

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

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

**Tuesday, July 8, 2025**

**5:00 PM**

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

**Members Present:**

William Schoefmann, Vice Chair  
Councilor Andrew Madison  
Gerald Kuhn  
Mari Brunner  
Doris McColleston  
Gerald Lins  
Eric Weisenberger  
Derek Blunt, Alternate

**Staff Present:**

Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant

**Members Not Present:**

John Mitchell, Chair

**1) Call to Order**

Acting Chair Will Schoefmann called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

**2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)**

**3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Approval of Meeting Minutes: June 10, 2025**

Acting Chair Schoefmann welcomed any comments or edits on the minutes from June 10, 2025. With no comments or edits, Councilor Andrew Madison moved to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Gerald Lins. With all in favor and no opposition, the minutes for June 10, 2025, were approved.

**4) Board Business:**

**A) Exchange Itinerary – Continued Discussion/Activity Planning for October 15–24, 2025**

Mr. Schoefmann opened the discussion on board business item #4 concerning the October exchange itinerary. He noted that Ms. Nicole Howe had provided a simplified version of the typically extensive itinerary he usually prepares and expressed appreciation for her effort to make it easier to follow. He stated that the main structure of the visit has largely been finalized, and the focus now is on finalizing some of the more detailed elements of the daily schedule. He

invited the group to ask any broad questions about the itinerary or whether a review was necessary.

Mr. Blunt raised a question about lunch planning for the State Capitol day, inquiring about the type of venue to consider and whether the group preferred an upscale option, noting that several accommodation options are available. He mentioned that the mayor had suggested a nearby location in Concord.

Mayor Kahn responded by offering the option of using the Capitol cafeteria, though it is in a less scenic part of the building and does not serve alcohol. He noted the benefit of this option is flexibility, given the uncertain timing of the day's events. He explained that the two scheduled tours of the Statehouse and the State Library could run longer than expected, making pre-ordering sandwiches at the cafeteria a practical solution.

Mayor Kahn noted that he, and Ms. Howe had discussed the idea that after a morning of visiting historic sites, the group might prefer more free time in downtown Concord for shopping. He pointed out that the New Hampshire Supreme Court is located further away on Hazen Drive, making it less convenient and potentially too much to fit into the day's schedule. As a result, he has not planned a visit to the Supreme Court but is willing to do so if the group prefers. Mr. Blunt added that there are many good options in Concord, and lunch or activity choices will ultimately depend on budget and priorities.

Councilor Madison suggested two lunch options in Concord for the State Capitol day. The first is the Barley House, located across from the State Capitol and known as a popular spot for legislators. The second option is Concord Craft Brewing on Storrs Street, which also serves food. Mr. Blunt confirmed that Concord Craft Brewing can accommodate a large group and serve food, although the menu is more limited. He noted that the Barley House is more convenient, centrally located on Main Street, and considered a staple of Concord. He agreed with Councilor Madison's suggestions and emphasized that the final choice should be based on the group's budget and preferences.

Councilor Madison offered to make arrangements at either of the suggested restaurants, as he travels to Concord daily for work. Ms. Doris McColleston noted that previous tours of the State House took considerable time. Mr. Schoefmann recommended that the group skip the Supreme Court and focus on downtown locations, such as the State House and State Library. Mr. Schoefmann added that he will review budget figures this month, which will help determine the lunch venue for the next meeting. He agreed the current options are good and offered to look into menus in the meantime.

Mr. Schoefmann opened the floor for questions about the itinerary, offering to review the entire schedule or focus on specific days. Mr. Gerald Kuhn inquired about the large gap in free time on Thursday between the City Hall visit and the 4:00 PM Colonial Theater tour, noting that there

may be an opportunity to add an activity during that timeframe. Mr. Schoefmann acknowledged the gap and agreed that something could potentially be added.

The group discussed keeping the day after arrival relatively light to allow visitors time to rest, adjust from travel, and manage jet lag. Ms. Mari Brunner suggested incorporating optional activities, such as pickleball, a local hike, or a casual walk downtown. Councilor Madison agreed, saying the idea is to have flexible options that are engaging but not overly demanding. Mayor Kahn mentioned Keene State College and the Historical Society as potential low-key activities that keep visitors in the downtown area without requiring too much energy or coordination.

Mr. Schoefmann discussed providing guests with self-guided activities, such as a mural tour map and optional visits to places like the Historical Society. Mayor Kahn shared that the City could offer a docent for guests interested in exploring the City. The idea is to provide flexible options before regrouping for scheduled events, such as dinner and the Colonial Theatre tour.

