

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

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

**Thursday, September 11, 2025**

**6:00 PM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

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

**Members Not Present:**

Michael J. Remy, Vice Chair

**Staff Present:**

Elizabeth A. Ferland, City Manager  
Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney  
Marti Fiske, Library Director  
Amy Kraemer, Head of Youth and  
Community Services  
Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer  
Alyssa Bender, Youth Services Manager

**Jay V. Kahn, Mayor**

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

**1) Acceptance of Donation for Makerspace Staffing - Library Director**

Library Director, Marti Fiske, and Head of Youth and Community Services Amy Kraemer addressed the Committee and stated this item is in reference to the acceptance of an annual donation from the Friends of the Library in the amount of \$15,000. This fund will be used to pay for Makerspace staffing. Ms. Fiske stated that the Friends of the Keene Public Library have been funding the Makerspace since 2016. She indicated that the Makerspace staff train community members on how to use the machinery, and they work with librarians to develop services and programming. Today the library has staff who work 18.5 to 19.5 hours a week and the library has approximately 18.5 hours open every week. Ms. Fiske expressed her appreciation to the Friends and turned the presentation over to Ms. Kraemer.

Ms. Kraemer stated currently Makerspace has one part-time staff person and frequently interns from Keene State College from their Department of Sustainable Product Design and Innovation also provide their services. She presented to the Committee some items Makerspace helps interested participants create. She stated they have in their possession a 3D printer, sewing machines, and a laminator. She gave some examples of items they have made in Makerspace, including signs displayed at the Story Walk at Ashuelot Park, people have made kitchen knobs, engraving of glasses and water bottles, engraved coasters. Ms. Kraemer stated one does not have to be an artist to design and create things with Makerspace, there are staff available to assist you.

The following motion by Councilor Chadbourne was duly seconded by Councilor Lake.

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized do all things necessary to accept and expend a donation of \$15,000 from the Friends of the Keene Public Library to fund Makerspace staffing.

**2) Councilor Remy - Request to Place Social District Question on 2025 Municipal General Election Ballot**

The Chairman stated Councilor Remy is not present today and hence, this item will be place on more time until the next FOP meeting. Councilor Lake clarified there will be sufficient time for this item to make the 2025 Municipal Ballot. The Manager agreed that there is sufficient time.

The following motion by Councilor Lake was duly seconded by Chair Roberts.

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that Councilor Remy's Request to Place Social District Question on the 2025 Municipal General Election Ballot be placed on more time until the next meeting.

**3) Acceptance of NH Juvenile Court Diversion Network Funding - Youth Services Alyssa Bender**

Youth Services Manager Alyssa Bender addressed the Committee next. Ms. Bender stated New Hampshire Juvenile Court Diversion Network is the over-arching accreditation entity and covers the state-accredited program. The City has been accredited through the network for over 20 plus years and go through accreditation every two years, and through the sub-contract accreditation is completed every year. She indicated with these funds they are able to provide more services that they were not able to provide in the past. She stated the City typically receives between \$5,000 to \$6,000. However, last year the City received \$56,000 and this year the grant is for \$45,800.36. The increase in funding also came with increase in requirements. The City has taken over three new towns and cover the entire county for the diversion program.

Ms. Bender stated this funding helps support kids and wellness programs and also supports kids and substance use prevention and education. Last year the City worked with over 80 youth who were referred to diversion, whereas four years ago the City accepted only 30 youth.

The following motion by Councilor Roberts was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and expend funds provided by New Hampshire Juvenile Court Diversion Network for Youth Services programs.

**4) Relating to the Appropriation of Funds for the Local Match for the Marlboro Street & Cheshire Rail Trail Improvements Project, NHDOT#42515 Resolution R-2025-28 Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer**

City Engineer Bryan Ruoff was the next speaker. Mr. Ruoff stated these appropriations of funding is to meet the local match for the Marlboro Street and Cheshire Rail Trail Improvements project. He indicated this project has been bid three times. The first was in October 2024 where the City received bids of roughly 2.5 times what the engineer's estimate was. The project was bid again in February of this year, where they received similar bids for around 2.5 million again twice what the engineer's estimate was.

At that point, staff did a reset on the project. There was some language that was leading to higher bid unit prices that was corrected to get better bid prices and the bid was resubmitted to DOT to get the updated plan specifications and cost estimates approved. With that, the federal government allocated another \$1,000,000 commitment for the project. What staff is now asking is a Resolution for the additional City match of additional federal funds for the project. The project has been publicly bid for both engineering services and construction services and the most recent bid, the numbers, came in at approximately \$600,000 less than it was originally bid for the project.

The Chair clarified the City's portion is coming from unallocated funds. Mr. Ruoff answered in the affirmative.

