

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

6:00 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Mitchell H. Greenwald, Chair
Catherine I. Workman, Vice Chair
Jacob R. Favolise
Laura E. Tobin
Molly V. Ellis

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

Members Not Present:

All Present

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Ferland, City Manager
Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney
Brandon Latham, Deputy City Attorney
Don Lussier, Public Works Director
Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer
Andy Bohannon, Deputy City Manager
Chelsea North, Parking Manager
Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager
Jason Martin, Fire Chief
Greg Seymour, Deputy Fire Chief
Mitchell Smith, Highway Operations
Manager
Yves Gakunde, Purchasing Manager
George Downing, Downtown Infrastructure
Project Ombudsman
Ben Hoy, Solid Waste Manager

Chair Greenwald called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and explained the procedures of the meeting.

1) Terry Bishop - Concerns with Parking on Marlboro Street and Enforcement Measures

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from the Petitioner.

Terry Bishop of 124 Eastern Ave. stated that he owns 89 Marlboro St. He continued that the issue is with parking. He is seeking solutions, not the easy way out, by installing parking meters or parking stations. It was suggested they extend the parking restrictions in front of the store. The sign says, “*No parking from here to corner,*” and they were thinking of having a larger loading zone, which would help the City and the people on Adams St., where tractor-trailer trucks unload when the children are coming and going. Enlarging the loading zone would allow tractor-trailer trucks to pull in and unload their supplies for the restaurant, the bar, his business, and the store at the other end. He would like to hear input on this idea.

Chair Greenwald stated that he is familiar with Mr. Bishop's situation, having lived in that building in 1970. He continued that he understands what is going on. He senses that the real problem is the other store using those parking spaces in a way that does not allow the public to use them. He asked if that is somewhat accurate. Mr. Bishop replied yes, that is part of the problem. He continued that because there is no enforcement, other people, maybe from the neighborhood or the college, are coming and parking all day there. Some targeted enforcement there might help. It has in the past. He is looking for more input on possible solutions and looking for input on the idea of extending the front area to a loading zone.

Chair Greenwald replied that his concern is that when Penuche's reopens, the problem will get worse, so they need a solution now. Mr. Bishop replied that on the bar's/Penuche's side of the street there is two-hour parking, but where the Owl's Nest restaurant will be is 30-minute parking. The 30-minute parking rule is not enforced, which he does not fault the City for, because those spaces do not bring in revenue, but the problem will probably get worse.

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from staff.

Public Works Director Don Lussier stated that all of Marlboro St. will be rehabilitated this summer, including some streetscape improvements, new sidewalks, new crosswalks, and bike lanes. He continued that he wanted to show images of what the area looks like now, and what it will look like after reconstruction. The area in front of Mr. Bishop's store is all concrete. The image shows the public sidewalk area. It looks to be 12 to 15 feet wide, but a portion of that is private property, which the public does not know, and they use the whole thing. The image also shows the painted parking spaces that exist today. Five spaces are marked out in front of Mr. Bishop's store, and four are in the block directly to the west. As Mr. Bishop alluded to, the way it is marked right now actually does not meet City standards. City Code says no parking is allowed within 30 feet of an intersecting street, and the parking space he is pointing to is well within 30 feet of an intersecting street. The rehabilitation of the area will bring that into compliance with the standards. There will be more of a setback on the east end of that block, next to Adam's St., which will create more of a turning radius. Next to the driveway, they will be observing the five-foot offsets as well, so there will be more space on each side. As a result, they will lose one or two of those five parking spaces. There will be three or four parking spaces once the rehabilitation is done. They might be able to just eke out a fourth space; they will try. The sidewalk stays where it is and the bike lane will go in.

Rebecca Landry, Deputy City Manager, introduced Chelsea North, Parking Manager. She continued that staff has had the opportunity to discuss internally a variety of options. Ms. North stated that Mr. Bishop mentioned that he is not looking for metered parking, but an option in that area would be to create a ParkMobile zone. It would not be isolated to just those spaces in front of the store; it would have to be from that area, at least, westward to Main St. to cover that area. The City does not have the hardware for coin meters anymore, so it would have to be a Park Mobile enforcement zone, in whatever time increment is decided, whether 30 minutes or something different.

Ms. Landry stated that ParkMobile is the app. She continued that she thinks it is also possible to do text parking in a ParkMobile zone. Ms. North replied yes, through their other vendor, the City

has a Text-to-Park program they could launch in that area. Ms. Landry stated that they would avoid installing any meters or kiosks. She continued that meters are obsolete, kiosks are quite expensive, and the construction project is coming. The only alternative to doing pay-by-app or pay-by-text is to have stronger signage. Instead of saying “30-minute parking,” it could say, “TOW ZONE, 30-minute parking, to report violations, call [number].” That may or may not have an immediate benefit, but they could try it in the interim.

Chair Greenwald asked about calling it a loading zone. Ms. Landry replied that that is an option as well. Chair Greenwald stated that he realizes it would not be “razor-sharp enforcement,” but occasionally, that could be enforced, which might send the signal. Ms. Landry replied yes, if they call it a loading zone, she still wants to make sure they make it clear to people that they risk getting towed. Knowing there will be consequences puts some psychological pressure on people when they decide to break the rules and park there.

Councilor Favolise stated that, regarding the idea of making it a Park Mobile zone, it seems to him like it would not necessarily resolve the enforcement issue. He continued that people can pay to park, and there is a time limit, but they still have to get the Parking Enforcement staff down to that area. He asked if that is correct. Ms. Landry replied yes, but no matter what they do, they will need to bring Parking Enforcement staff down Marlboro St. She continued that if it is called a loading zone and that solves the problem, that would be great. If there are only one or two offenders and this solves the problem with those one or two offenders, that is an easy win. However, she does not know of any options that eliminate the need for staff to do enforcement on Marlboro St.

Mr. Lussier stated that making it a loading zone would be a great solution, but it would need to be codified, to be enforceable. He continued that it is not like they could just putting up a “loading zone” sign tomorrow; it would need to go through that process.

Councilor Tobin stated that she feels slightly disoriented, like she has walked into the middle of a conversation and missed understanding the scope of the problem. Chair Greenwald replied that having lived in the building for two years, he has familiarity with it and can try to summarize the issue. He continued that Marlboro St. has Romy’s Market, with Savings Bank of Walpole across the street. Three businesses there need those parking spaces for their existence. They need the parking spaces to turn over. If anyone is parked there for a lengthy period of time, it strangles the businesses. Mr. Bishop owns the building where Romy’s Market was, and he is asking for relief in this situation. Penuche’s, the bar on the corner, is being rebuilt and will be busy when it reopens. The City needs to get this parking situation solved sooner than later. Currently, the parking spaces are not turning over, and they need a solution. Options are designating it as a loading zone or making it a ParkMobile zone. The Police Department drives by there every day, but they apparently do not issue parking tickets, so the MSFI Committee needs to figure out a solution or ignore it and let it go on as it is, but he does not think that is a good idea.

Councilor Tobin asked if anyone has a sense of why the cars are there longer, such as whether people are going into a different business or if they are residents nearby. Chair Greenwald replied that anecdotally, he has heard that people from one of the other businesses park there all day, which they should not do, but without enforcement, there is nothing to push them away.

City Manager Elizabeth Ferland stated that this is a parking issue, in terms of enforcement, and the Parking Fund is a separate fund that is entirely funded by the revenues the City receives, via fines, permits, coins, or app. She continued that this location is quite a distance away from Main St. for the enforcement officers to walk, or to add to their loop. If the City is going to enforce this as a loading zone, 30-minute parking, or two-hour parking, it should be paid parking so that it is added to the system.

Chair Greenwald asked what they do on Ralston St. Ms. North replied that it is a mixed system. She continued that in that area, they have tried to transition to ParkMobile only, which has worked well, but they still have a few meters in front of the thrift store. Chair Greenwald replied that he was thinking about Ralston Street's distance from Main St., compared to Marlboro Street's distance from Main St. He asked if it is correct that the enforcement officers have vehicles. Ms. North replied that they have one vehicle, which is not always available, but driving by is occasionally an option.

Chair Greenwald asked if there was any public comment. Hearing none, he asked for further comment from the Committee.

Councilor Workman stated that she wants to highlight that parking has been an ongoing problem for all the time she has been a member of the MSFI Committee and of City Council. She continued that they keep putting a Band-Aid on each parking issue that pops up, like Whack-a-Mole. She continued that she is imploring the MSFI Committee and City staff to come up with a more sustainable option. The public should not have to come to them with every single traffic problem. It is an on-going, consistent, City-wide problem. It is a waste of residents' time to complain to the Committee about individual problems, when it is a systemic issue. She does not know if the answer is more Parking Enforcement Officers or looking at the budget to do something differently to staff it better, or designing a new department that just does traffic enforcement and parking enforcement. Keene's residents deserve better.

Chair Greenwald replied that they are talking about three parking spaces here. He continued that he does not believe they need an entire new department. How they do not have any enforcement boggles his mind. He asked what the current regulation is for these four spaces. Ms. North replied that she thinks it is a 30-minute zone. Chair Greenwald asked if there is a sign. Ms. North replied yes.

Ms. Landry stated that enforcing 30-minute parking, which they can do, would mean having Parking Enforcement Officers going to Marlboro St. and chalking some tires, then returning 30 minutes later and issuing parking tickets. She continued that they would not tow right away. It could involve friendly methods, like flyers on windshields to ask people to please stop parking beyond 30 minutes. They can try being nice, but when it comes to parking enforcement and parking problems, they mentioned in the CIP review and will mention in the upcoming budget process, they are reaching a point where parking revenue is not sufficient to cover parking expenses. This fund is self-sustaining; it is not supported by property tax dollars, and they are taking every decision like this into account when they determine how to sustain the expenses long-term. That is why, if they are going to consider enforcement, it makes sense to have a paid

parking solution. They are not sure yet if it is possible with the app to offer the first 15 minutes free, which people love. They have done that with the pay stations, and they are looking into whether they can do that with the app. Again, the Marlboro St. redesign is coming up. They can try something now and see if it works, and shift later, but she did not want this to pass without explaining that the expenses are going up and the revenue is coming down, for several reasons.

