

**CITY OF KEENE
PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

Tuesday, February 10th, 2026

5:00 pm to 6:00 pm

2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall



- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)**
- 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** Approval of meeting minutes: January 13th, 2026
- 4. Board Business:**
 - a) Exchanges: golf, bicycle, brewer, dancer/musician
 - b) Eulenfest Participation – fundraising during festival
 - c) October Visit
 - d) Friends Group / Booster Club (not city affiliated)
- 5. Communications:**
 - a) Derek Blunt – MC2 BBS donation status
 - b) Mail from Dr. Sabine Michalek – congrats to Mayor on re-election
- 6. Reports:**
 - a) Treasurer Report – *Eric*
- 7. New Business:**
 - a.)
- 8. More Time:**
 - a.) Fundraiser – cookbook, Taste of Keene, any other opportunities
- 9. Next Meeting:** Next meeting is March 10th, 2026
- 10. Adjournment**

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 13, 2026

5:00 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall

Members Present:

Mari Brunner
Councilor Laura Ruttle-Miller
John Mitchell, Chair
Gerald Kuhn
Derek Blunt
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Doris McCollester

Staff Present:

Nicole Howe, Human Resources Assistant
Meagan McLaughlin, Staff Liaison

Members Not Present:

Gerald Lins
Andrew Madison
Eric Weisenberger

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 – December 9, 2025

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

4) Board Business

A) Social Media Posts – We have only received photos from one member

Ms. Howe stated that the PCC discussed this last time. She continued that so far, they have only received photos from Mr. Kuhn's wife. If anyone else has photos to include in social media posts, they can send them to her and Meagan McLaughlin, who is the PCC's new staff liaison. It

30 would be good to at least have the photos live somewhere in the City's files. Mr. Schoefmann
31 replied that he will find a way to collect those.

32
33 Mr. Kuhn asked if they want photos from past trips/events, too. Ms. Howe replied sure, that
34 would be good. Chair Mitchell stated that he has a lot of photos, but he does not know how to
35 get them to the City. Ms. Howe suggested he bring his phone to vice-chair, Mr. Schoefmann in
36 IT to assist with that.

37
38 Ms. Brunner arrived at 5:03 PM.

39
40 **B) Pumpkin Festival Review – Sales, ideas for next year**

41
42 Ms. Howe stated that the PCC's total profit from Pumpkin Fest was \$1,937.20. She continued
43 that it was a few hundred dollars less than last year's profit – maybe this year they did not do as
44 much shopping around to find the best deals on the supplies they used. Still, it is a good profit.

45
46 Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Blunt for his thoughts. Mr. Blunt replied that he thought it went well.
47 He continued that operations-wise, they had three grills going this time, which was great.
48 Whatever the amount was for the supplies they had, it was the perfect amount, because sales
49 ended at 6:00 PM and they sold their final hot dog at about 5:55 PM. They had a good flow of
50 volunteers, and everything went smoothly.

51
52 Ms. McCollester asked about the expenses. Ms. Howe replied that she thinks they spent about
53 \$700 on supplies. Discussion ensued about the expenses and the profit and how the numbers
54 compare to previous years. Chair Mitchell stated that there are benefits to having a presence at
55 Pumpkin Fest other than the money, too, such as people getting to know the PCC and learning
56 about the exchanges. Ms. Howe stated that she thinks the PCC has approximately doubled their
57 profits in the past three or four years.

58
59 Chair Mitchell asked for thoughts on how to make it smoother next time. Mr. Blunt replied that
60 it would be great to be able to accept credit card payments, but they were not able to get a card
61 reader to work during Pumpkin Fest, due to the overloaded networks. He continued that they
62 would need a wi-fi connection. They probably would have made more money if they could have
63 had card payments. Other than that, operations went very smoothly, including the volunteers,
64 set-up and take-down, and the tent size. Discussion continued. Chair Mitchell stated that the
65 reports he heard were all positive.

66
67 **5) Communications**

68
69 **A) Holiday Message Received from Einbeck and Sent New Year's Message from
70 Keene**

71
72 Chair Mitchell stated that holiday messages were sent and received.

73
74 **B) Open House – Mitchell Residence 1/17 at 7:30 PM**

76 Chair Mitchell stated that his house will be open this Saturday at 7:30 PM, for about an hour, for
77 a low-key gathering. He continued that they have a good community of people and it would be
78 good to try and keep that going. He hopes someone comes up with another gathering in about
79 four months, so they can keep communicating and coming up with ideas for what the next visit
80 will look like.

