

City of Keene
New Hampshire

FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 13, 2025

5:30 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Thomas F. Powers, Chair
Michael J. Remy, Vice Chair
Bryan J. Lake

Members Not Present:

Bettina A. Chadbourne
Kris E. Roberts

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Ferland, City Manager
Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager
Kari Chamberlain, Finance Director/Treasurer
Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney
Don Lussier, Public Works Director
Duncan Watson, Assistant Public Works
Director/Solid Waste Manager
Andrea Bixby, Public Works Office Manager
Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer
Mitchell Smith, Highway Operations
Manager
Aaron Costa, Assistant Public Works
Director/WWTP Manager
Ben Crowder, Sewer Operations Manager
Andrew Keyser, Laboratory Manager
Jim Mountford, Fleet Services Operations
Manager

Chair Powers called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM and directed members of the public to the proposed Fiscal Year 2025–2026 Budget at www.KeeneNH.gov.

Proposed Fiscal Year 2025–2026 Budget Review

Public Works (Pages 160–170)

Chair Powers welcomed Public Works Director, Don Lussier, who introduced the Public Works Department’s proposed Fiscal Year 2025–2026 Budget and his staff to discuss specific parts of the Budget. Mr. Lussier explained the Public Works Department encompasses Administration, Engineering, Highway, Solid Waste, Water, Sewer, and Fleet Services. The Department’s FY 26 proposed Operating Budget totaled \$31 million, which Mr. Lussier called a significant portion of the City’s Budget.

Mr. Lussier highlighted long-term trends and challenges the Public Works Department is watching:

1. Retention & Recruitment of Qualified Staff: A recurring theme year after year, with challenges in the past competing against the private sector. More recently, very experienced, qualified, mid-career employees were leaving the City to pursue opportunities with other public sector employers, which concerned Mr. Lussier. So, over the next year, he will work with the City Manager and Human Resources to ensure the City is very well positioned to compete for and retain talented staff. Unfortunately, he said those vacancies put a lot of extra strain on the people that remained, which was driving up overtime costs, and increasing the need for contract work. So, Mr. Lussier said it was not good for the bottom line.
2. The Regulatory Environment: Solid waste, drinking water, and wastewater are all highly regulated industries—whether municipal or private sector. Mr. Lussier said the long-term trend had been that the regulations the City must comply with are getting more and more stringent and he did not envision any of them becoming less stringent. Each time they became more stringent (i.e., a new compliance requirement), there is an additional operating cost for the Department's Budget, whether that is due to an expensive new laboratory test or additional requirements for disposal of solid waste. The Department is following two regulatory issues at this time: (1) perfluoroalkyl substances, a.k.a. PFAS, would have a significant impact on wastewater treatment, the disposal of sludge from the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and more generally, how the City manages solid waste. PFAS were identified within the Transfer Station's plume, so Mr. Lussier said it would be something the City deals with in the future. (2) Disinfectant byproducts, a series of chemicals produced when the disinfectant used for drinking water—chlorine—interacts with naturally occurring organic matter in the source water. Mr. Lussier said there was a lot of evidence to suggest the toxicity of these byproducts, so they were being more stringently regulated. He anticipated changes in the future impacting how the City treats and distributes water, and how quickly water turns over within the system—all of which could affect the Operating Budget in coming years.
3. Ongoing Inflationary Pressure on Materials, Equipment and Fuel: The cost of asphalt, vehicle repair parts, and disposal tipping fees are rising faster than the Operating Budget can keep up with. The price of new vehicles and heavy equipment has increased sharply. Mr. Lussier was proud of his staff for being remarkably creative and finding ways to offset these cost increases, such as extending replacement cycles by repurposing vehicles. They are also rightsizing the fleet, such as getting the Clerk's office a smaller, lower-cost, and less expensive to fuel and maintain transit vehicle vs. their former full-size cargo van, which is no longer appropriate. On utilities, Mr. Lussier reported activities like replacing motors to make equipment more energy-efficient. In reality, he said there is only so much to be squeezed out of those operational efficiencies, and he thought the Department was close to that limit this year.

Mr. Lussier thought the upcoming Public Works staff would discuss many more than normal supplemental requests, the vast majority of which he said are required just to maintain the current level of service. A few requests were for new or enhanced services that staff thought would be good to offer, which they will highlight. Despite these challenges, Mr. Lussier said the Public

Works Department remains committed to providing essential services that the customers and community expect.

Over the previous year, the Department began several initiatives to improve and expand its service offerings: (1) The fall 2024 Ward Optimization Weeks (WOW) were very popular and well-received by the public. Mr. Lussier appreciated the Council endorsing their continuation. (2) Elimination of the long-term blanket parking ban in favor of a more as-needed approach. Mr. Lussier said they have not worked out all the kinks in the new system, and they will continue improving it. (3) A plan for overlaying asphalt sidewalks to address safety concerns and functionality of the sidewalks that are not in the schedule to be repaired or replaced anytime soon. (4) The Roadway Safety Action Plan that the Council recently adopted would put the City on track to significantly reduce—hopefully eliminate—fatal and severe accidents over the coming years and decades; it also helps the City apply for grant funding to make safety improvements. Mr. Lussier and his knowledgeable staff were proud of all the good things happening at Public Works. The Budget they would review reflects their efforts to minimize the burden on the tax and ratepayers while ensuring the City's infrastructure systems and Department operations meet the community's needs. Mr. Lussier hoped the Committee would support the recommended Budget. He welcomed individuals from his Department to speak to parts of the Public Works Department Budget.

Administration: Andrea Bixby, Public Works Department Office Manager of 10 years after promotion from Administrative Assistant, explained that the Administrative team also includes an Administrative Assistant, and together they handle all incoming requests—whether in person, via phone, email, Facebook, etc.—and get that information to staff working in the field. They also manage records, public outreach via social media, and the Public Works section of the Keene website. Ms. Bixby also manages Green-Up Keene each year, which she said was steadily growing since her participation the first year. She reported great success in 2025 with the most volunteers ever—over 300—collecting almost 5,000 lbs. of trash. She agreed that prices were going up and said the best way she could combat that was shopping around for various office supplies; she purchases for most of the Public Works Department, not just Administration. Chair Powers said it was a great description of Ms. Bixby being the Department's focal point as much as Mr. Lussier was, and Chair Powers referred to the Administrative Budget sections on pages 166–167. City Manager, Elizabeth Ferland, added that Ms. Bixby deserved credit for stepping up to help when the Revenue office was struggling with the huge task of Water and Sewer billing, stating she was doing a great job. Ms. Bixby said it was taking a lot of her time and was such a big part of her job, but it completely slipped her mind when presenting.

Engineering: Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer, explained that the Engineering Division is responsible for planning, designing, and managing Keene's infrastructure systems and acts as engineering oversight for all of the City's departments and divisions. The Division's Budget was based on a fully-staffed group of six full-time employees, including the City Engineer, three civil engineers, an infrastructure project manager, and an engineering technician, as well as two inspectors hired during the construction season. Most Engineering staff were funded through the Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) in the Water and Sewer Funds. Mr. Ruoff said the Department was not proposing significant changes to the Budget from the previous fiscal year for FY-26. He looked to incorporate cost-of-living increases for the wages for two positions under the

Operations Budget and cost-of-living updates to the benefits listed. He said the only supplemental request was because the Department was understaffed for approximately two years. The request was an additional \$10,500 in Technical Services and would be specifically allocated to traffic studies and traffic management because that was the most requested within the current workload. At this time, there are 40 projects in construction or design, of which eight to 10 are major infrastructure projects of over \$2 million. So, Mr. Ruoff said the Department needs to act on requests quickly for the public and ensure it supports the City.

Highway: Mitchell Smith, Highway Operations Manager, said the proposed FY-26 Highway Department Budget was mostly unchanged from FY-25. He explained two supplemental requests. (1) Pavement markings: both contracts increased this year, so the Department requested \$5,500 to cover the costs. (2) Sidewalk sealing – \$20,000: the City has approximately 29.5 miles of concrete sidewalk that are installed with a sealant that lasts five to eight years. At this time, the City did not have a program for resealing, so Mr. Smith said implementing this would help extend the life of the City's investment in concrete sidewalks. Mr. Smith concluded with FY-25 Highway Division highlights: increased tax ditch maintenance with more equipment, drag box paving, drain cleaning program, sidewalk paver program, and the aforementioned WOW Weeks.

Vice Chair Remy asked how much sidewalk \$20,000 of sealant would cover. Mr. Smith replied approximately 10%, which could be accomplished again in future years. Mr. Lussier said this was one of the enhancement requests. He explained the plan was to purchase the equipment out of this year's budget (FY 26) from which there should be an excess leftover. He said the intention—with the Council's support—would be for this to become a part of the baseline Budget in future years until it catches up on an ongoing basis. He agreed with Mr. Smith that the work would not happen immediately, but the City should see value from extending the life of and getting better service out of that concrete investment. Vice Chair Remy mentioned the eight-year life of the sealant (at least 12.5% annually) and Mr. Lussier mentioned an every-five-year rotation ideally.

Councilor Lake asked for a brief update on sidewalk funding plans for this year given there were troubles in the past for some new concrete sidewalks. The City Engineer, Mr. Ruoff, stated the City had not issued the Notice to Proceed noting the contractor was the lower bidder and was the same contractor working on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ramp at the Parks and Recreation Department building. Mr. Ruoff said the City wanted to keep the pressure on the contractor to complete that work and was waiting for the ADA ramp to be completed before awarding the sidewalks. The plan was for them to start the sidewalk work in late May or early June 2025 with Gardner, West, and Willow Streets—listed in the Council's monthly update of construction projects.

Chair Powers opened the floor to public comments.

Mayor Jay Kahn recalled it being great to hear the Community Development Department address the asphalt paver sidewalks—which could extend the amount of sidewalks improved annually—during past information sessions. The Mayor thought it would be worth highlighting those statistics per construction season and the City taking action to accomplish such things. Mr. Smith believed it was approximately 1,500 feet of overlaying asphalt sidewalks vs. 0 feet accomplished

without the pavers. For context, Public Works Director, Mr. Lussier, added the program for asphalt sidewalk replacement with concrete in the CIP was to typically replace 1,200–1,400 feet each year, so he said the goal of this would be to essentially double the length of sidewalk touched annually.

Solid Waste Fund (Pages 198–209)

Duncan Watson, Assistant Public Works Director/Solid Waste Manager, addressed the Committee during his final Budget presentation after 33 years with the City of Keene. Mr. Watson offered guidance regarding Keene's solid waste and recycling future as it directly impacts the Operating and Capital Budgets. Keene's solid waste program is unique in the State of New Hampshire and the entirety of Keene's Solid Waste Budget exists outside of the general taxation rate as a Special Revenue Fund. The program relies on tipping fees for trash disposal and revenue from the sale of recycling commodities to maintain the approximate \$6 million in revenue to offset the approximate \$6 million in expenses. Mr. Watson was very proud to have successfully managed this innovative business model and expected it would be able to continue under the new leadership in the future. When Mr. Watson assumed responsibility of Solid Waste Operations in June 1992, Keene was sitting on a low single-digit recycling rate. He said many tools had been and would continue being employed in maximizing the City's diversion rate, as each ton of waste the City diverts saves \$99.00 in disposal costs. However, over his three decades of work in this field, he learned the only real way to meaningfully increase diversion—meaning alternatives from bearing our waste—is through investments in infrastructure. Mr. Watson explained the City of Keene's recycling program leapt from a low single-digit diversion rate in 1992 to a low-to-mid-20% diversion rate by 1994 due to the City's investment in infrastructure and opening the City's materials recovery facility. This mechanized facility allowed for processing recyclable portions of the waste stream more effectively and efficiently, thus dramatically increasing the City's diversion rate. However, three decades after the commissioning of what continues to be the largest municipally-operated materials recovery facility in the State of NH, Mr. Watson said Keene remained stuck with no meaningful hope of growing its diversion rate without access to improved infrastructure. He stated that Keene could not achieve this necessary infrastructure investment alone. The cost to sort the waste stream holistically, with up to 70 sortations, and achieve diversion rates exceeding 80% would be prohibitive. Mr. Watson had been advocating for a more centralized approach to managing solid waste that seeks to achieve the stated goals of NH's Solid Waste Plan. He also advocated reducing NH's reliance on landfilling as the primary means of disposal at the state level through the Northeast Resource Recovery Association, the New Hampshire Solid Waste Management Council, the New Hampshire Waste Working Group, and the Collaborative Solid Waste Strategies Group.

Mr. Watson continued, explaining that at this time, 80% of NH's waste was landfilled in the state's largest landfill, located in Rochester, NH, operated by Waste Management (WM). The City used the landfill in Rochester per a new five-year agreement with WM signed in January 2025. The Rochester landfill was expected to have a capacity through the mid-2030s, and half of the waste it received was from out-of-state. Mr. Watson expressed frustration with New Hampshire's approach to managing solid waste because of a recent update to the state's 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan. In 1996, NH's stated goal was 40% diversion by the year 2000,

whereas the most recent plan update's stated goal was 25% diversion by 2030 and 45% diversion by 2050. Leaving the urgency of contributions of climate change emissions associated with waste activities aside, Mr. Watson said the Plan update had absolutely no chance of achieving its stated diversion goals because the Plan made no reference to the infrastructure necessary to achieve those diversion goals. He stated the simple fact of the matter was that the largest waste companies operating in NH had no interest in changing the status quo, and their business models gave very short shrift to diversion and placed heavy emphasis on bearing our waste for the foreseeable future. Mr. Watson explained that there existed technology at this time to achieve waste diversions upward of 80% with a cost equal to or lower than Keene's existing costs, while what he called advanced materials recovery facilities (AMRF)—for lack of a better name—were expensive to develop. He said all a private sector company seeking to develop an AMRF would need is the commitment of a municipality's waste stream for a period of years at a cost equal to or less than current costs, with an environmental outcome far superior to the current practice of bearing the vast majority of resources.

Mr. Watson concluded, encouraging his successor and the whole City Council to continue advocating for the necessary infrastructure investments needed to make the act of throwing something away effectively an act of recycling. He also encouraged urgency to advocate not only for the looming disposal crisis but also a better economic and environmental outcome than the business-as-usual approach. Regarding the FY-26 Solid Waste Budget, Mr. Watson addressed the one supplemental request to provide effective succession planning for approximately 1/4 of the year; he cited the surprising amount of rules, regulations, and things on a daily basis that must be done to keep the City compliant, as well as the challenges of running a daily operation. Chair Powers called it a matter of economics and commented on the City doing all it could without help from the state, adding the state might be making it hard for the City to achieve a better supply.

Vice Chair Remy wants to learn more about the AMRF idea that Mr. Watson described and wants to understand the economics of another entity taking over for the City. The Vice Chair thought it was a cool idea, especially if the diversion rate could be that high. Mr. Watson was happy to provide more information.

Chair Powers asked where overlap funds were suggested in the Budget. The City Manager pointed to the Administration Wages on page 206 and Vice Chair Remy mentioned Account 521030.

Councilor Jacob Favolise of Main Street recalled the City Engineer mentioning updated regulations around PFAS, and it struck the Councilor that Keene's Recycling/Transfer Station would potentially need increased oversight, testing, and mitigation depending on how far down those parts per trillion get at the state level. Councilor Favolise was unsure if that was necessarily reflected in the FY-26 Budget and asked Mr. Watson to talk about the medium- to long-term. Mr. Watson said the City was already involved with PFAS testing as a Keene's Groundwater Management Zone requirement. When the regulations changed from 70 parts per trillion—1 part per trillion is equivalent to 1 drop of water in 5 Olympic swimming pools—standard down to 12 parts per trillion, the City received a hit (exceed standard) outside its Groundwater Management Zone in a domestic water well, which had since been treated with a carbon filtration system that

seemed effective in removing the PFAS. Mr. Watson said the City continued monitoring its Groundwater Management Zone and just outside it to determine the impact of PFAS and where it is traveling.

Councilor Lake recalled in the past mentioning safety around the Transfer Station. He said it seemed the City did well clearing out some of the area on the paved turn toward the trash drop-off, which he thought helped. The Councilor usually visits during the week when it is less busy, but stated how he could envision someone easily flying around that corner and causing a head-on collision if not paying attention. So, he encouraged anything possible to keep that line of sight open (e.g., clearing shrubbery). He added that he wants to keep the conversation open about reducing the weekend congestion and making things as safe as possible around it, citing the extended hours in an attempt to reduce the congestion. He has seen times when cars were backed up to the road. Councilor Lake thanked Mr. Watson for the information provided and his service, stating he would be missed next year.

Mayor Kahn appreciated the due credit being given to Mr. Watson. The Mayor said every time he was at the Keene Recycling/Transfer Station, he was amazed at how well-organized it was, calling it a tribute to the staff managing all the pick-up and drop-off. Mayor Kahn asked about the lithium-ion battery issue, recalling a mishap at the Recycling/Transfer Station that had the attention of all WM and some media, so he asked for Mr. Watson's insights on Keene's management and other precautions. Mr. Watson echoed praise for excellent staff at the Keene Recycling/Transfer Station, calling the team he had assembled the best he had seen in his career, after seeing a lot come-and-go. To date, Mr. Watson reported three major fires in the Keene Transfer Station area, stating it was impossible to determine the source exactly, but it was not an unreasonable conclusion that the ignition source was likely a compromised lithium-ion battery. He explained that lithium-ion batteries themselves are not the problem, it is when the casing of the batteries are compromised and exposed to air or water—they become either flammable or explosive—and the fires also burn very hot, creating a difficult situation with the trash as fuel sources. The State of New Hampshire banned lithium-ion batteries from disposal, but Mr. Watson said those were just words, and lithium-ion batteries are everywhere. He used singing greeting cards as an example, which people regularly throw away not realizing they contain lithium-ion batteries, stating his hope that the battery casings are not compromised at the Transfer Station. Mr. Watson explained that at this time, the City of Keene has areas for free lithium-ion battery disposal at the Recycling/Transfer Station by informing the attendant so they could handle them properly. He said the ubiquitous nature of this product means it is simply a matter of time before additional fires, whether in trash trucks or at the transfer station, and though not a problem unique to Keene, the City was bearing the brunt of this problem.

Sewer Fund (Pages 212–225)

Water Fund (Pages 228–241)

Aaron Costa, Assistant Public Work Director/Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager, provided background on both Funds. He introduced Ben Crowder, Sewer Operations Manager, and Andrew Keyser, Laboratory Manager. Mr. Costa explained that annually, staff reevaluate and put forward a Budget that aligns with City Council goals and fiscal objectives. The Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds are financed by user fees, which are comprised of a meter charge and

volumetric charges. He and the Public Works Director recently spoke with the Committee about proposed rate increases. Mr. Costa explained that there are approximately 6,200 connections serving the residents and businesses of Keene. Portions of Marlborough and Swanzey are connected to the sewer system; the City is also selling water to the north Swanzey Water and Fire Precinct. The City builds those entities in accordance with the terms outlined in its inter-municipal agreements.

The sewer system itself is comprised of a Treatment Facility, five wastewater pumping stations (including Martell Court), over 94 miles of sanitary sewer pipe, and the Wastewater Treatment Plant that treats approximately 3 million gallons daily. The water system is comprised of a Treatment Facility, two surface water reservoirs or groundwater wells, six water storage tanks, four water pump stations, two water booster stations, and about 100 miles of water main, as well as water meters, hydrants, and valves throughout the City. The City of Keene also produces, on average, 2 million gallons of water daily, with peak demands reaching about 3 million gallons daily in the summer. Every Keene citizen and visitor uses these services. Mr. Costa said staff work extremely hard to provide quality drinking water that complies with all state and federal regulations, as well as to maintain adequate supply and infrastructure for Fire protection. Keene also collects, transports, and treats wastewater that is eventually discharged back to the Ashuelot River. This work occurs 24/7/365. Staff are proud of this work and Mr. Costa encouraged anyone to set up a tour of the Water Treatment and Wastewater Treatment facilities.

This year, Mr. Costa explained the Water and Sewer Funds did have several supplemental requests for the Water and Sewer utilities. He cited price increases since Covid and said the utilities had done their best to hold the line over the prior several years to not impact customer rates, while still maintaining services. In the Sewer Fund, the supplemental requests totaled \$157,140, or 1.8% of the overall Budget, of which \$33,000 would be for one-time expenses: renovation of Bradco Pump Station, purchasing properly engineered confined space entry equipment, two explosion-proof heater units for the Martell Court Pump Station, and refurbishment of a 40 horsepower return activated sludge pump and motor at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He recalled the Public Works Director mentioning new programs, and \$24,000 of that supplemental request was for implementing a new collection system maintenance program that would fund video inspection and coating of approximately 50,000 linear feet of sewer pipe per year (approximately 10% of the system). This would help identify problem areas and help staff prioritize repairs and comply with collection system maintenance requirements identified in the City's Discharge Permit. Mr. Costa also mentioned approximately \$12,775 of additional funds requested for an on-call person for the Water and Sewer Division needed to respond to calls after hours. The remaining \$87,000 requested was for funding various line items Mr. Costa said better reflected the cost increases on parts, materials, and other consumables.

In the Water Fund, Mr. Costa explained staff were requesting \$97,309 in supplemental funds, approximately 1.5% of the total Budget. Approximately \$8,000 of that would fund a pump rental needed every other year when staff perform flushing in the Fox Avenue and Glen Road pressure zones. \$14,000 would restructure the three-person Meter Division following a recent retirement; Mr. Costa explained how instead of funding it with two H5 positions and one H11 position, staff proposed changing the structure to an H12 foreman level position that would match the other foremen in the Water and Sewer Funds as well as H8 and H5, allowing a chain-of-command and

opportunity for promotions. The remaining \$75,000 was additional funding for various line items to better reflect the cost increases on parts, materials, and other consumables.

Chair Powers echoed Mr. Costa on the high cost of doing business and the Chair added the increasing demand for faster services was just as high. He said it is challenging without enough staff and Chair Powers appreciated the work accomplished with the existing workforce. The Chair cited an example of talking a City worker painting fire hydrants late in the day who kept working to finish the job despite the hour, calling it a testament to the work ethic in the Department.

Equipment (Fleet Fund) (Pages 244–250)

Jim Mountford, Fleet Services Operations Manager, reviewed the Fleet Services and Enterprise Fund. This Division leases/rents almost all vehicles back to the other City of Keene divisions. The rental rate is derived from fuel prices, amount of hours worked on the equipment, and amount of parts put on the equipment, insurance, and replacement cost—whatever it takes to keep the vehicle on the road. Fleet Services also buys and sells (selling in conjunction with the Purchasing Department; different for Fire Department equipment as Fleet only owns ambulances and staff cars). If the City name is applied to a vehicle, Fleet Services works on it. Fuel prices this year were about the same as the past few years—\$4.00/gallon diesel fuel estimate. Mr. Mountford mentioned reimbursement from the State of NH for the City’s fuel use but said it did not help return a lot to the system. As background, he continued explaining five members (including three mechanics, all fuel billing, the buying/selling) of Fleet Services were working on 266 pieces of equipment 24/7/365. For example, a Fire Department issue might require two mechanics coming in to get a vehicle back on the road with as minimal time required. Mr. Mountford boasted about his phenomenal staff and commented on his 21-year career in the Division. He explained Fleet Services is right in the middle of the heavy truck, heavy equipment, and auto industries—working on everything from compactors or asphalt rollers to excavators, up to giant equipment at the Airport like the tower truck—it all goes through the one building on Marlboro Street. The Division is very cautious about how things go back out on the street, trying to only procure the best items possible, with everything purchased through government pricing or contracts—not only for the State of New Hampshire, but also from around the country (e.g., equipment purchases from Tennessee and Montana). Mr. Mountford said the Fleet Services Division puts a lot of effort into saving the City a lot money, such as the successful program reusing vehicles. For example, Police vehicles are rotated out yearly based on mileage and warranty and shifted for use as “civilian cars” when needed by the City Engineer, for instance, vs. the price of a new car for that individual. Mr. Mountford also personally thanked Mr. Watson for 15 years of helping him with his career.

Vice Chair Remy referred to the Equipment Fleet Transfer Capital & Other (41091500) lines on page 250 where he noticed a lot of variability year-to-year and asked for more details because there was a few million dollars represented. The City Manager said she and the Finance Director would have to look into that column as there could be a mistake. For example, the \$10,000 listed for the Transfer-Cap Project in 2023–2024 was too low. The figures did not look right to her. Vice Chair Remy agreed it was a several million-dollar swing in the Budget. The City Manager said it might be timing and something out of place in the wrong year. The Vice Chair said if it

was timing, it would be really high this year, and he would want to understand it. The City Manager said she would look into it.

Chair Powers spoke about 20 years prior, before Mr. Mountford imagined the rental program, when the Fleet Services used a maintenance formula, which was based on job tickets collecting hours of use (only) on certain equipment, which pushed the rate up. Mr. Mountford developed a more reasonable rate and spread the cost across the whole fleet. Mr. Mountford agreed, explaining the monthly rental rate for a department vehicle is also less than a department would pay in rent, 24-hour mechanic, parking, insurance, gas, and all other vehicle expenses included. He called it a great program.

Vice Chair Remy asked if the City Manager had an answer about the Equipment Fleet Transfer Capital & Other (41091500) lines referenced earlier. The City Manager said no, it would take a more time and work because that Transfer to Capital Project should be equal to the amount of capital vehicles purchased in a year, so she did not know why it was so low in one year.

The City Manager wanted to speak about Mr. Watson, being his final Budget meeting. The City Manager thanked Mr. Watson for running the Recycling/Transfer Station, which she imagined had been a challenging adventure; the City Manager's experience from other communities and Keene proved running transfer stations and keeping them off of the tax base was difficult. She said Mr. Watson was always creative and she appreciated that he closed his final Budget comments thinking about the future because Mr. Watson was always so passionate about this work. The City Manager was grateful for everything Mr. Watson did for the City of Keene.

Mr. Lussier hoped the Committee felt the sense of passion and pride the Department takes in its work. He called Public Works the best profession to be in.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 6:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker
May 20, 2025

Edits submitted by,
Kathleen Richards, Deputy City Clerk