

City of Keene
New Hampshire

FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 12, 2026

6:00 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Thomas F. Powers, Chair
Bryan J. Lake
Kris E. Roberts
Michele A. Chalice

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

Members Not Present:

Bettina A. Chadbourne, Vice Chair

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Ferland, City Manager
Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney
Brandon Latham, Deputy City Attorney
Don Lussier, Public Works Director
Ben Hoy, Solid Waste Manager
Steve Stewart, Police Chief
Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer
Kari Chamberlain, Finance Director
Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, Parks and Recreation
Director

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

1) Mark Rebillard/Keene Downtown Group - Request for Community Funded Event
Status - Series of Small Scale Festivals During Downtown Construction City Council
Policy R-2012-19 - Community Event Funding

Mark Rebillard representing the Downtown Group addressed the Committee. He stated the Group is looking at a proposal for which they are requesting support for City resources in terms of Fire, Police, and Public Works. He stated they are looking at organizing two to six festivals per year during the upcoming construction period, which is going to happen downtown. He felt this type of festivals would create a pulse of commerce needed by downtown merchants in an effort of bringing people downtown. Mr. Rebillard stated they are seeking two grants; one state and one federal where the in kind donation the City might make in terms of Fire, Police and Public Works might be matched.

He stated they are planning on a large marketing campaign to tell people why it is important to spend money downtown and also a community currency program which all downtown, merchants would be enrolled in; an easy to redeem electronic funding - gift certificates and vouchers that could be used in a very short period of time (not once construction is over).

Mr. Rebillard stated this is a collaboration between all merchants downtown. He indicated the Colonial Theater has applied for and has received a grant from T-Mobile for a \$50,000 mobile stage which could be located anywhere downtown which they envision would be the center point of the festivals. This concluded Mr. Rebillard's presentation.

Councilor Chalice began by expressing her gratitude for the energy and coordination Mr. Rebillard has put into this effort to bring to the downtown. She hoped this is something the City could continue to do in the future.

Councilor Lake echoed Councilor Chalice's comments. He stated he was looking forward to all events.

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

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that any available unspent funds from the City's FY26 community events budget be used to help offset the cost of City services for the Keene Downtown Group for two small-scale festivals as part of the "Dig Into Keene" project, with event dates tentatively scheduled for April 4 and June 13, 2026. Costs over the above available funds will be the responsibility of the Keene Downtown Group.

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 that the City Council suspend Resolution R-2012-19, the City Council Policy on Funding for Community Events to allow the City Manager to include funding in the proposed FY27 Community Events Budget for the Keene Downtown Group to conduct up to four small-scale festivals as part of the "Dig Into Keene" project, with event dates tentatively scheduled for July 25, September 12, October 1, and November 27, 2026 for consideration by the City Council during budget deliberations. Said funding not to exceed the \$10,000 threshold.

2) Mark Rebillard/Keene Downtown Group - Request for Community Funded Event Status - Keene 250th Independence Day Celebration - July 4, 2026

Mr. Rebillard stated the Heritage Commission and Councilor Ellis, with other interested people in the community, have come forth with a plan for a 250th Independence celebration of our country. It is being referred to as "US 250". He stated the celebration would include a parade and events that are going on at the Historical Society on July 4th. It would also coincide with the 4 on the 4th Footrace that already occurs downtown. Groups and nonprofits would be encouraged to build floats etc. Here again they are looking for resources from Police, Fire, and Public Works for that event.

Councilor Chalice stated she is excited about this celebration and sees that the proposed budget is \$50,000 which Mr. Rebillard has indicated would be from donations but asked if they had a contingency plan if the donations don't add up to what they are budgeting for. Mr. Rebillard stated these are plans that could always be scaled back.

City Clerk Terri Hood addressed the committee and stated staff has conducted a few protocol meetings and the Mayor has brought together a group of individuals in the community that are interested in helping support this event. They include individuals from the Swamp Bats who will also have activities during the same holiday dates. She stated this is going to be an amalgamation

of different efforts coming together. The parade route would be minimal in terms of needing City staff support. The concept is a rolling closure starting on Lower Main Street near the Historical Society, coming down Main Street and having walkers cleave off at Railroad Street. Floats and other motorized vehicles will be leaving the area via Washington Street. The Clerk felt there is a good plan coming together and is confident this would be a family-friendly fun event that brings people downtown on that day.

