



KEENE CITY COUNCIL
Council Chambers, Keene City Hall
April 2, 2026
7:00 PM

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES FROM PRECEDING MEETING

- March 19, 2026 Minutes

A. HEARINGS / PRESENTATIONS / PROCLAMATIONS

1. Community Recognition: Union Leader 40 Under Forty Award - Dr. Lito M. Amit
2. Community Recognition: Keene State College Men's Basketball

B. ELECTIONS / NOMINATIONS / APPOINTMENTS / CONFIRMATIONS

1. Confirmations - Energy and Climate Committee, Library Board of Trustees

C. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Pathways for Keene - Request for Use of City Property - 4 on the 4th Road Race - July 4, 2026
2. Keene Pride Festival - Request for Use of City Property - Pride Festival - September 20, 2026
3. Brittany Williams - Concerns Relating to Cars Congesting Royal Avenue During School Pick-up
4. Councilors Filiault, Jones and Haas - Request to Review Recent Amendments to Land Development Code - Codified with the Adoption of Ordinance O-2025-15-A
5. Councilor Williams - Request for Consideration of an Ordinance Amendment to Allow Leashed Dogs in Woodland Cemetery

6. Rick MacMillan - Withdrawal of Request for Public Art Display - Temporary Sculpture Installation

D. REPORTS - COUNCIL COMMITTEES

1. Public Art Display Proposal - Temporary Large-Scale Sculpture Installation
2. Eversource Access Across City-owned Land in the Town of Swanze y - Transition to License
3. Acceptance of Fire Department Strategic Plan
4. Presentation - Red Pine Scale - Dinsmoor Woods (Maple Avenue) Harvest
5. Presentation - Transfer Station Assessment Report
6. Presentation - Management of Emerald Ash Borer Infested Trees
7. Presentation - Outlining the Role of Contractors and Consultants
8. Downtown Infrastructure Project Update
9. FY25 DOJ Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program Award
10. Written Public Comments - Proposed Capital Improvement Program 2027-2033
11. Proposed Capital Improvement Program 2027-2033

E. CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

F. REPORTS - CITY OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS

G. REPORTS - BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

H. REPORTS - MORE TIME

1. Terry Bishop - Concerns With Parking on Marlboro Street and Enforcement Measures

I. ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READING

1. Relating to Personnel
Ordinance O-2026-06

J. ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING

1. Relating to Updates to Section 94-321, "Stop Signs" in the City Code
Ordinance O-2026-03

K. RESOLUTIONS

NON PUBLIC SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

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

MINUTES FROM PRECEDING MEETING

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION: KEENE HIGH SCHOOL WINTER SPORTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PUBLIC HEARING - PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM 2027–2033

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

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

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

The Downtown Infrastructure Improvement and Reconstruction Project is one of the most significant investments in the CIP. The City Manager noted that much of this underground infrastructure is more than 120 years old, and replacement is critical to maintaining reliable service and supporting future economic vitality. The financing strategy for this project is intentionally structured to mitigate impacts on the tax rate. This includes more aggressive use of unassigned fund balance, planned roadway funding, downtown infrastructure reserves, and available grants. City Manager Ferland said this layered approach would allow the City to advance critical investment while reducing reliance on bonding and smoothing the overall tax

impact. She noted that the Lower Winchester Street Reconstruction Project and West Street Corridor Improvements are aligned with the State of New Hampshire's 10-Year Transportation Plan, allowing the City to leverage approximately 80% state funding. The City's Stormwater Resiliency Program is coordinated with these efforts to maximize efficiency and reduce long-term disruption. Together, the City Manager called these coordinated, multi-year investments designed to address multiple infrastructure needs, while making the best use of available funding.

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

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

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

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

recommendation on March 26 that would come back to the full City Council for a final vote on April 2, 2026.

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

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

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

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

He said it would have to be cleaned by people but thought that it could be an opportunity for a part time job or a community service project. Mr. Kost wanted the City to think about something other than this very complicated piece of machinery.

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

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

Mayor Kahn noted that the City also received two communications about the CIP. The first was from The Reverend Elsa Worth in support of the Downtown Restroom Project, and the second from Mr. Anthony Ferrantello in opposition to the Restroom Project. Both letters were distributed to Councilors and would be filed into the public hearing record.

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

A true record, attest: 
City Clerk

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Mayor tabled the next two communications regarding Councilors Ellis' and Haas' conflicts of interest on two Committee reports. While doing so, the Mayor took the opportunity to remind the Council about requirements of the City Council's Rule of Order, Section 15 Conflicts of Interest, which was amended in February 2025. Under this Rule, a Councilor with a special

interest must file written details of any Special Interest with the City Clerk for inclusion on the agenda, and the existence of a Special Interest is determined by a majority vote of the Councilors present. Finally, Mayor Kahn said Councilors are not required to leave their seats when abstaining from discussion or votes. However, if a Councilor with a Special Interest wishes to speak at a public hearing or meeting at which public comment is permitted, they must do so from the audience.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the Keene Downtown Group be granted a Street Fair License to use downtown City rights-of-way to conduct up to four small-scale festivals as part of the "Dig Into Keene" project,

with event dates scheduled for Saturday, July 25, 2026, Saturday, September 12, 2026, Saturday, October 10, 2026, and Friday, November 27, 2026 including sidewalk displays, buskers on sidewalks, musical and stage performances on a small mobile stage on Railroad Square, and food vendors at locations to be determined, conditional upon the following:

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

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

COMMUNICATION - COUNCILOR ELLIS - CONFLICT OF INTEREST - MONADNOCK 250

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Councilor Haas was unclear on why he needed to abstain from this vote as well, noting the first item was directly related to the Keene Downtown Group but he did not think it was the same for this event. Mayor Kahn clarified that the Keene Downtown Group would be the license holder for the Monadnock 250th Independence Day Celebration, so he thanked Councilor Haas for having abstained from the vote.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Councilor Chadbourne said she never imagined herself being the historian but noted that this had been an ongoing discussion for years, dating back to when John MacLean was City Manager. She said there had been discussion about using the Findings Property at one point, the old vacant lot on Ashuelot Street (now City-owned), and other different areas for The Farmers' Market. So, Councilor Chadbourne said it was an ongoing discussion, and she thought it was really important for everyone to remember that this is very fluid: there are constant, shifting conversations, and she thought it would be important to leave the conversation open for reconsideration. She thought Councilor Chalice bringing this up was a good reminder that the Council should revisit this.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOP REPORT - REALLOCATION OF CAPITAL FUNDS – SKATE PARK