Chair Greenwald stated that he hears all of that, but it strikes him that this situation is very wrong, and it is not being enforced. He continued that he suggests the Committee place this item on more time. He wants some enforcement in this area of Marlboro St. in the next month, even if Parking Enforcement Officers have to drive down there to enforce it, and it does not bring in any revenue. He does not want to penalize the whole street by putting in a ParkMobile zone, when there is only one problem with four parking spaces. This is not complicated. Of all the issues he is faced with as a City Councilor, this is so straightforward – the rule is already there. They should just enforce it.

Chair Greenwald stated that to go back to the other idea of putting up a sign that says it is a tow zone, with a phone number to call to report violations, he does not know why that would require new signage. He asked if it is correct that someone could call the Parking Office now, with the current signage, to report that a car has been parked for X amount of time and ask them to take it away. He knows that making it a loading zone would be a little different in terms of the Ordinance pieces, but he is inclined to think of this the same way Chair Greenwald is, in the sense that the rule exists here, and they just need the existing rule to be enforced.

Councilor Tobin stated that she wonders if there is a way that “See, Click, Fix” could be used to report something like a vehicle being parked there too long. She continued that she understands the expense of monitoring, if Parking Enforcement Officers have to go down there, but maybe they could enforce it if there were an easier way of reporting the problem.

Chair Greenwald stated that they could keep discussing this on and on, but they have a lengthy agenda tonight.

The following motion by Chair Greenwald was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends placing Concerns with Parking on Marlboro Street and Enforcement Measures on more time, making a note for there to be some enhanced enforcement over the next month.

2) **Public Art Display Proposal - Temporary Large-Scale Sculpture Installation - Public Works Director**

Chair Greenwald introduced the item and stated that the Committee will hear from the requestor as well as the Public Works Director. He continued that first, he wants to note that when a proposal to fund this was brought forth at the Keene Rotary Club he is part of, he specifically did not participate in the discussion. Therefore, he does not have a conflict of interest.

Public Works Director Don Lussier stated that Rick MacMillan brought this proposal forward, working alongside the artist. He continued that Mr. MacMillan previously was successful in bringing the City “Thought Cage,” an art piece currently on display in the Ashuelot River Park. He is excited about this proposal, and hopes others are as well. He asked Mr. MacMillan to speak.

Mr. MacMillan stated that the letter he recently sent to the Committee is nearly the same letter he sent to them a year ago, about the installation of “Thought Cage” by Vermont artist Christopher Curtis. Subsequent to that installation in Ashuelot River Park, Mr. Curtis offered one of his monumental outdoor sculptures to Keene on loan. It was on display at the Mount all last summer. He is willing to loan it to the group that is an arm of the Monadnock Rotary Club, for a period of one year, on a renewable lease basis. The proposal he is advancing is primarily to site it at the Key Rd. roundabout. There, it has the most visibility, which is important to the artist. Something of this stature needs a lot of public display and a lot of traffic. The sculptor’s aim is to sell the piece, which is not possible if the piece is hidden in the woods somewhere. Alternative sites were entertained earlier but the artist turned them down. The artist came to Keene two weeks ago, and with Mr. Lussier’s help, they toured two or three sites to consider as alternatives to the Key Rd. roundabout, still fixing on the roundabout as the most viable site for both the artist’s interest and for the City of Keene. It serves as a billboard, of sorts, saying that Keene is open to monumental sculpture.

Mr. MacMillan continued that he obtained estimates and quotes for landscaping. He approached the Monadnock Garden Club, and they are willing to do a landscape design. He approached the area’s Rotary Clubs, as Chair Greenwald mentioned, regarding financial support. One aspect of this proposal is regarding the proceeds from the commissions for the sale of this sculpture. Sculptures typically take one to two years to sell; they are not an impulsive, off-the-shelf buy. The arrangement would be a 20% commission and split pro rata among the Rotary Club financial supporters and the City of Keene. He does not know what the City of Keene requires, in terms of setting up some kind of trust fund or something for the receipt of these monies, but that is something they could work out.

Chair Greenwald asked what the other potential locations were. Mr. MacMillan replied that the Island St. rotary is smaller; and the Patricia Russell Park does not have the traffic that the Key Rd. roundabout has. The ease of installation would be far less expensive than the Key Rd. site, however. There would also be space at Ashuelot River Park, but again, that would be limited to foot traffic, not vehicular traffic.

Mr. Lussier stated that Mr. MacMillan correctly described the sites they looked at. He continued that initially he tried to guide Mr. MacMillan toward the Water St. location. He (Mr. Lussier) was smitten with an idea that Mr. MacMillan floated of creating a sculpture park in the city, and the old Findings parcel would be a wonderful spot for that. However, the artist is correct that it has less traffic and less visibility, and he understands why the artist would want his sculpture in the roundabout. They talked about how the existing roundabout is landscaped. The agenda packet includes a rendering that was part of the letter. They discussed that if that was approved, and if the City Council authorized that location, they would have to remove landscaping as was necessary to install it, and then eventually, when the artist sells the piece, they would be

responsible for restoring any landscaping that had been removed. They understand and are amenable to that. He understands why the artist wants to see it in a prominent location. He thinks it would look striking in the Key Rd. roundabout location, and he/staff has no opposition.

Councilor Ellis asked what would happen if, say, the piece sells in a week. She asked if the artist would still need to leave the piece there for the duration of the year. Mr. MacMillan replied that that might be in the terms of the sale. He continued that they have not worked out that kind of detail yet. The one-year lease would be renewable at the end of 12 months. Thought Cage has been in Ashuelot River Park for almost a year and is for sale. He does not think there have been any potential buyers. One of the problems will be marketing and trying to advertise these works of art as being offered for institutional or investor purchase. He was hoping that the City of Keene might have some ideas, because he is not a marketer, and he is sure someone in the City would have more creative ideas than he does about how to promote this art as well as the City of Keene.

Chair Greenwald asked if it is correct that the value of this sculpture is \$150,000. Mr. MacMillan replied that the sticker price is \$200,000.

Councilor Ellis asked if it is correct that Mr. MacMillan said the Monadnock Garden Club was one of the groups contacted to do landscaping if it was going to be in the roundabout. Mr. MacMillan replied yes. Councilor Ellis asked if they could also do landscaping if the location were different, such as Pat Russell Park with the idea of the sculpture garden. Mr. MacMillan replied that he thinks that is a great idea. He continued that he had not approached the Monadnock Garden Club about that idea, but if that were the site – and he thinks there is room for discussion about creating a sculpture park at Pat Russell Park – it would require some thoughtful landscaping. He hopes the garden club would participate in it.

Councilor Favolise stated that regardless of where they decide to site this structure, he wants the Committee to be conscious of not dismissing east Keene or Pat Russell Park as a location because of limited foot traffic or visibility. He continued that that feels like a cyclical problem the City will have to invest in one way or another, whether it is the park project itself or siting art installations in that area to encourage more foot traffic. He does not know where they should site this. He does not have major objections to the artist and petitioner preference of the roundabout, but he does not think Pat Russell Park should be off the table in the future, so he is glad to hear they are open to the idea of a sculpture park there.

Chair Greenwald stated that there is a very large, open, barren area that cannot have anything built on it, on the former Findings property, which strikes him as a great place for a sculpture garden. He continued that the sculpture in question could be the centerpiece with more to come. He would like to investigate this further.

Councilor Workman stated that she is not opposed to this sculpture or to the City borrowing it, but she is concerned about its potential placement in a roundabout. She continued that she understands the visibility factor from the artist's standpoint. She is concerned about safety in a roundabout and does not understand the logic of how the sculpture being in a roundabout while vehicles are moving attracts people, because no one can walk up to the sculpture or explore it.

Yes, it is a high traffic, high visibility area, but placing a sculpture in the middle of a roundabout does not seem like sound judgement to her.

Mr. MacMillan replied that attached to his letter is a Photoshopped image of the sculpture at the Key Rd. roundabout. He continued that his purpose in placing it there was to demonstrate that it is not a visual obstruction to traffic. It is true that people will not be allowed to park and get out and touch the sculpture, or anything like that. They could think of it more as a “welcoming sign” that the City of Keene treasures sculpture, particularly monumental, outdoor sculpture. The plan would be to attract other sculptors from around the country to come here and exhibit their works. Pat Russell Park could serve as the nexus for such a development.

Vicky Morton of 275 Water St. stated that she supports Councilor Workman’s thoughts. She continued that having used that roundabout many times, she knows that lanes are crossing and people drive through quickly to try and get to the other end. She wonders how much of the property in front of Aspen Dental the City owns, and whether there is a right-of-way there, and whether the sculpture could be placed not in the center of the roundabout but over on the side in front of Aspen Dental. It would get visibility, but people would not be gawking and slowing down in the roundabout to look at the sculpture, which impacts the other drivers.

Councilor Chalice of 25 Beech St. stated that she agrees with Councilor Workman, too. She continued that she has concerns about placing an object that is specifically inviting visual attention within a traffic circumstance. She thinks having sculpture in the City is a lovely idea, but she is also concerned about the City becoming involved in the marketing of the sale of someone’s sculpture. She does not feel that the City’s resources are well spent on that.

Chair Greenwald replied that as he understands it, the City has nothing to do with the sale or marketing of this sculpture. He continued that they already went through this conversation with the sculpture that is at Ashuelot River Park. He hopes that sells. The big concern was that it was going to sell fast, but it has not. Councilor Chalice replied that perhaps she is mistaken, but she recalls that Mr. MacMillan, just a few minutes ago, stated that he hopes the City has some people with marketing talents that could be used with this. Chair Greenwald replied that he missed that.

