

**CITY OF KEENE  
PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE  
AGENDA**

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

5:00 pm to 6:00 pm

2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall



1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)**
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** approval of meeting minutes: February 11, 2025
4. **Board Business:**
  - a) Next Exchange- review itinerary research assigned at last meeting
  - b) Fundraising ideas and opportunities
5. **Communications:**
  - a) Derek Blunt- Yard sale fundraiser to benefit student exchange- update
  - b) Facebook- “Keene Partner City Committee”- like, share, suggest
6. **Reports:**
  - a) Treasurer Report – *Eric*
7. **New Business:**
  - a.) Notification of Council Action- Reports to the Council by Boards and Commissions
  - b.) MC2 Student Exchange Update & Request of Support
8. **Next Meeting:** Next meeting is March 11, 2025
9. **More Time:**
10. **Adjournment**



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

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

**Tuesday, February 11, 2025**

**5:00 PM**

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

**Members Present:**

John Mitchell, Chair  
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair  
Gerald Kuhn  
Mari Brunner  
Doris McCollester  
Gerald Lins (arrived at 5:04 PM)  
Eric Weisenberger  
Derek Blunt

**Staff Present:**

Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant

**Members Not Present:**

Councilor Andrew Madison

**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 – January 14, 2025**

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 14, 2025. Mr. Kuhn seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

**4) Board Business**

**A) Next Exchange – Program Planning/Itinerary**

Chair Mitchell stated that the Germans’ travel dates have changed. He continued that they will now be coming to Keene from October 15 to 24. He continued that there are 26 travelers on their list, and the PCC had decided that 20 was the limit. He will relay that information to Jürgen

29 Herbst, unless someone feel they should go beyond 20, which he personally does not think  
30 would be reasonable. He gave more information about whose names are on or not on the list of  
31 travelers.

32  
33 Gerald Lins arrived at 5:04 PM.

34  
35 Discussion ensued about who can host and who cannot, and what the numbers are. Mr. Lins  
36 spoke about how he could host two to four guests. Ms. Brunner confirmed that she can host two.  
37 Chair Mitchell stated that Councilor Madison is not here, but he believes he can host one. Mr.  
38 Giacomo, Mr. Schoefmann, Chair Mitchell, and Mr. Kuhn can each host two. Mr. Blunt stated  
39 that he could host one person if the PCC is really in a bind, but he is already hosting a teacher.  
40 Chair Mitchell stated that it sounds like they have spots for 13 people so far, and they need spots  
41 for 20, so this is something to work on. He continued that typically there are community  
42 members who are excited about hosting. Discussion continued.

43  
44 Chair Mitchell asked the group to discuss the calendar and activities. Mr. Schoefmann stated  
45 that he believes they had decided the cruise would be the culminating event. Discussion ensued  
46 about the cruise and which day to schedule it for. Mr. Lins spoke about hosting an outdoor  
47 gathering at his house in Chesterfield, NH. Discussion continued about activities. Ms. Brunner  
48 stated that by the end of the trip, people will probably want time/opportunity for shopping.  
49 Regarding the visit to the capital, Mr. Schoefmann asked if Mayor Kahn is coordinating that.  
50 Ms. Howe replied yes, they are all set to take everyone for a visit; they just need a date. She  
51 continued that he has connections there and could arrange something with the governor or a  
52 senator. Mr. Kuhn noted that the McAuliffe Center (science museum) is also in Concord.

