

City of Keene
New Hampshire

FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 12, 2025

6:00 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Thomas F. Powers, Chair
Michael J. Remy, Vice Chair
Bettina A. Chadbourne
Bryan J. Lake
Kris E. Roberts

Members Not Present:

All Present

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

Staff Present:

Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager
Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney
Andy Bohannon, Deputy City Manager
Brian Ruoff, City Engineer
Don Lussier, Public Works Director
Jason Martin, Fire Chief
Paul Andrus, Community Development
Director
Rick Wood, Fire Marshall

Chair Powers called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1) Request to Transfer FY 2025 Funds to the Ambulance CIP - Fire Chief

Fire Chief Jason Martin addressed the Committee first. Chief Martin stated this item is looking to transfer and reappropriate unspent money into a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project. It is a 2025 CIP project to replace the ambulance. The Chief stated this was a grant match and they were unsuccessful in obtaining the grant, which is the reason the funds are unspent.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Remy.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to transfer available FY2025 operating funds in the amount of \$39,564.00 from the Ambulance Transfer-Grant fund (line item 40200000-580080), to the FY2025 Ambulance Replacement Program CIP (#40M0002B).

2) Heritage Commission - City Support for a 250th Independence Day Celebration - July 4, 2026

Molly Ellis, Chair of the Heritage Commission and Rosemary Carey, Vice-Chair addressed the Committee. Ms. Ellis stated they are before the Committee regarding the 250th Anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence next year - July 4th, 2026. She stated they are trying to create a framework for some kind of event. She stated they are trying to work on

collaborating with the Historical Society to get this event off the ground and would like to know what the City can offer for support.

She indicated they are looking for a line item in the budget, a staff person to assist, and a member of the City Council to represent the Council on the Commission.

Councilor Remy stated he would like to assist and asked whether a City Committee should own this event. He agreed this would be a great event and felt the City should participate and play a role in it. He added that because this is an event for next year it can be added to next year's budget.

Asst. City Manager, Rebecca Landry, stated that City staff are going over ideas internally and would appreciate the opportunity to work with Ms. Ellis and her team to discuss this, and stated they are willing to come up with some ideas and bring them back to the Committee.

The Chair asked whether the Commission was planning on a parade. Ms. Ellis stated they would love a parade but how big remains to be seen depending on sponsors, what the City can contribute, the number of volunteers, bands etc. Councilor Remy stated he has already started discussing this event with the County for their participation. Ms. Ellis stated Michelle Walker from the Historical Society attended a meeting of all Historical Societies in the County, and no other County is planning an event for next year. Hence this would be Keene's event, and Keene should be able to get other Counties to assist with this event.

Councilor Chadbourne suggested a meeting with staff and then discussing other stakeholders that we can bring to the table. Perhaps even consider a Committee that is exclusively tasked with this event.

The Chair stated if bands are being thought of for this event, that is something that should be worked on now. He suggested the National Guard Band.

Mayor Kahn thanked Ms. Ellis and Ms. Carey for stepping forward and leading a discussion with the Heritage Commission and seeking engagement for this project. He felt this is an easy ask. He indicated he had thought about the Middle School or High School bands but didn't think of the National Guard Band, which he felt was a good idea. The Mayor stated many in the community would want to be involved in this event. The Mayor added it is a good thing for an organization like a Heritage Commission to step forward and want to be involved and be willing to start the conversation. He thanked Councilor Remy for his willingness to assist, as someone who has experience of organizing downtown events.

Councilor Lake made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Remy.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends placing the request for City support for a 250th Independence Day Celebration - July 4, 2026, on more time to allow staff to begin planning efforts with the Heritage Commission to determine the City's role and the scope of event.

**3) Written Public Comments - Proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Operating Budget
Cameron Tease - In Support of Outside Agency Funding - Keene Senior Center**

Chair Powers indicated comments from Mr. Tease in support of outside agencies are included in the Committee's packet.

Ms. Kimberly Brown, Executive Director from the Keene Senior Center addressed the Committee and stated she was present to answer any questions regarding Mr. Tease's letter.

The Chair stated the way the Committee's rules are outlined is for the public hearing to occur and written comments to be accepted. Mr. Tease has completed both and stated that his comments are being considered and reviewed at next week's Council meeting.

Councilor Remy made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Roberts.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the written public comments from Cameron Tease in support of outside agency funding for the Keene Senior Center be accepted as informational.

4) Request to Expend Funds from CDD Personnel Funds to Purchase a Community Development Permitting Software Platform - Community Development Director

Community Development Director Paul Andrus and Fire Marshall Rick Wood addressed the Committee next. Mr. Andrus stated they have two items to address tonight. Mr. Andrus stated the Community Development Department provides planning, building, health inspections, and code enforcement. He stated this item is to be able to provide modern, streamlined, transparent service with respect to permitting and plan reviews. He stated this request is for an online permitting platform where a match of roughly \$33,000 has already been requested in next year's budget for a federal grant that staff is fairly certain it will receive from FEMA which has since been clawed back – which has left staff looking at different opportunities.