Mayor Kahn addressed the committee and stated this event sells itself. He stated the New Hampshire Tourism Department is promoting this event statewide. They will be promoting different festivals that happen throughout the State and the County. He indicated following the Swamp Bats and fireworks event on July 3 would be the traditional 4 on the 4th race followed by the parade down Main Street. The Mayor estimated a couple of thousand people to be part of the parade and tens of thousands observing the parade down Main Street. He felt this is what the community is looking for; this is something that would showcase the Monadnock region and Keene as a center of activity in the region.

Relative to fundraising, he felt the \$50,000 could be easily achieved. The other item is prize money; how do you get thousands of people to participate. One idea is a bike-decorating contest – would this be a community funded decorating contest? Prize money also for the best decorated float.

The Mayor went on to say antique vehicles and municipal vehicles are going to be invited to participate in the parade. Community groups will be invited to march. There is a vendor in town who is prepared to provide the City with 8' x 3' banners for groups that don't have one.

The Mayor explained the staging from Bruder Street is significant because of the Revolutionary War monument located on Baker Street for the mobilization of a Keene militia that marched down to Lexington and Concord in 1774 and 1775.

The Historical Society of Cheshire County is going to be very active as a partner to the Keene downtown group in administering the affairs of the parade. There will be various performance venues along the parade route on Main Street. There are performance groups that would not only be in the parade like the Keene High School Marching Band and the Nelson Town Band, but there will be other groups invited as well. There is also a plan for readings such as the Declaration of Independence by school-aged kids representing the different schools. He added The Keene Sentinel and the Monadnock Radio Group would also be participating in this event.

The Mayor noted this is not just a Keene event rather the entire Monadnock region coming together to represent the significance of this day in our country's history. The Mayor thanked Mr. Rebillard's assistance with this event.

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

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Council suspend Resolution R-2012-19, the City Council Policy on Funding for Community Events to allow the City Manager to include funding in the proposed FY27 Community Events

Budget for the Keene Downtown Group to conduct the Keene 250th Independence Celebration on July 4, 2026 for consideration by the City Council during budget deliberations. Said funding not to exceed the \$10,000 threshold.

3) Allocation of Casino Revenue Donation to FY27 CIP - Finance Director

Finance Director Kari Chamberlain addressed the next item and stated on September 18th, 2025, the Council voted to accept funding from Revo Casino. The funding was a percentage of their revenues generated during the week of December 17 through December 26, 2025, which was part of a host community partnership. This resulted in a donation of \$13,788.35. Ms. Chamberlain stated staff is requesting that this funding be utilized to offset the total expense related to the police department's exacom system replacement, which is included as part of the fiscal year 2027 Capital Improvement Program.

Ms. Chamberlain explain this equipment records all telephone and radio traffic in and out of the police department. It is slated for \$41,300 in the CIP, which would leave a \$27,512 balance to be funded.

Councilor Favolise asked for clarification as to how this project in particular was decided. The City Manager in response stated the host community agreements were created by the State of New Hampshire to help offset any impacts to municipal services which happened as a result of hosting a casino and the greatest impact would be to police services. Staff also looked at the upcoming CIP to determine where these funds could be applied and Exacom was an option for the City.

Councilor Lake stated he agrees with this expenditure but in future years if the City was to continue with this type of agreement, he would like to see those funds be distributed to offset other services as well. Public infrastructure might make sense if there is going to be increased foot traffic and car traffic going into certain areas of town such as Emerald Street where Revo Casino was located.

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

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Council approve the allocation of the Revo Casino donation in the amount of \$13,788.35 to the FY27 Police Department CIP for Exacom purchase.

4) Execution of a Change Order for Construction Engineering Services with Greenman Pederson Inc. for Island Street 2026 Reconstruction - City Engineer

City Engineer Bryan Ruoff addressed the committee and stated this item is a request to execute a change order with Greenman Pederson Inc. for engineering services during construction for the 2026 Island Street Corridor Reconstruction Project.

Mr. Ruoff reminded the Committee that the City had to bid this project twice in order to select a contractor to perform the scope of work for the project. Based on staff's workload at the time, it

made sense to hire a civil engineer consultant to manage the project, both from a construction administration and inspection standpoint and to have a full time inspector on site.

The initial notice to proceed was issued around July 4. It was a very tight schedule from the beginning but SUR Construction was projecting to finish the project in 2025, with everything working as planned. During the project, the City added about two weeks of scope based on added scope of items the City requested. The contractor was asked to hold off on installing the sidewalk until spring due to issues the City has experienced in the past due to cure time. Mr. Ruoff stated the City owes SUR Construction between 50 and 60 days' time extension.

