chair  
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair  
Councilor Andrew Madison  
Mari Brunner  
Doris McCollester  
Derek Blunt, Alternate  
Gerald Lins (until 5:24 PM)  
Michael Giacomo

**Staff Present:**

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant  
Jay Kahn, Mayor

**Members Not Present:**

George Hansel  
Dawn Thomas-Smith  
Gregg Kleiner

**Mayor Jay Kahn**

**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 – March 12, 2024**

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of March 12, 2024. Mr. Lins seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**4) Board Business**

**A) Einbeck Exchange – Continued discussion about travel plans for October 12 to 19 (group ticket purchase or airlines to use)**

*i. Brewers, Rotary Members (leadership position), Police Officers, etc.*

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Schoefmann if he has researched airlines/prices. Mr. Schoefmann reported yes, the per-person cost with Air Lingus would be \$1,036, flying into Frankfurt. He continued that he is awaiting a reply to his query from another airline. Discussion ensued about how to collect payment A minimum of 10 people qualifies for group airfare.

Chair Mitchell reported that they will be lucky to have four Rotary Club members join the trip. He continued that the hope is a conversation with Einbeck about developing an ongoing exchange. Mr. Giacomo asked how that factors into the total number of people traveling. He continued that he did not think they had spots available for four Rotarians. Chair Mitchell replied that he thinks they are at 16 or 17 travelers. He listed the names of known travelers. Mr. Giacomo asked about brewers. Chair Mitchell replied that there is room for two brewers.

Councilor Giacomo stated that he is looking for guidance on inviting brewers. He continued that there is a lot of interest from brewers, and there are many brewers in the Monadnock Region. The challenge is how to determine who to choose. As he and Councilor Madison were discussing recently, part of the answer will be choosing the brewers who are most likely to try to create an exchange out of this. The PCC supports exchanges but does not run them. He still does not know the best way of going about (choosing brewers), such as looking at brewers in or closest to Keene, and/or looking at those who create products most similar to Einbeck's, and so on and so forth. He is also not sure about how interested the Einbeck brewers are regarding an exchange. Chair Mitchell replied that Einbeck's brewers and Rotarians seem interested in exchanges and are preparing. Discussion ensued about various brewers in the Monadnock Region and how to determine the right travelers. Mr. Schoefmann spoke about wanting to involve Branch and Blade, because they have supported the PCC's endeavors for years. Chair Mitchell spoke about focusing on brewers who have time, resources, and ability to do the legwork needed for exchanges. Mr. Giacomo stated that he will draft the key points of an "elevator speech," and email about 10 different breweries. Discussion continued.

**B) Update on Student Exchange taking place June 15 to 28 – Derek**

Mr. Blunt stated that there is nothing new to report. He continued that they are still awaiting to hear about Einbeck's placements for MC2's students and the final touches to the itinerary. He will be excited to share more information at the next PCC meeting.

Chair Mitchell asked if Mr. Blunt has heard anything from Elizabeth Cardine about the teaching assistant who had expressed interest in coming to Keene. Mr. Blunt replied no.

**C) Media Outreach – links to Keene Chamber have been added to FB page – Dawn**

Chair Mitchell stated that they will skip this since Ms. Thomas-Smith is not present.

**D) Update on Future Exchanges – Soccer, Dance, and Youth Exchange – John**

Chair Mitchell stated that he received a phone call from Kerstin Hillebrecht (of Einbeck), whom he connected with Kristen Leach of the NH Dance Institute. He continued that Ms. Hillebrecht and Ms. Leach are in conversation and making plans (for a dance exchange). Travelers from Einbeck will come to Keene the first week of October, and they are planning for Keene dancers to go to Einbeck sometime next year. This is very good news.

Chair Mitchell continued that there is a group of people who would really like to have some sort of general sports exchange. That is something for the PCC to think about for the future.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if he should reach out to Kate Bosley regarding a soccer exchange. Chair Mitchell replied that he has had two emails from her and she seemed enthusiastic but he has not heard back since. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will reach out.