Mr. MacMillan replied that he did say that. Chair Greenwald replied that he agrees with Councilor Chalice that it is not the job of City staff or the Council to sell artwork. Mr. MacMillan replied that it could be displayed on the City’s website or something that would not take much of an effort, and act as a billboard for the City. Chair Greenwald replied that it would be there, but he would not count on the City doing much of anything to get involved with the sale of this sculpture. Mr. MacMillan replied that he recently spent time in Tucson, which has many sculptures in roundabouts, and after a while, people stop paying attention to them. The marketing of something like this would have to be through word of mouth and inside connections.

Councilor Ellis stated that she wonders if the sculpture might not get as much visibility in the roundabout as it might if it were in a park where people would come to see it. If one of the artist’s concerns is that it be in a visible, highly trafficked spot, Mr. MacMillan is correct that if people are just circling around in a roundabout, they might not be looking at all, which is good –

drivers should instead be focusing on traffic. She thinks a park location might be more advantageous.

Councilor Tobin stated that she echoes Councilor Workman and Councilor Ellis. She continued that she thinks placing this in a roundabout would have challenges, regarding people not being able to walk up to it to read about it, look at it, explore it, and understand it. They want drivers to be focused on traffic. When drivers enter the roundabout, they are looking right and left, and having gone through the intersection many times, she can already hear the comment someone would make – “*What is that?*” Then they would likely move on, because they are focused on traffic. No one would be able to see the sculpture well.

Chair Greenwald asked if there was further comment. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

The following motion by Councilor Workman was duly seconded by Councilor Tobin.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the request to install a sculpture entitled “That Place in the Stars” on City property be approved and that the City Manager be authorized to negotiate and execute a one-year renewable lease with Sculpture NH, with a preferred location of Pat Russell Park if possible.

3) **Eversource Access Across City-owned Land in the Town of Swanzey - Transition to License - City Attorney**

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from the City Attorney. City Attorney Amanda Palmeira stated that this request was before the Committee in November 2025; just the legal instrument was slightly different. She continued that Eversource was here to ask for access via an easement. They have their transmission line at the airport, and to access it, they go over airport property. Instead of an easement, it will be a license. She apologizes for the duplication of items. The interest, from her perspective, is that an easement is closest you can get for property interest before conveying the whole thing, so in the interest of the City retaining its control there, they will walk it back to be a license and thus the City be able to limit the duration and adjust the terms. Eversource is aware of this, and they are fine with it.

Chair Greenwald asked if there were comments from the Committee or the public. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

The following motion by Councilor Tobin was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to negotiate and execute a revocable license and indemnification agreement with Public Service Company of New Hampshire, d/b/a Eversource, for the use of City-owned land located near the Dillant-Hopkins Airport in Swanzey for access to its transmission lines.

4) Acceptance of Fire Department Strategic Plan - Fire Chief

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from staff. Jason Martin, Fire Chief, and Greg Seymour, Deputy Fire Chief, introduced themselves. Chief Martin stated that they are here to share information about a strategic plan they have been working on. A copy is in the agenda packet.

Chief Martin stated that this Strategic Plan is internal to the Fire Department, meant to create a three- to five-year guide for the Department to use. It establishes a common set of guardrails of internal decision-making. These guardrails align with the combined values and motivations of the members. In 2024, the Department experienced a lot of changes, including a lot of personnel turnover and promotions. Almost the entire command staff were new to their positions, including the Deputy and himself. It was almost like becoming a whole new Fire Department overnight, so it was a good time to bring everyone together under a common cause and mission and build a united team. It was also a perfect time to confirm that the Department was meeting citizens' expectations. With that, the Department partnered with the company ESCI to go through a comprehensive strategic plan process that ensured they remained a responsive, modern, and community-focused public safety organization. This effort reflects the Department's commitment to proactively address evolving service demands, workforce challenges, and community expectations, while positioning itself for long-term success.

Chief Martin continued that strategic planning is more than just development of goals. It is an intentional creation of a roadmap that defines direction, aligns resources, and establishes measurable outcomes. As outlined in the Department's Strategic Plan, this process is designed to provide a clear framework for decision-making, strengthen accountability, and guide the organization over the next three years. To ensure a well-rounded and inclusive approach, the Department engaged both external and internal stakeholders in this development. In September 2025, an external stakeholder session was held at the Keene Library, bringing together community members, business owners, and organization leaders. The session provided valuable insight into the community's expectations, identified the community's definition of "good service," and identified key priorities such as response effectiveness, professionalism, communication, and community trust. There is more detail in the MSFI Committee's agenda packet.

Chief Martin continued that in parallel, the Department conducted an internal stakeholder process that included representation from all divisions. This effort was facilitated by ESCI and incorporated nationally recognized best practices in fire service strategic planning. Through facilitated workshops and a department-wide climate survey, members identified organizational strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth. This combined approach, integrating community expectations with internal, operational insight, ensured that the strategic plan is both externally relevant and internally actionable. As part of this process, the Department also took a comprehensive approach to organizational alignment. This included updating its mission, vision, and values to reflect current expectations, reinforce organizational culture, and provide a clear foundation for decision-making moving forward. This strategic plan represents an investment in the future of the Keene Fire Department and the community it serves, ensuring continued delivery of high-quality emergency services, strengthening public trust, and positioning the organization to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Chief Martin continued that this process led to six goals, and under each goal, they developed objectives to support it, and actionable items. The MSFI Committee is getting the shortened view of the plan, and he would be glad to go over any of it in more detail. The goals are:

1. Grow and support a resilient team.
2. Improve readiness through high-quality training.
3. Enhance organizational culture.
4. Advance operational excellence.
5. Strengthen community relations through education and outreach.
6. Build a resilient workforce by advancing member health, wellness, and sustainability.

Chief Martin continued that as an organization, they defined their core values, which they will use to make decisions. They updated their mission and vision through a collective thought process and set goals that will continue the progression of the Department in the future.

Councilor Tobin stated that she really appreciates the sixth goal, and the objective that talks about normalizing mental health support. She continued that she was excited to see that, and she thanked them for sharing that.

Councilor Favolise stated that he has a general comment, not for the Fire Department – the Committee has not always been receiving the lengthy documents in the agenda packet soon enough to be able to review the documents ahead of the meeting, in order to formulate the best comments or questions. He continued that this was a good example of that to him. However, he does have a question. He likes the strategic plan's emphasis on actionability, and how it is not a plan that will just sit on a shelf. His question is what the actual metrics will look like. How will they know, for example, if they have fostered a supportive work environment?

Chief Martin replied that that is a good point, and he does not have the full plan in front of him, but as Councilor Favolise said, a key piece is accountability. He continued that under the objectives are actionable items that are measurable. Staff has worked on setting up a huge board that has all of this listed out, so everyone can see, at the same time, what has been worked on, what has been checked off, and what needs to be worked on. That way they can all hold each other accountable. Councilor Favolise replied that having the visual accountability piece there is important, because many times, great plans are put together, and nothing happens with them. Chief Martin replied yes, and everyone in the Department was nervous about that; they do not want to put this effort in for nothing. They want to keep it active and stay engaged with it.

Chair Greenwald asked if there was any public comment. Hearing none, he stated that this is a very well put together plan, and he thanks them for the presentation.

The City Manager stated that she wants to acknowledge the Chief and the Deputy for all the work they did to put this together. She continued that it is important, when there is such change in an organization, to take a step back and ask where they are going, and whether they are all going in the same direction. It was a perfect time to do that, and she credits the Chief and the Deputy for this effort, and Deputy City Manager Andy Bohannon for also working with them.

The plan has action items they will be able to check, and there is also some flexibility, because just as a plan only being as good as the work done to implement it, plans do change over time as conditions change. She gives kudos and thanks to the Chief and Deputy.

Councilor Haas of 114 Jordan Rd. stated that regarding the mental health issue, the Department has a therapy dog now. He continued that he met the dog a couple of weeks ago, and he made him feel very good. The City Manager replied that a Firefighter has a dog he is training, but neither the Department nor the City have a therapy dog.

Mayor Kahn stated that the question about going one level deeper with the plan was a good observation. He continued that he thinks this is a model, and he likes that the organization's leadership has brought this forward. He expects there will be other kinds of strategic plans being developed for other departments. The City has the new Master Plan, and they will have a CIP document. He thinks it would be helpful, for at least a couple of the goals, for the City Council to see what the strategic plan's implementation plan looks like. It would be of some value, to set their expectations. Tonight's agenda has a question about how the City executes and chooses to do external contracting. That, too, is another one level down from their usual decision-making, but clearly, it is because Councilors are uninformed. Thus, he thinks it would be helpful to include the Fire Department's strategic plan in the Council agenda, if the City Manager and the Chief could talk about that. The City Manager replied that she suggests a link to it, as it is a very lengthy document and she does not think the City Clerk's Office would be happy to be asked to insert it into the agenda packet. A link could be used by anyone who wants to see the strategic plan. It is helpful to see how these departments are being managed. Departments do have strategic plans, different ways, and different things they are focused on, and they are at different levels. For example, the Parks and Recreation Department has the Active and Passive Recreation Plan, which is ready for another update. Having the strategic plan available for people to see is a great idea, and she would prefer to direct people to a website link instead of including it in the agenda packet.

Chair Greenwald replied yes, and in addition, the City Manager's door is always open to Councilors who have questions and want more detail.

The following motion by Councilor Ellis was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the 2026 Fire Department's Strategic Plan be accepted as informational.

5) Presentation - Red Pine Scale - Dinsmoor Woods (Maple Avenue) Harvest - Parks and Recreation Director

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from staff.

Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, Parks and Recreation Director, introduced Alex Barrett, a Forester with Long View Forest, the consultant the Parks and Recreation Department hired to help them work through this process.

Mr. Barrett stated that Ms. Fisk-Hennessey and her team have done a great job describing the Red Pine Scale, an invasive insect that is making its way through a lot of New England's red pines. In 1938, a massive hurricane blew down a lot of the forests that were particularly vulnerable because of how agricultural abandonment had gone and what many of the forests looked like. Southern NH was hit especially hard. There were a lot of white pines at that time, the main native conifer, which blew over. During that period, people were worried about a wood famine, as wood was used for many more things back then, so they planted a ton of red pine, which is a highly productive plantation species. Red pine is not exactly from here. It is close to here but does not grow in big forests that are monocultures like we have here. Cities, states, and federal governments planted a ton of red pine, well-intentioned, in the 1930s through the 1960s. It is slow, like a long-term garden, and the red pines were not well taken care of. They were mostly left how they were planted, and they grew up exceedingly tall. Now we are dealing with the fallout of that. Photos of Rt. 2 in Massachusetts show some trees that have been killed by the Red Pine Scale, which have just been left to die where they are. They do not look particularly nice, and they are a hazard to the road.

Mr. Barrett continued that Ms. Fisk-Hennessey and her team have been very proactive about dealing with this in Keene. They have done a lot of great outreach and involved the UNH Cooperative Extension and the Society for Protection of NH Forests, and have reached out the private sector to pull him in as a consultant. He has an interesting role as he is a Forester who mostly deals with private landowners and municipalities in MA, NH, and VT, but this is an urban forestry project. It is at a scale of space that is much more like a forestry project he would do out in the woods somewhere, but this happens to be right along the pavement next to a school, in a very public environment. Thus, he is trying to balance his own professional training with something that is a little new to him, which is doing the work in a very urban place.

Mr. Barrett continued that the City has already dealt with some issues in these red pines. When many trees are all bunched together and are not thinned, they get root rot infections, and boring beetles that attack them. A photo shows an area of existing blowdown. They are 100-foot-tall trees, and many are leaning over Maple Ave. Taking out a few of them makes the whole cohort vulnerable. This is kind of already developing. The north end of this section has fungal infection in the roots of the trees, which is spreading. Thus, even absent the Red Pine Scale, they removing the red pines is a sound decision.

Mr. Barrett continued that regarding the planning process, amazing groundwork has already been laid. He came into this situation without knowing much about it and was amazed by what the Parks and Recreation Department was already doing. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that this problem was brought to staff's attention in the fall of 2024, when they were notified about the Red Pine Scale in Swanzey and the trees dying there very quickly. She continued that because that is a forested area behind Market Basket, there was not the same threat level as there is in Dinsmoor Woods, which is an urban space. In the winter of 2024, staff came before the MSFI Committee about this issue, with state foresters, and brought a branch that showed what Red Pine Scale looks like. In the winter, they hosted a chainsaw class, which helped them with the pilot project out of Wheelock Park where they took down a tract of red pine so people would see what it would look like. That is what is on the header of the City's Red Pine Scale webpage right now. Staff have been on the radio throughout the past year and a half, with dedicated radio spots

on AM and FM radio, which are all linked on the Red Pine Scale webpage as well. In April 2025, they hosted a “walk ‘n talk” at which state foresters met with people at Wheelock Park to show and explain what it looks like when red pine trees get infected, and how they are looking for the rusty needles at the base of the crown of the tree. This is what will eventually happen with Keene’s red pine trees. In summer 2025, the City was notified that Keene does have evidence of Red Pine Scale. In the fall of 2025, staff reached out to Long View Forest, and they made sure they could have a scope for the harvest plan. That went out for a Request for Proposals (RFP) in February 2026. At a meeting the beginning of next week, they will talk about what the plan’s needs are, in terms of harvest action.

Mr. Barrett continued that the slide shows a map, with bright pink to indicate areas that are exclusively red pine trees, which will be completely cut down. The two tan areas indicate mixed-wood forests, with some white pines, oaks, maples, and other trees mixed in. In those areas, they can be more selective, pick out the red pines, and leave the other forest there. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that she has larger maps if anyone wants one. Mr. Barrett continued that when you drive down Maple Ave., it feels like you are deep in a red pine forest, but it is actually quite a narrow strip. He is not sure if the white pines were planted at the same time, but there is a white pine forest behind the strip of red pines. That was a welcome surprise as they began to lay out the project, because it became clear that although the road will be dramatically affected from a visual perspective, the surrounding neighborhoods will be less visually impacted. The walking trails through there will be quite impacted, though.

Mr. Barrett continued that he is the Forester who is the architect/designer of the project. The City has worked to solicit proposals and selected Crown Point Excavation as the contractor to do the work. He has worked with this company in other capacities doing logging work, and they are great at what they do. The project timeframe is unusually tight for the logging and forestry world, largely driven by the fact that they will need to close a section of Maple Ave. for a few days to allow the felling of trees to happen. It is timed to coincide with April vacation. He typically does logging contracts with a two-year timeframe, so a one-week timeframe is very different. Luckily, it coincides with a rather quiet time for many loggers, because the woods are generally still coming out of mud season, so he thinks this is advantageous. They initially thought about doing it during the winter break, but it was too soon and not a great time to get loggers.

Councilor Favolise stated that he does not know if this is the same process as when they were doing the Wheelock Park pieces, because his understanding is that the City was able to use that wood. He asked if that is happening here. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey replied that that is not happening here. She continued that they can keep the cost down for the City by allowing the excavation company to realize all of the harvest value. Mr. Barrett replied that he did a financial modeling exercise behind the scenes ahead of time to think about where it might land, financially, and decided to offer it in that fashion so that it would work out well. He continued that it will be a lot of wood, because like he said, red pine is incredibly productive from a volume perspective.

Mr. Barrett continued that there will be a couple of days of cutting, followed by a couple of days of merchandising, which is the processing of those trees and the trucking of the wood off-site, both as round wood, solid trees, and as chips. Some of the wood will be fed through a chipper.

That will help reduce the debris that is left on site, which is nice in terms of the forest recovering, and in terms of the visuals. They hope it will work out well, but they are looking at a few more days after that initial period of trucking of wood, with a target of May 15 for project completion. The trucking will most likely be the bottleneck, but the company is optimistic that they can get a lot of it done in that first week.

Chair Greenwald asked Mr. Barrett to talk about the tops. He asked what will be left. Mr. Barrett replied that they will be fed through a chipper. He continued that generally, he spends a lot of time communicating to people that it is necessary to leave a huge mess in the forest because that is what nature generally likes, but in this case, it is the opposite – they need to vacuum it up as best they can, to reduce the safety risk. When the debris dries, it becomes quite flammable, so it would be good to not have it along a town road. Chair Greenwald asked what will be replanted. Mr. Barrett replied that he will get to that in a minute, after he gets through the slides about the operational side.

Mr. Barrett continued that the project will use traditional large-scale logging machinery. Trees will be cut down with a feller buncher, which looks like a huge excavator with a “spinning wheel of saw death” on the end. It cuts down trees and makes bunches of them, which the grapple skidder then comes up and grabs, 6 to 10 trees at a time. It is fast and efficient. Some little branches will break off when the trees fall, but generally the whole tree is taken to a processing site. The photo shows a processing site in Walpole, with a slasher de-limber, a processing machine, and a whole-tree chipper. All the wood that does not meet the specification of being a saw log or a telephone pole will get fed into the chipper. That will generally become wood heat for facilities around here or be made into biomass to make electricity. It is an efficient system for utilizing wood. That is particularly why they did it this way in the RFP, to make sure they had a specific type of operation here.

Mr. Barrett continued that the big question is what the stewardship of these woods looks like going forward. They are an artificial forest, created 80 to 90 years ago, with not a lot of attention given, and now there will be a dramatic change. In the interim, it is nice that underneath the red pines, a 15- to 20-foot-high forest has grown, of both woody, invasive plants, and oak and maple trees. When they cut it all down, they will cut down all those little stems, too. It will be a complete severing of everything. The red pine will not sprout back; it biologically does not do that. The hardwood trees and invasive plants will sprout back. This summer, they will see those stems sprouting up. The first step he hopes to do is some ecological restoration to manage the balance of what comes back, to manage the invasive plants. It will be nice to have the invasive plants severed and small, as opposed to how they are currently. In thinking about the forest moving forward, they are relying on a mostly natural regeneration process, which will come from that sprout growth as well as seed growth that is currently in there. They have begun talking about whether doing any enhancement planting would be good. His general advice is that spring can be a challenging time to plant, depending on the weather, so they should wait and see what sprouts back in the summer and how it is coming along. Then, they could think about whether to do enrichment plantings. He recommends giving it three months of waiting, to see how it looks. Fall is a better time to plant shrubs, trees, and plants you do not want to survive a potentially droughty spring.

Mr. Barrett continued that “wait and see” may seem like not a great answer to the question of what will be replanted, but if this were a project he were doing in the middle of the woods, he would be very optimistic, because there are all these really nice trees that will sprout after they are cut, and they can be worked with. Chair Greenwald replied that the City Council needs to pay attention to this answer, because he knows as soon as the trees are cut, the Councilors’ phones are going to be inundated with messages from people wanting to know what happens next. He thanked Mr. Barrett for the information. Mr. Barrett stated that in terms of replanting, many species are available that would be well suited to this site. He continued that when they think about the size and configuration of how to put them in there, it should be in response to what nature is giving them. Many times, people will gravitate toward planting a three-inch caliper tree from a nursery that is 15 feet tall and has been bound in burlap for a long time. Those trees immediately look nice, but they generally do not do well long-term. If they plant a diversity of smaller shrubs and trees, those will generally outpace the older and bigger trees that get planted.