The following motion by Councilor Chadbourne was duly seconded by Chair Lake.

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2025-28.

**5) Relating to the Appropriation of Additional Funds for FY26 Water Infrastructure Pavement Repairs Resolution R-2025-29 - Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer**

Mr. Ruoff stated there has been a number of water main breaks earlier this year. Much of the scope of those water main breaks go beyond what City crews can handle. Winchester Street, Water Street, West Street were all major water main breaks that required the City to get pricing from local contractors. Performing those repairs, pretty much depleted the water department's budget. He stated what staff is asking is replenish this money to be able to perform pavement repairs as the construction year continues. Obviously, if it is not warranted, the funds will not be used.

Councilor Lake asked when pavement is torn up and has to be repaved for a water related project, whether that money usually comes from the water fund rather than the regular public works fund.

Mr. Ruoff stated unplanned water repair would come from the water-operating budget, which budget is very small. If it is a planned project, it would be in the CIP but also be funded through the water fund.

Councilor Roberts asked how much the water street repair cost. Mr. Ruoff stated to excavate this area, re-patch and restore the sidewalk was about \$12,500. The Chair asked whether these funds

were also coming out of unallocated funds of the water fund. The Manager stated that was what was being planned but is not indicated in the Committee report.

The Committee asked that the Resolution language be amended.

The following motion by Councilor Lake was duly seconded by Chair Powers.

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend the adoption of Resolution R-2025-29 with the adjustment that the funding is coming from the Water Fund on an allocated fund balance.

**6) Relating to the Appropriation of Funds for FY26 Sewer Main Lining Project**  
**Resolution R-2025-30 - Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer**

Mr. Ruoff stated a month ago he had come before the Committee for approval for the manager to execute a change order for the sewer main lining project. He stated he had incorrectly stated the amount the City had available in the DES Grant and what the City had for funds. He noted the City didn't have the amount to execute the change order but did have it in the grant.

Hence, what staff is trying to do and what probably should have been done from the beginning, given this is a three-year project scheduled in the CIP, was to allocate the funds for this project for FY26, 27, and 28. FY 26 and 27 have been completed. What staff is asking for is to complete the point repairs for this project and complete the change orders as part of that FY 28 budget.

The City is a year ahead on this project. By using this remaining additional loan funding, the City gets the maximum amount of loan forgiveness and essentially free money from the federal government.

Councilor Lake clarified the City is essentially completing the 2028 work ahead of schedule and are pulling that funding forward to complete that work now. Hence, this work will not happen in FY28 and the funding won't go out in FY28. The City Engineer agreed.

The following motion by Councilor Roberts was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2025-30.

**7) Relating to the Appropriation of Funds for the Keene Airport Solar Project**  
**Resolution R-2025-31 – Airport Director**

City Manager Elizabeth Ferland addressed the Committee next and noted that Dan Weeks from Revision Energy and Kari Chamberlain, Finance Director were also present tonight.

The Manager stated the bond amount in the Resolution is for the entire amount of the solar project. If the City were successful at meeting the buying threshold of 5% or more in time for the Safe Harbor of the investment tax credit, the City would be reimbursed just over 3.4 million

Dollars in one year. This would greatly reduce the cost of this project and accelerate both the payback period and the positive cash flow. The Manager stated to meet this deadline the City needs approval this month and the ability to execute a contract and provide a deposit as soon as possible.

The very conservative report from Beacon Integrated Solutions discussed at the last FOP meeting shows this project with a positive cash flow in year one with the tax credit applied and year three without the tax credit and has an \$8 to \$13 million estimated benefit in savings calculation.

The Manager went on to say she provided Revision Energy a report from Beacon Integrated Solutions and the City's bond rate after the last FOP meeting and Revision Energy updated the projections using the bond rate and utilizing the 25.5% tax credit instead of the 30% previously shown. She noted this is because the City uses tax-exempt bonds and the 30% would be for someone who is using a taxable bond. In both scenarios, the City will have substantial revenue savings. Without the tax credit, the project has a positive cash flow in year three, completely offsetting the bond payments and with the credit, there will be a positive cash flow right away and saving and revenue numbers are much greater. Revision Energy's calculations show a \$20 to \$24 million revenue and savings over the 25 years of the project, which is the warranty period.

Ms. Ferland further stated in addition to the financial benefits, there are also huge environmental benefits as well. This will be one of the largest municipal solar farms in New Hampshire and offset over 6.5 million pounds of carbon dioxide equivalent every year. This will move the City one step closer to meeting its very aggressive energy goals.