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

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

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

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

Councilor Haas said, having been around the Council for a couple of years, that it can start being a little different than what is in/out of the plan. He agreed that there was funding for it and it was all matched, but he frankly saw no need for additional pavement and parking in that area. If this passed, he asked for it to be permeable pavement or some kind of natural substance that would be suitable there. He understood that it would require more maintenance for plowing and such but said the City could look at things like that. However, he was unsure the City has a need for anything more than just a walkway from the Skate Park—a potential future crossing at Water Street over to the parking lot of Pat Russell Park. The City Manager also clarified that the City

received permission from New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services on its plans for this location because of the foundry that was there before. So, she said that the type of pavement may not be able to change.

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

FOP REPORT - ACCEPTANCE OF LOCAL SOURCE WATER PROTECTION GRANT

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

FOP REPORT - ACCEPTANCE OF DONATION - OFFICE EQUIPMENT

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

Mayor Kahn thanked the City staff who arranged this.

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

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

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

First, City Manager Elizabeth Ferland reported on Green Up Keene: Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. This year, participants could use the drive-through supply pick up again at Keene Public Works (350 Marlboro Street). If supplies are needed before the event, call or email Andrea Bixby (603-352-6550 or abixby@keenenh.gov) at the Public Works Department to arrange pickup. If members of the public have an important space they want to sponsor, they

should look at the online map on the Public Works Department webpage, and see what sites are available for volunteers to claim (email Ms. Bixby). Participants could also simply show up on Saturday April 25, 2026, to be assigned area that needs attention. keenenh.gov/public-works/green-up-keene/.

The City Manager said Public Works Director Don Lussier also asked her to highlight the upcoming open house at the Wastewater Treatment Plant on April 16, 2026, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. She said it would be a great opportunity to meet with staff, ask questions, and take a tour. City Manager Ferland highly recommended it, noting the tour would highlight items in the Capital Plan for the next seven years and the importance of those items. She encouraged attendance.

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

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

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

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

A Joint Planning Board-Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report was read, with the Planning Board unanimously finding Ordinance O-2026-02 to be consistent with the 2025 Comprehensive Master Plan, and the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee unanimously requesting that the Mayor set a Public Hearing on Ordinance O-2026-02. Mayor Kahn filed the memorandum and set a Public Hearing on Ordinance O-2026-02 for May 21, 2026 at 7:00 PM.

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

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

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

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

NON PUBLIC SESSION

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

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

The public session reconvened at 8:58 PM.

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

ADJOURNMENT

03/19/2026

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

A true record, attest: 
City Clerk



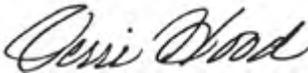
CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #B.1.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Mayor Jay V. Kahn
Through: Terri Hood, City Clerk
Subject: **Confirmations - Energy and Climate Committee, Library Board of Trustees**

Council Action:
In City Council March 19, 2026.
Nominations tabled until the next regular meeting.

A true record;

Attest: 
City Clerk

Recommendation:

Attachments:

None

Background:

I hereby nominate the following individuals to serve on the designated board or commission:

Energy and Climate Committee

Claire Oursler
reappointment
Regular Member - Slot 8

December 31, 2028

Library Board of Trustees

Susan Matthews
158 High Street
Regular Member - Slot 5

June 30, 2029



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #C.1.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Janelle Sartorio/Pathways for Keene
Through: Terri Hood, City Clerk
Subject: **Pathways for Keene - Request for Use of City Property - 4 on the 4th Road Race - July 4, 2026**

Recommendation:

Attachments:

1. PFK - 4 on the 4th 2026 - Letter to Mayor and Council

Background:

Ms. Sartorio is requesting the annual license for Pathways for Keene to sponsor a footrace on July 4, 2026. The applicant has requested Community Event funding for this FY27 event.



March 04, 2026

Mayor Jay Kahn and Keene City Council
City of Keene
3 Washington Street
Keene, NH 03431

RE: License Request for the 2026 Four on the Fourth Race

To: The Honorable Mayor Jay Kahn and the Keene City Councilors,

Pathways for Keene requests a license to hold the annual Four on the Fourth Road Race on Saturday, July 4th, 2026. The race will begin and end at Railroad Square and the event hours will run from 6am to 11am.

This event has become a signature event for Pathways and for the City of Keene drawing over 500 runners and walkers to Railroad Square in Keene for a fun and energizing event for all ages. We are especially excited to continue this tradition in 2026 as it is the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Though we run independently, we hope our race will serve as a kickoff to the larger Monadnock 250 Event.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support!

Sincerely,

Janelle Sartorio
President, Pathways for Keene



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #C.2.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Adam Toepfer/Keene Pride
Through: Terri Hood, City Clerk
Subject: **Keene Pride Festival - Request for Use of City Property - Pride Festival - September 20, 2026**

Recommendation:

Attachments:

1. KP FY26-27 Letter to City Council

Background:

Mr. Toepfer is requesting the annual license for use of downtown City property on September 20, 2026 to conduct the 2026 Keene Pride Festival. The applicant has requested Community Event funding for this FY27 event.



The Honorable Mayor and City Council
Keene City Hall
3 Washington St.
Keene, NH 03431
Re: 2026 Keene Pride

3/10/26

Dear Honorable Mayor Jay Kahn and City Council Members,

After the incredible success of Keene Pride Fest., we would like to continue the annual tradition for 2026. Keene Pride Week will take place between 9/12/26 and 9/20/26. We are requesting use of city property on Sunday 9/20/26 for Keene Pride Fest.

The week-long pride event will culminate on Sunday September 20, 2026 with a “block party” from 12pm – 6pm which will include entertainment, food, and local vendors. For this day, we request from the City:

- Close the street surrounding Central Square
- Close Roxbury Street from Central Square to the Green Energy Solutions building
- Close Main Street from Railroad Square to Central Square
- Close Railroad Street from Main Street to Wells Street
- Reserve the use of Railroad Square for festival use
- Request proper barriers from Public Works Department to provide adequate safety
- Request use of City Power/Electricity
- Request the support of Police and Fire
- Request City Water in the event that vendors require

Note: This is based on assuming the city is not moving forward with Downtown construction in 2026. If the construction has begun, Keene Pride Festival will encompass the “large scale festival” layout as designed by city staff on Railroad Square, Main St, and Gilbo Ave.

