

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

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

**Tuesday, August 13, 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  
Michael Giacomo  
Doris McCollester  
Gerald Lins

**Staff Present:**

Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant

**Members Not Present:**

George Hansel  
Mari Brunner  
Gregg Kleiner  
Derek Blunt, Alternate

**Mayor Jay Kahn (at 5:08 PM)**

**1) Call to Order**

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

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

Roll call was conducted.

**3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – June 11, 2024**

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 11, 2024. Mr. Lins seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**4) Board Business**

**A) Einbeck Exchange**

- i. Continued discussion about travel plans for October 10<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>. Final confirmation of attendance for those planning to participate – for Group Ticket purchase.**

**ii. Further discussion – Einbeck contingent and the final number of individuals traveling.**

Chair Mitchell stated that things seem to be going well (with travel planning). He continued that Ms. Howe has been helping. A sheet is going around the room, and each person should check to make sure their email address is on it. Last night he received a call from Germany saying that they (the Einbeck hosts) do not have the travel information and email addresses from everyone (in Keene). That would explain why Keene travelers have not heard from their hosts. Discussion ensued.

Chair Mitchell welcomed Kristen Leach to the meeting, and reported on the dance exchange she has started. He continued that last year in Germany, the director of the House of Youth approached him (about starting an exchange) and he/they connected with Ms. Leach, who now has an exchange already happening. She has guests coming (to Keene from Einbeck) before October and already has the travel arrangements finalized for her students. It is an exemplary thing that they (the PCC) should be doing with the exchanges, such as Rotary and others.

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had questions, thoughts, or concerns. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he is still working on meeting with someone about the soccer exchange, which was supposed to happen last month but the scheduling has not worked yet.

**B) Update on Student Exchange - Derek**

Chair Mitchell stated that Derek Blunt is not here to give an update. He asked if anyone else can speak to this. (Guest) Gerald Kuhn replied yes, Mr. Blunt has begun fundraising for the next round of exchanges. He continued that Mr. Blunt and some students did a successful fundraiser at the Cheshire County Fair. Several students have expressed interest in participating in an exchange, but there are many details to work out. Staff makes sure to inform the students about what their responsibilities would be, which weeds out students (without serious interest/commitment).

Chair Mitchell stated that it sounded like Mr. Blunt was very pleased with the exchanges in both directions, and they look forward to more. Mr. Kuhn replied absolutely. He continued that both sides want to keep doing exchanges, and would do them even more frequently if they had the funding. They are working on an every other year cycle.

Mayor Kahn arrived at 5:08 PM.

Chair Mitchell stated that at the PCC does not have a huge budget, but at some point, they should think about a little support for students. He continued that it has been done historically. Mr. Schoefmann replied that they had been talking about having a “filing period” for groups to request supplemental funds. He continued that he thinks the PCC needs to formalize that in some way. In the past, it has been done on an as-needed basis, but if groups can schedule when

to come to the PCC with a request for funds and go through a process for approval, it might help the groups organize their exchanges a little more formally. Discussion ensued about the PCC's budget and the logistics and process. Mr. Giacomo stated that part of the PCC's mission is to encourage other exchanges, and it would be great if the number of applicants continued to grow. Mr. Kuhn shared advice on how to create an application process, from the perspective of what the MC2 School does, including having the students present to the PCC.

Chair Mitchell stated that regarding the lapel pin with two flags, the PCC bought about 100 of them eight years ago for \$2.50 to \$3.00 each. He continued that the pins have been popular with the Germans. Typically, each Keene traveler and each Einbeck guest is given one pin if they have not yet received one. Ordering 100 pins would be about \$300 or \$350. He asked if the PCC is interested in doing that this year, as there is only one pin left. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Lins made a motion to use Partner City Committee funds to cover the cost of 100 pins. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

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

At Chair Mitchell's request, Ms. Leach gave an update on the dance exchange. She stated that it is coming along, and there will be a meeting Thursday night, to finalize who is hosting and get the addresses to Einbeck. Brief discussion ensued.

**5) Communications**

Chair Mitchell stated that he received a call from Jürgen Herbst last night, who says that everything is going perfectly. He continued that Mr. Herbst should send itineraries to the Keene travelers soon. He still needs travel information from a few Keene travelers. He (Chair Mitchell) will get that information to him. Helen Mattson asked Nicole Howe to enter her (Ms. Mattson's) flight information and send it to Mr. Herbst. Ms. Howe agreed.

Mr. Giacomo stated that he has been trying to work with local brewers for the last couple of months, regarding an exchange, and it would be an amazing exchange if they could get a brewery that was willing to run with it. He continued that he personally cannot create that exchange. They need a brewer/brewery to step up and help create and run this exchange, but he is not finding that person. Discussion ensued. PCC members gave ideas for who else to talk with. Mr. Giacomo stated that it is important to determine what the mission of a brewery exchange would be, and probably the brewers themselves would need to determine that. Whether there is value in a brewery exchange is up to the brewers.

**6) Reports**

**A) Treasurer's Report – Gregg**

Chair Mitchell stated that they will skip the treasurer's report since the treasurer is not present. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he has the report, which Ms. Mattson gave him before her departure. He continued that the appropriations account has \$18,052.09, and the base account has \$13,666.38.

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

7) **New Business**

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

Chair Mitchell stated that his news is that C&S will not donate to the PCC for their Pumpkin Fest fundraiser, due to the PCC not having a tax ID number and all of the other non-profit requirements. Mr. Schoefmann stated that since half of the volunteers for the Pumpkin Fest fundraiser are from MC2, it would be good for the PCC to list MC2 as a partner in the booth itself and ask them kindly if the PCC could utilize (their tax ID number). Chair Mitchell replied that they could ask if MC2 would be able to fill out the form. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he missed a meeting for vendors. He put the Vendor Coordinator in touch with Ms. Brunner and Mr. Blunt. Mr. Blunt seems willing to spearhead (the PCC's Pumpkin Fest participation), so he recommends they ask Mr. Blunt about this. He will write that email.

Discussion continued and Mr. Giacomo recommended asking Price Chopper and Hannaford for food donations if it does not work out with C&S. Chair Mitchell asked if they should organize a Pumpkin Fest working group, for planning the food, organizing, collecting all of the materials, and determining what they are going to cook and sell and how they are going to do it. He asked who could join this working group. Mr. Schoefmann replied that since Mr. Blunt is spearheading this, they should talk with him. Discussion ensued about who can participate, given that many PCC members will be in Einbeck. Chair Mitchell stated that he will talk with Mr. Blunt and share the information he has about where and how to get the food and where the (materials) are.

Councilor Madison stated that another idea regarding bratwurst and knockwurst donations is that Boston, MA has a German Consul General, Dr. (Sonja Kreibich). He continued that part of the mission of the Consul General is to promote friendly relations, and promote knowledge and understanding, which is similar to what the PCC does. It might be worth reaching out to (her) and seeing if (she) wants to work with the PCC.

Mr. Schoefmann replied that actually, the Consul General is coming to Keene soon. He continued that in May or June, the Consul General's assistant reached out to Helen Mattson, having done a search for German-centric groups in New England and finding the PCC. He talked with the Consul General's assistant and organized a visit to Keene for them this coming Monday. He and Chair Mitchell will meet with them. PCC members are invited to come to City

Hall to help greet them. The Consul General and her assistant will have lunch with him, Chair Mitchell, and Mayor Kahn, to discuss the PCC's endeavors. It would be great if the Consul General could help promote some of those. They will drop a note about some help with the bratwurst. The Mayor has scheduled a visit to Keene State College (KSC) with the Consul General as well, to visit with the KSC president and visit the Cohen Center. He will send the PCC an email with the information about Monday.

Chair Mitchell stated that the next step is to communicate with the American Consulate in Germany, once they have had this visit and made a connection. They should also let Dr. Kreibich know how helpful Sabine (Michalek), the Mayor of Einbeck, has been.

**B) Purchase of Keene/Einbeck lapel pins – cost approval**

(Discussed in previous agenda item).

Chair Mitchell asked if there was any other new business. Ms. Leach stated that at the last Clarence DeMar Marathon meeting, she asked if anyone was interested in having a running exchange with Einbeck. People from Einbeck would come to Keene and run the Clarence DeMar Marathon, and people from Keene would go to Einbeck to run the marathon there. She continued that people became very excited. Discussion ensued about the idea of a running exchange. Chair Mitchell asked for it to be on next month's agenda.

In response to a question about whether it would be safe for students or inexperienced marathon runners, Ms. Leach clarified that it would be an exchange for adults, not students. She continued that she does not expect that people without running experience would choose to sign up for a running exchange.

**8) Next Meeting – September 10, 2024**

Chair Mitchell stated that the next meeting for travelers is coming up. Ms. Mattson replied that it will be at her house, in Fitzwilliam, NH, at 6:30 PM on August 20. Discussion ensued and Chair Mitchell clarified that it is an optional meeting for travelers, mainly social, and there will be another meeting before the trip as well. Discussion continued and the group determined that the next meeting for travelers will be September 17, also at 6:30 PM, location TBD.

Mayor Kahn asked if there was room to add another traveler (for the trip to Einbeck this October). Chair Mitchell replied no, it is too late to add anyone. He continued that there will be another trip in three years.

**9) More Time**

**A) Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities**

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had anything to add for this agenda item. Mr. Schoefmann replied that Pumpkin Fest is coming up, so they are pouring most of their efforts into that.

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

Chair Mitchell asked if Mayor Kahn had anything to report for this agenda item. Mayor Kahn replied no. Ms. Mattson stated that it is just on the agenda as a mental note. Mayor Kahn stated that they (the Germans) expressed interest in next year’s event, but he does not think there was interest in attending this year.

**C) Media Outreach**

Chair Mitchell stated that he approached a photographer of a local newspaper, who spoke with his editor, and the photographer is excited to travel to Einbeck with the Keene delegation next time, if there is a spot for him. He continued that he believes the photographer is from the Monadnock Ledger. They will invite him to PCC events. Mayor Kahn stated that he can help with communication with the Keene Sentinel. Discussion continued. Mr. Giacomo spoke about the possibility of an arts exchange.

**10) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Nicole Howe, Staff Liaison