

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 14, 2025

5:00 PM

**2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall**

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Councilor Andrew Madison
Gerald Kuhn
Doris McColleston
Eric Weisenberger
Derek Blunt

Staff Present:

Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

Gerald Lins
Mari Brunner

Mayor Jay Kahn

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – September 9, 2025

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of September 9, 2025.
Councilor Madison seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

a) Exchange, October 15–24, 2025 – Final Discussion

Chair Mitchell stated that the German students arrived four days ago, were well received, and seem to be enjoying themselves. He continued that he met with the teachers today, and they think everything is going extremely well. Mr. Blunt is doing a great job. He also met with the

singers today. They had a safe arrival, and everything is going well. Those two exchanges are off to a good start, and the PCC can be ready for theirs.

Mr. Schoefmann showed a PDF of the schedule. He stated that the German guests arrive in Keene tomorrow around 7:30 PM.

Mr. Kuhn arrived at 5:03 PM.

Discussion ensued about arrival and pick-up. Mr. Schoefmann stated that they have four drivers and a van.

Mr. Schoefmann listed the scheduled events for Thursday, October 16. Chair Mitchell asked if there were any questions, noting that the PCC has gone over the schedule several times already. Hearing no questions, Mr. Schoefmann continued with the scheduled events for Friday, October 17. Councilor Madison gave information about the lunch reservation. He asked if there is an alternative plan for any Germans who are not interested in the shopping trip. Discussion ensued about who is driving, and who would be able to drive people who do not want to go shopping.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Saturday, October 18 is Pumpkin Fest. Discussion ensued about the day's schedule, regarding the PCC's booth, who will be there, the set-up and tasks, supplies needed, and so on and so forth. Mr. Blunt stated that he will be there all day, and he has a schedule for student volunteers from MC2 School, who will be rotating throughout the day. Mr. Schoefmann reported on the work he and Mr. Blunt have been doing to get the food items/supplies needed for the booth.

Mayor Kahn arrived at 5:10 PM.

Mr. Schoefmann continued, regarding the schedule, that on Sunday, October 19, German guests will do activities with their hosts. He outlined the events of Monday, October 20. He continued that Saint-Gauden's National Historical Park may be affected by the government shutdown. Councilor Madison stated that it would probably be possible to drive into the park, but the buildings would be closed, and no one would be there to give tours. Discussion ensued about alternatives to Saint-Gauden's. Mr. Schoefmann spoke about the schedule for Tuesday, October 21, and Wednesday, October 22, and discussion continued. Councilor Madison shared information about lunch and activity options for Wednesday. Chair Mitchell asked how many hosts will be there helping that day, and discussion ensued.

Mr. Schoefmann gave information about the schedule for Thursday, October 23. He continued that departure is the morning of Friday, October 24. Discussion ensued about transportation to Boston.

PCC members thanked Mr. Schoefmann for all the great work he has done with the schedule. Discussion continued about who is driving and when. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will email the schedule to the PCC, and the hosts already have it in the WhatsApp chat.

Chair Mitchell asked what the needs are for getting supplies to the dinner at Mr. Lins's house on the 23rd. Discussion ensued about tables, chairs, paper goods, and so on and so forth. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he was going to wait until this weekend to figure out those details.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that regarding the budget, he had to book van rentals through Enterprise, because the Parks & Recreation vans they planned to use are being repaired. He continued that the head of Fleet Services told him the cost for van rentals can come from the Fleet budget. Thus, the PCC is within budget. Discussion ensued about supplies needed for Pumpkin Fest.

b) Pumpkin Festival 2025 – Final Discussion

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Blunt to give an update on Pumpkin Fest. Mr. Blunt and Mr. Schoefmann spoke about the food/ingredient acquisitions, and discussion ensued. Mr. Blunt listed the supplies they still need, which PCC members might have or have access to, such as trash bags, tongs, propane, coolers, and so on and so forth. Discussion ensued about transporting the supplies to Pumpkin Fest, and the timing of that. PCC members spoke about what they can help with. Discussion ensued about set-up on the morning of October 18, and parking.

Mr. Blunt stated that regarding the budget, they are a little over the \$600 the PCC initially cleared. Discussion ensued. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he thinks the remaining costs are about \$300 and he has spent a little over \$400. Chair Mitchell proposed having the PCC approve about \$250 more. Mr. Blunt stated that he thinks up to \$800, total, is what they need.

Mr. Kuhn made a motion to approve an amount not to exceed \$800, from the Partner City Committee Budget, for food and supplies for the 2025 Pumpkin Festival. Councilor Madison seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Blunt to give a report on how the student exchange is going. Mr. Blunt replied that it is going very well. He continued that eight students and two teachers have been here for 10 days now, and they have had a full itinerary. He spoke about the activities they have done so far, such as visiting the Statehouse and hiking Mt. Monadnock. They loved their day at the YMCA. They are spending Thursday in Boston and departing later that night. Everyone looks forward to the Keene students going to Einbeck sometime in spring 2026. Discussion ensued.

5) Communications

6) Reports

a) Treasurer Report - Eric

Mr. Weisenberger stated that the fundraising account is at \$17,506. He continued that there is some fluctuation, but the general appropriation is \$22,672. Ms. Howe stated that they finally got the \$5,000 appropriation from the City squared away, backdated to July. She continued that obviously, this week there are a bunch of pending charges. Chair Mitchell asked if that is in the range of \$14,000. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes, they are well under that, even with the van rentals. Chair Mitchell asked what they made last year at Pumpkin Fest. PCC members replied that they do not remember the exact figure, but they think it was over \$1,000. Ms. Howe stated that they can have that report for next month, and they can compare this year to last year.

Chair Mitchell stated that he thinks they still have some items leftover that they could raffle off. Ms. Howe replied yes, they do. Discussion ensued about the possibility of raffling those off at the dinner at Mr. Lins's house, which is in Chesterfield, NH, and whether that is allowed. It is a private function at a private residence. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will look into it.

7) New Business

8) Next Meeting – November 18, 2025

Discussion ensued about the November meeting date, given that City Hall will be closed on November 11, as it is a federal holiday. Mr. Schoefmann stated that the PCC meeting will be Tuesday, November 18.

9) More Time

a) Fundraiser – Cookbook/Any Other Opportunities

Chair Mitchell stated that they should talk with Mr. Lins's wife about the cookbook fundraiser. He continued that they could talk about the cookbook at the dinner at the Lins's house, and it would be great to have something they could hand out to people that had contact information on it.

10) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Nicole Howe, Executive Assistant