Councilor Chalice clarified what the City is proposing is not a penalty, it is for additional work the City requested and a delay for completing the sidewalk until the next season. Mr. Ruoff answered in the affirmative. The Councilor asked for the downtown project, if there are aspects of this the City can learn from and having provisions in the contract to make sure that we are not paying anything more than necessary. Mr. Ruoff stated the downtown project is a three-year project with an opportunity to complete final restoration in the spring of the fourth year. There are provisions being added into the contract requiring the contractor to restore all areas that are disturbed within a calendar year.

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 that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a change order for Construction Engineering Services with Greenman Pederson Inc. for 2026 construction as part of the Island Street Corridor Improvements Project.

5) Relating to the Appropriation of Planned Funds for Engineering Services for the Robin Hood Park Improvements Project Resolution R-2026-05

Mr. Ruoff turned this presentation over to the Parks and Recreation Director. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that the City engaged the community in 2023 to discuss infrastructure rehabilitation improvement at Robin Hood Park. Through those conversations, the number one item of emphasis was the pool. She stated in order to allocate these funds properly as part of the CIP (grant funding has already been secured through the Land Water Conservation Fund) – this has been developed as a two-phase project. Phase one is the pool – to improve infrastructure, energy and water efficiency of the pool itself in FY27. Phase two slated for FY28 – encompasses all of the other action items that the community engagement process brought attention to.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated staff is requesting advanced spending of these planned funds to develop contract documents, plans and specifications to be construction ready for phase one this fiscal year, which will still allow the City to go through the process for phase two, which will be everything but the pool; allowing for rehabilitation of the pool without any loss of use.

The following motion by Councilor Lake duly seconded by Councilor Chalice.

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2026-05.

6) Relating to the Appropriation of Funds for Recycling Equipment Replacement Resolution R-2026-06

Public Works Director Don Lussier began by introducing the City's new Solid Waste Manager Ben Hoy. Mr. Hoy stated \$200,000 was appropriated in the CIP budget for recycling equipment replacement program. Machine X ended up coming in with the winning bid at \$247,800, which is \$47,000 over what was budgeted. Mr. Hoy stated what staff are asking for is to transfer money from the solid waste fund into the recycling project fund to cover the balance. He noted this equipment has served the City for 30 years. The additional funds would be to cover the electrical cost to install that equipment.

Mr. Lussier added this contract would replace the infeed conveyor as well as the sorting line conveyor. He added this contract does not cover all the recycling equipment, future CIP'S would have money budgeted to replace some of the other equipment in that line.

Councilor Chalice clarified the current processes of recycling at the recycling center will remain the same, staff are replacing equipment and are not expanding what is being recycled. Mr. Hoy answered in the affirmative.

Councilor Lake asked whether transferring these funds would have an impact on the unallocated fund balance. Mr. Lussier stated the solid waste unallocated fund balance currently has approximately \$2 million dollars. He noted this is a self-funding account, they are not tax dollars.

Councilor Roberts asked based on age of items at the facility whether there were other items that could be coming forward for replacement. Mr. Lussier stated the magnetic belt separator (which helps sort out steel cans from other recycling items) and the Eddy Current Separator which pulls out aluminum cans would need to be replaced in the next few years.

The following motion by Councilor Chalice 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-2026-06.

7) Councilor Workman - Request for Review and Update of 2019 InterAgency Memorandum of Understanding Involving Local Law Enforcement Partners

Councilor Workman referred to her letter included in the committee packet and stated she wanted to stress that this is not about questioning the professionalism of our officers and any inter-agency cooperation. She added this is not about immigration either. She stated a clear and current MOU protects officer safety and improve response effectiveness for public safety. The question is not whether these partnerships should exist, it is whether the written agreement that governs them reflects today's legal environment, operational realities and accountability standards. The current MOU was developed under an earlier legal and operational landscape.

Since 2019, there have been changes in state law, changes in federal and state incident command expectations, expanded multi-agency operations and evolving data practices and updated risk management standards.

The Councilor went on to say recent New Hampshire legislation demonstrates how quickly the statutory framework work surrounding law enforcement cooperation can change. Whether or not a single law is central to daily operations, these shifts underscore a larger point. Agreements like this are living documents and cannot remain static. She felt current MOUs should specify how policy differences are resolved during joint operations. They should include regular review requirements so they can stay aligned with the law and best practices.

She stressed these are government safeguards, not tactical or operational directives. Requesting that an interagency MOU be reviewed and updated is not operational interference in policing. She noted RSA 106 only relates to anti sanctuary cities acts and Title 8 of the US Code which relate federal laws governing immigration, naturalization and citizenship. She added that this is not what her request is about.