Mr. Andrus stated the system he is referring to is used by most modern community development department permitting offices. This is an experience for customers to do everything online such as planning reviews, code enforcement, health inspections, food licensing etc. It is an extremely transparent process, and from a customer's perspective, is easy to use.

Mr. Andrus stated they are requesting funds from the department's personnel lines because of vacancy savings in the amount of \$93,000 to be able to get this program up and running with the idea that they already have \$33,000 that has been requested. This would essentially be for the first year to get the software up and running and to pay for the professional services for the software. There would be some continuing costs annually thereafter.

Mr. Andrus stated there have been conversations that have been going on since before he started his employment with the City with a company called OpenGov.

Mr. Andrus stated that City staff wants to be able to provide robust reporting and have a dashboard that would not only allow things to be turned around faster, but the community and Council will be able to get that information as well. He stated that OpenGov happens to own a City software program that Public Works is currently using called Cartograph. This would allow the department not only to work with that program, but also to work inter-departmentally with Community Development reviews, Planning, Building, Fire, Public Works, and to have that process fully-integrated.

Mr. Andrus turned the presentation over to Mr. Woods so that he could explain what kinds of functionality an applicant could expect.

Mr. Woods stated he has been with the City just over a year and one of the things he has heard loud and clear is this idea of functioning as one City; this platform will allow the City on the Code Enforcement permitting side to actually do that. We can all use the same programming, the same software, and on the client side to get one interface; they select what they want. This system will allow each client when they go in for the first time to set up an account, create login credentials, and to have access to the historical data of what they have done in the system in the past.

He stated the department gets requests almost daily for copies of documents from prior years and for different letters of permitting. A customer will not be able to self-serve and find a letter that was issued in the past. This system will allow a customer to apply and pay online. A user can also track where their application is in the process and what department is reviewing it. This is something that is going to provide a great service to the City and will help from a management perspective. Mr. Andrus added that reporting is going to be very efficient as well. Mr. Woods stated that the other thing that this system offers, which the current system does not, is “on the fly” customability – to be agile and change as the community needs to change.

Councilor Chadbourne asked how Cartograph fits into this item. Mr. Woods explained that Cartograph is the City’s asset management program. It is used by Public Works and Facilities. Mr. Woods asked the Public Works Director to address how Cartograph is used.

Public Works Director Don Lussier stated that Cartograph is an asset management system. The department first started using Cartograph around 2007 to 2008. It was a requirement of the City’s consent decree with the EPA related to sewer overflows. The City had to create and adopt a modernized computer work management system, which was called Cartograph Navigator at the time. It was used to track routine ongoing maintenance for the sewer system. Since that time, it was adopted for all kinds of asset systems; such as water, sewer, roadway, bridges, storm drainage systems, street trees, dams, traffic signals signs, mechanical equipment at plants. It is all in this one system. It does things like remind staff to do periodic maintenance. For instance, for pumps that have to be maintained every few hours. It is also the home of the request system – the system automatically parses a required task to the correct manager of a department. It is used during CIP to determine what is going to be built over the next five to seven years.

Councilor Chadbourne asked what the City currently offers in terms of the Community Development Department and permitting process online. Mr. Andrus stated they currently use a

system called IWorQs, which provides some basic functionality, mostly around internal workflows. It allows staff to track internally who is handling different applications. It does not produce reports that anyone can use. Mr. Woods stated that the current system does not allow a customer to pay online for any submitted application. Customers cannot modify an application online. Modified applications need to be either emailed or dropped off.

The current system doesn't allow the applicant to see what stage their application is in. Customers are constantly calling to inquire about the status of their applications. In the current system, there is no visibility between departments. Every department has its own module. The new software will be a much more comprehensive program that allows the City to have all that together to achieve what the City has been looking to do for a long time.

Councilor Chadbourne asked whether this system would eliminate the one-on-one experience a customer might sometimes need. Mr. Woods stated that customers are always welcome to come into the department; completing an application online is not a requirement. He added that the lion share of the department's business are people who do this for a living and the City is actually delaying their ability to get their work done by having so many disconnected steps. Councilor Chadbourne felt this sounds like a very efficient system, which could alleviate some of the frustration from the development community.

Councilor Lake asked when this product would go live. Mr. Andrus stated it could be about eight months, but staff have done a lot of pre-work to launch the product. Councilor Lake asked whether OpenGov has other products the City could use in the future. Mr. Woods stated there are a variety of municipal modules the City could use.

Ms. Landry stated the City did use OpenGov some time ago for budget transparency, and it provided a very high-level overview in terms of spending and revenue. It was for public consumption but the City found was that it was not utilized, so it was discontinued. Cartograph is the other system being used, and noted they are a very robust organization. She added permitting, planning, inspection, and Cartograph use OpenGov, which is a great product, but did not feel that type of robust system would be required for some of the other City operations.

Councilor Remy asked whether this was an annual cost. Mr. Andrus noted to the cost for year two and three as outlined in the Committee's packet and added the contract for the existing system is about \$25,000. For the first year, there won't be an incremental savings as both products would need to be used, but next year the \$25,000 would be applied against the \$60,000 annual cost – a difference of \$35,000.

Councilor Roberts made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to expend \$93,557 from FY25 Community Development Department (CDD) Personnel funds for the purchase of the OpenGov Permitting Software Platform.

5) Request to Approve a Change Order to the OpenGov (Cartegraph) Contract (PO20250067) for the Inclusion of a Cloud Permitting Platform for the Planning, Building, Code Enforcement and Health Inspection Services of the City - Community Development Director

Mr. Andrus stated the next item is asking for the authorization to approve a change order to their existing OpenGov contract.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lake.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute a change order to the existing contract the City has with OpenGov for the inclusion of a cloud permitting platform.

6) LWCF Grant Round 36 - Intent to Apply - Deputy City Manager

Deputy City Manager Andy Bohannon addressed the Committee and stated that this item is to create an intent to apply for the LWCF grant - Grant Round, 36 for the Ashuelot Green Space Project. He explained that the Ashuelot parking has been a grass field and will be home to the Monadnock Conservancy in the near future. The City is in the process of having that parcel donated to the City. The LWCF grant is a Land, Water, and Conservation Fund which comes from offshore drilling. Once you receive a grant and place it on that particular parcel, it is parkland in perpetuity.

Mr. Bohannon stated Ashuelot River Park has already received a grant when it was first established, so that would be plus point for this application because they are now extending the footprint. This is a project that has been on the radar for a while but has never been in the CIP. The grant application has been ready several times but has been pulled back due to JRR and the Conservancy not being ready. The City has three years to execute once the grant is accepted. Mr. Bohannon stated he expects to have something in the CIP for this upcoming cycle. The maximum grant being requested would be \$500,000.

Councilor Lake made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Roberts.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to execute an Intent to Apply for LWCF Grant Round 36 for the Ashuelot Green Space project.

7) Levitt Music Series Grant - Letter of Commitment - Deputy City Manager

Mr. Bohannon stated that the City has been working with the County, which was going to be the grant writer. The City wanted to work with the music festival as a capstone for this project. They are interested, but it is a tight turnaround both for the county and the music festival. He stated the City will be back next year with this application, but for this year, the recommendation is that this be withdrawn.

Councilor Remy made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Remy.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel recommends acceptance of the withdrawal of the Levitt Music Series Grant project request for Letter of Commitment.

8) Acceptance of FAA AIP Grant for Airport – Airport Taxiway ‘A’ Reconstruction Project - Airport Director

Airport Director David Hickling stated this is the third time staff have come forward with this request to accept Federal Aviation grant for the taxiway reconstruction project. He stated the City was not able to get funding in a timely manner in order to be able to award the contract. Mr. Hickling stated they have a bid request which opens next week and are anticipating a quicker turnaround for the grant this year.

The hope is to get that grant mid to late July and start work in August and get this project done this calendar year.

Councilor Roberts made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Remy.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept, execute, and expend grant funding for up to the amount of \$3,300,000 from the Federal Aviation Administration Airport Improvement Program for the Taxiway A reconstruction project.

9) Agreement for Construction Engineering Services with Greenman Pedersen Inc. (GPI) for the Island Street Infrastructure Improvements Project - City Engineer

City Engineer Brian Ruoff stated the next agenda item deals with Agreement for Construction Engineering Services with Greenman Pedersen Inc. (GPI) for the Island Street Infrastructure Improvements project. He stated that this project has been bid three times.

The first time, the City was not satisfied with the submitted bids.

The second time, no bids were received.

This most recent time, the City received four bids, two of which were within the project budget. He stated the City has also concurrently advertised engineering positions, both for a civil engineer, project manager, and inspector, with the intent of them essentially covering this project or shifting existing personnel to cover this project during construction. The City has not been able to hire people for these positions. In light of this, and in anticipation of construction to get as much of the project done this year. The City is looking to bring GPI on board as the construction manager for this project. They will oversee quantities, be the clerk of the works, and make sure that the quality of the work is being met and conform to the contract documents. GPI had the most competitive price and has the ability to do the work.

Mr. Ruoff stated there is also an economy of scale both for the City and GPI, where they will be inspecting other projects within the City and managing multiple projects for the City, essentially for this year and part of next year. They will have staff that work directly for the City as inspectors and civil engineers managing projects.

He stated this project is being funded through the sewer, water and highway funds. There are funds available in all those projects to pay for these engineering services. This is not a request for additional money.

The Chair asked whether this work includes the intersection at West Street and the light. Mr. Ruoff answered in the negative and stated that work was bid out separately as part of this project. There is approximately \$150,000 to do that work. The bids that came out specifically for that scope were closer to \$400,000. The City is making an interim improvement of that system to be able to hold the City over until West Street reconstruction work. This contract has been awarded to SUR Construction.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Remy.

On a 5-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute an agreement with Greenman-Pedersen Inc (GPI) for engineering services during construction as part of the Island Street Infrastructure Improvements Project (32MI0224, 34MI0224, 75M00624), up to the aggregate amount of \$250,000.

10) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,
Terri Hood, City Clerk and Kathleen Richards, Deputy City Clerk