We believe this will be a highly desirable attraction that will bring tourism to local businesses. We plan on marketing this event to the Monadnock Community and beyond. We also plan to leverage the beauty of the fall foliage season in conjunction with the event to draw more people.

As required, we will provide a \$1 Million certificate of insurance to the City, and work closely with City staff to ensure this event is safe and enjoyable for all.

We would like to stress that this is intended to be a family friendly event. Our intention is to reach out to local schools to be involved with helping to decorate and plan. The primary purpose of Pride is to celebrate diversity, bring awareness and support our LGBTQIA+ community; however, ALL are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Adam Toepfer
Board President



603-696-2927



www.keenepride.org



25 Roxbury St. #114
Keene, NH 03431



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #C.3.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Brittany Williams
Through: Terri Hood, City Clerk
Subject: **Brittany Williams - Concerns Relating to Cars Congesting Royal Avenue During School Pick-up**

Recommendation:

Attachments:

1. Communication_Brittany_Williams_redacted
2. Word text of handwritten letter - Communication_Brittany_Williams_redacted
3. Word text of SAU 29 email - Communication_Brittany_Williams

Background:

Ms. Williams has submitted a letter with concerns related to the cars congesting both sides of Royal Avenue when Keene High School students are about to get out of school. Her submission includes some photographs of the congestion and an email that Keene High School has sent out to parents.

march 19, 2026

Brittany Williams
43 Royal Ave Keene NH
03431

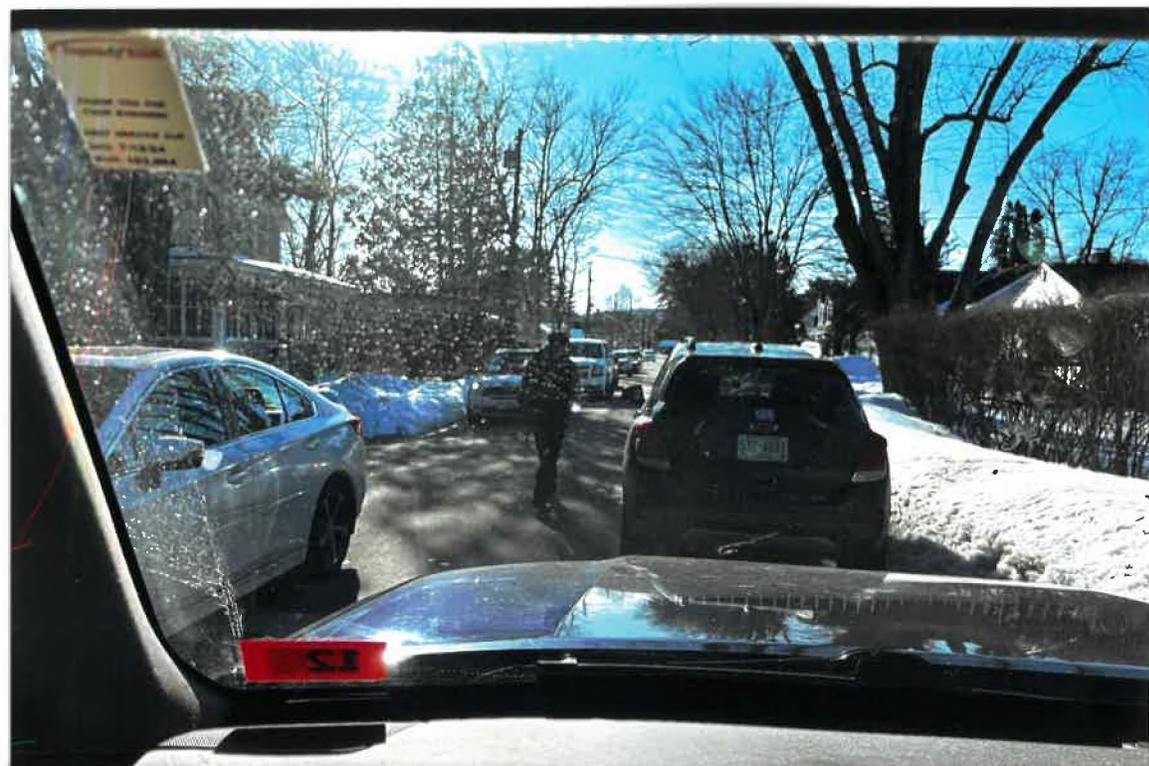
Good day Mr. Kahn,

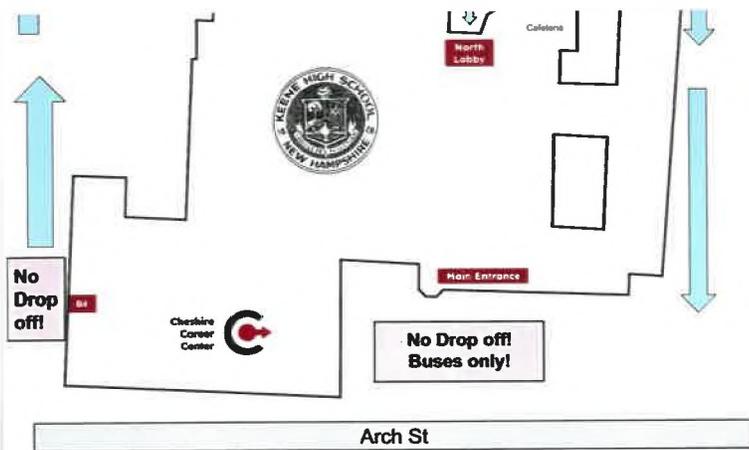
my name is Brittany. I own a home on Royal Avenue. Everyday when the high school gets out of school, a large number of parents park along our road blocking the roadway. There have been numerous times where I have been blocked from getting to my house. One instance I honked at the car to please move, a car behind me who was also trying to get down the road got out of her car to tell her to move. I then had to get out and ask because she still stayed there. When I was asking her to move and letting her know she was blocking the road her response to me was "I know, I know." There is a school bus that can't get down the road because of the cars. I have elderly neighbors that if something were to happen, emergency vehicles would not be able to get to them. I have talked to neighbors ^{who} have to go down the next street and around to just get home. I have contacted the Keene pd, Keene high, and my ward councilman multiple times. Keene high sent out an email reminding parents that Royal Ave is not where pickup is. Keene pd said they would send patrol, to which I have never seen a patrol car. This may seem like a small issue, but ~~as soon~~ it can become a huge incident very quickly. Please help myself and my neighbors with this. I appreciate your time.

Thank-you



Brittany Williams





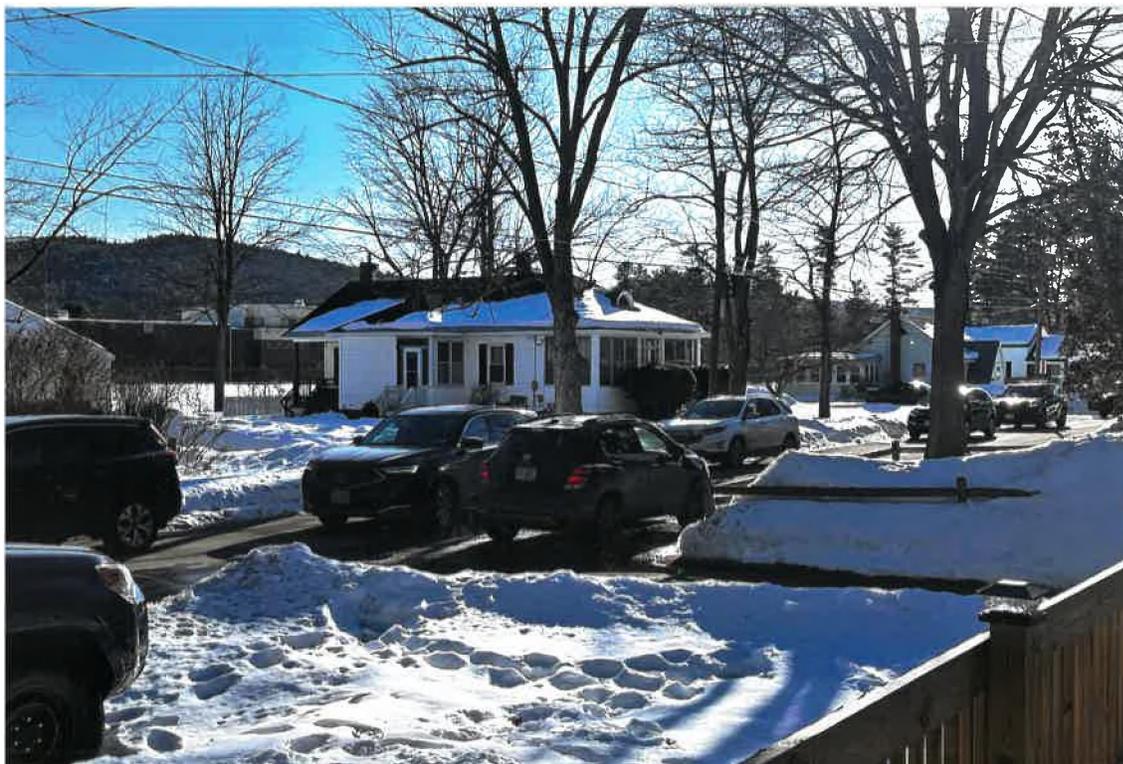
In the morning, all buses will drop off students at the front of the building (main entrance). This means no parent drop-offs can happen at the front of the building.

Parent Pick-Up(after School)

Parent pick up is in front of the school only. Parent pick up must occur **AFTER** the buses leave at **3:50**. Otherwise we ask that you arrange to pick up your student at a different location in the afternoon. Please do not park on Royal Ave, as our neighbors are struggling with blocked driveways and backed up traffic due to parent pick-ups.

← Reply

→ Forward



This is the text of the handwritten letter typed out into Word

March 19, 2026

Brittany Williams
43 Royal Ave
Keene, NH 03431

Good day Mr. Kahn,

My name is Brittany. I own a home on Royal Avenue. Everyday when the high school gets out of school, a large number of parents park along our road blocking the roadway. There have been numerous times where I have been blocked from getting to my house. One instance I honked at the car to please move, a car behind me who was also trying to get down the road got out of her to car to tell her to move. I then had to get out and ask because she still stayed there. When I was asking her to move and letting her know she was blocking the road her response to me was "I know, I know". There is a school bus that can't get down the road because of the cars. I have elderly neighbors that if something were to happen, emergency vehicles would not be able to get to them. I have talked directly to neighbors who have to go down the next street and around to just get home. I have contacted the Keene PD, Keene High, and my ward councilmen multiple times. Keene High sent out an email reminding parents that Royal Ave is not where pickup is. Keene PD said they would send patrol, to which I have never seen a patrol car. This may seem like a small issue, but it can become a huge incident very quickly. Please help myself and my neighbors with this.

I appreciate your time.

Thank you,

See signature in the handwritten document

Brittany Williams

This is the text of the SAU29 email that was provided as an image typed out into Word

In the morning, all buses will drop off students at the front of the building (main entrance). This means no parent drop-offs can happen at the front of the building.

Parent Pick-Up (after School)

Parent pick up is in front of the school only. Parent pick up must occur **AFTER** the buses leave at **3:50**. Otherwise we ask that you arrange to pick up your student at a different location in the afternoon. Please do not park on Royal Ave, as our neighbors are struggling with blocked driveways and backed up traffic due to parent pick-ups.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #C.4.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Councilor Randy Filiault
Councilor Philip Jones
Councilor Ed Haas

Through: Terri Hood, City Clerk

Subject: **Councilors Filiault, Jones and Haas - Request to Review Recent Amendments to Land Development Code - Codified with the Adoption of Ordinance O-2025-15-A**

Recommendation:

Attachments:

1. Communication_Filiault

Background:

Councilors Filiault, Jones and Haas have submitted a communication requesting that the Council review recent changes to the Land Development Code, citing community concerns about increased costs of fire separations and maintenance access, as well as concerns relating to allowing a 100% increase in multifamily units by right in the Medium Density district.