Councilor Chalice stated that she commends Mr. Barrett for this work. She continued that she is encouraged to hear reference to the adjacent mixed forest of native species. It sounds like the City is learning from its lessons to not use a monoculture again, and that they will wait and see what comes back and take advantage of the mix of native species. Mr. Barrett mentioned mixed ages, and that they can utilize the healthier aspects of their existing ecosystem as a model as they go forward. She is encouraged, keeping her fingers crossed, and appreciates Mr. Barrett’s attention to detail.

Councilor Workman thanked Mr. Barrett for the presentation. She continued that she understands why this is necessary. This is in Ward 4, and as a Ward 4 Councilor, she has already heard a lot from constituents in the Pako Ave. area, who are concerned about this significant change to the area and the impact it will have. She is still a little concerned and wants to know if it is true that there is no way to save the healthy trees that are there. If she understood correctly, there are some healthy oak and maple trees that grew in that area, 10 to 20 years old. Mr. Barrett replied 10 to 20 feet in height. Councilor Workman asked if it is really necessary to level the healthy trees, too.

Mr. Barrett replied that these are trees in this size class, one to three inches in diameter, of younger growth. He continued that in the tan areas on the map there are some much larger hardwood trees and pines that will get saved. Along the east side, there is quite a young forest under there, and it will all get smashed by the operation. There is no way around that. Part of the reason why he wanted the feller buncher, which will mow it all down, is that it will cleanly sever all those little stems instead of leaving them bent over or broken. Severing them will stimulate quick sprouting growth. Some of them will come up this year, and some will come up next year, but that “clean slate” will be very helpful in that regard.

Councilor Ellis stated that she appreciates how thorough the presentation is. She continued that she thinks it addresses many of the concerns she had been hearing, so she has been taking notes and is excited to pass this information on.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that something they really want to ensure for the community is that they are not just clear-cutting it and leaving it. She continued that there is a purpose and there is a

plan. They need to let nature take its course and be patient. There will definitely be a giant, visual impact, but they need to let nature take its course so they can identify what the right moves are, what the right species are, and where the right locations are to plant anything, should they need to plant anything, starting in the fall. Chair Greenwald replied that she said that very well.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated that she wants it to be public knowledge that on Saturday, April 11, 2026, they will be doing a woods walk at 3:00 PM, and Mr. Barrett will be present. People can walk through the woods at Dinsmoor Woods on either side of Maple Ave. and get a better understanding of what will happen.

Councilor Haas asked if there are plans for Wheelock Park and Robin Hood Park after this project. He continued that they were infected, but maybe they are not infected anymore. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey replied that she wishes it were possible for an infection to go away, because then they would not need to do these projects at all. She continued that there is evidence of Red Pine Scale at Wheelock Park. Staff determined, in working with Long View Forest, the state foresters, and the urban foresters from the Cooperative Extension, that Dinsmoor Woods is showing much more evidence of much more dangerous forested area right now. That is why they are focusing on Dinsmoor Woods first. The plan for Wheelock Park has yet to be determined, but they do need to actively think about taking those trees down in February of 2027, so they can make sure there is still harvest value in that wood and make sure they eradicate the threat.

Mayor Kahn stated that he is near Maple Ave. He continued that he thinks there is \$125,000 allocated in the first year of the CIP for this, which is great so the project can proceed as it has been presented. This presentation and the walk-through are the kinds of visibility people need in order to understand the scope of the project. Regarding the other parts of the scope of the project, that \$125,000 is in one year and entirely for the removal of the diseased species. He thinks he knows what the Public Works Department's tree budget is, which is a relatively low number, for replacement of trees that need to be taken out. He is planting the idea that they need to be piggybacking an allocation for these subsequent years so that the kind of evaluation that will take place in the fall has a trail to it that begins to reassure the public that this is not a "one and done" project. Maybe they need to lift the tree budget for the next couple of years. The Council is about to talk about the budget, which is why he is now planting the idea that that trail and subsequent work need to be thought of in FY27 and FY28 when they complete some other work. He is not sure how to give that some visibility, but he thinks that replanting effort is the assurance people will be looking for.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey replied that it is actually \$135,000 for FY27, which is the Dinsmoor Harvest, and \$10,000 of that is a donation from the Monadnock Conservancy, because it aligns well with their mission. They are willing to donate tree species that would be a native diversification of what currently exists in the forest, and the City can work with Monadnock Conservancy on that. Staff feel very confident about being able to balance the costs of the harvest itself with the costs of the invasive species management, as well as any re-plantings or new plantings they need to do.

Chair Greenwald asked for further comment from the Committee or the public. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

The following motion by Councilor Favolise was duly seconded by Councilor Tobin.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the Dinsmoor Woods Harvest Plan and presentation by Long View Forest be accepted as informational.

6) Presentation - Transfer Station Assessment Report - Solid Waste Superintendent

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from staff. Ben Hoy, Solid Waste Manager, introduced Matt Doyle, from Weston and Sampson Engineering. He continued that the Recycling Center was built in 1993 and as it ages, it needs a lot of work. Staff wanted to seek professional engineers to help them scope the projects they need to scope, get an idea of which projects to put first, which to push off, and what the costs might be, and to ensure that they are doing the right things at the right time for the City of Keene. Mr. Doyle came in the fall of 2025 with a large crew of engineers with majors in different disciplines, which was great. Weston and Sampson has really helped staff make the right decisions and helped them identify and correct the most important needs of the facility over the coming years. He asked Mr. Doyle to go over the report.

Mr. Doyle stated that the purpose of Weston and Sampson's assessment was to evaluate operations, general physical condition of the site, and the facility and interior environment to help prioritize the CIP. As Mr. Hoy indicated, a group from Weston and Sampson did a site visit to do a comprehensive visual review of the infrastructure. The group included engineers from each discipline: site/civil; structural; architectural; mechanical, electrical, plumbing (MEP); and fire protection, to each assess their expertise related to the facility. In addition, Mr. Hoy walked with them, and they asked him questions, and he gave them additional input, more on the operational challenges staff is having in the facility, to further assist in the engineers' observations. The group used the information they gathered from the site visit to develop a detailed summary of existing conditions and identify areas needing improvements. At the end of that, they used the information to provide estimates of probable costs for each item.

Mr. Doyle continued that to give a quick overview of the site, an aerial image of the Transfer Station site shows the main entrance off of Rt. 12, the scale house, the weigh station, the underground fire cistern, and the main transfer station building and its tipping floor. He continued that the current electrical service out of the generator area is to the southeast side of the facility, with the diesel generator and main panels. The upper area is the household solid waste drop-off area and the household hazardous waste building. The existing building, constructed in 1993, has had some work done over the years. In 2002 there was an addition to convert from a compactor to a tipping floor. There have also been a few additional minor internal mezzanines added above the balers, and a small bale storage addition. The main structure is two stories, with the lower level for baler storage, and the main level for recycling processing.

Mr. Doyle continued that regarding site observations, the main area the group looked at was the front entryway. They observed entry congestion backups to Rt. 12, partially due to the single-

scale house and single lane coming in, which has potential for a large backup on busy days. Trailer staging also impacts that area. Trailers coming from the facility are at the side of the road while they wait to be picked up. He believes staff have since added an additional paving area down the drive aisle that has helped alleviate some of that. A lack of an electronic payment also adds to the entryway congestion. Weston and Sampson's recommendations for the area were a reconfiguration, which would include relocation of the scale and providing new prefab-scale houses in a second pay booth, and implementation of an electronic payment system. Their report includes a concept sketch of what that could look like, with a ticket booth that would allow for multiple lanes of ingress and egress.

Mr. Doyle continued that in the upper area, the main items the group identified were that the entrance to that area is a steep, blind corner with crossing traffic patterns, which creates a bit of a dangerous condition. The upper drop-off areas are unpaved. If items fall, it is kind of a puncture hazard for people as they drive up there. There is a lack of trailer storage adjacent to the tipping floor. The trailers are staged as they take away waste, and it creates a pinch point for vehicle circulation. Their recommendations are to reconfigure the circulation to eliminate the crossing traffic patterns, pave the upper areas, and widen the roadway next to the tipping floor, which would require a new gravity block retaining wall because of the steep grades. There is a concept sketch of an idea of eliminating the crossing traffic at the blind corner. That could have a paved road.

Mr. Doyle continued that regarding the site utilities, it is currently powered by a diesel generator with a biodiesel fuel source, which is pictured, along with a backup generator and the main electrical panels housed in a small canopy. There are pictures of the cistern, and you will note there is no permanent piped connection to the tipping floor sprinkler system. Weston and Sampson's recommendations are to provide new electrical service, 480V, 3-phase, from Rt. 12; replace the backup generator; and create a permanent piped connection to the tipping room floor.

Mr. Doyle continued that lastly on the site observations were the retaining walls. The site is on a very steep hill, so there are multiple retaining walls. The biggest is adjacent to the tipping floor. The structural engineers noted minor vertical cracking, efflorescence, clogged weep holes, and a lack of guardrail barrier at the top. Their recommendations were to reinstall or provide additional guardrail and added visual warnings, address the cracking with epoxy crack injection, clean the weep holes, and implement maintenance of these to further prolong the retaining wall's life.

Mr. Doyle continued that the structural engineers did an evaluation of the whole building, and found that overall, it is in good condition. They noted that structural slabs are in good condition, but there is some minor, localized rust on the beams at lower levels, and areas of missing fire protection. As the building goes to the main floor, it transitions to a pre-engineered metal building, and the engineers identified that it is in good overall condition. Recommendations are to clean and check those beams and repair or restore missing spray fire protection. Regarding the assessment of the exterior envelope, they identified localized rusted areas and surface damage, an area in the north inside corner with mildew growth from a lack of downspout gutter, and some residue from past fires at the tipping floor. Their recommendations are to address these items by fixing the drainage and cleaning those things up. They looked at the roof and discussed with Mr. Hoy that there have been no leaks, but due to the roof's age, Weston and Sampson recommends

they consider replacing the roof in the next 8 to 10 years. They assessed all the personnel doors and overhead doors, which are in varying degrees but all still functional, with the exception of the tipping floor overhead doors, which they recommend considering for replacement on the near side.