Councilor Roberts clarified one of reasons for moving this project up is because the federal administration has put a deadline date on all planned funding for green energy projects. The Manager agreed and added the investment tax credit being discussed is sun setting out with the new administration and is no longer going to be available. The City has until December 30th to meet all requirements to safeguard that tax credit. She added the City has been working on this project for two and a half years. The Manager noted with or without the tax credit, this is a very favorable project both financially and environmentally.

The Chair stated he could not see why this project should not be moved along; a project that has been worked on for many years.

Councilor Favolise asked whether the City would be assuming ownership and operational control of the solar panels. The Manager stated yes, the City will assume ownership, noting the projects the City has done to-date have all been done through a power purchase agreement, which is when you do not take on any responsibility for the solar project itself. You are purchasing the power, but the cost of the power is annually escalated, and you are really hedging your bets as to whether there will be a savings. This is the biggest project the City has ever undertaken and is the first one the Manager has felt comfortable with the savings the City will see, because of the size of the project. The other projects we've done have been relatively small. The one for the Wastewater Treatment Facility was larger, but even so it wasn't enough to motivate a purchase.

If we purchase, the City will see the greatest benefit and with the savings we have included in these calculations capital improvement repairs for the inverters as well.

The following motion by Councilor Chadbourne was duly seconded by Councilor Lake.

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2025-31.

The following motion by Councilor Lake was duly seconded by Councilor Roberts.

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a contract with revision energy for the construction of a solar farm at the Keene Airport.

### **8) Revo Casino Host Community Agreement - City Manager**

The City Manager addressed this item. She stated she had two Councilors who reached out to her who saw a news article on WMUR, which allows host municipalities of gambling facilities to also receive funds as if they were a charity. Nonprofits see about \$16,000 to \$20,000 depending on the activity at the casino. December is when Revo Casino would be addressing this issue for the host municipalities and in order to participate the City would need to sign their standard agreement.

The Manager stated this is the first time the City would be participating in something like this and would need Council authorization to move forward.

Councilor Chadbourne asked whether this means each year the City would have to apply, and it would be approved in December. The Manager stated this is the time period chosen by Revo Casino and this is when the agreement would need to be signed to participate (35% of what they take in during the time period).

Councilor Lake asked whether there are restrictions on how these funds can be used. The Manager stated the funding goes to the general fund. She added the reasoning behind this is because communities felt that casinos place a burden on their host community such as with Police and Fire. Hence, there are no restriction on how the funds can be used. She stated a conversation would need to be undertaken as to how these funds should be used.

Councilor Roberts stated he is not going to support this because he agreed the money would be helpful but stated he had an ethical problem with accepting money from organizations that might cater to gambling issues. He stated when he goes to the New Hampshire Employment Security Office, by 11:45 am, he sees vehicles starting to come in and most of the attendees are retirees. He felt accepting these funds places a bad light on the City.

Councilor Favolise stated the negative impacts casinos have on citizens would be an issue regardless of whether the City has this agreement or not. He encouraged the Committee to think

about this agreement offsetting some of that perception and some of the burden a casino places on a community and stated he would like the opportunity to vote on this before the full Council.

Councilor Lake asked if this item was not moved forward, whether another charitable organization would fill that time slot in December and additionally whether there was a restriction on the location of the charitable organization that receives that funding.

The Manager stated in meeting with the Casino Manager, he indicated they try to keep it as local as possible, but there is no restriction that it needs to be Keene and there are organizations that are receiving funds that are not from Keene.

Councilor Chadbourne stated the City Manager has made a good point in terms of the City accepting this money, which benefits the City and as Councilor Favolise pointed out these casinos are here and this money is going to a charity or a municipality. She added the Manager had indicated the Council could decide how this money could be used and felt based on what Councilor Roberts said the Council could perhaps consider using the money towards either the Police Department or the Fire Department, which employs a social worker to address some of the issues that come up with addiction. She stated she saw this as a positive thing and stated she supports it.

Councilor Roberts referred to the ten-day issue and asked whether those days are additional days taken away from the casino or whether they are taken away from other charitable organizations. The Manager stated they are not additional days for the casino but if the City didn't accept these funds, then another nonprofit could apply for those days. The Councilor asked if the City accepts these funds, does that mean there could be less funds available for nonprofits that are currently receiving these funds. The Manager stated it just means a nonprofit couldn't sign up for those dates the City signed up for because the nonprofits are receiving it based on the sales or the activity that is happening on the days they are signed up for.

The Chair felt it was the right thing for a community; when an organization such as this, is in the community and the City is providing some services, this type of funding helps pay their fair share.

The following motion by Councilor Roberts was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On a vote of 3 to 1, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute a standard agreement for host communities with Revo Casino and Social House Keene, and to accept and expend the funds. Councilor Roberts voted in opposition.

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 6:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,

Terri Hood, City Clerk and Kathleen Richards, Deputy City Clerk