March 30, 2026

To: Mayor Jay Kahn and Keene City Council

From: City Councilor Randy Filiault

Subject: Land Development Code

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Randy 2 Filiault". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the right of the "From:" field, overlapping the "Subject:" field.

Respectfully request the Keene City Council review the recent change in our land Development Code, specifically Section 5.3.2, Dimensions and Siting, and section 8.3.1.C.2.a, Dwelling and Multi-Family.

Re: 5.3.2: Community response is concerned about increased cost of fire separations, and maintenance access.

Re: 8.3.1.C.2.a: Community response has expressed great concern that a 100% increase by right is excessive when alternate paths to the same goal of increased housing are available. These alternatives need to be better reviewed. Increase by right to 4 units could be a more manageable change as we explore ways to expand housing options.

Sincerely,

Randy Filiault, Keene City Councilor

Phil Jones, Keene City Councilor

Ed Haas, Keene City Councilor



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #C.5.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Councilor Robert Williams
Through: Terri Hood, City Clerk
Subject: **Councilor Williams - Request for Consideration of an Ordinance Amendment to Allow Leashed Dogs in Woodland Cemetery**

Recommendation:

Attachments:

1. Communication_Williams

Background:

Councilor Williams is requesting the Council consider updating the current regulations restricting dogs in cemeteries to allow leashed dogs in the Woodland Cemetery. Councilor Williams suggests this would benefit the neighborhood as allowing dog walkers would increase foot traffic on the paths, improving security for everyone.

March 30, 2026

City of Keene Clerk's Office
3 Washington Street
Keene, NH 03431

To the Honorable Mayor and City Council,

There is currently "no dogs allowed" rule in Woodland Cemetery.

I think it would benefit the neighborhood if this rule were to be changed to allow dogs on leashes in the cemetery. The increase in dog walkers would increase foot traffic on the paths, improving security for everyone.

I am requesting for this issue to be reviewed in Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bobby Williams".

Bobby Williams
City Councilor, Ward 2



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #C.6.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Rick MacMillan
Through: Terri Hood, City Clerk
Subject: **Rick MacMillan - Withdrawal of Request for Public Art Display - Temporary Sculpture Installation**

Recommendation:

Attachments:

1. Communication_MacMillan_redacted

Background:

Mr. MacMillan is requesting the Council accept the withdrawal of his proposal of March 13, 2026 for the temporary installation of a large-scale outdoor sculpture on City property as the artist has found a location outside Keene to display the piece.

39 Hathersage Ln
Dublin NH 03444
March 30, 2026

Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Keene
3 Washington Street
Keene, NH 03431

Re: Request to Install a Sculpture on Municipal Property

Dear Mayor and City Councilors:

Events since the meeting of the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee on March 25 have occurred, resulting in me having to withdraw my proposal of March 13, 2026, to install a monumental outdoor sculpture in municipal space owned by the City of Keene.

I appreciate the support of the City in this endeavor so far.

Sincerely,



Frederick W. MacMillan

Sculpture NH

██████████
████████████████████



ITEM #D.1.

CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Municipal Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: **Public Art Display Proposal - Temporary Large-Scale Sculpture Installation**

Recommendation:

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends that 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.

Attachments:

None

Background:

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.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #D.2.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Municipal Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: **Eversource Access Across City-owned Land in the Town of Swanzey - Transition to License**

Recommendation:

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

Attachments:

None

Background:

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.

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CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Municipal Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: **Acceptance of Fire Department Strategic Plan**

Recommendation:

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.

Attachments:

None

Background:

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 thanks 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.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #D.4.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Municipal Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: **Presentation - Red Pine Scale - Dinsmoor Woods (Maple Avenue) Harvest**

Recommendation:

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.

Attachments:

None

Background:

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 FY 27 and FY 28 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 FY 27, 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.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #D.5.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Municipal Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: **Presentation - Transfer Station Assessment Report**

Recommendation:

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

Attachments:

None

Background:

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 has 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 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 is 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.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #D.6.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Municipal Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: **Presentation - Management of Emerald Ash Borer Infested Trees**

Recommendation:

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.

Attachments:

None

Background:

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.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Municipal Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: **Presentation - Outlining the Role of Contractors and Consultants**

Recommendation:

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.

Attachments:

None

Background:

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 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.



ITEM #D.8.

CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Municipal Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: **Downtown Infrastructure Project Update**

Recommendation:

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

Attachments:

None

Background:

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.



ITEM #D.9.

CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: FY25 DOJ Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program Award

Recommendation:

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to co-apply with the County of Cheshire, NH and to accept and expend the U.S. Department of Justice FY25 Byrne JAG in the amount allocated to the City of \$5,501.00.

Attachments:

None

Background:

Police Captain Steve Tenney addressed the Committee and stated this is a grant that the City has partnered with the County on for about 15 years. The grant pays for phones and air cards that are in the department computers and cruisers. Captain Tenney stated this year the grant is \$5501.

Councilor Chalice stated she is grateful for this grant but asked whether the language of the agreement has been reviewed. She noted the grant is with the County but the funds are coming from the Federal Government; to make sure new language has not been added that would tie the City into some type of aspect the City is not comfortable with. For example conversations that may go beyond where the City intends it to go.

Captain Tenney stated the City enters into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County and that language has not changed. The County is responsible for filling out the grant in its entirety. He added in looking at the MOU, there is no new language. He stated he could not comment on the full grant itself and added they have reviewed other language in the past and have determined that although it is different, the department wouldn't change the way it operates.

The Councilor asked the City Attorney whether the City could be susceptible to a requirement that is not in the agreement with the County but the County may have agreed to, in order to accept those federal funds. Attorney Palmeira stated she had not reviewed the Agreement but this could be an option because the City is receiving funds through the County they might want to control how it's used, but stressed not having seen the agreement she could not determine how this might look. The

Manager stated the Attorney could review the Agreement before the next Council meeting.

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

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to co-apply with the County of Cheshire, NH and to accept and expend the U.S. Department of Justice FY25 Byrne JAG in the amount allocated to the City of \$5,501.00.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #D.10.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: **Written Public Comments - Proposed Capital Improvement Program 2027-2033**

Recommendation:

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend the written public comments for the proposed capital improvement program 2027-2033 be accepted as informational.

Attachments:

None

Background:

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

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend the written public comments for the proposed capital improvement program 2027-2033 be accepted as informational.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #D.11.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: **Proposed Capital Improvement Program 2027-2033**

Recommendation:

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of the Capital Improvement Program for fiscal year 2027-2033.

Attachments:

None

Background:

The Manager stated the City has received all written communications after the public hearing by the deadline and the Committee has acted on that this evening. She stated that no additional comments will be taken from the public tonight; this meeting is a time for the Committee to ask questions from staff.

The Manager went on to say that the Planning Board reviewed the plan on Monday, March 23, 2026, and voted that it was consistent with the Master Plan. She indicated the reason this document goes to the Planning Board is because there is a statute in New Hampshire, RSA 674:5, that authorizes the municipalities to adopt a Capital Improvement Plan and establishes the Planning Board's role and the Planning Board looks at whether the projects are consistent with the community's Master Plan. Their role is primarily planning and policy alignment and not budgeting. It is now up to the City Council to decide whether or not to amend or adopt the plan as presented.

The Manager noted the letter that is included with the Capital Plan includes a reference to the City's Fiscal Policy. Because the Finance Department had been focused on training an entirely new team, the Finance Director did not bring forward proposed changes this year. Hence, to ensure the review occurs for the upcoming year, staff has already scheduled a Fiscal Policy Workshop for June 30, 2026 at 6:00 PM in Council Chambers.

She stated today staff would be addressing comments or questions from the members of the public raised at the public hearing.

The first is the public bathroom. The Manager stated the Public Works Director has additional

2026-100

information to share regarding public bathrooms in response to the comments. She reminded the Committee that public bathrooms are currently included in the CIP for FY28 (not for the upcoming budget, but the year after). Regardless of the decision made this evening, there will be another year for the Council to evaluate whether to proceed and what type of facility would be appropriate before it would be considered as part of the FY28 operating budget. As always, the CIP is a planning document and does not obligate the Council to undertake any future projects.

The other item the Public Works Director will be talking about tonight is the road construction budget. The Public Works Director will review the funding structure for the downtown infrastructure project. It has been updated several times. This will include the use of FY26 road construction budget, as well as the funding that would otherwise have been allocated to next year's road construction funding.

The Manager stated she has also had a conversation with the Mayor about the possibility of adding \$500,000 to the road construction program for FY27. The Mayor is interested in seeing the plan be amended this evening to add additional funding for additional roadwork.

In anticipation of that discussion, the Manager stated she has asked the Public Works Director what they would recommend if the Council chose to add \$500,000 to road construction in FY27. He has identified two options. The first would be to complete Court Street from Route 9 to Central Square at an estimated cost of \$478,000.

Alternatively, if the Council preferred to spread the funding across multiple locations, they would recommend completing a smaller section of Court Street, along with work on Emerald Street. If the Council is interested in doing this, it will require an amendment to the plan to add those additional funds.

The Manager stated she also wanted to discuss the downtown infrastructure project. Bids are coming in mid-April 2026. Because the City is planning to utilize the FY26 budget, the budget that has already been approved, if there is a successful bid, move or reallocate the use of those funds from road construction for the projects that were listed in the CIP to the downtown project.

In regards to the \$500,000 being added to road construction, it would be a placeholder contingent upon Council determining that the resulting tax impact is manageable after the downtown infrastructure projects have been reviewed.

Public Works Director Don Lussier addressed the Committee next. He stated staff had a few comments on the letter the City received from Mr. Kost, what he had suggested was the Portland Loo. He stated this is one of the options staff looked at. He referred to a slide presentation – this is from a presentation DPW staff gave to the Nashua City Council. The first option that Nashua looked at, and that Mr. Lussier stated he would not recommend, is a portable restroom trailer. He did not feel this would be aesthetically appropriate in the downtown. It is not a permanent facility and the purchase cost is very low.

The next option is the Portland Loo. They are extremely durable, well built, and stainless steel. They are cheaper than the self-cleaning option. The drawback is the maintenance requirements. The manufacturer's website recommend these units need to be cleaned two to five times per day in order to stay acceptable and hygienic. Mr. Lussier stated he had talked to the Facilities Director, Andy Bohannon who indicated he does not have the staff that could visit this facility twice a day. In addition, how would this be managed on weekends when City staff is not available for cleaning. Mr. Lussier pointed out this is also an open-air facility. He noted to the vents, there is privacy but an

individual's legs will be visible. Because of the vents, wind will blow through it. They are designed to discourage loitering.

Mr. Lussier stated the option that staff is recommending is a self-contained unit. This one is designed by Urban Blue. They are more expensive in the first instance, and the real advantage is that they are self-cleaning. There is a cleaning function that would clean the toilet after every user, and they have a series of jets that will flush any debris on the floor after every 10th use.

City will send someone on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to do a full cleaning, replenish the paper supplies, etc. The savings are in the long-term and relate to the operations and maintenance costs. Mr. Lussier stated the other thing he likes about this unit is that it is prefabricated concrete, it is robustly made, and is designed for durability. The electronics have time limits, so after 20 minutes it automatically unlocks itself. It will also send an alert to an official (Police, Public Works, or Parks and Rec.). He added there are many different aesthetic treatments. He referred to the one shown on the slide which is made up of aluminum planks on the top with a stone-like façade, which he felt would be aesthetically appealing for the downtown area. It is also heated.

Mr. Lussier next reviewed the costs. The trailer is the least inexpensive. The Portland Loo is about \$100,000 less than the Urban Blue self-cleaning unit. Both the Portland Loo and Urban Blue units would last about 20 years. The real difference is in the operating costs.

The bathroom trailer has an annual operating cost of almost \$43,000. The assumption is two, 1/2 hour visits each day from staff for maintenance, it could take longer as the smallest trailer unit is three bathrooms. Because it is pretty light-duty construction, a larger amount is budgeted for repairs annually (\$10,000 annually for repairs).

For the Portland Loo and Urban Loo - \$5,000 a year for repairs and maintenance costs. The cleaning expenses for the Portland Loo, which includes two one-hour visits each day for maintenance, Monday through Friday. For the Urban Blue, it is a one-hour visit three times a week for maintenance, Monday, Wednesday, Friday. The Portland Loo is actually a more expensive life cycle cost than the Urban Blue self-cleaning unit. Mr. Lussier added if the community decides to go the route of the Portland Loo because it is less expensive it would mean staffing would be required which would add an extra cost.

Mr. Lussier stated Mr. Kost had raised not in his letter but orally about proprietary parts for the Urban Blue. Mr. Lussier stated he did reach out to the manufacturer this week and they assured him everything in the mechanical room is standard off-the-shelf parts. The proprietary items are the toilet and the sink in the bathroom unit itself. They are constructed for their own specifications. They are precast concrete units that are wrapped with fiberglass to be easily cleaned. This concluded Mr. Lussier's comments.

Councilor Chadbourne felt Urban Blue makes the most sense, but has the highest price tag. She noted one of the other issues that occurred with the traditional bathroom were things being flushed down the toilet that should not be flushed down. She asked whether this could become an issue with this model. Mr. Lussier stated he has heard horror stories about things like sweat shirts ending up in the sewer system, but stated this was something they can handle.

Councilor Chalice asked whether staff has had the opportunity to check with other locations in New England where the Portland Loo is being used to find out how that option is working for them. Mr.

Lussier stated he has not had the opportunity to reach out to these communities. The Councilor stated she was unconcerned about people using these toilets being cold, she felt this would be a positive thing; it is not the City's responsibility to make it comfortable for people to use the facilities just to provide a respectable place. She also did not feel one 24-hour bathroom downtown was enough. She indicated she has heard from constituents who have expressed concern that they have not had the opportunity to have public discussion on this issue. Councilor Chalice stated pending reviews from other communities she would vote for the Portland Loo and then a public process for something in the future.

Mr. Lussier noted, as has been mentioned, this is scheduled for 2028 and is likely not the last time this conversation will happen. He indicated in the CIP staff has identified a couple of viable options. If they choose the Portland Loo and can save some money on the construction project that would be something to consider.

Councilor Lake recalls discussing this issue four years ago when a discussion was brought forward about the homelessness issue. He recalled a portable bathroom installed on Gilbo Avenue at that time which did not last too long; Portland Loo was an option that was discussed which was around \$200,000 at that time. He stated the City has offered options and referred to the signs that have been installed directing the public to the Library and City Hall during day time hours and agreed overnight and Sunday are the time slots that still need discussion. He stated the reviews he has done on Portland Loo has been positive and that is an option that is used across North America and Canada and have been in use for a number of years. They seem to hold up pretty good. He added many of those cities were also much bigger than Keene and have larger budgets dollars to spend. He added he is having a difficult time getting on board spending half a million dollars and not knowing what the construction costs are going to be in two years.

Councilor Roberts stated he has listened to this conversation many times and what he sees is a total lack of responsibility, accountability, and gratitude. Regardless of what the City has done there has been group of people who have found a way to compromise the system. As the City tries to get better and better, it costs more and more. He felt someone in the group is going to find a way to damage this and he does not believe this unit would be indestructible.

Councilor Chalice as a point of clarification stated she had heard on the radio a comment that Hundred Nights Shelter is open 24/7 – she noted Hundred Nights closes at 6:00 pm. They were open for a short period of time when they were acting as a winter shelter 24/7 but they are not anymore.

Chair Powers clarified that he had heard during one of the discussions that the downtown bathroom construction might also be part of the electrical system from the pavilion. Mr. Lussier stated there have been discussions undertaken where staff had looked at ordering the structure with an extra large utility space in order to put the electrical equipment for the solar array in that utility space just to keep it out of the elements. This is not a requirement and could be mounted in the under deck.

The Chair noted many people have been working on a downtown bathroom for many years with different ideas. He felt the bottom line is something needs to be done. He noted looking at the slides the cost is about the same. Blue Urban would cost \$286,000 not \$440,000 but it is the extra utilities that is going to add to the cost. The extra year is going to give Council time to review the cost.

Councilor Lake asked whether the plan is that this work would be aligned with existing work on Gilbo Avenue. Mr. Lussier stated there could be some savings by combining the two projects. He added

because the solar pavilion project is federally-funded he was not quite sure of the timing but if everything goes well, it would work out great to start both projects late summer of 2027 (FY28).

Mr. Lussier next called the Committee's attention to Page 92 - funding for the downtown with respect to roads; column for current available funds - if you compare this table in the previous version of the book, road preservation and rehab line was not in the previous version.

In FY27, the proposal is that the money that had been planned for regular road paving be used to complete road rehab as part of the downtown project. Staff is suggesting that the FY26 for paving be similarly reallocated to the downtown. There is however, an issue which Mr. Lussier went on to explain. The FY27 funds can be approved by Council as part of approving the CIP next week. However, the FY26 funds have already been approved to use, \$1.4 million for a specific list of roads. Hence, there will need to be a separate Council action to reallocate those funds to the downtown project.

Councilor Roberts stated he is not confident the City would receive the same bid for a project to start in two months. Mr. Lussier stated a war in the Middle East and a global disruption of the petroleum markets was not something he was anticipating when planning this project. He stated on April 16, 2026 the City would know what the answer is.

The Councilor felt it would be not just a yes or no with this project and perhaps further modification could be made to the project so as to not delay it by another year. The Manager stated anything is possible. Staff is always hopeful and optimistic, but won't know until the bids come in.

Councilor Lake raised concern about two full seasons of not doing major rehab. around the City. He asked for some added clarification of the plan for some of the streets. He referred to the section of Court Street to Route 9 and asked when this work was being planned for. City Engineer Bryan Ruoff stated this portion of roadway was planned for FY29. He added based on the condition, staff have been considering moving that work up with unspent funds. However, with the reshuffling of the two years of planned road rehab. work, it made more sense to pull that forward, allowing the City to backfill with other roads that the City won't be able to complete as part of those two years. The Councilor stated roads in Keene are in extreme condition due to this winter and asked if the \$500,000 should be moved up or \$500,000 should be added into the budget. The Manager stated either one of those suggestions work and added staff would know more as they complete the operating budget.

Chair Powers asked whether the City is going to be able to undertake work on Court Street with everything else going on. Mr. Lussier stated engineering is putting together a contract to do this work in-house. He stated staff would have a better idea on April 16, 2026 about how to move forward.

Councilor Chadbourne stated she wanted to revisit the downtown bathroom. She went on to say that the hospital has a cutting gadget installed in their toilets to prevent items going down the toilets. Mr. Lussier stated that equipment like that does prevent maintenance of the system downstream but increases the need for regular maintenance; he stated he would look into it.

Councilor Lake stressed he would like to not see going two seasons without roadway work but would take the Director's advice and revisit this issue after April 16, 2026.

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

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of the Capital Improvement Program for fiscal year 2027-2033.



ITEM #H.1.

CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Municipal Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: **Terry Bishop - Concerns With Parking on Marlboro Street and Enforcement Measures**

Recommendation:

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.

Attachments:

None

Background:

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

2026-70

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 12-15 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.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #1.1.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Darcy Newport, Human Resources Director

Through: Elizabeth Ferland, City Manager

Subject: **Relating to Personnel
Ordinance O-2026-06**

Recommendation:

That the City Council refer Ordinance O-2026-06 to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee.

Attachments:

1. O-2026-06-Related to Personnel

Executive Summary:

This ordinance amends the City's personnel code to increase the cash incentive for employees who opt out of the City's health insurance coverage from \$3,500 to \$5,000. The payment structure and conditions for receiving the benefit remain unchanged, including lump-sum distribution and pro-rating provisions.

Background:

The proposed ordinance updates the benefit provided on an annual basis to eligible non-bargaining unit personnel providing proof of alternative health coverage, and choosing to opt out of the city's plan to be comparable to the benefit provided under most of the city's ratified collective bargaining agreements.



CITY OF KEENE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty Six

AN ORDINANCE Related to Personnel

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Keene, as follows:

That the ordinances of the City of Keene as amended, are hereby further amended by removing the stricken text and inserting the bold text in Section 62-61 1a (3) "Insurances" of Chapter 62 entitled Personnel as follows:

- (3) If a regular full-time employee so chooses, the employee may elect, upon receipt by the city of written verification that the benefit is received by some other means, to receive taxable income in the amount of **\$5,000.00** ~~\$3,500.00~~ in lieu of the city health insurance benefit. To qualify for such payment, the election must be such that it will not subject the city to penalty or assessment and is compliant under the Affordable Care Act, Tricare or any other legislative requirements. This amount shall be distributed in a lump sum payment in December for the prior year (December 1 to November 30), or a pro-rated amount shall be distributed to the employee if employment ends or insurance election changes at some point during that time period. If both spouses are employed by the city and covered by the city medical plan benefit, this shall not apply.

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #J.1.

Meeting Date: April 2, 2026
To: Mayor and Keene City Council
From: Municipal Facilities, Services and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee
Through:
Subject: **Relating to Updates to Section 94-321, “Stop Signs” in the City Code Ordinance O-2026-03**

Council Action:

Recommendation:

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

Attachments:

1. O-2026-03 Relating to the Updates to Section 94-321, “Stop Signs” in the City Code_Referral

Background:

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.



CITY OF KEENE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty Six

AN ORDINANCE Relating to the Updates to Section 94-321, "Stop Signs" in the City Code

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Keene, as follows:

That the City Code of the City of Keene, New Hampshire, as amended, is hereby further amended by adding the bolded text and by deleting the crossed-out text to the provisions of Section 94-321, "Stop Signs" in Division 5, "Specific Street Regulations" in Article IV of Chapter 94, entitled "TRAFFIC, PARKING AND PUBLIC WAYS" as follows;

- Airport parking lot ~~north~~ **east** end exit at **Airport Road**
- Airport parking lot ~~south~~ **west** end exit at **Airport Road**
- Castle Street Extension for eastbound traffic ~~from Harper Acres~~ **at Ashuelot Street**
- ~~Center at Keene for southbound traffic at Emerald Street.~~
- Chapman Road for westbound traffic at ~~its intersection with~~ Eastern Avenue
- Chestnut Street for westbound traffic at Forest Street.**
- Dort Street for northbound traffic at ~~its intersection with~~ Pinehurst Avenue
- Edgewood Avenue for southbound traffic at ~~its intersection with~~ Greenwood Avenue
- Gilsum Street for ~~South bound~~ **southbound** traffic at ~~the intersection with~~ Washington ~~St. Street~~
- Greenwood Avenue for eastbound traffic at ~~its intersection with~~ Route 32.
- Jennison Street for northbound traffic at ~~the intersection with~~ Foster Street.
- Kenworth Avenue for northbound traffic at ~~its intersection with~~ Greenwood Avenue.
- Linden Street at ~~Woodburn Street~~ for eastbound traffic **at Woodburn Street**
- Linden Street at ~~Woodburn Street~~ for westbound traffic **at Woodburn Street**
- Lynwood Avenue for westbound traffic at ~~its intersection with~~ Edgewood Avenue
- ~~Main Street, Route 12, for eastbound traffic at Route 32~~
- Martin Street for northbound traffic, ~~and southbound traffic~~ at Tiffin Street.

Martin Street for southbound traffic at Tiffin Street.

Mechanic Street **for westbound traffic** at Court Street

Mechanic Street **for eastbound traffic** at Washington Street

North Lincoln Street for northbound traffic at ~~its intersection with~~ Beaver Street

North Lincoln Street for southbound traffic at ~~its intersection with~~ Beaver Street

Pako Avenue for **north-eastbound** traffic at Pako Avenue ~~at the point where it runs north and south.~~

Summit Road for northbound ~~and southbound~~ traffic at Hastings Avenue/Maple Avenue.

Summit Road for southbound traffic at Hastings Avenue/Maple Avenue.

~~Union Street for southbound traffic on Elm Street~~

Vernon Street ~~and for eastbound traffic at~~ Washington Street ~~for eastbound traffic on~~ Vernon Street.

~~West Hill Base~~ **Hill Road** for northbound traffic ~~on north end of West Hill Base Road, at~~ its ~~intersection with~~ West Street.

West **Hill Road** ~~Street~~ for eastbound traffic at ~~its intersection with~~ West Hill Base **Hill** Road.

~~Wilbur~~ **Wilber** Street for southbound traffic at ~~its intersection with~~ Water Street.

Winter Street for westbound traffic at School Street.

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

In City Council March 5, 2026.
Referred to the Municipal Services, Facilities and
Infrastructure Committee.



City Clerk