Councilor Madison raised the possibility of guests attending a local Rotary Club meeting, specifically the Thursday morning club, suggesting it might interest Rotarians visiting the area. Ms. Brunner noted existing connections between local and international Rotary Clubs.

Mayor Kahn mentioned the City Council meeting on the evening of October 16 as an optional event. Mr. Schoefmann suggested possibly inviting Petra Bonsack, who has represented Einbeck in the past in a semi-official role, to attend. They discussed giving her a brief welcoming moment at the start of the meeting rather than expecting guests to stay the whole time.

Ms. Brunner discussed plans for Tuesday, October 21, specifically whether to revisit Harrisville Designs. Mr. Schoefmann explained that Harrisville Designs had been suggested again because they're in the same direction as the taproom. They had previously attempted to schedule a visit, but the owner closed the business before the visit could take place. Councilor Madison questioned whether other options for showcasing classic New England textiles were available, but concluded that there are likely not many viable alternatives.

Councilor Madison discussed potential stops near the Dublin Taproom, suggesting Millipore in Jaffrey as a possible site visit. He noted that Millipore produces industrial and medical-grade filters used in environmental fields and that it is conveniently located. Having visited multiple times, he offered to reach out to see if the company would host a tour for the visiting German delegation. He also briefly considered summer camps in the area, which typically hire international staff, including Germans, but noted the camps would likely be closed in October.

Mr. Schoefmann shared that during the Taste of Keene event, he spoke with the head brewer from Post and Beam Brewery in Peterborough, who expressed strong interest in starting an exchange or partnership with the visiting delegation. Mr. Schoefmann was surprised at how aligned the brewer's comments were with the Committee's goals.

Councilor Madison suggested that instead of visiting the Dublin Taproom, they could consider a visit to Post and Beam, followed by dinner in Peterborough at one of the many restaurants there. Mayor Kahn noted that Peterborough offers shops and restaurants like Harlow's and Waterhouse, describing the town as charming, albeit more expensive.

Mr. Kuhn encouraged him not to give up on Harrisville Designs, emphasizing its international reputation and the quality of its products. Mr. Schoefmann suggested that he and Mayor Kahn coordinate outreach efforts; Mayor Kahn would contact Millipore, and Mr. Schoefmann would attempt to reach the owner's son, Nick, who is now running the business. They acknowledged past difficulties in securing a visit but agreed to collaborate and see which option is feasible.

Mr. Schoefmann welcomed additional comments. Councilor Madison suggested discussing scheduling for the next meeting and plans for Thursday's welcome. Mr. Schoefmann noted that there is a lot to catch up on. Ms. Howe confirmed that the cruise on Wednesday, October 22, is scheduled for 4:15 to 6:15 PM and mentioned that a hike or lift to the top of Mount Sunapee had previously been considered for earlier that day, which they agreed would fit into that time slot.

Councilor Madison said he would follow up with Sunapee Mountain Resort about the planned activity. He added that if the resort option does not work out, they could use the beach area at Sunapee State Park as a backup plan.

The group discussed using Keene Ice as a meeting location, noting it worked well last time due to its large parking lot, which accommodated buses, carpools, and drop-offs. Although the Rec Center was briefly considered, Keene Ice was favored for its convenience, familiarity, and proximity to the highway. They acknowledged potential conflicts, such as a high school game, but agreed that it remained the most practical option. Mr. Schoefmann offered to reach out to Ms. Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, Parks and Recreation Director.

Mr. Schoefmann reminded the group to email him any cost estimates for site visits, such as the Precision Engineering Museum, which costs \$6 per person. He asked for confirmation if estimates had already been sent and noted that he would double-check his email. Mayor Kahn recalled that the Saint-Gaudens site was approximately \$10 per person.

Mayor Kahn confirmed that they are likely to scrap the idea of visiting Keene State on Tuesday, October 21, and instead plan to have a local business lunch, possibly a bagged lunch at the winery. Mayor Kahn mentioned he had considered Keene State's Dining Commons as an option due to its variety and affordability (\$11 per person), to which Mr. Schoefmann said he would keep it as a backup option during planning.

Ms. Brunner discussed plans for the first Thursday of the visit, suggesting a lunch at Keene State College's Dining Commons, which is conveniently located near the Historical Society and Appian Way. Mayor Kahn offered to lead the campus tour himself. Committee members agreed this plan would fit well into the day's schedule and help make the itinerary more cohesive.

**B) Exchange Budget – Updates from Committee Members’ Research on Costs**

Mr. Schoefmann reviewed the budget, noting previous estimates were around \$10,600 but likely underestimated the final cost. Mr. Schoefmann acknowledged some overestimations and missing items, with plans to refine the numbers by the next meeting in August. He also confirmed the \$11 per person lunch cost at Keene State.

Ms. Brunner asked whether breakfast events were planned, such as at Keene Ice or another meeting location. Mr. Schoefmann said he had not planned any, although there may have been one initially listed that he later removed, except possibly including refreshments during the welcome event, as had been done in the past. They agreed to consider adding breakfast and noted that the arrival breakfast is currently listed for Tuesday, October 21, at The Blastos Room.

Mayor Kahn mentioned visiting Chapters at the Toadstool Bookstore, where he learned they serve breakfast sandwiches and could be a potential local vendor to support. The group discussed the possibility of reaching out, noting that it’s a lesser-known downtown area that has taken over from a previous restaurant. Mr. Schoefmann suggested that any breakfast provided should be minimal and likely limited to the welcome event, depending on budget constraints. He noted that more updates on the budget would be forthcoming as contributions are confirmed and finalized by the next meeting.

**5) Communications**

They discussed ongoing sign-ups for event coverage. Ms. Howe noted a sign-up sheet was circulating and encouraged everyone to add their names for the days they are available. Mr. Schoefmann emphasized there is no pressure, just an opportunity to plan and ensure support and coverage throughout the visit schedule.

**6) Reports**

**A) Treasurer Report – Eric**

Mr. Weisenberger reported no recent financial activity. The general appropriation account holds \$16,182, and the fundraising account has \$17,506. Mr. Schoefmann inquired about the timing of the annual allocation, and Ms. Howe replied that she would need to investigate it, noting that it typically occurs around July 1. Mr. Schoefmann observed that the appropriation amount seemed slightly higher than last time, but Ms. Howe clarified that the balances have remained steady for several months. She agreed to follow up on the allocation details.

7) **New Business**

A) **Pumpkin Festival 2025 – Begin Discussion of Plans, Budget, Donations, and Volunteers**

As planning begins for Pumpkin Festival 2025, Mr. Schoefmann noted the need to start discussing budget, donations, and volunteer coordination. He requested help with budgeting, as his focus was on the exchange program. Mr. Blunt volunteered to review costs and provide price estimates, referencing records from the previous festival. He also offered to meet and ensure everything aligns with expectations.

They are still waiting for confirmation on whether they will have a table at the event and whether they will be allowed to sell hot dogs and bratwurst. Ms. Brunner had requested both, but noted they might have to adjust if another vendor is already offering hot dogs. They agreed to adapt the plans based on what the organizers allow.

They discussed finalizing the budget so they can determine what donations might be needed. Mr. Schoefmann noted that it will likely involve an expenditure similar to last time. He suggested that Ms. Brunner handle the ordering to avoid over-purchasing, recalling a humorous mistake where he accidentally ordered pallets of bratwurst (“meat bars”). They ended on a positive note, agreeing they have a good pool of volunteers, including student support.

8) **Next Meeting:**

Mr. Schoefmann noted that the next meeting is scheduled for August 12 and that Chair John Mitchell may or may not be back by then. He also mentioned that he and Chair Mitchell have an upcoming online coordination meeting with both Wolf and Jürgen later in the week to ensure everything is on track for the forthcoming visitation.

Mr. Kuhn inquired about the timing of the host meetings, noting that they were initially planned for July, August, and September. Mr. Schoefmann confirmed that meetings are now expected to take place in late August and September. He explained that he and Chair Mitchell will confirm the finalized visitation list later this week, after which they can finalize host assignments and send out the dates for the host meetings.

9) **More Time**

Mr. Lins discussed the status of the cookbook project, noting they have only received a handful of recipes so far, far from enough to complete it. They agreed it is more of a long-term project, not something to be ready by the Pumpkin Festival. They hope the German delegation can bring recipes during their visit. Ms. McCollester mentioned that her recipes are primarily German, and she has been translating American recipes into German. They encouraged anyone with recipes or significant others with good ones to send them to Jerry for inclusion.

Mayor Kahn suggested inviting key individuals to an event to help foster relationships, such as the new German instructor or contacts like Ted Benson. Mr. Schoefmann agreed, recommending the welcome dinner as the most suitable event for networking and introductions, rather than the farewell dinner. They also discussed including others, like someone formerly with Schleicher and Schul, and Colonial Board members. Mr. Schoefmann asked that any invite lists be shared with him and Ms. Howe so they can coordinate catering and include guests in the program.

**10) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Acting Chair Schoefmann adjourned the meeting at 5:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Amanda Trask, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,  
Nicole Howe, Executive Secretary