**E) Update – Guidelines/expectations for people from Keene traveling to Einbeck – Mike Giacomo, Gerry Lins, Doris McCollester, and Councilor Madison**

Mr. Lins stated that they (he and the other PCC in the working group) met and discussed general guidelines and expectations for travelers. He continued that he wrote those in a document and added some guidelines for hosts, too. None of the guidelines should be too shocking. They welcome PCC members' comments. They are trying to keep it to two pages. (Example guidelines) are, in essence, "have decorum," "do not complain," although worded differently, and having respect for Einbeck hosts' timing expectations and requirements. It is about respect. Mr. Lins continued that another expectation is for reciprocity of some sort, such as people who travel to Einbeck then hosting when people to Einbeck travel to Keene, or volunteering in some way. Guidelines for hosts include respecting guests' restrictions and needs (religious, culinary, and otherwise), giving guests breakfast each day, and prioritizing timeliness so the daily schedules work for everyone. PCC members can send him comments and edits.

Mr. Giacomo stated that the underlying theme of the document is that as much information as they can provide to the people running the trip, and (vice versa), the easier everything will be. For example, knowing ahead of time there will be a mountain hike, and being told which shoes to bring. He continued that communication is key. He appreciates Mr. Lins' work on this document.

Chair Mitchell thanked Mr. Lins and the working group and asked people to send any comments/thoughts to Mr. Lins. He continued that the PCC can look at it again at the next meeting. Mr. Schoefmann asked if they could finalize it today. Others agreed. Mr. Lins stated that it could always be amended if needed.

Mr. Lins left at 5:24 PM.

5) **Communications**

6) **Reports**

A) **Treasurer Report – Gregg**

Chair Mitchell stated that they do not have a treasurer report today, but he does not think anything has changed since last time. Ms. Mattson replied that she can confirm that nothing has changed.

7) **New Business**

A) **Pumpkin Fest (October 12) – further discussion/volunteers (have established 6) and need C&S contact for donation of Bratts, knockwurst, etc.**

Chair Mitchell stated that three generous people have donated their time for this upcoming Pumpkin Fest. Discussion ensued. Ms. Brunner stated that she can help. Chair Mitchell stated that he is putting together a donation request for C&S. He will access Dawn's old information and will have more information about that. He continued that if they can think of anyone else who might be able to help at the event, let him know. Mr. Blunt said he will bring students to help. Discussion continued. Ms. Brunner brought up the topic of finding a way to allow credit card payments. Discussion ensued about the challenges of that.

B) **Juliana Dodson – draft letter of invitation to attend Hannah Grimes Center's *Radically Rural* – Mayor Kahn**

Mayor Kahn stated that Juliana Dodson, leader of the Radically Rural event, called him. He continued that he does not have a written invitation from her, but that would not be hard to obtain. Ms. Dodson inquired whether a delegate from (Einbeck) would be interested in attending Radically Rural. He thinks she is interested in going to Einbeck at some point, which is a different topic. This would be a great marketing tool. He has addresses for the mayor and Jurgen Herbst, and can make sure to get an invitation to them and get a delegate to attend. Discussion ensued about the timing and including Radically Rural in the exchange schedule. Mr. Giacomo stated that Radically Rural is a series of events, not one event, so they would have to find out what specifically they would be interested in, once the theme for 2025 is determined. Mayor Kahn replied that it would be great to extend an invitation for this year, if someone wants to come. The PCC agreed to send the invitation to Mr. Herbst.

8) **Next Meeting – May 14, 2024**

Chair Mitchell asked if Mr. Schoefmann could follow up regarding the soccer exchange. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he has an email out regarding group travel, but the response from them might take up to ten days. Discussion ensued and PCC members suggested other airlines to ask. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he will inquire with three. Chair Mitchell asked what the mechanics are for (booking group travel), in terms of the procedure and deadlines, and Mr. Schoefmann explained. Chair Mitchell asked about the payment procedures, such as whether the City would pay the airline and travelers then pay the City. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he is not sure, but he could find out. Chair Mitchell asked him to look into it and report back at the next meeting.

Chair Mitchell asked if there was anything else to discuss today. Ms. Brunner brought up the topic of possibly bringing items to Einbeck to sell at Eulendorf. Discussion ensued. Mr. Schoefmann explained, for those who have not been on an exchange and did not know, that Einbeck's other partner cities bring local wares to sell at Eulendorf, and the money goes to Einbeck as a fundraiser. Discussion continued about what Keene could bring to sell, and whether this year would be a good time to try to do this, or if there is a different way Keene travelers could help out at the festival. Chair Mitchell stated that maybe Keene travelers could help with the Einbeck committee's booth at the festival, the way Einbeck travelers helped with the PCC's booth at Pumpkin Fest in the past.

- 9) **More Time**
  - A) **Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities**

- 10) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by, Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison