

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

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

**Tuesday, December 10, 2024**

**5:00 PM**

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

**Members Present:**

John Mitchell, Chair  
Councilor Andrew Madison  
Michael Giacomo  
Mari Brunner  
Doris McCollester  
Gerald Lins

**Staff Present:**

Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant

**Members Not Present:**

William Schoefmann, Vice Chair  
Eric Weisenberger  
George Hansel  
Derek Blunt, Alternate

**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 – November 12, 2024**

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

**4) Board Business**

**A) Next Exchange – dates, hosting duties, itinerary ideas**

Chair Mitchell stated that Einbeck would like the exchange to be September 25 to October 4, or October 13 to October 25. He expects Einbeck to confirm which dates they want, in the next couple of weeks.

Discussion ensued about the timing of the Choral Exchange and Pumpkin Fest.

Mr. Lins and Councilor Madison talked about/asked what activities they should plan for Einbeck visitors. Mr. Giacomo replied that they will have an ongoing discussion about that over the next eight months. Discussion continued. PCC members spoke of how even if the exchange overlaps with Ms. Howard's choral exchange, there probably will not be a lot of overlap with activities, and gave ideas for activities.

Chair Mitchell raised the topic of hosting duties. He asked who will be able to host. Mr. Lins, Ms. Brunner, Councilor Madison, and Mr. Giacomo replied in the affirmative. Discussion continued about who has room for how many people. Chair Mitchell stated that it sounds like they have room right now for 14 guests, which is a great start. He continued that a few PCC members not present tonight might also host. They will need to get some back-up spots. As soon as they hear from the Einbeck group about whether they are choosing 9/25 to 10/4 or 10/13 to 10/25, Ms. Howe will let the PCC know.

Chair Mitchell stated that the PCC can think of ideas for new tours or places to visit during the exchange. Councilor Madison stated that he and some others were mulling over the idea of local bakeries. He gave some suggestions of local businesses. Gerald Kuhn added bakery ideas, and discussion continued. Mr. Lins gave ideas about a tour of a local brewery and hosting a cookout. Discussion continued about that and other breweries. Ms. Brunner suggested the possibility of a hike if the weather is good. Chair Mitchell suggested an expanded visit to the Statehouse, which was a popular activity in the past. PCC members suggested other NH towns/cities to consider visiting, and the possibility of a boat ride. Discussion continued with other ideas, such as the tramway at Mt. Washington, Littleton, farms, Yankee Candle, the butterfly sanctuary, glassblowers and other art, and more. Chair Mitchell stated that of course, they will have an opening ceremony and a going away ceremony, and they can talk about locations for those. PCC members gave ideas.

**B) Fundraising Ideas and Opportunities**

**C) Choral Exchange Sponsorship Consideration**

Chair Mitchell stated that historically, the PCC has met to come up with ideas, review the PCC's finances, and discuss what kind of support they could give to requests. He asked if the committee can discuss the Choral Exchange request now, to have their questions ready for Sandra (Howard) when she comes to the next meeting, at which the PCC might be ready to vote and give Ms. Howard an answer. PCC members replied yes, they can talk about it today.

PCC members asked for clarification of what Ms. Howard is asking for, and how much money the PCC has currently. Chair Mitchell replied that Ms. Howard is asking for about \$7,100. Ms. Howe stated that the PCC's fundraising account has \$16,973, and the general appropriations account has \$16,982.

Discussion ensued about the PCC's account balances, expenditures, the costs of hosting Einbeck visitors in Keene, and PCC members' thoughts on the Choral Exchange's request. The PCC members discussed the need to maintain a reserve and of how much, the various exchanges the PCC supports or wants to support, the elements of exchanges that the PCC will or will not support financially, and the PCC's fundraising capacity. They discussed what the responsibilities are or should be of the various groups that organize exchanges, the travelers, and the hosts. PCC members' questions about the Choral Exchange were what type of support Keene State College (KSC) is providing, how KSC manages transporting students to events (such as athletics) and whether they could use buses for this.

Mr. Giacomo suggested the PCC create a specific line item in their budget, annually, for funds that are for third party exchanges the PCC supports. He continued that this (type of request like Ms. Howard's) has come up before and will continue coming up, as more exchanges come together.

Discussion continued. PCC members agreed that they want to support the Choral Exchange. Discussion ensued about the details of the financial support and other types of support, and PCC members had questions about the Choral Exchange's transportation/bus budget and whether there are options there.

Chair Mitchell stated that Ms. Howard is coming to the PCC's January meeting. He asked if the PCC members think it is reasonable, based on today's conversation, to offer approximately \$2,000. PCC members replied yes. Mr. Giacomo replied yes, or they could say the PCC would cover the cost of the welcome reception and the trip (to Keene from Boston), but they would prefer knowing the details behind the transportation company. Others agreed.

- 5) **Communications**
- 6) **Reports**
  - A) **Treasurer Report - Eric**
- 7) **New Business**
- 8) **Next Meeting – January 14, 2025**
- 9) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant