

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, February 19, 2026. The Honorable Mayor Jay V. Kahn called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. Roll called: Randy L. Filiault, Michele A. Chalice, Bryan J. Lake, Jacob R. Favolise, Laura E. Tobin, Robert C. Williams, Philip M. Jones, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Edward J. Haas, Laura E. Ruttle-Miller, Molly V. Ellis, Thomas F. Powers, and Mitchell H. Greenwald were present. Kris E. Roberts was absent. Having declared that a quorum was physically present in the Council Chambers, Mayor Kahn recognized that Councilor Catherine I. Workman requested to participate remotely for health reasons; she called alone from her home. Hearing no objections from the Council, Mayor Kahn granted the remote participation. Councilor Lake led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES FROM PRECEDING MEETING

A motion by Councilor Greenwald to adopt the March 5, 2026, meeting minutes was duly seconded by Councilor Powers. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Roberts was absent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Kahn announced upcoming dates of interest in March 2026 and April 2026:

- The evening of Friday, March 20, 2026: the last day of Ramadan. Mayor Kahn honored all those who celebrated over the previous 30 days.
- Friday, March 20, 2026: the Vernal Equinox would occur at 10:46 AM.
- Saturday, March 21, 2026: the “first full day of Spring.”
- Thursday, March 26, 2026: Keene State College President’s Annual Outstanding Women of NH Awards.
- April is Child Abuse Prevention Month: wearing a blue ribbon honors children affected by abuse and serves as a national symbol for child protection.
- April is also Sexual Assault Prevention Month: wearing a teal ribbon signifies awareness and support for sexual assault survivors.
- Thursday, April 2, 2026, through Thursday, April 9, 2026: Pesach (Passover)
- Sunday, April 5, 2026: Easter (preceded by Good Friday)
- Monday, April 6, 2026, through Friday, April 10, 2026: New Hampshire Energy Week

Next, Mayor Kahn announced that the City Council would host the Legislative Delegation Meeting on Monday, April 6, 2026, at 6:00 PM in the County Delegation Hall. Representatives from the New Hampshire Municipal Association would present an overview of legislative initiatives of mutual concern. Invitations went out to Cheshire County State Legislators, Town Managers and Administrators, elected School Board Members, and key people involved in legislative issues. Light refreshments would be served at 6:00 PM with the presentation commencing at 6:30 PM.

The Mayor shared a reminder that the 2026 Council break will be in August. The regular City Council meeting of August 6, 2026, will be held as planned; however, the August 20, 2026, and September 3, 2026, Council meetings are canceled. All Standing Committee meetings in August are canceled: PLD on August 12, 2026, FOP on August 13, 2026, and August 27, 2026, and

MSFI on August 26, 2026. Regular meetings will resume with the September 9, 2026, PLD and September 10, 2026, FOP Committee meetings.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION: KEENE HIGH SCHOOL WINTER SPORTS

Mayor Kahn welcomed Keene High School Athletic Director Mike Atkins, as well as the Keene High winter sports athletes in attendance. The Mayor thanked Mr. Atkins for helping to recognize a really successful Keene High School winter sports season. Mayor Kahn said the Keene City Council honored winter sports athletes who demonstrated outstanding achievements at state competitions. Their awards were the result of years of mentoring that began in grade school, at the Keene YMCA, at Keene Parks and Recreation, at local schools, at skiing mountains, and gymnasiums across the Monadnock Region; together these organizations and others contribute to the outstanding youth development opportunities that exist in Keene and the Monadnock Region. The Mayor proceeded, recognizing each team.

Bowling: The Keene High School sport with outstanding success winning the New Hampshire State Championship for the second straight year. Bowling is a game that requires scoring points consistently; unlike other sports, when the offense is not scoring and the defense can pick you up. This season, Mayor Kahn said the Keene Blackbird Bowlers won all ten of their meets, going undefeated during the regular season. In the final round of competition, Keene Bowlers won 14 games in one day to become the 2026 State Champions. Izaac LaClair and Jacob Moody (not present) were two who had consistently been among the top four bowlers in the state. Bowling team members come from all parts of the school life, and the Mayor noted that for many bowlers, it is not the only sport that they play competitively. This year, the Bowling Team won championships with only seven out of the possible eight players, including three junior varsity members—one of whom bowled every game, helping lead the team to the championship. (not all present at the meeting) Senior Bowlers: Izaac LaClair, Jacob Moody, Sebastian Bolton, Trevor Clark, and Evan Cheshire; Junior Bowlers: Cam Newer, Kaitlynn Dixon, Chris Chickering, and Seth Clark; Sophomore Bowlers: Jax Whitney, Caden Carle, Earl Jacob, Evelyn Swartout, and Lily Sanderson; and Freshmen Bowlers: Theo Hahs, David Wilbur, and Pailynn Buffum. The Mayor congratulated them for their outstanding records over the past two years. He also congratulated coaches Aaron Moody and Assistant Coach Jack Beauregard. Mayor Kahn also thanked Yankee Lanes, which had been a great partner for the Bowling Team.

Gymnastics: Specifically, sophomore Olivia Adams (not present) had competed at really high levels this past year: broke a record held for 18 years at Keene High School, placed in the all-around and the floor exercise, and tied for 8th place all round in the State Championships, which the Mayor called a real achievement for a gymnast at Keene High School. Mayor Kahn noted that Ms. Adams trains year-round at the Monadnock Gymnastics Center in Peterborough and has competed at multiple National Gymnastics Association National Championships. As a sophomore, Mayor Kahn said Ms. Adams' future would be fun to watch.

