

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

**FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, July 24, 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

**Members Not Present:**

Kris E. Roberts

**Staff Present:**

Elizabeth A. Ferland, City Manager  
Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney  
Don Lussier, Public Works Director  
Brian Ruoff, City Engineer  
Dan Langille, City Assessor  
David Hickling, Airport Director  
Kari Chamberlin, Finance Director  
Beth Fox, Asst. City Manager/HR Director

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

**1) Sale of City Property - 100 Church Street - Public Works Director**

Public Works Director Don Lussier addressed the committee first and stated the item before the Committee is regarding sale of a City-owned property to an adjacent property owner. Mr. Lussier explained in 1977, the City acquired a total of five individual parcels surrounding the intersection of Church Street, 93rd Street and Norway Avenue. At the time, Church Street continued through to Main Street and the Cleveland Building had not been constructed yet. As part of the redevelopment of that area is when the City acquired the five parcels on all four corners of that intersection. Three of those parcels on the south side have been sold to adjacent property owners. However, the City still owns the parcel on the northeast corner – closest to the Elks Club across 93<sup>rd</sup> Street.

Mr. Lussier stated this started with a request from the adjacent property owners, bringing to the City's attention some behavior that was happening on that City-owned parcel. He noted this area has been cleaned up and a pocket park has been created, which looks very attractive. However, there have been issues with people congregating on that property and participating in activities that the City would rather not see happening on City-owned property.

City staff met with the adjacent property owners and during the meeting the property owners asked if the City would be interested in selling that property to the adjacent property owners. Staff is in agreement of this proposal. Mr. Lussier noted there is no need for another pocket park as there is Russell Park as well as a pocket park on Church Street.

The property in question is undevelopable in its current configuration. It is .12 acres/5,000 square feet. Per the current zoning, 10,000 square feet would be required to develop the property. He noted there is the possibility they could do a lot line adjustment with one of the adjacent properties or merge it with one of their properties and locate a building on it. In its current configuration, it would either need a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals, or Planning Board action to develop this property. The City does not see a lot of value in continuing it as a park and recommend selling it to the adjacent property owner.

Councilor Chadbourne asked which property owner was interested in this property. Mr. Lussier referred to page five and noted the original complaint letter was signed and sent to the City from both property owners that abutted on the north and east sides. The letter of intent to purchase the property came from Jiffy Real Estate LLC which abuts the property to the north. Councilor Chadbourne stated she has had complaints from residents about homeless people sleeping in hallways and at times sleeping right in front of their doors, and she suggested they go to their landlord. She felt having that owner own this property would be a great improvement. She added there were complaints about a lot of drug activity in that park as well.

City Manager Elizabeth Ferland felt this was a reasonable solution and does support the request but added her only question is whether or not the council wanted to open this up to other abutters. She stated Council has the ability to directly authorize the Manager to negotiate with the abutter because there is a justification for that. The council could also direct the Manager to send a letter to all the abutters so they have equal opportunity to make an offer. Councilor Remy asked whether the motion could be changed to say “to an abutting property owner” which would give staff the flexibility to work with other abutters. The Manager agreed this would work. Councilor Remy asked if MGJ was aware of this. The Manager stated this entity also attended the meeting but decided not to submit a letter of intent to purchase.

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

On a 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute the sale of 100 Church Street (parcel ID# #574-015-000-000-000) to an abutting property owner.

**2) Execution of a Change Order with Insituform for Additional Scope of Construction Services as Part of the Sewer Main Lining Project - City Engineer**

City Engineer Brian Ruoff was the next address the committee. Mr. Ruoff stated this request is to execute a change order with Insituform for necessary additional scope of work for construction services as part of the sewer main lining project. He explained when the City attempted the pre clean and TV study, the sewer main scheduled to be rehabilitated as part of the project, found some pipes that had deteriorated further that needed point repair prior to work being completed. The City was able to obtain competitive pricing that is acceptable to DES who have signed off on it. Staff is looking to execute a change order with Insituform to perform these point repairs prior to lining these sewer mains.

Mr. Ruoff noted because pricing is slightly greater than 20%, which is what the City Manager is authorized to sign, staff is coming before the Finance Committee for approval. He stated they could potentially use the contingency in the project to get under that number. However, since federal funds are involved, in the interest of full disclosure, staff is before the committee to ask for approval. He added this is part of a NHDS Clean Water SRF loan for which the City would receive 10% loan forgiveness.

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

On a 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute a project change order with Insituform Technologies as part of the Sewer Main Lining Project (32MI0425), in the amount of \$155,200.

**3) Execution of an Agreement for Engineering Services During Construction with Greenman-Pedersen Inc, (GPI) as part of the Transportation Heritage Trail Phase 1 Project, NHDOT#40653 - City Engineer**

Mr. Ruoff stated this item is an execution of agreement for engineering services with Greenman-Pedersen for construction as part of the Transportation Heritage Trail phase one project and NHDOT project number 40653. In conformance with the federal funding that the City is receiving for the project, the City sent the scope of work for engineering services for Qualifications. The City only received one response from Greenman-Pedersen Inc. The cost outlined is a not to exceed cost, but it is likely their cost will be closer to \$100,000 less than what staff is requesting. This project is federally funded and administered through DOT - 80% paid by the federal government with a 20% City match.

Mr. Ruoff noted the project goes from the Public Works facility to Route 101 where it connects to the Crouse Bridge.

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

On a 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute an agreement with Greenman-Pedersen Inc (GPI) for engineering services during construction as part of the Transportation Heritage Trail Phase 1 Project (NHDOT#40653) for an amount not to exceed \$300,000.

**4) Contract for 2026 City-Wide Property Revaluation - City Assessor**

City Assessor Dan Langille was the next speaker. Mr. Langille stated this item is regarding the 2026 City-wide property revaluation. He noted this is a CIP approved project that has been in the CIP for a number of years. Staff followed the City's process of going through a request for proposals and received two qualified bids. One came in at \$180,000 and the other one came in at \$134,500. Staff is recommending the lower bid with Vision Government Solutions who has experience with New Hampshire communities.

Mr. Langille went on to say that this company also did the City's revaluation in 2021 and the City also uses their software, which is an added advantage. Their staff is certified and the New Hampshire Office of Professional License does certify to make sure they are eligible to do the work. There is also oversight by the New Hampshire Department of Revenue.

The City is looking to begin this work in the fall, around October, and the work will continue through September 2026. Mr. Langille noted there is a lot of work that goes into this project and there is also the opportunity for the public to come in and ask questions about the revaluation process and their own property values. The final values will be used in the December tax bill of 2026. The company will be sending out notices to every member of the public so they will be notified ahead of time what their preliminary value is and can come in and ask questions and learn about the process before it becomes finalized.

Mr. Langille noted the proposal comes just under the budget estimate of 135,000 and there are funds available in the revaluation capital reserve fund to cover this cost.

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

On a 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a contract with Vision Government Solutions for the 2026 City-wide property revaluation.

**5) Amendment to FAA AIP Grant for Airport – Airport Taxiway A Reconstruction Project - Airport Director**

Airport Director David Hickling stated last month he was before the committee to request approval for the airport taxiway reconstruction project. He stated the bids that came in are much higher than was anticipated. He indicated however, the good news is that DOT and the FAA are going to fund this project as bid. The Director noted usually the City gets funding up to 95%. However, the City has more funding for this project and hence the City is only paying 2.5% of this project. The City needs approval for \$3,761,805.43.

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

On a 4-0 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 \$3,601,668.27 from the Federal Aviation Administration Airport Improvement Program for the Taxiway A Reconstruction Project.

**6) Construction Agreement for Airport Taxiway A Reconstruction Project with Casella Construction Inc. - Airport Director**

Mr. Hickling stated this item is for the same project but it is for the purpose of awarding the contract to the lowest bidder who is Casella Construction. He indicated the contract has been reviewed by the airport engineer of record who approves the contract.

Chair Powers asked whether this contractor has done work for the City in the past. Mr. Hickling stated McFarland Johnson has looked over their work and approved the bid.

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

On a 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to enter into a construction agreement with Casella Construction Inc. for the Airport Taxiway A Reconstruction Project.

**7) Airport Fuel Tank Replacement Project Close-out and Reallocation of Funds - Airport Director**

Mr. Hickling stated the last item he has for the committee is a project to replace the fuel tanks at the airport. This project has been completed but there fund balance in that project which staff is looking to reallocate to the Taxiway A reconstruction.

Councilor Chadbourne stated she is glad to see this item come forward as the City has been talking about replacing that fuel tank for years.

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

On a 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to close the Fuel Tank Replacement Project (05J0006A) and reallocate remaining funds of \$37,480.24 to the Airport Taxiway A Reconstruction Project (05J0004B).

**8) Use of Unspent City Attorney's Office Personnel Funds - City Attorney**

City Attorney Amanda Palmeira addressed the committee next and stated her request is to carry over personnel funds from last year's fiscal budget. The Attorney noted to a correction to the motion language to add the words "carryover and use" and to also add the amount of \$60,000.

The Attorney noted there is \$88,000 in unspent personnel funds. She explained the remaining funds in that budget is because the City has not had an Assistant City Attorney, which was funded since March. Also, the previous City Attorney's line was funded for a full-time City Attorney who did not work full time that year and was a higher step than the new City Attorney who has been brought on.

Attorney Palmeira stated she is asking specifically for these funds to go to legal services so that the department could hire a contract attorney without having the need for second attorney's assistance. She stated the department has a number of projects and some things that are certainly not pressing time wise and there are things that come up every day that are more pressing. This is for an attorney to get some specific tasks completed.

She stated the \$60,000 is based probably on two days a week with a contract attorney who works at a reasonable rate for about four months.

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

On a 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Attorney be authorized to carryover and use \$60,000 of unspent monies from the Fiscal Year 2025 City Attorney Personnel budget for Legal Services.

**9) Relating to Proposed FY26 Budget Amendment - Resolution R-2025-25**

Finance Director Kari Chamberlin stated this item is in reference to a Resolution – staff is proposing an amendment to the FY26 budget to appropriate the amount of \$105,440 for Police Department personnel costs and further reflect additional revenue in the amount of \$105,440 related to an increase in the college liaison contract and a transfer of funding from the opioid Special Revenue Fund.

Ms. Chamberlin explained when staff was originally doing the calculations, the revenue from both the Keene State College contract and the Special Opioid Fund revenues were netted against the expenses, which reduced the overall appropriation for the Police Department personnel expenses. Staff is trying to recognize that with a 0 tax impact.

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

On a 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2025-25.

**10) Relating to Class Allocation & Performance Bonus - Ordinance O-2025-24**

Asst. City Manager/HR Director addressed the Committee next and stated the next item is a proposed amendment to the class allocation Ordinance and performance bonus sections of the City code. She stated the City recently amended and executed a contract with the police officers which moved their performance bonuses to base pay and the amendment before the Committee tonight proposes to shift the compensation that is associated with annual performance bonuses into base salary. From the perspective of the employees, it brings that compensation into consideration for part of their pension calculations; performance bonuses are not. For non-union employees it also creates more transparency around what the actual compensation is.

Ms. Fox explained the amendment in front of the Committee proposes in Section 62-192 to move the job titles of Police Captain and Deputy Fire Chief up one grade from 26 to 27. Move the job titles of Police Chief and Fire Chief up one grade from S29 to S30.

In addition, the amendment will strike from the ordinance, the performance bonus section, which is Section 162-195 - implementation proposal for this change would be similar to what the City did with the police officers, prorate their performance bonus up to the date of the proposed adoption of this Ordinance which is August 24, start of the first pay period.

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

On a 4-0 vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Ordinance O-2025-24.

## **11 Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,  
Kathleen Richards, Deputy City Clerk