81

82 **6) Reports**

83

84 **A) Treasurer Report – Eric**

85

86 Ms. Howe stated that the fundraising account has \$17,777.53. She continued that the general
87 appropriations account has \$18,212.13.

88

89 **7) New Business**

90

91 Chair Mitchell asked if there was any new business. Mr. Schoefmann stated that Councilor
92 Laura Ruttle-Miller is new to the PCC, and asked if she wanted to introduce herself. Councilor
93 Ruttle-Miller introduced herself and spoke positively about being a part of the PCC. Chair
94 Mitchell and others welcomed her and thanked her for being there. Chair Mitchell and Mr.
95 Schoefmann briefly shared information about the partnership between Keene and Einbeck.

96

97 Chair Mitchell stated that the next item of new business is that he met with a couple members of
98 the country club, a manager and a golf manager, and they are very excited about a golf exchange.
99 He continued that they potentially would like to participate in the visit this year. There is interest
100 from people in Einbeck as well, and everything is moving in a positive direction. He has made
101 some progress with the bicycle exchange as well. A well-known person in the local bicycle
102 community is interested in working on a bicycle exchange. It is exciting to have three strong
103 candidates for the upcoming trip.

104

105 Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Schoefmann if he has had any luck with a potential soccer exchange.
106 Mr. Schoefmann replied no, although he has tried. He continued that it is tough to organize. In
107 response to Ms. Howe's question, Mr. Schoefmann explained the background of the youth soccer
108 exchange, regarding how it used to be very active, until the organizer retired from it. The PCC
109 has been unsuccessful in finding someone from the Keene area to take over the soccer exchange,
110 despite how eager Einbeck is for it to continue. He has reached out to numerous local groups,
111 organizations, and people, trying to find someone. Chair Mitchell spoke about how it is more
112 complicated to find someone to run an exchange for high school students than for adults, but
113 they are hopeful that they will find the right people.

114

115 Chair Mitchell asked, regarding other potential exchanges, if Mr. Schoefmann still knows two
116 brewers interested in a brewery exchange. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he knows just one.
117 Chair Mitchell replied that if anyone else knows a brewer who might be interested, that is
118 something to think about.

119

120 Chair Mitchell asked for other ideas for people to consider for upcoming exchanges. Ms.
121 Brunner replied that Kristen Leach does dance exchanges that are mainly children's dance, and

122 she wonders if they should approach someone who does dance programs with adults. She gave
123 examples. Chair Mitchell replied that he spoke with someone who might be interested, and
124 maybe Ms. Brunner can follow up with her.

125
126 For Councilor Ruttle-Miller's benefit, being new to the PCC, Chair Mitchell and Mr.
127 Schoefmann briefly explained the current exchanges – the student exchange led by Mr. Blunt of
128 the MC2 Charter School, the youth dance exchange led by Kristen Leach, and the choral singing
129 exchange led by Sandra Howard of Keene State College. Chair Mitchell stated that Ms. Leach
130 reports that she has plans being made for the exchange this year. Ms. Howe asked if they should
131 invite her to attend a meeting. Chair Mitchell asked if it would be possible to have a regular
132 invitation for her. Ms. Howe replied yes. Discussion continued.

133
134 Regarding new business, Mr. Schoefmann asked if they can talk about the next trip. Chair
135 Mitchell stated that they do not yet have the invitation from the Einbeck group, but he expects
136 they will receive that soon. He continued that it will be for about 20 people, so the PCC needs to
137 start thinking about how to organize this. Maybe two golfers and two brewers, for example.
138 With five groups of people, they quickly fill 10 spots.

139
140 Ms. McCollester asked if they know how many people are interested in this next trip. Chair
141 Mitchell replied no, but they try to prioritize people who are either promoting an exchange or
142 trying to develop one. Discussion continued. Chair Mitchell explained that typically for an
143 exchange, a lead person from Keene and a lead person from Einbeck work together, with the two
144 committees' support, and figure out how to make the exchange happen. He continued that for
145 example, last year with the dance exchange, Ms. Leach got in touch with Einbeck's lead person
146 for the dance exchange, and they together imagined what a dance exchange would look like, and
147 after a lot of planning, a group of Einbeck students went to Keene and vice versa. That is what
148 they hope will happen with golf as well. Maybe a couple people from Keene who are interested
149 in promoting the idea of a golf exchange would go to Einbeck, meet some like-minded people,
150 and start talking about what such an exchange could look like. Discussion continued.