Swimming: Senior Andrew O'Donnell had an incredible season. Swimming competitively from the age of six with the Keene YMCA Dolphins, Mr. O'Donnell continued to swim for the Dolphins through middle school, earning numerous awards and setting records in several events. At Keene High School, Mr. O'Donnell qualified for the State Championship all four years, with

notable achievements: 6th place finish in the 50-yard freestyle during his freshman, sophomore, and junior years; Top 7 finishes in the 100-m butterfly during his sophomore and junior years. This year, he concluded his high school career, placing 2nd in both the 100-m freestyle and 50-yard freestyle, setting a new Keene High School record in the latter. Additionally, Mr. O'Donnell contributed to his relay teams, securing 2nd place finishes in the 400-yard freestyle in 2025 and the 200-yard freestyle relay and the 200-yard medley relay this year. Outside the pool, Mr. O'Donnell is an avid mountain biker and snowboarder, and values hard work. Upon graduating, he will continue as an electrician apprentice with Hamblet Electric and work for Faulkner Landscape and Drainage Solutions. The Mayor congratulated Mr. O'Donnell.

Girl's Wrestling: Sophia Domitrovic began wrestling in the sixth grade at Keene Middle School. At her first tournament, Ms. Domitrovic placed third, giving her the confidence to move forward. Ms. Domitrovic's mental toughness and resilience pushed her past any self-doubt, and she had an excellent middle school career. Her eighth-grade season culminated in her winning the individual title of Girl State Champion, helping her team finish a historic season as the Girl's Team State Champions. She also competed at the Youth New England, finishing second. Ms. Domitrovic brought these accomplishments with her to Keene High School, where there were some losses as well as a couple first place finishes, with her earning the title of State Champion at the Girl's State Championships on February 27, 2026 as a freshman. Ms. Domitrovic is now the third female Blackbird to call themselves Wrestling State Champion. The Mayor said Ms. Domitrovic looks forward to continuing her success over the next three seasons and hopes to wrestle for the Iowa Hawkeyes when she graduates high school, which the Mayor called quite an ambition. Until then, she will also continue playing soccer and being a part of the girl's track team, throwing discus; as well as working on her culinary skills, with hopes of eventually becoming a chef. Mayor Kahn congratulated Ms. Domitrovic.

Boy's Wrestling: Leo Runez won his 2nd NH State Meet of Champions title this year in the 144-lb weight class. With his second state title, Mr. Runez became only the 14th wrestler in Keene High School history to win multiple State Championship titles. Other season highlights included a 5th place finish at the Lowell Holiday Invitational and a 1st Place finish at the Minickiello Holiday Invitational. Mr. Runez has been wrestling since elementary school and now trains year-round, wrestling at tournaments throughout New England and the United States. He finished his junior season with a record of 41-6, bringing his career varsity record to 106 wins and 25 losses. Off the wrestling mats, Mr. Runez excels academically, ranking in the top 25% of his class, with his favorite subjects being mathematics and environmental science. He is also an avid rock climber and hiker. The Mayor congratulated Mr. Runez.

Skiing: Mayor Kahn introduced junior skiing standout, Lily Vidders, who was the Division I Skimeister as a Freshman and this year finished 2nd. A Skimeister has the fastest combined times in the Slalom and Giant Slalom Alpine, and Classic and freestyle Nordic (i.e., cross country). In addition to that accomplishment, Ms. Vidders is a three-sport athlete competing in field hockey, Alpine skiing, and Nordic skiing. She is a unique winter athlete because she competes in the varsity Nordic, cross country, and Alpine downhill ski teams. This requires significant dedication, planning, and flexibility. She had an outstanding season this year after having had knee surgery the prior season. Ms. Vidders is also a multi-time athletic scholar-athlete and a

member of the Mayor's Youth Council. Ms. Vidder's coaches are Bob Dumond and Pete Hills. The Mayor congratulated Ms. Vidders on her success.

PUBLIC HEARING - PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM 2027–2033

Mayor Kahn opened the Public Hearing at 7:23 PM and the City Clerk read the Notice of Hearing. The Mayor welcomed Finance Director/Treasurer Kari Chamberlain to the dais.

The Mayor requested opening remarks from the City Manager, Elizabeth Ferland. The City Manager began by thanking the City Council and any Planning Board members in the audience for participating in this Public Hearing on the proposed Fiscal Year 2027 through 2033 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP is the City's primary long-range planning tool. It guides how the City evaluates, prioritizes, and schedules investments in infrastructure, facilities, equipment, and community assets—while balancing those needs with affordability and the City's fiscal policies.