Operational interference would mean directing officers how to conduct arrests, how to investigate crimes or how to make tactical decisions in the field, which authority rightfully belongs to law enforcement leadership and trained professionals. She added she was not trying to get in anyone's way. Reviewing and updating an MOU is a governance function. It is contract oversight. It is risk management. It is ensuring that inter-government agreements entered in the City's name are legally current, structurally sound and fiscally responsible. It does not direct police tactics. It ensures that the framework is clear, current and defensible. In fact, clarity protects officers. Documented command protocols prevent confusion. Updated agreements reduce legal ambiguity, which can otherwise fall back on the officers asked to act within them.

Councilor Workman stated in December, the City saw firsthand when there was confusion over operational jurisdiction and practices among local chiefs who have signed the MOU. Each had a different interpretation of it. A periodic review requirement is now standard best practice in most interagency agreements. Including such a requirement is not a criticism of leadership. It is recognition that our laws and society evolve. This request is about modernization, transparency and just good governance. It respects operational independence while fulfilling oversight responsibility. It strengthens interagency cooperation rather than weakening it, and it ensures that when our agencies work together, which they will and should, they do so under an agreement that reflects current laws, current standards and current realities. This concluded her comments.

City Attorney Palmeira stated she wanted to take the opportunity to give a little bit of research she had done on this issue. She stated as Councilor Workman explained, her letter concerns a MOU with the Police Department. She indicated that the City Council does work with the City Manager on authorizing her to enter into contracts, other MOUs, or agreements. She stated however, statutorily this one is unique. There are state laws that describe specifically this exact item and who has the authority to enter into it and what the effect of it is.

She went on to say the scope of it is: these are set out in RSA concerning policing and police jurisdiction. Specifically, this type of agreement lives under RSA 40A:11(a) and is for police chiefs of any municipal department to enter into. This is not one that the City Manager has to

enter into or has authority to look into. Neither does the City Council nor in other towns a select board, etc.

She stated there was an article in the *Keene Sentinel* regarding the MOU the Police Department has, and how it relates to immigration law. The Attorney stressed as the Councilor stated this MOU has nothing to do with that authority. That was not an accurate depiction of what the MOUs effect is.

Councilor Chalice clarified what the Attorney is saying is that the City has no authority over this MOU, the Statute says that this is handled by the police chiefs because it is a memorandum of understanding between them. She asked in the circumstance where the public has concerns, was there a way the City can facilitate a public hearing in an organized manner, where the public can express those concerns within the context of it being a police chief endeavor.

Attorney Palmeira in response stated this setting provides some commentary for the public. Regardless of any conversations tonight, the Council has no authority to add anything into this MOU – this is something the police chief needs to facilitate.

Police Chief Stewart addressed the Committee next. With reference to review of this document, the Chief stated it was reviewed at the January 20, 2026 Cheshire County Chiefs meeting, which the Chief attended. He stated the topic of the mutual aid agreement came up and all the chiefs in the room were satisfied with it. There was talk about the immigration portion of it and everyone that was present agreed that it had to do with motor vehicle offenses and criminal offenses, not civil immigration law enforcement. He stated there was no real desire to make any further changes to it, to the extent someone noted that most that offered signatories were no longer even the current chiefs, which he added doesn't have anything to do with the validity of the agreement. He indicated there wasn't any appetite to recirculate the document and resign it.

In terms of the review of this document, it has already been reviewed, but the Chief added it is also subject to legal scrutiny daily by Defense Attorneys – the County Attorney attended the Chiefs meeting and he had no issues with the way that it is constructed and there hasn't been any successful challenges to the legality of it.

Jodie Newell of Leverett Street addressed the Committee. Ms. Newell noted this document is a decision for the Police Chiefs but felt there could be some influence here. She indicated she was here to speak in support of Councilor Workman's letter and felt the intention behind it is to clarify what jurisdiction is, if this is what the RSA says and that is what the community would be held to. Ms. Newell felt the community has some influence and a voice; what we would like to have in our community or not.

Jules Gibson of Central Square addressed the Committee next. They felt there are a lot of items in play here; the community has no say, and this is in the hands of the Police Chiefs but hoped today's discussion could be sent to them for their consideration.

Jules Gibson added it is nice to hear from the City Attorney that some of the legal ambiguity has been cleared up so people have a good understanding of what that means and how it impacts

their safety. They added it has been stated this is not about immigration but felt there is a substantial piece of this – where there was an incident involving arrests at the courthouse. People were confused as to what law enforcement were doing from another town arresting someone in their capacity.

Jules Gibson went on to say that even if the jurisdictional ambiguity was cleared and everyone was on the same page, they suggested revisiting the MOU between law enforcement and Keene and law enforcement and surrounding towns. This should depend not only on what is legally permissible, but what is ethically viable as well; does the manner in which law enforcement in Keene think about their relationship with federal law and ICE align ethically and morally with the way other towns as part of this MOU are thinking about their own relationship with these agencies.

Jules Gibson stated they are sure there are lots of good reasons for this interagency cooperation across the county but if there are core pieces of our values that are not in alignment, that is something that should also be a point of consideration as to how this MOU is approached. They added if our core values as it relates to law enforcement don't align with that of federal law enforcement or other neighboring communities, then Keene should perhaps reconsider the MOU.

Councilor Chalice asked for clarification as to why law enforcement from Troy has the ability to come into Keene and arrest Keene citizens when they leave the Court House.

Chief Steward in response stated his understanding is that the Troy Police Department is a participant or a signatory in the Federal 287-G Program, which authorizes local police departments, local sheriff departments, and county sheriff departments in the State to execute warrants for civil immigration issues. The Chief went on to say Manchester ICE had requested Troy to come to court when they knew that these individuals were going to be there and make arrests on warrants that they had.

The Troy Police Chief had stated in the newspaper that his view was that the county mutual aid agreement covered him under that. Chief Stewart stated the Troy Chief is aware that Chief Stewart does not agree with him. Chief Stewart noted it is not just the Troy Chief that is sworn or authorized to participate in these sorts of 287-G activities. New Hampshire State Police also participate in the 287-G Program. There are at least three sheriff departments that are part of the 287-G program and sheriff's departments in New Hampshire have a statewide jurisdiction.

Councilor Workman addressed the Committee again and how the public is made aware of this MOU. She stated she had a hard time locating this document even though it is supposed to be public. She also noted all the signatures on it were from 2019 and there is nothing about a review period. Councilor Powers stated the public is aware now, as many will be watching this meeting on social media. The Manager added this document would also be available on the City website.

Councilor Williams addressed the committee next and stated it is concerning to him that the 287-G program that Troy has, extends outside of Troy and felt this is something that should be subject to legal challenge. He also reiterated what Councilor Workman stated how the community could be advised of this MOU. The Councilor went on to say when the City has these

Mutual Aid Agreements, and the issue of immigration is included in it the City could be opening itself up to possible legal liability and noted there a lot of illegal activities that are happening right now when it comes to immigration. He referred to possible lawsuits from the State of Minnesota against the federal government as well as individual lawsuits. He noted people are getting deported without having a proper hearing, people are being placed in warehouses with inhumane conditions and if our police officers are aware of that he questioned what liability are they exposing themselves and exposing the community to. He felt the MOU should consider this aspect.

Councilor Roberts asked the City Attorney, when the federal government creates a task force and involves the local police, it falls under a different type of legal jurisdiction. The City Attorney responded by saying when a local law enforcement personnel has been deputized to enforce federal law, just like federal agents – they would have jurisdiction throughout the entire United States. Those agents working on behalf of the Federal Authority would have the same reach.

Ms. Lauren Hubelay of 180 Hurricane Road stated she wanted to follow up on what Councilor Chalice mentioned and asked for clarification; if Keene has decided not to engage in this type of cooperation yet surrounding areas have – what benefit does Keene have from not engaging in that cooperation if surrounding areas do and can enforce their actions within our community.

Councilor Chalice stated her understanding is that if our Police have decided not to engage when things change in the future, it could benefit our entire community.

Councilor Powers stated he wants to make it clear that the mutual aid agreement Keene is a signatory to, has nothing to do with federal agencies, nor will it ever, because it is not provided for in the statute which allows this agreement to come together. If another town has decided to sign onto it, that doesn't affect this agreement. This is solely for State of New Hampshire law enforcement and state law. Officers in the agency that signed on to do the federal work are doing it as federal agents, it does not affect their authority under state law – it is outside of that.

Councilor Lake thanked everyone for their comments on this item. Councilor Chalice stated these are difficult times and thanked everyone for their patience.

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

On a vote of 4 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the request for review and update of the 2019 Inter-Agency Memorandum of Understanding Involving Local Law Enforcement Partners be accepted as informational.

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 7:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,
Terri M. Hood, City Clerk