Mr. Doyle continued that the MEP engineers came through and assessed the building systems. They noted some outdated equipment, some in poor condition, and areas where they seemed to not be functioning properly. The main concern is the accumulation of dust in the facility. Their recommendations focus on trying to improve that with improved mechanical equipment and a dust capture system at the baler, which they feel is the main source of dust from the operations. They assessed all the electrical systems in the building, noted some outdated panels, and recommended that those be considered for replacement in the longer term. Lastly, fire protection. One area is the tipping floor that has fire protection, and as they noted, it does not have a dedicated connection to the cistern. The main problem with that is the duration of time the Fire Department has to spend hooking that up is added time during which a fire could spread or get out of control. Thus, the recommendation is to refurbish or replace the cistern and create a pump house with the fire pump that would then also have a dedicated connection to the existing sprinkler piping in the tipping floor so that in the event of an emergency, those would immediately kick on.

Mr. Doyle continued that the last thing for the interior building is the sorting line work area and the processing equipment itself. This was a big topic they discussed. The sorting line employee work area is open to the main facility floor, and there is some heating in there with heat lamps, but staff indicated that during winter months it can get very cold and people need to take frequent breaks, and in the summer months, it can get very hot. Since it is open to the overall facility, with the dust that is generated, the air quality is poor. The equipment is over 30 years old, and they recommend full replacement, which he hears is scheduled for June. The baler equipment was overall in fair condition, but in the long term, Weston and Sampson recommends that it be considered for replacement, since it is a vital piece of equipment, so there is no downtime as that equipment ages.

Mr. Doyle continued that lastly, there is the additional site buildings. At the household hazardous material building, the team noted some rusting at the personnel doors and the corroded electrical load center, which they recommend replacing. The scale house is quite small if two employees are there in peak hours and lacks a true foundation. As part of the reconfiguration of the entry, they recommend the scale house be replaced.

Mr. Doyle continued that regarding the cost, the team put all those elements they identified into a list and put them into two-year ranges. They tried to push out some of the bigger projects in anticipation that there would be engineering, time for planning, and a larger cost for those. The items they put in the 0–1-year range were the building mechanical system upgrades, the overhead doors at the tipping floor, and the sorting line equipment. For 2–3 years, they had the retaining wall repairs/upgrades, tipping floor fire protection addition, and the replacement of personnel doors as needed through the facility, including the metal panel siding repair/replacement at those identified areas. For the 4–5-year range, they grouped multiple items into the category of “miscellaneous repairs” through the building, which together make up the

cost estimate shown. They felt that those items in the 4–5-year range could be dealt with sporadically as needed. Other items in the 4–5-year range are the new gravity block wall adjacent to the tipping floor, and the sorting line employee work area. That would be creating an enclosed area for the employees, with dedicated heating and cooling, which would improve their work environment and create a barrier from the dust, so they are not out in the open of that facility. Additionally, they had the electrical upgrades to the recycling building, and the recycling balers, categorized in the 4–5-year range. For year 6–7, they only listed the new electrical service, which would be the dedicated service brought in from Rt. 12 for the facility. It would be quite a large project, which is why it is the only project designated for the 6–7-year range. Lastly, they had projects for the 8–12-year range, and a few projects they left open ended, including the emergency power upgrades, which would be the additional backup generator replacement, roof replacement, and the additional overhead doors at the facility. The last two were the entrance circulation and weigh scale relocation, and the site circulation to the upper drop-off area.

Mr. Hoy stated that it is a very comprehensive report. He continued that many of the projects are ones that staff are looking hard at for their upcoming CIP projects. Weston and Sampson’s report really helped staff evaluate the needs, and they are excited about the progress and where they are going. They feel like they are going in the right direction, which they really appreciate Weston and Sampson’s help with.

The City Manager stated that a recommendation that Weston and Sampson briefly mentioned was accepting electronic payment, which she has been wanting to do for a few years now, so she was very happy to see that in the report. She continued that staff did some work at the Transfer Station to set it up, in terms of fiber and connectivity, so she thinks they could talk about doing that sooner in the plan, without doing the entire reconfiguration of the front, which would be more costly. In addition, she wants to commend Mr. Hoy for doing a great job in getting this done; it is really helpful to have this type of information when they are trying to plan these capital projects into the future. This is something that had not been done for quite some time. Chair Greenwald replied yes, Council needs this information, now and in the future to make the decisions.

Chair Greenwald asked if there is 3-phase power on Rt. 12. Mr. Hoy replied that there is 3-phase power on Ford St. right now, a small industrial road off of Rt. 12. Chair Greenwald replied that he thought that part of the problem with the Transfer Station, with potential solar fields and whatnot. He asked if it is correct that they would have to pay to extend the 3-phase power to the Transfer Station, and whether that is in Weston and Sampson’s analysis somewhere. Mr. Doyle replied yes, they put that in year 6-7, and that is part of the reason the cost is so high – it is not right at the street outside of the Transfer Station, but down Rt. 12 a little bit. He continued that they looked at whether there was a shorter distance that could come to the facility, but crossing the woods and the rail trail there did not seem feasible, so it would need to come further down Rt. 12 first and then down the main entry of the facility.

Chair Greenwald stated that this is a good report, and now they know what they need. He continued that they need to deal with what they can afford, and it is like any other business – they need to make choices. He asked for comments from the Committee or the public.

Councilor Haas stated that he thinks the Transfer Station is a real asset to Keene. He continued that conceivably, in the future, his opinion is that these things can be turned into money-making opportunities. If they can manage trash and manage the passage of it through the region, it might turn out pretty good for the City. He hopes they look for opportunities for additional capacity for it and additional items that they can recycle, additional capabilities and capacities, to generate possibly a money-making scheme out of the Transfer Station. Maybe in years 12 through 15. Chair Greenwald replied that he chaired the Solid Waste Committee many years ago, changing the formulas for receiving waste and trucking waste, and can say that it is a very complex business. The City has to maintain the facility, which is what this presentation has provided them with information about.

Councilor Ellis stated that she gives big thanks to the Transfer Station. She continued that her husband always says it must be the best place in the City to work, because every time he goes there, the employees are so helpful and cheerful. She thinks they are doing a great job and she appreciates it. Chair Greenwald stated that it is a very well-run operation and he frequents it regularly, as that is part of the building management business.

The following motion by Councilor Workman was duly seconded by Councilor Tobin.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the Transfer Station Assessment Report be accepted as informational.

7) Presentation - Management of Emerald Ash Borer Infested Trees - Highway Operations Manager

Chair Greenwald asked to hear from staff. Highway Operations Manager Mitchell Smith introduced Rachel Vogt, owner of Pleasantscapes. He continued that the Emerald Ash Borer will be a small portion of this presentation. Two things bring them here tonight, and the bigger one is how to come up with tree replacements. The Emerald Ash Borer has been in NH since 2013, and in Cheshire County since 2019. In a three- to five-year window it completely kills a tree. The Highway Operations Manager at the time tried treating the trees in 2019, with Bartlett Tree Company, basically with the same outcome. They put a bunch of chemicals in the ground and wound up taking the tree down anyway. The two Highway Operations Managers before him decided the best practice would be to remove the infected trees and come up with a suitable replacement. The Public Works Director sent an email about the trees he (Mr. Smith) is doing on School St. Three are the Emerald Ash Borer.

Mr. Smith stated that when he became Highway Operations Manager, one of the things he really wanted to do was pay attention to what they put where. If you drive around, you will see a lot of trees just butchered by tree companies, by the City, from sidewalks and travel lanes. He really did not want to do that. Luckily, he has known Ms. Vogt for quite a while, and she is always more than willing to help. He asked her to talk about what they do.

Ms. Vogt stated that she has been studying environmental horticulture for over 25 years and is a big advocate for pollinators and all the things that will keep the City green. She continued that a delicate choice has to be made every time you plant a tree, as there is a balance between

infrastructure, pedestrians, and nature. The location of the tree is what leads the decision of what kind of tree to choose. Everyone wants to put in a native tree, and she is a big advocate of native species, but in the wrong places, native species can cause serious problems. Oak trees create a lot of litter, which is expensive for the City to clean up. There are other choices you can make. Certain hybrids can provide the right tree that will live for a very long time, provide shade, provide housing for pollinators, and be supplemented with flowering trees that will also bring in pollinators. In planting, the “10/20/30” rule is about not planting the same species down the whole row, as they learned with the red pine trees. They strive for diversity, but they also want to make sure the tree will not disturb the infrastructure that is in place or become a problem with the neighbors. If you have large trees, and they are growing over the property, you can drive down any City street and see big holes in the trees. They strive to choose trees that will thrive and will quickly provide the canopy and provide the necessities. Pleasantscapes does a little bit of native species, but they also choose hybrid species that have proven to be disease resistant. She works with a friend who is an arborist for the City of Cambridge, consulting with him frequently on tree choices and what works for him, because he has seen it all in his 25 years in his position. Regarding the replacement of the City of Keene’s trees, she would highly recommend a hybrid, such as parkland maple or paperbark birch, which is sturdy, strong, and very vertical. You can supplement that under the canopy with native species like clethra, sambucas, and smaller shrubs that will invite the pollinators.

Chair Greenwald asked if there is a program or source where homeowners can purchase these hybrid trees. Ms. Vogt replied that they can certainly purchase them from Pleasantscapes. She continued that she is big on community and education, so she works with all the local schools. Pleasantscapes has pamphlets, books, and many resources for the City, including an incredible staff that would be happy to help educate the City to pick the right tree that will do well.