City Manager Ferland reported that this proposed CIP represented approximately \$209.9 million in capital investment over the next seven years, with about 61% within the General Fund. She called this a balanced program—one that reflects the need to invest in aging infrastructure while also supporting public safety, community amenities, and overall quality of life. She said a key component of this plan is how it is funded. Approximately 70% of the General Fund Capital Program is supported through bonds, grants, and capital reserves. This allows the City to leverage outside funding, spread costs over time, and reduce the immediate impact on the tax rate. The City also uses capital reserves and, in select cases, unassigned fund balance to offset costs and smooth tax rate impacts over time. City Manager Ferland said it is important to note that the use of unassigned fund balance will be closely monitored to ensure continued compliance with the City's Fiscal Policy guidelines and to maintain appropriate reserve levels over time. In the first year alone, the City Manager anticipated more than \$9 million in grant funding, along with approximately \$3 million in unassigned fund balance to further offset costs. She said that maintaining a consistent level of capital investment is important. It helps mitigate the impact of larger projects over time. City Manager Ferland noted that the primary driver of this CIP is aging infrastructure. The City continues investing in roads, bridges, sidewalks, stormwater systems, and water and sewer infrastructure. These are essential investments critical to public safety, system reliability, and long-term fiscal stability.

The Downtown Infrastructure Improvement and Reconstruction Project is one of the most significant investments in the CIP. The City Manager noted that much of this underground infrastructure is more than 120 years old, and replacement is critical to maintaining reliable service and supporting future economic vitality. The financing strategy for this project is intentionally structured to mitigate impacts on the tax rate. This includes more aggressive use of unassigned fund balance, planned roadway funding, downtown infrastructure reserves, and available grants. City Manager Ferland said this layered approach would allow the City to advance critical investment while reducing reliance on bonding and smoothing the overall tax impact. She noted that the Lower Winchester Street Reconstruction Project and West Street Corridor Improvements are aligned with the State of New Hampshire's 10-Year Transportation Plan, allowing the City to leverage approximately 80% state funding. The City's Stormwater

Resiliency Program is coordinated with these efforts to maximize efficiency and reduce long-term disruption. Together, the City Manager called these coordinated, multi-year investments designed to address multiple infrastructure needs, while making the best use of available funding.

The City Manager continued, explaining that the CIP includes significant investments in the City's water and sewer systems, totaling more than \$60 million combined. These investments support regulatory compliance, system reliability, and the long-term replacement of underground infrastructure—foundational to public health and environmental protection. She said the City continues to prioritize public safety infrastructure, including fire and ambulance apparatus and communications systems. These investments ensure the City's first responders have the equipment necessary to deliver services safely and effectively.

The CIP also includes continued investment in community assets, including Robin Hood Park, one of the City's major recreational facilities. City Manager Ferland reported that improvements would address aging infrastructure (including the pool), enhance accessibility and safety, and ensure the park continues to serve residents for generations to come. The project represents a total investment of approximately \$3.9 million, including \$500,000 in anticipated federal and state grant funding, with the remaining costs supported through City capital reserves and planned borrowing. The City Manager reported that the City was also actively pursuing Congressional Directed Spending funding to further offset costs and reduce the impact on local taxpayers. Additionally, she said the City continues to support trails, open space, and river corridor improvements that contribute to community health and quality of life.

The City Manager noted that the CIP includes ongoing investment in municipal buildings, energy systems, and information technology infrastructure. These investments are focused on protecting existing assets, improving efficiency, and supporting reliable operations.

In closing, City Manager Ferland said this Fiscal Year 2027 through 2033 Capital Improvement Program reflects a careful balance. It is driven by the need to address aging infrastructure while maximizing external funding, maintaining fiscal discipline, and continuing to invest in the services and amenities that define the community. Importantly, even the largest investment, the Downtown Infrastructure Project, had layered funding sources to reduce reliance on debt and mitigate the impact on the tax rate. The City Manager said it is important to remember that the CIP is a planning document. It does not bind any public body to undertake a project. Rather, it serves as a guide for the Council to identify and schedule needed improvements that align with the City's Master Plan and to forecast their financial impact. Once adopted, the first year of the CIP becomes the foundation for the upcoming fiscal year's capital budget and is incorporated into the annual operating budget process. Public participation remains an important part of this process, and the City Manager appreciated the feedback at this meeting and any additional feedback in writing until 1:00 PM on Tuesday March 24, 2026. The Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee would consider all information received to date and vote on a recommendation on March 26 that would come back to the full City Council for a final vote on April 2, 2026.

Mayor Kahn opened the Hearing to public comments on the CIP.

Councilor Jones pointed out that the Councilors received a revised CIP book that evening and everything was one page number off. The City Manager agreed about the revised book, noting that there were some additional changes in the “out” years, mostly for Public Works projects. Instead of pointing them out, staff decided to provide the Council with a revised book.

Len Fleischer represented the Monadnock Interfaith Project (MIP), an organization which believes in the inherent dignity of each person. MIP’s diverse faith traditions encourage them to care for their neighbors and to strive for the common good. He said these values are frequently demonstrated by the City of Keene’s policies and planning. From 2017 to 2019, MIP heard—in listening gatherings around Cheshire County—a need for public restrooms in downtown Keene that are accessible for as many hours per day as possible. Mr. Fleischer said that the need for bathroom access outside traditional City service hours is important for older folks, families with young children, people who are unhoused, visitors to the City, and really for all of us. He recalled the MIP speaking to the City Council about this in 2019 and Mr. Fleischer said MIP sincerely appreciated that the goal of publicly accessible bathrooms was still alive. They were grateful to see a public restroom included in the CIP for 2027 through 2033. He called this public amenity a typical feature of cities in our country and around the world. He said it signals Keene’s municipal commitment to meeting basic human needs and creating a welcoming downtown. He knew the City’s preference had been a staffed bathroom for safety reasons, but MIP knew this was a challenge. He said that keeping a downtown public bathroom in the CIP may hopefully lead the City to seek funding in creative ways. Mr. Fleischer said MIP urged the City to keep this proposed downtown bathroom in the CIP and to prioritize getting the bathroom built in the upcoming years. He stated that access to a bathroom is a matter of human dignity for all of us and he thanked the Council for its consideration.

Ken Kost of 51 Railroad Street also supported having a downtown bathroom for all of the population, so he was really glad it was in the CIP. He knew it was not a decision for this day but said that when he read the description of this particular bathroom, it was for a fully automated self-washing piece of machinery, which he thinks are built well and have strong reliability. However, his research on one of the brands listed in the CIP showed that it has eight motors; four pumps; 12 actuators and valves; and 25 sensors, nozzles, filters, heating elements, controls, and more. He called it really complicated. Mr. Kost said his concern is that although these bathrooms are reliable, they will break because any one of those bits and pieces will break down. Further, he thought those would be proprietary pieces of equipment, so the local plumbing companies could not fix them; it would take a service company, maybe a service contract. He had a sense that the bathroom would break after the City spends \$500,000 on it, opens it, and everyone is excited about it. He would not want to decide to spend \$500,000 on something that breaks, and he said it would break. So, Mr. Kost said that he preferred the alternative toilet type mentioned in the CIP, a Portland loo: it is manual (not automatic), very heavily built, and used throughout New England (i.e., the City would not have to worry about winterization). Mr. Kost hoped the City would consider something simpler, like a Portland Loo, which does not have to be maintained. He said it would have to be cleaned by people but thought that it could be an opportunity for a part time job or a community service project. Mr. Kost wanted the City to think about something other than this very complicated piece of machinery.

Robin Kost of 51 Railroad Street lives downtown, is disabled, and said she never had a problem going to a bathroom in downtown Keene (even in the evenings). Her first concern was that any bathroom the City builds has to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, calling that a given. Ms. Kost said to worry about the realities. She lives downtown and is concerned about drug problems and hazards, and that this bathroom stays clean, open, and safe. She understood that the building at the end of Gilbo Avenue was unoccupied at this time and owned by the City. Ms. Kost could envision that building very easily being turned into a public restroom for people in Keene attending events and more. She mentioned the news, and the existing growth rate for jobs in the United States right now being at zero; she thought it was similar in Keene. She thought the City could hire a few people in need of some kind of financial assistance or work, or those coming through the court system for community service to work cleaning the bathroom once per day. She noted that the Gilbo Avenue building belongs to the City already and could be locked if there were problems. It would still need to meet the ADA requirements, etc. Ms. Kost called it a good, frequently trafficked location with businesses nearby. She added that she had used many of these fully functioning bathrooms in Tokyo and other parts of the U.S. and said they are not all that they are thought to be. She said that when it fails, it would fall back on the people who proposed spending the \$500,000 plus on it. If an existing structure could be outfitted properly and there could be people to service it part time, Ms. Kost suggested it.


Andrew Madison of 178 Elm Street thought the bathroom was put in The Keene Sentinel largely trying to stir up controversy; if it was a County-proposed idea, he thought the article would have read differently. Mr. Madison asked the City Council to really consider wants versus needs in the CIP and the Budget this year. Regardless of what happens during the elections in November, he said there is a financial reckoning that municipalities in the state would have to face. He said federal funding is going to be harder to come by as our national debt is being driven up and resources for municipalities are drying up; he cited continued chaos at the federal level and called the state level budget a nightmare. Mr. Madison said at this time, the State of New Hampshire was working to downshift costs as much as it possibly could to cities and cut revenues by giving tax breaks to those who need them the least. He said the state was in a pretty serious budget deficit at this time and revenues were expected to fall well below their "already paltry expectations." Mr. Madison asked the Council to really consider, as moving forward with spending the essential needs of the City, how to accomplish the absolute essentials regarding infrastructure. He said the Downtown Infrastructure Project was already over Budget and he cited growing needs, as aging infrastructure in other parts of the City would start failing. He also cited increasing emergency needs. With the Fire Department understaffed and surrounding departments cutting funding and losing volunteers at alarming rates, he said Keene would be asked to support surrounding towns more and more as time goes on. As a taxpayer and a citizen, Mr. Madison was really concerned about what the future would look like, both for the City of Keene and the State of New Hampshire. He asked everyone to consider needs versus wants as they move forward with the Budget and CIP. Mr. Madison did not envy the Council's position, noting that it would be a tough few years and he thanked everyone for sticking it out.

Mayor Kahn noted that the City also received two communications about the CIP. The first was from The Reverend Elsa Worth in support of the Downtown Restroom Project, and the second

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from Mr. Anthony Ferrantello in opposition to the Restroom Project. Both letters were distributed to Councilors and would be filed into the public hearing record.

There being no further comments, Mayor Kahn closed the Public Hearing at 7:46 PM, except that written comments would be accepted up until 1:00 PM on Tuesday, March 24, 2026.

A true record, attest: 
City Clerk

Councilor Favolise asked the City Manager if there was an anticipated timeline for when the revised CIP that the Council received during this meeting would be available for public review on the City of Keene website. The City Manager hoped the next day. Councilor Ruttle-Miller suggested that the revised CIP would be an opportunity for a nice City promotional video if one was not planned already.

NOMINATIONS - ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE; *AND* LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mayor Kahn nominated Claire Oursler to serve as a Regular Member of the Energy and Climate Committee, with a term to expire December 31, 2028. The Mayor also nominated Susan Matthews to serve as a Regular Member of the Library Board of Trustees, with a term to expire June 30, 2029. Mayor Kahn tabled the nominations until the next regular meeting.

CONFIRMATIONS - AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING COMMITTEE; *AND* BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PATH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mayor Kahn nominated Sally Rinehart to serve as an Alternate Member of the Airport Development and Marketing Committee, with a term to expire December 31, 2028. The Mayor also nominated David Mast to serve as an Alternate Member of the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee, with a term to expire December 31, 2028.

A motion by Councilor Greenwald to confirm the nominations was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Roberts was absent.

TABLED - COMMUNICATIONS - COUNCILOR ED HAAS AND COUNCILOR MOLLY ELLIS - CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Mayor tabled the next two communications regarding Councilors Ellis' and Haas' conflicts of interest on two Committee reports. While doing so, the Mayor took the opportunity to remind the Council about requirements of the City Council's Rule of Order, Section 15 Conflicts of Interest, which was amended in February 2025. Under this Rule, a Councilor with a special interest must file written details of any Special Interest with the City Clerk for inclusion on the agenda, and the existence of a Special Interest is determined by a majority vote of the Councilors present. Finally, Mayor Kahn said Councilors are not required to leave their seats when abstaining from discussion or votes. However, if a Councilor with a Special Interest wishes to

speak at a public hearing or meeting at which public comment is permitted, they must do so from the audience.

COMMUNICATIONS - KEENE SWAMPBATS - REQUEST TO DISCHARGE
FIREWORKS - INDEPENDENCE EVE CELEBRATION - JULY 3, 2026; ALANA
FIERO/KEENE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS - REQUEST TO USE CITY
PROPERTY - TASTE OF KEENE FOOD FESTIVAL - JUNE 6, 2026; *AND* COPPER
CANNON DISTILLERY - REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN THE KEENE FARMERS'
MARKET

The first communication was received from Kevin Watterson, requesting the annual license to discharge fireworks at Alumni Field as a part of the Independence Eve Celebration held at that evening's Swamp Bats Game; the applicant requested Community Event funding for this FY27 event. A second communication was received from Alana Fiero and the Keene Young Professionals Network, submitting their annual request for a license to conduct the Taste of Keene Food Festival on Saturday, June 6, 2026; the applicant received Community Event funding for this FY26 event. A third communication was received from Kevin Blake Amacker, requesting annual permission to be a vendor at The Keene Farmers' Market in 2026; they provide alcohol tastings and have appropriate safeguards in place per The Liquor Commission, and they sell retail alcohol and follow Liquor Commission rules. The Mayor referred all three communications to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee.

COMMUNICATION - COUNCILOR HAAS - CONFLICT OF INTEREST - KEENE
DOWNTOWN GROUP

A communication was received from Councilor Edward Haas, putting on record a Conflict of Interest regarding topics related to the Keene Downtown Group and requesting to be recused from the discussions and votes when the topics come before the City Council.

A motion by Councilor Filiault to acknowledge Councilor Haas's conflict of interest and grant the request for recusal from participation and voting on the two matters pertaining to the Keene Downtown Group on this evening's Agenda was duly seconded by Councilor Chalice. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Roberts was absent. Councilor Haas abstained.

PLD REPORT - MARK REBILLARD/KEENE DOWNTOWN GROUP - USE OF CITY
PROPERTY - SERIES OF SMALL-SCALE DOWNTOWN FESTIVALS DURING
DOWNTOWN CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

A Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the Keene Downtown Group be granted a Street Fair License to use downtown City rights-of-way to conduct up to four small-scale festivals as part of the "Dig Into Keene" project, with event dates scheduled for Saturday, July 25, 2026, Saturday, September 12, 2026, Saturday, October 10, 2026, and Friday, November 27, 2026 including sidewalk displays, buskers on sidewalks, musical and stage performances on a small mobile stage on Railroad Square, and food vendors at locations to be determined, conditional upon the following:

- The furnishing of a certificate of liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 naming the City of Keene as an additional insured;
- The signing of a standard revocable license and indemnification agreement;
- That the Petitioner agrees to absorb the cost of any City services over and above the amount of City funding allocated to the events, and agrees to remit said payment within 30 days of the date of invoicing;
- That the footprint and layout for the events shall encumber downtown City sidewalks, Railroad Square, and Central Square (if it is available);
- The full extent of road closures and detour routes shall be agreed upon with City staff;
- That City staff are authorized to approve changes to the event dates for the applicant's benefit due to weather or logistical considerations, provided that the revised dates are acceptable to City staff and will occur within two weeks of the Council approved event date;
- That the actual events will be held from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM with the times for set up and clean up to be established with City staff;
- The submittal of signed letters of permission from any private property owners for the use of their property;
- Said permission is granted subject to obtainment of any necessary licenses or permits and compliance with all laws; and compliance with any recommendations of City staff; and
- That free parking be granted under the provisions of the free parking policy for the following: use of spaces with dates, times and locations to be determined in coordination with the Parking Division for volunteer parking during pre-event set-up and post-event break-down activities, and to be determined spaces within the event footprint on the day of the event.

A motion by Councilor Filiault to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Jones. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Haas abstained. Councilor Roberts was absent.

COMMUNICATION - COUNCILOR ELLIS - CONFLICT OF INTEREST - MONADNOCK 250

A communication was received from Councilor Ellis, putting a Conflict of Interest on record regarding topics related to the Monadnock 250 event, and requesting to be recused from the discussions and votes when the topic comes before the City Council.

A motion by Councilor Filiault to acknowledge Councilor Ellis' Conflict of Interest and grant the request for recusal from participation and voting on the Monadnock 250th Celebration license approval on this evening's Agenda was duly seconded by Councilor Chalice. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Roberts was absent. Councilor Ellis abstained.

PLD REPORT - MARK REBILLARD/KEENE DOWNTOWN GROUP - REQUEST TO USE CITY PROPERTY - MONADNOCK 250TH INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATION - JULY 4, 2026

A Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the Keene Downtown Group be granted a Street Fair License to use downtown City rights-of-way on Saturday, July 4, 2026 to conduct the Monadnock 250th Independence Day Celebration including merchant sidewalk sales, family activities and a parade, conditional upon the following:

- The furnishing of a certificate of liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 naming the City of Keene as an additional insured;
- The signing of a standard revocable license and indemnification agreement;
- That the Petitioner agrees to absorb the cost of any City services over and above the amount of City funding allocated to the event, and agrees to remit said payment within 30-days of the date of invoicing;
- That the footprint and layout for the event shall encumber downtown City sidewalks, Railroad Square, a portion of the Commercial Street Parking Lot, and a portion of the Gilbo Avenue East Parking lot;
- That the petitioner is permitted to conduct a parade and use the traveled portions of Baker Street, Bruder Street, Main Street (Northbound side) from Central Square to Route 101, and a portion of Railroad Street. Road closures may include any portions of other streets needed to facilitate detour routes. The full extent of road closures and detour routes shall be agreed upon with City staff;
- That the Petitioner is permitted to place portable toilets in City parking spaces located in Commercial Street Parking Lot in the parking spaces along the former skate park from Friday, July 3, 2026 to Monday July 6, 2026, which will be chained together and affixed to ensure they are not vandalized while unattended overnight;
- That the actual event will be held from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM with the times for set up and clean up to be established with City staff;
- Free parking has been granted under the provisions of the free parking policy for City parking spaces needed for storage of equipment from Friday, July 3, 2026 to Monday, July 6, 2026; and spaces within the event footprint on the day of the event;
- The submittal of signed letters of permission from any private property owners for the use of their property; and
- Said permission is granted subject to obtainment of any necessary licenses or permits and compliance with all laws; and compliance with any recommendations of City staff.

A motion by Councilor Filiault to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Jones.

Councilor Filiault said kudos to Councilor Ellis, who was stifled to be able to talk about this due to being recused. Councilor Filiault commented on how new Councilors often sign up for many new things during their first year. He hoped the whole Council would support this.

The motion to carry out the intent of the PLD Committee report carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Haas and Ellis abstained. Councilor Roberts was absent.

Councilor Haas was unclear on why he needed to abstain from this vote as well, noting the first item was directly related to the Keene Downtown Group but he did not think it was the same for

this event. Mayor Kahn clarified that the Keene Downtown Group would be the license holder for the Monadnock 250th Independence Day Celebration, so he thanked Councilor Haas for having abstained from the vote.

PLD REPORT - KATI WOODARD / FARMERS' MARKET OF KEENE - REQUEST FOR USE OF CITY PROPERTY - 2026 FARMERS' MARKET

A Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report was read, unanimously recommending that the Farmers' Market of Keene be granted permission to use 22 spaces along Gilbo Avenue and 18 spaces on the other side of the median strip in the Commercial Street parking lot on Saturdays from Saturday, April 25, 2026 to Saturday, October 31, 2026. Said permission is subject to the following conditions:

- the furnishing of a certificate of liability insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 naming the City of Keene as an additional insured;
- the signing of a standard revocable license and indemnification agreement;
- the receipt of a total rental fee of \$932.00 (payable on the first day of every month at \$155.00 per month);
- access to City electrical shall also be provided at a fee of \$60.00 for the season;
- obtainment of all necessary permits and licenses and compliance with all laws, and compliance with any recommendations of City staff.
- It is further recommended that The Farmers' Market of Keene be allowed to erect sandwich board signs on City property prior to the start of sales, subject to review and approval by City staff with respect to the number and location. The signs must be removed immediately after the sales have concluded.

A motion by Councilor Filiault to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Jones.

Councilor Chalice noted that she managed The Farmers' Market one summer and said it is a rough road. She said she was embarrassed that the City charges these farmers for use of this City property. She vouched for the fact that this is not a money-making venture for the farmers and said the City is graced by the fact that these people are willing to come every week and bring food they have grown. She hopes in the future the City will find a way not to charge these people to use City property. Councilor Chalice said she was in full support, but embarrassed.

Councilor Greenwald said on the other hand, The Farmers' Market uses parking spaces, which removes revenue from the City. He added that for the most part, the farmers are not City of Keene residents. Councilor Greenwald thinks it is very fair for them to pay for use of the spaces, noting that it had never been an issue. He said that it is not a lot of money and they are just paying their fair share.

Councilor Chadbourne said she never imagined herself being the historian but noted that this had been an ongoing discussion for years, dating back to when John MacLean was City Manager. She said there had been discussion about using the Findings Property at one point, the old vacant lot on Ashuelot Street (now City-owned), and other different areas for The Farmers' Market. So, Councilor Chadbourne said it was an ongoing discussion, and she thought it was really important

for everyone to remember that this is very fluid: there are constant, shifting conversations, and she thought it would be important to leave the conversation open for reconsideration. She thought Councilor Chalice bringing this up was a good reminder that the Council should revisit this.

With all due respect to Councilor Chalice, Councilor Filiault said that if the Council were to make this free for The Farmers' Market, it would set a precedent that any group can now come in and think they are allowed on City property for free. He said that precedent would wind up in the City Attorney's lap and said the Council does not want to go there. Councilor Filiault called the existing fee nominal just to prevent people saying that they want City property for free. He said there is always a reason for everything and that is the reason behind this small fee.

Discussion ensued briefly correcting a scrivener error in the motion to confirm that it should list the permission as "*on Saturdays* from Saturday, April 25, 2026 to Saturday, October 31, 2026."

The motion to carry out the intent of the PLD Committee report carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Roberts was absent.

PLD REPORT - CAROLYN OGREN - REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF WAREHOUSE ZONING AS IT RELATES TO THE POTENTIAL HOUSING OF DETAINED INDIVIDUALS

A Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the acceptance of the Request for Review of Warehouse Zoning as it Relates to the Potential Housing of Detained Individuals as informational. Mayor Kahn filed the report as informational.

PLD REPORT - REQUEST FOR SIGN ON TO LETTER OF SUPPORT - SENATE BILL 538 RELATIVE TO NET METERING CREDITS FOR SOLAR PROJECTS SERVING POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

A Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report was read, unanimously recommending that the City Council authorize the Mayor to sign a letter in support of SB 538 provided by the Clean Energy New Hampshire. A motion by Councilor Filiault to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Jones.

Mayor Kahn said he hoped this would come out of the House in the same manner that it was going in. He said that would be the question.

The motion to carry out the intent of the PLD Committee report carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Roberts was absent.

FOP REPORT - REALLOCATION OF CAPITAL FUNDS – SKATE PARK

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending that the City Council reallocate \$75,000 from the Patricia Russell Park Construction (65J0006B) to the Skate Park Improvements Project (65J0008A). A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Lake.

Councilor Haas asked the City Manager to clarify if this would be for additional parking spaces or just a driveway from behind the Skate Park up to the Pat Russell Park parking spaces, and how wide the areas would be. The City Manager said she was unsure about the width but said that it would be a pathway connecting the parking lot on the west side of the Skate Park to the parking lot on the Pat Russell Park side. The project is also for a parking lot. Both the pathway and the parking lot are a part of this project. She explained that this could not be completed until the Findings Building was torn down and the City received final approval from New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services for any site restrictions. Councilor Haas asked approximately how many parking spaces and if they would go behind the Skate Park. The City Manager said 15 spaces.

Councilor Chalice said she had requests from community members to look at locations for raised bed community gardens on the east side. She said this was suggested as the location that would be central to quite a bit of the east side neighbors who live there. Councilor Chalice said she would be looking to understand more about the site plan and be speaking to Parks and Recreation to see whether it would be possible and if so, how. It seemed to Councilor Chalice that funding was available to have this happen and she wanted to let her fellow Councilors know that she would be pursuing this on behalf of a group of east side residents. City Manager Elizabeth Ferland clarified that this movement of money is a match for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant that the City received, and the plan had already been obligated through that grant. So, Mayor Kahn said that the granting agency already approved the plan with a scope. Councilor Chalice clarified that she had no qualms with the plan or the funding; she was not asking for any of that funding. She hoped that there would be a grassy area with full sunshine where the residents may be able to place a garden, without disturbing what was already designed. Councilor Chalice noted that she was only elected recently and was not looking to disturb what was already approved or to reassign funding.

Councilor Ruttler-Miller reminded Councilors to face their microphones when speaking for the benefit of those watching from home. Mayor Kahn appreciated the reminder.

Councilor Haas said, having been around the Council for a couple of years, that it can start being a little different than what is in/out of the plan. He agreed that there was funding for it and it was all matched, but he frankly saw no need for additional pavement and parking in that area. If this passed, he asked for it to be permeable pavement or some kind of natural substance that would be suitable there. He understood that it would require more maintenance for plowing and such but said the City could look at things like that. However, he was unsure the City has a need for anything more than just a walkway from the Skate Park—a potential future crossing at Water Street over to the parking lot of Pat Russell Park. The City Manager also clarified that the City received permission from New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services on its plans for this location because of the foundry that was there before. So, she said that the type of pavement may not be able to change.

The motion to carry out the intent of the FOP Committee report carried on a roll call vote with 11 Councilors voting in favor and three Councilors voting in opposition. Councilors Chalice, Williams, and Haas voted in the minority. Councilor Roberts was absent.

FOP REPORT - ACCEPTANCE OF LOCAL SOURCE WATER PROTECTION GRANT

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and execute a Local Source Water Protection grant from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) in the amount of \$39,500.00. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Roberts was absent.

FOP REPORT - ACCEPTANCE OF DONATION - OFFICE EQUIPMENT

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept the donation of office furniture and equipment from Guild Mortgage Company with an estimated value of up to \$100,000. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Lake.

Mayor Kahn thanked the City staff who arranged this.

Councilor Ruttle-Miller clarified whether this equipment was sourced by the City because it read to her as a donation. She was really confused by a company from Bedford donating furniture, and how the City found out they were closing and had furniture available. City Manager Elizabeth Ferland called it a donation to the City that the company was offering to municipalities and other nonprofits. She also recognized City staff, not only in Purchasing but across the organization, for sourcing items from places like Facebook marketplace and creatively finding ways to save money. She said it was possible that City staff saw this posting somewhere.

The motion to carry out the intent of the FOP Committee report carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Roberts was absent.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

First, City Manager Elizabeth Ferland reported on Green Up Keene: Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. This year, participants could use the drive-through supply pick up again at Keene Public Works (350 Marlboro Street). If supplies are needed before the event, call or email Andrea Bixby (603-352-6550 or abixby@keenenh.gov) at the Public Works Department to arrange pickup. If members of the public have an important space they want to sponsor, they should look at the online map on the Public Works Department webpage, and see what sites are available for volunteers to claim (email Ms. Bixby). Participants could also simply show up on Saturday April 25, 2026, to be assigned area that needs attention. keenenh.gov/public-works/green-up-keene/.

The City Manager said Public Works Director Don Lussier also asked her to highlight the upcoming open house at the Wastewater Treatment Plant on April 16, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. She said it would be a great opportunity to meet with staff, ask questions, and take a

tour. City Manager Ferland highly recommended it, noting the tour would highlight items in the Capital Plan for the next seven years and the importance of those items. She encouraged attendance.

The City Manager also provided an update on activity at the warming shelter, as well as general shelter and motel placements; she knew there was interest from Council regarding utilization. The City partnered with Hundred Nights and the United Church of Christ to open a warming shelter this year. Since the warming shelter opened on January 20, 2026 through February 27, 2026, it had provided over 400 bed nights of service. There were more individuals using the warming shelter from outside of Keene (30) versus Keene residents (22); data also showed that the Keene residents were staying longer and therefore account for slightly more (56%) of the total bed nights. The City Manager said this distinction is important. While the number of out-of-town individuals may be higher, the intensity of service—measured in length of stay—was greater among Keene residents, which drives overall usage. The City Manager said staff would look at data again when the warming shelter closes at the end of this month. The City Manager reported a similar pattern in the overall shelter system, with approximately 57% of individuals being Keene residents at Southwestern Community Services' shelters, and approximately 54% of individuals served at Hundred Nights being Keene residents. Lastly, the City Manager reported that the City was still using a limited number of motel rooms: seven rooms across two locations as part of a broader strategy to address shelter overflow and emergency needs. Councilor Filiault asked whether the City was tracking what towns and what states these non-Keene individuals are coming from. The City Manager said yes.

Councilor Tobin expressed her excitement about Green Up Keene. She hoped for ongoing conversations about having a few more Green Up Keene days per year because of the ongoing needs throughout the City and energy around the effort. Councilor Tobin said it is exciting to see people out cleaning the City.

Mayor Kahn said that he visited the emergency shelter before the season closed in March 2026. He stated that if people thought there was a stereotype of person who might use an emergency shelter, there is none. He did not think that it came as a surprise to any of the social service providers in the community. Mayor Kahn called the warming shelter a real service and he wished that there were other means of the City providing shelter for those who need it. However, on the occasions that it was bitterly cold, snowy, or just inclement during the season, the Mayor applauded all the parties who made this happen: the City, the United Church of Christ, and Southwestern Community Services. Other churches also came to volunteer throughout the season as a great community effort.

JOINT PB-PLD REPORT - MEMORANDUM - O-2026-02 - RELATING TO THE DEFINITION OF "FAMILY"

A Joint Planning Board-Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report was read, with the Planning Board unanimously finding Ordinance O-2026-02 to be consistent with the 2025 Comprehensive Master Plan, and the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee unanimously requesting that the Mayor set a Public Hearing on Ordinance O-2026-02. Mayor

03/19/2026

Kahn filed the memorandum and set a Public Hearing on Ordinance O-2026-02 for May 21, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING - RELATING TO CHAPTER 30 - EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT - ORDINANCE O-2026-04

A memorandum was read from Emergency Management Director Kürt Blomquist, recommending that Ordinance O-2026-04 be submitted for first reading and referral to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee. Mayor Kahn referred Ordinance O-2026-04 to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee's April 9, 2026 meeting.

ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING - RELATING TO SETBACK EXCEPTIONS, ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS, AND PARKING REGULATIONS - ORDINANCE O-2025-40

A Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Ordinance O-2025-40. Mayor Kahn filed the report. A motion by Councilor Filiault to adopt Ordinance O-2025-40 was duly seconded by Councilor Jones. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Roberts was absent.

NON PUBLIC SESSION

A motion by Councilor Greenwald to go into Non-Public Session to discuss legal matters pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(L), and land matters pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(d) was duly seconded by Councilor Powers. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Roberts was absent.

At 8:36 PM, Mayor Kahn called a five-minute recess before the session started. The Non-Public Session began at 8:41 PM. The public session reconvened at 8:58 PM.

A motion by Councilor Greenwald to seal the minutes of the Non-Public Session held this evening as divulgence of the information would render the proposed actions ineffective was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Roberts was absent.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Kahn adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.

A true record, attest: 
City Clerk