151
152 Chair Mitchell asked if others had thoughts on this year's trip. Ms. Brunner replied that if she
153 goes, her main interest would be the dance community. Mr. Schoefmann stated that during the
154 recent exchange here in Keene, there were conversations about Keene visitors participating more
155 in Einbeck's Eulenfest, which is the fall festival that happens while Keene visitors are there. Mr.
156 Schoefmann gave more information about Eulenfest and continued that the idea would be to
157 somehow participate in the fundraising efforts, as Einbeck's other partner cities do, although the
158 logistics are challenging. If anyone has ideas for how Keene could help with Eulenfest, they can
159 talk about it. Discussion ensued, with ideas such as selling stickers or buttons or something else,
160 or jack-o-lantern carving.

161
162 Chair Mitchell asked who, among the PCC members, might be interested in going to Einbeck
163 this year, knowing that they are not making any commitment now. Ms. Brunner replied that she
164 is interested, but if she is going to try and connect with people in Einbeck's dance community,
165 she would need to first connect with some sort of dance group in Keene. She continued that she
166 will work on it. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he would consider going, and his focus would be
167 coordinating Keene's participation in Eulenfest. Ms. McCollester, Mr. Kuhn, and Mr. Blunt

168 stated that they would be interested in traveling, too. Mr. Blunt stated that he would love to help
169 with Eulenfest, and any other educational connections that could be made. Chair Mitchell
170 replied that there is another school in Einbeck that wants to start a connection. Councilor Ruttle-
171 Miller stated that she and her husband would be interested in traveling, and she has family
172 members who are avid golfers. Discussion continued about who else might go on the trip.
173

174 Councilor Ruttle-Miller asked if they know the dates of the trip, if it is generally the same week
175 in October. Chair Mitchell replied that they do not have the official invitation yet with the
176 official dates, but it is generally the second week in October or whenever Eulenfest is. The trip
177 is about 10 or 11 days. Discussion continued.
178

179 Chair Mitchell stated that they should elect officers, since it is a new year.
180

181 Ms. Brunner nominated John Mitchell for Chair of the PCC and Will Schoefmann as Vice Chair.
182 Councilor Ruttle-Miller seconded the nomination, which passed by unanimous vote.
183

184 **8) Next Meeting – February 10, 2026**

185 **9) More Time**

186 **A) Fundraiser – Cookbook/any other opportunities**

187
188 Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mr. Lins and his wife were spearheading the fundraiser cookbook.
189 He continued that they will have to find out where they are at with that. Discussion ensued about
190 how PCC members recall that recipes are being collected from the Germans, but Mr. Lins needs
191 help with some translating. Chair Mitchell spoke about how others can help, too; this is not just
192 Mr. Lins's job. Mr. Kuhn stated that he would be happy to help with the graphic design part if
193 that is helpful. Chair Mitchell replied that that would be great.
194

195 Mr. Schoefmann asked if the PCC did fundraising at Taste of Keene last year. Chair Mitchell
196 replied no. Councilor Ruttle-Miller stated that she is on the board of Taste of Keene, and briefly
197 shared more information. Discussion ensued about possibilities for the PCC's participation and
198 how it went in the past, and the need for the PCC to sell something that is non-alcoholic.
199

200 **10) Adjournment**

201
202 Chair Mitchell asked for "October Visit" to be added to the next agenda, under "Board
203 Business." He continued that he would also like to add "Friends Group" to the agenda. Ms.
204 Howe asked what that is. Mr. Schoefmann replied that the concept would be to have an auxiliary
205 group that could, for example, serve alcohol at a fundraising event for the PCC. It would be like
206 a "booster club."
207

208 Chair Mitchell asked if there was anything else to add to future agendas. He asked if they should
209 make the PCC's participation in Eulenfest an agenda item, or if they have too many things going
210 already. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he thinks that could just be part of the discussion of the
211 upcoming official delegation visit.
212

214
215 There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:41 PM.
216
217 Respectfully submitted by,
218 Britta Reida, Minute Taker
219
220 Reviewed and edited by,
221 Meagan McLaughlin, Staff Liaison