Chair Greenwald asked where they buy these trees. Mr. Smith replied that they buy all of the trees and downtown flowers from Pleasantscapes. He continued that Pleasantscapes is a vendor for multiple plants and flowers. Ms. Vogt added that Pleasantscapes also maintains several of the large commercial properties in the City, so they see the impact on picking the right tree for the right place. Chair Greenwald replied that planting at some big parking lot is not the same as someone’s front lawn on Maple Ave. or something like that. Mr. Smith replied or the narrow grass belts. He continued that every spot is different. He continued that it is huge having Ms. Vogt in his corner.

Chair Greenwald thanked them for the presentation and asked if there was further comment from the Committee or public. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

The following motion by Councilor Tobin was duly seconded by Councilor Ellis.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the Highway Operations Manager’s report be accepted as informational.

8) **Councilor Favolise - Request for Presentation Outlining the Role of Contractors and Consultants**

Chair Greenwald stated that Councilor Favolise sent in a request for information, which turned into a presentation outlining the role of contractors and consultants. He asked Councilor Favolise to address his communication, and for City staff to respond.

Councilor Favolise stated that he wrote this letter to the City Manager in response to questions about several projects where the City is using outside consultants and outside contractors to do work. He continued that regarding the timing; it was not a coincidence that this was after the City received some news about the Downtown Infrastructure Project. For tonight, he hopes they can get information. Mayor Kahn was correct that the current Council maybe lacks some information about the way these processes play out, what the evaluation criteria are for when the City does a project in-house versus going out to a contractor or consultant, and what the evaluation criteria are for selecting a contractor or consultant and bringing that recommendation to the Council. He also hopes that this can be part of a larger conversation about ways that the City maybe needs to maintain its existing policies and practices as well as areas they might look to tweak them. He appreciates the City Manager and her team pulling this together and being responsive and collaborative.

Mr. Lussier introduced Yves Gakunde, Purchasing Manager. He continued that the first question he heard was regarding when the City uses consultants versus the City's engineering division. Behind him in the audience tonight is Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer, who is the head of a very qualified and talented group of people, but it is a small team. Regarding when the City does engineering services in-house, that team is comprised of generalists, not specialists. They are really good at basic civil site infrastructure, such as water and sewer, drainage, roadways, and sidewalks. That is their bread and butter. They mostly will work on projects where the outcome is well known in advance. For example, Island St. was a significant reconstruction project, with a lot of roadwork, water and sewer work, drainage, and sidewalks. A lot of work was done, but if you look at the map of Island St. before the work was done and after, you will see they did not really change anything. They knew exactly what it was going to look like afterwards because they did not change anything. That type of project lends itself well to the City engineers' skillset, because when you get into these projects with a lot of public involvement and questions about what things should look like, as this Committee knows, it takes a lot of meetings and a lot of time. Generally, the City tasks a consultant with those projects with high levels of public involvement, because the consultants have more staff to call on. Roxbury St. is another example of a full reconstruction project with water, sewer, and drainage, and the City replaced a 36-inch drain pipe with a 60-inch one. Again, this was a significant civil engineering process, but it was not like staff was asking the community, "What should Roxbury St. look like?" They knew it was going to look exactly how it had looked before. Sewer main projects are "meat and potatoes" work for Mr. Ruoff's team.

Mr. Lussier continued that for consultants, it is the opposite. Consultants are used for projects that require specialized training, such as structural engineering, geotechnical traffic design with traffic modeling, soil scientists for wetlands mapping, and landscape architecture. He half-jokes that the only thing that engineers know about trees is that the green end goes up. The City also

tends to use consultants more than in-house staff when there is federal money involved and there are regulatory compliance elements. Federal funding brings an additional level of bureaucratic red tape and requirements, and it becomes a lot for staff to keep track of and keep on top of the changing requirements. City staff do not have the time, nor the specialized training, to do the Department of Environmental Services (DES) wetlands permits, for example. Large projects with more staff requirements, such as the Downtown Infrastructure Project, even without the public involvement, take thousands of engineering hours to design. It would have taken Mr. Ruoff's entire team a couple of years to design that project, and they would not have been able to do anything else.

Mr. Lussier continued that sometimes, the City benefits from having a third party take a fresh look at something with a different perspective. The presentation from Weston and Sampson tonight on the Transfer Station is a good example. Staff was not surprised by a lot of the items Weston and Sampson found; but having them come in and look at it with a fresh perspective helped. They talked about things like circulation and changes to traffic patterns. It is good to get a different perspective from time to time.

Mr. Lussier continued that Councilor Favolise's other question was about consultant selection. Almost always, the City uses a process where they ask consultants to provide their bids/proposals for a project. There are two processes, the Request for Proposals (RFP) and Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The selection criteria they use could vary from one project to another, but they are similar. For example, for the Robin Hood Park project, they looked at overall quality of the consultants' qualifications and their understanding of the project, worth 20%; experience of the staff assigned to the project, 15%; their ability to complete all aspects of the project, 15%; the project team's experience with federal funded projects, 20%; previous experience with similar projects, 20%; and client references, 10%. He always considers client references a much lower priority in the valuation criteria simply because he does not think anyone would say that the company did not do a good job, but it is still part of the criteria in every case. It is important to note that the evaluation can include price, but sometimes it does not. Specifically, that is the difference between the RFP and the RFQ. An RFP considers price as one of the criteria, and it would be present in that list of criteria. An RFQ cannot consider price. That is a federal purchasing requirement. The City almost always uses RFPs, unless there is federal funding involved. It is the ideal approach when the outcome/project goal is well defined but the consultants' methods for reaching the project goal vary. The City looks to see that the consultants bring creative ideas for bringing the project together, how they interact with the public, their ideas for how to get public engagement, and that sort of thing. An example is the tax ditch restoration project, which was put out to RFP recently. The City knows what the project will accomplish – restored functionality of the tax ditch. However, different consultants might have different ideas about how to engage the public, how to communicate with the public, such as holding meetings versus sending mailers, and the City wants to see some creativity applied to it in the RFP.

Mr. Lussier continued that the RFQ, on the other hand, cannot consider price initially, and "initially" is an important distinction. The Federal Purchasing Guidelines, 23 CFR Part 172, say that the City must first select the "most qualified" candidate for the job. This is used for engineering and architectural services. After selecting the most qualified firm, the City attempts

to negotiate a scope and fee for their services. It is staged in that order. First, you negotiate the scope, and once you agree on the work that needs to be done in order to complete the project, then you negotiate the fee, which there is a process for. The firm prepares their estimate of what they think it should cost, and someone from the City does an “independent governmental estimate,” which is what they think it should cost. Then the firm and the City show each other their estimates and negotiate between the two. Sometimes, the firm’s estimate is less than the City’s estimate and the City is happy with that. Sometimes, the City’s estimate is way below the firm’s, and they try to figure out where the discrepancies are, such as whether there was a misunderstanding in the scope development. If they cannot come to an amicable agreement on the scope and fee, the City would then go to the next most qualified firm. That is what happened recently with the solar pavilion project. Staff came up with what they thought was the most qualified consultant and presented that to the Committee, and the Council decided it was fine, but they did not think the consultant was the most qualified one for the project. Thus, staff then went and negotiated with the second most qualified consultant, and that contract is underway.

Mr. Lussier continued that in terms of contractors versus City staff, City staff are great at what they do. They are really equipped for and best suited to doing small projects and routine maintenance, such as sewer cleaning, fixing hydrants, storm drainage maintenance, asphalt overlays, or simple concrete repairs like a couple of panels in a sidewalk. The City is not equipped or staffed to do big production quantities. They have a tiny excavator, not a giant machine that can replace 300 feet of water main per day; they are not set up for that kind of work. It would not be cost effective if they were equipped for that kind of work. They do not do enough of that kind of work to keep the equipment moving and productive. City staff are great at addressing insufficiencies, which is a word from State law referring to a defect with the public highway that is not readily discernable by the traveling public and could create a problem for them. If the City gets notified that there is a road insufficiency, which could be dangerous, State law gives them a certain amount of time to respond to that. City staff are great at that. They could never get a contractor to respond quickly enough to take care of that, but City staff can get out there, with a Highway staff member on call 24/7. For small scope projects like hydrant repair, the City would not be able to hire a contractor to come fix one hydrant that got knocked over by a car accident, but City staff are great at getting out there the next week and fixing that. Contractors are for everything that is not that, like the major reconstruction projects with complicated, multiple utilities that need to be phased and sequenced, with a scope beyond the City’s capabilities. If the City is looking to accelerate a project schedule and get work done very quickly, again, it is a matter of staffing. The City has complex workloads, with many projects going on at the same time, with a lean crew, so they just cannot get everything done at once.

Mr. Lussier stated that he hopes that it answers the question about how the City decides whether to use in-house staff or contractors. He asked Mr. Gakunde to talk about the contracting issues.

Mr. Gakunde stated that the slide shows the City’s purchasing guidelines in terms of professional services contracts. He continued that for anything above \$50,000, they have to go out for RFPs or RFQs. When they need a professional services contract below \$50,000, they require three estimates, which the department could seek. They need to not need to do RFPs or RFQs for those. Mr. Lussier stated that the agenda packet has a copy of the City’s purchasing ordinances

that lay out the different thresholds, with some interesting elements, such as using cooperating purchasing agreements.

Mr. Gakunde continued that the slide shows the number of RFPs/RFQs, and the number of professional services contracts the City has had each year for the past three years. In FY 23, for example, the City had five RFPs/RFQs, and five professional services contracts. The numbers are rather consistent. He is happy to take questions.

Councilor Favolise thanked Mr. Lussier and Mr. Gakunde for the presentation. He continued that it sounds like there is a robust internal process in place. One of the things that has been challenging, as a Councilor, is that regardless of whether the internal processes are decided by Council, the Councilors are the ones who get the questions. Thus, this really helps Councilors be able to articulate why decisions are made the way they are made. He asked if there is a scoring rubric that is produced as a result of the evaluation criteria Mr. Lussier explained.

Mr. Lussier replied yes, and often times, the scoring result will be included in the memorandum that is advanced to the Finance, Organization and Personnel (FOP) Committee for their approval. Councilor Favolise replied that he is not an FOP Committee member, and he does not think he has seen those scoring documents. He continued that seeing those would be helpful.

The City Manager replied that regarding the scoring memorandum he is talking about, there is a memorandum that puts forward a recommendation for a consultant, and probably about a paragraph of the memorandum talks about the number of companies that bid on the project and what their scores are. She continued that it is presented to the FOP Committee, and that makes it into the final Council packet. Chair Greenwald replied that that is just for projects. He continued that certainly, the Council is not going to hear about, say, paper towel purchases. They have to trust the City staff for regular purchasing.

Mr. Lussier replied that to expand on the RFP review process, ideally, the City receives five to seven proposals. He continued that typically, if there are more than three, they will review the paper proposals that companies submit, with “they” being a team of at least three people, including the City Engineer and at least one person from outside the Department so they have a bit of a different perspective on it. If there are more than three proposals, the team creates a shortlist of three or four they want to interview, and then they interview them. He can think of only about two cases in which they did not interview them, because one was so completely out of sync with the others that clearly, there was no way to get over the fact that one consultant was charging three times more than another. But generally, they interview the top three or four firms and rank the interviews to come up with the final one.

Mr. Gakunde stated that because the RFPs and RFQs are not just judged by the price, the final candidate is advanced to Council for approval. He continued that for any contract that will be above \$50,000, they select the candidate through the RFP or RFQ process, send it to Council for approval, and then move into the contract phase.

The City Manager stated that she wants to add that the FOP Committee packets have the memorandums submitted by the departments, but she does not know that they always make it

into the meeting minutes word for word in the Council packet. She continued that if Councilors are interested in what was actually proposed, and details of the memorandum that came from a department head, they might have to look at the FOP Committee packet it was presented in. Secondly, she wanted to share that the City has a purchasing portal, which has been helpful. When she gets calls from people interested in bidding on City projects, she sends them there and tells them to register so they can be notified next time the City has a project of the type they might be interested in bidding on. Anyone from the public can also look to see what the City has out in terms of bids and past contracts. A few years ago, the City started adding the contracts there, because it helps with transparency and with Right to Know requests. The purchasing portal is free for the City to be able to use, and it has been a good tool.

Mr. Gakunde stated that when they post the contracts, they try to add the documentation, like Council approval and Council minutes, so that everyone who wants to access the information can see the process the City went through.

Chair Greenwald asked if there was anything further from the Committee. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

The following motion by Councilor Ellis was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the presentation outlining the roles of contractors and consultants be accepted as informational.

The City Manager stated that she wanted to recognize Mr. Gakunde for the donation the City received, \$100,000 of value of donated equipment. She continued that Mr. Gakunde is part of a purchasing group that shares information, and he does a great job at finding free items for the City, so she wanted to publicly acknowledge him.

9) Relating to Updates to Section 94-321, “Stop Signs” in the City Code - Ordinance O-2026-03

Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer, stated that in the implementation of the recommendations identified in the Safe Streets for All report, the Public Works Department is looking to install stop signs. He continued that as part of doing that, the Engineering Division reviewed the three locations where the report recommended added stop signs. They identified that two of the locations did not meet the warrant. One is a location they had already discussed with the MSFI Committee about two years ago, which he will go into more detail about in a minute. The one staff is adding and recommend adding to the City Ordinances is Winter St. for northbound traffic at School St. That was identified in the recommendations, and staff reviewed it, and found a limited sight distance to the right at that intersection, so they recommend a stop sign be added in that location in conjunction with the recommendation. The other changes to the City Code are essentially making all the wording consistent. About a year ago, they went through the City Code for all the signs and identified the ones that were no longer in the locations that the City Code identified, and they did a great job at that. Unfortunately, as engineers, they did not do a good job at looking at the grammatical entries, and there was a lot of inconsistency in some of the wording. Thus,

they have cleaned all that up so that the wording throughout the Stop Sign Ordinance is consistent, and they added the new stop sign.

Mr. Ruoff continued that the other two locations where stop signs were requested, which staff identified did not meet the warrant and thus are not being added, are the Lincoln St. and Roxbury St. four-way stop sign. About two years ago, staff met with the MSFI Committee and identified the four warrants that are required for a four-way stop sign. These meet one of them, which is the traffic volume for the major artery, which is Roxbury St. being over 570 vehicle trips per eight hours. They do not meet any of the other criteria, so they are not recommended as far as the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The other location was Forest St. at Chestnut St. Staff does not recommend a stop sign at that junction, either. It does not meet any of the warrants for a stop sign to be added.

Councilor Tobin stated that she is thankful for the consistency. She continued that as part of the Roadway Safety Plan, there was that running list of things to do and things to update. She asked if that is still being updated, and where to find it. Mr. Ruoff replied yes, he calls that his CIP items folder, and as they update items on that list, he checks off that it was done, when, and what it was related to. He continued that for example, for the stop signs, when they put in a stop sign that Council has approved, once they put in a request for the sign maker to install a stop sign, they put the exact ticket number that the request went in to track it back to that. It is not publicly available online, but he would be happy to share it with the MSFI Committee whenever they would like. He could also look into making it public.

Councilor Tobin stated that she thinks it would be helpful, and it also adds value to that group that participated in that and had those conversations, so they can see there is progress being made. She continued that it makes it feel like it was worth being part of that committee. Mr. Ruoff thanked her for the great feedback.

Mr. Lussier stated that about a month and a half ago, he started working on a presentation he wanted to give to the MSFI Committee on the first year of progress with the Safe Streets for All program. He continued that he got some statistics from the KPD and started putting that together, and then other things got in the way. It is on his radar.

Chair Greenwald asked if there was further comment from the Committee or public. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

The following motion by Councilor Favolise was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the adoption of Ordinance O-2026-03.

10) Downtown Infrastructure Project Update - Public Works Director

Mr. Lussier stated that there is not a lot to report, but the project is out for bid. He continued that it was advertised last week, and bids are due on April 16. Earlier, he mentioned cooperative purchasing agreements. He is not sure he has said it at any public meetings like this, but he has

talked with some folks about a concern they had with bidding the project in the spring and potentially running into an issue with getting the traffic signal equipment in time for installation in Central Square. They thought about the idea of reversing the sequence of the project, starting at the southern end and working their way north, because that would give them more time to purchase and have the traffic signal on hand. That idea was not well received, so they put their heads together and came up with an idea. They will be purchasing the traffic signal equipment outside of the contract, through one of the cooperative purchasing agreements. There are a couple they can use. The NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) has pre-bid basic traffic signal equipment so you can take it off of their shopping list, and a company called Source Well has the same sort of thing where they bid projects for multiple agencies, and as long as the vendor is willing to honor the bid price that they want for that bid, then you can purchase it off of that and it meets the City's Ordinance for purchasing competitively. Thus, the City will purchase all of the traffic signal equipment that way, so they can get that purchase done and in production while they are going through the contracting with the construction contractor.

Chair Greenwald stated that he has a question for the Ombudsman. He asked if the downtown community is aware that April 16, 2026 is a big day and that the project is alive and well and will happen this summer.

George Downing, Downtown Infrastructure Project Ombudsman, replied that the Keene Sentinel just published it. He continued that he did not know the date until this week when he asked Mr. Ruoff. Yes, the downtown community knows the project will happen this summer. When the Committee and Council went through everything a few months back, the question he heard most frequently was whether the project was still happening. There was only about a week of uncertainty before Public Works came up with a plan and brought it to the Committee and they went forward with it. It has been an easy question to answer. Now what people want are the details of what the project will look like, and the exact phasing. The City now has a new phasing plan they need to start distributing, since they are back to a three-year plan. Those are the kinds of details people are looking for, and the City cannot really provide them until they know who is doing the job and until they go through the process they were talking about in the presentation about the scope of the job. Thus, they are kind of in a holding pattern now. Other than that, he has been busy "playing whack-a-mole" as new businesses open up and he has to go introduce himself to them, which is a good thing. Today he stumbled across the arcade on lower Main St. He knew they would be opening but did not realize they were within the project's footprint. He went in and met them and introduced himself. That has been happening lately, with businesses opening that he did not even know were there yet.

Councilor Tobin stated that she ran into a business owner last week who was not clear on what was happening, and whether the project was starting. She continued that the business owner was a little confused. The business is right outside of the project's footprint. Whether traffic can come through or not will definitely affect their business. Her question is whether Mr. Downing is checking in with the businesses right outside of Main St.

Chair Greenwald stated that part of the reason for asking Mr. Downing to come forward in this conversation is to get the media to pick up on the fact that yes, this is coming, because as April 16th becomes reality, he does not want to hear people saying, "I didn't know anything about it."

Mr. Downing stated that to respond to Councilor Tobin's question, he has tried to go about a block outside of the project's footprint in all directions, but not much further than that, because where would he stop? There has to be a limit to some degree. The email notification system is available to anyone and everyone, which he encourages people to sign up for, right on the front page of the City's website. One category you can sign up for is specifically the Downtown Infrastructure Project. It is called "Downtown residents and businesses construction information."

The following motion by Councilor Workman was duly seconded by Councilor Tobin.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends accepting the Downtown Infrastructure Project Update as informational.

11) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Greenwald adjourned the meeting at 8:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,
Terri Hood, City Clerk and Kathleen Richards, Deputy City Clerk