53  
54 Chair Mitchell asked what other big activities they want to do, so they can plan the smaller  
55 activities around those. For example, do they want to go to Boston, the Seacoast, or somewhere  
56 else out of town? Discussion ensued. Mr. Lins spoke about Hanover/Lebanon, NH, King Arthur  
57 Flour, and other attractions in that area. Mr. Schoefmann spoke about how they usually try to  
58 schedule an ice breaker activity early on. Mr. Weisenberger is looking into The Showroom.  
59 Chair Mitchell noted that the Redfern reception with the choral exchange is on the schedule as a  
60 crossover opportunity, and if they will do another one on Sunday, maybe that is not a great thing  
61 for Thursday night. Ms. Howe stated that Mayor Kahn wanted her to relay that he contacted  
62 Harrisville Mills, and they have okayed a visit/tour if that is something the PCC is interested in.  
63 He also called another manufacturer and is waiting to hear back. Chair Mitchell replied that  
64 sometime on Thursday would be available, or Tuesday or Monday. Discussion continued about  
65 the timing of activities, and the balance of walking activities with sedate activities, the amount of  
66 driving/riding, and how much time to allot each activity. Ms. McCollester suggested fitting in  
67 the Cathedral of the Pines sometime. Ms. Brunner suggested scheduling the manufacturer tours  
68 for Monday. Others spoke about various museums, the Quechee Gorge, and a nearby antique  
69 mall. Mr. Schoefmann stated that someone should look into which days and hours things are  
70 open in the Hanover area, and which activities would require reservations. Mr. Kuhn stated that

71 if they keep Sunday as “family day,” which is low key, they could pack in more activity on  
72 Monday.

73  
74 Chair Mitchell stated that this will help the PCC figure out transportation, too. He continued that  
75 they will need transportation on Friday, and on either October 20 or 21, and on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. He  
76 hopes that hosts would transport to and from the gathering at Mr. Lins’ house. Discussion  
77 continued about transportation options, and the possibility of splitting the group up if some  
78 people are interested in certain activities but not others. Ms. Brunner asked if they know  
79 anything about the travelers’ ages and interests. Chair Mitchell replied not yet. Discussion  
80 ensued about what is known so far about travelers, and who has been to Keene before; and about  
81 getting feedback from the travelers about their interest in certain activities.

82  
83 Chair Mitchell stated that the trip to Concord can include the capital, the State library, and the  
84 Supreme Court, followed by shopping, and getting everyone back to Keene for dinner with their  
85 host families. He continued that he assumes the Mayor is going to do the majority of the  
86 planning for that day. He asked if Mr. Blunt could do some researching/planning for the Friday,  
87 regarding the activities and shopping, and come back to the PCC with information. Discussion  
88 continued.

89  
90 Chair Mitchell brought up Pumpkin Fest, which the PCC will be selling food at, on Saturday. He  
91 continued that Sandra Howard invited folks to a potluck dinner with the choral exchange that  
92 evening. He asked if they want to go to that. Discussion ensued about the timing. Chair  
93 Mitchell suggested they wait to hear about when Pumpkin Fest ends, and if it ends at a realistic  
94 time, then they can aim for (the potluck dinner).

95  
96 Chair Mitchell stated that Sunday is a home day, and there is a choral concert in the evening. He  
97 asked if that is a “choose your own event,” or if they should try to coordinate having everyone  
98 attend. Mr. Kuhn asked if there has been any communication with the German Consulate (from  
99 Boston), because they had talked about that. Chair Mitchell replied that the firmer the PCC has  
100 its calendar, the better. Mr. Kuhn replied that Pumpkin Fest or the choral concert are the two  
101 potential dates (for the German Consulate to come). Ms. Brunner stated that she wonders if the  
102 choral group could push the dinner back a little bit because of Pumpkin Fest. Mr. Schoefmann  
103 replied that he will ask Ms. Howard.

104  
105 Chair Mitchell stated that Monday or Tuesday will be the Route 12 day. He continued that he  
106 will work on (planning/researching) that, if anyone wants to work with him on that. Mr. Kuhn  
107 replied that he can. Ms. Howe asked if whichever day is not Rt. 12 day would be the day for  
108 visiting local manufacturers. Chair Mitchell replied that that makes sense. Mr. Weisenberger  
109 stated that he can see if either of those evenings work for a tour of the theater and a gathering of  
110 sorts. Others replied that the ideal situation would be The Showroom on the 16<sup>th</sup> for a welcome  
111 dinner. Discussion continued. Chair Mitchell spoke about the manufacturing at KSC, and others  
112 spoke about the place on Court St.

113

114           **B) Fundraising Ideas and Opportunities**  
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116 Chair Mitchell stated that the Community Kitchen is interested in partnering with the community  
117 kitchen in Einbeck. He continued that he did some research and made some phone calls and  
118 learned that Einbeck does not have a community kitchen; they have a program run by local  
119 government, where they collect the food at the civic level and distribute it to families. It is a  
120 private process, where food is brought to your house, and no one knows you got it. Thus, they  
121 do not see a good connection there (between Einbeck and Keene for this), because Keene's  
122 process is overt and theirs is private. However, the PCC has been invited to help the Community  
123 Kitchen on October 4. There is a community dinner fundraiser event between 5:30 and 8:30 PM.  
124 The Community Kitchen would give a tour anytime during the Einbeck visitors' trip, and they  
125 have asked if the PCC could provide some food between 5:30 and 8:30 on October 4. He was  
126 thinking brats with curry. Discussion ensued. Chair Mitchell continued that the Community  
127 Kitchen will have a large-screen TV and they said the PCC is welcome to put anything on it, to  
128 advertise. PCC members could be there to talk with people about what the group does. He noted  
129 that the Community Kitchen would like the PCC to be there to talk with people even if they do  
130 not bring food. Discussion ensued, and PCC members agreed that it sounds like a good thing to  
131 do. Chair Mitchell stated that he will let the Community Kitchen know.  
132

133 Chair Mitchell stated that Mr. Blunt has been in touch with the radio station. He continued that  
134 he will try and do a promotion for his fundraiser and talk about the upcoming visit from the  
135 German students. Mr. Blunt stated that there will be a yard sale fundraiser at MC2 School on  
136 February 22 and 23. He asked who he could send that information to, for the PCC's social  
137 (media). Ms. Howe replied that she does not yet have access to that, but she could try to get  
138 access to it. Mr. Blunt stated that MC2 also welcomes donations of items for the yard sale.  
139 Discussion continued.  
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141 Ms. Brunner stated that last time, they had talked about some folks wanting to do more of the  
142 dance stuff. She asked if that is (still happening). Chair Mitchell replied yes, he will put  
143 Monday night Nelson contra dance. Ms. Brunner asked if he thinks they would be interested in  
144 learning line dancing. Discussion ensued. Chair Mitchell spoke about a man who owns a dance  
145 studio in Claremont, and how he has offered space if the PCC wants to bring dancers.  
146

147 Ms. McColleston stated that they had also talked about how Mr. Lins' wife had an idea about a  
148 Keene/Einbeck cookbook. Others replied that they think it is a good idea. Mr. Lins replied yes,  
149 but there is no deadline for this; it is just an idea that is out there that could develop. Ms.  
150 McColleston replied that she just mentioned it because it is not something that happens overnight.  
151 Chair Mitchell stated that the PCC will soon send Einbeck all the information about the Keene  
152 hosts, with little biographies. He continued that when they do that, they can add a request for  
153 (Einbeck travelers) to bring a copy of their favorite recipes.  
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155           **5) Communications**

156           **A) Update on Choral Exchange Sponsorship**

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- 6) **Reports**
  - A) **Treasurer Report – Eric**

- 7) **New Business**

Mr. Schoefmann introduced Dylan Murphy, who (works in Public Works). He continued that Mr. Murphy’s boss, Ben Crowder, mentioned that Mr. Murphy went to high school in Germany and would be good for the committee. He invited him here to see what the PCC was all about.

Mr. Murphy stated that Mr. Crowder told him the PCC could use a Public Works representative, and yes, he went to high school in Germany. He continued that he is not fluent in German the way he used to be, but it has been 10 years. He is glad to be here.

Mr. Blunt introduced his guest, Camille Branch, a student from MC2. He continued that he thinks they would be hard pressed to find any exchange program in the country whose students are involved in planning, fundraising, and fully fleshing out the exchanges as much as the MC2 students are. He wants a student presence at the PCC, and Camille has been doing awesome work and hopefully will be part of the next exchange. Chair Mitchell and others thanked Camille for coming.

- 8) **Next Meeting – March 11, 2025**

- 9) **More Time**

- 10) **Adjournment**

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

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant

