

**CITY OF KEENE
PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

Tuesday, May 12th, 2026
5:00 pm to 6:00 pm

2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall



1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)**
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** Approval of meeting minutes: April 14th, 2026
4. **Board Business:**
 - a) Exchanges:
 - i.) Golf
 - ii.) Brewer
 - iii.) Bicycle
 - iii.) Dancer/musician
 - iv.) Runner
 - v.) Soccer
 - vi.) Coffee Roaster
 - vii.) Baker
 - b) Eulenfest Participation – pancakes & NH maple syrup, maple whiskey, booth setup/decor/banner (logistic input from Einbeck meeting?)
 - c) October Visit – firming list of attendees, traveler profile information sheets
 - d) Schedule for Requesting Annual Funding – Will
5. **Communications:**
 - a)
6. **Reports:**
 - a) Treasurer Report – *Eric*
7. **New Business:**
 - a.)
8. **More Time:**
 - a.) Fundraisers:
 - i.) Cookbook Updates
9. **Next Meeting:** Next meeting is June 9th, 2026
10. **Adjournment**

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 14, 2026

5:00 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room,
City Hall

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Mari Brunner
Councilor Laura Ruttle-Miller
Eric Weisenberger
Gerald Kuhn
Andrew Madison
Doris McCollester
Gerald Lins

Staff Present:

Meagan McLaughlin, Executive Administrative
Assistant

Members Not Present:

Derek Blunt

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting: February 10th, 2026

Mr. Madison made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of February 10, 2026. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

- A) Exchanges
 - i) Golf

Chair Mitchell stated that he visited the golf course today, and the person the PCC had been talking to is no longer working there. He continued that he was introduced to new director, who

30 does not think anything can happen on their end until October. He thinks maybe the next time the
31 Germans come to Keene, the golf community might have more interest. Chair Mitchell
32 continued that at the moment, Councilor Ruttle-Miller is the PCC's golf group. He can talk with
33 her, outside of the meeting, about what he knows so far about golf from the German side.

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35 **ii) Bicycle**
36

37 Chair Mitchell stated that he has met with a couple of people and has made no progress. He
38 continued that it is not an easy connection. He welcomes other PCC members' thoughts.

39
40 **iii) Brewer**
41

42 Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Schoefmann if he had anything to report about a brewer exchange. Mr.
43 Schoefmann replied no, he is waiting to hear back from people.

44
45 **iv) Dancer/Musician**
46

47 Chair Mitchell stated that he spoke with Kristen Leach. He continued that she will try and come
48 to the next PCC meeting. She says everything is ready for October 9-20, and they are excited. He
49 also spoke with dance people in Einbeck, who are also excited. They hope Keene can help again
50 with transportation from Boston to Keene for the dancers coming from Germany. It coincides
51 with the PCC's visit to Germany, so it would essentially be on the people who would not be
52 traveling. Most of the people at this table will be on the trip to Einbeck. He asked for people's
53 thoughts on whether the PCC can help with this, and how they should proceed. Discussion
54 ensued. PCC members suggested Ms. Leach see if some of the exchange hosts or board members
55 could help with transportation. Chair Mitchell stated that if the PCC could help, it would be nice;
56 it is something to think about.

57
58 **v) Runner**
59

60 Mr. Schoefmann asked if there was any news about the running exchange idea. Councilor Ruttle-
61 Miller replied that there is someone she will invite to the May meeting, a woman who
62 coordinates local running groups, who had voiced interest when she (Councilor Ruttle-Miller)
63 talked about Einbeck with her in February. Chair Mitchell asked if this person is familiar with
64 Einbeck, and added that she can look online to see the running events that Einbeck holds
65 throughout the year.

66
67 Mr. Schoefmann stated that Einbeck really has an interest in a soccer exchange and is pushing
68 for that, but the PCC has really come up against a wall. They have tried to find someone from
69 Keene to invigorate the soccer exchange, and have not found anyone. If anyone has a last-ditch
70 effort or idea, it is something to think about. Discussion ensued about someone that Mr.
71 Schoefmann and Mr. Madison will reach out to. Chair Mitchell explained the difficulties the
72 PCC has had in finding someone to lead the soccer exchange, because it requires more than just a
73 passion for soccer – it is about the ability to provide the superstructure, including the insurance
74 and the responsibility of working with youth.
75

76 **B) Eulenfest Participation – pumpkin carving, pumpkin/apple tarts, pumpkin**
77 **soup, sliders (input from Einbeck meeting?)**
78

79 Mr. Schoefmann gave an overview of Eulenfest, the Einbeck festival that occurs during the
80 PCC’s October visit. He explained that Einbeck’s other partner cities participate in Eulenfest by
81 fundraising for a local cause, while the Keene PCC has just enjoyed it as tourists, so they would
82 like to pitch in with a fundraiser as well. They need to figure out what type of fundraiser to do.
83

84 Discussion ensued about what other partner cities have done for Eulenfest, and the PCC’s ideas
85 for what Keene could do. Mr. Madison stated that it needs to be something easy, because the
86 other partner cities are coming from several hours away by car, whereas Keene is coming from a
87 several-hours flight, which Einbeck understands. They would not be able to bring NH pumpkins
88 to carve, for example. Discussion continued with ideas of what to make and sell, such as
89 pancakes and NH maple syrup, pumpkin pie, or maple whiskey; and about how volunteering at
90 the booth will also involve chatting with people about Keene and NH.
91

92 Chair Mitchell asked for three PCC members to meet sometime between now and the next
93 meeting, to plan the specifics of the Eulenfest participation. Mr. Madison noted that they need to
94 come up with something that involves the PCC transporting the least amount of stuff on the
95 plane, to acquire as much in Germany as possible. Chair Mitchell stated that tomorrow, he and
96 Mr. Schoefmann will be talking with the Einbeck chair and vice chair, and they can ask them
97 questions about logistics and infrastructure of the booth.
98

99 **C) October Visit – firming list of attendees**
100

101 Chair Mitchell handed out “biography” forms for PCC members who are or might be traveling to
102 Einbeck to fill out, asking them to get it done as early as possible because it is extremely helpful
103 for the Einbeck folks to have them. He continued that even people who have been to Einbeck
104 multiple times should fill one out. It helps the new people on the Einbeck committee get to know
105 the travelers and their interests, and helps them create the itinerary.
106

107 Mr. Schoefmann reminded people who do not yet have passports to start the application process.
108 Chair Mitchell clarified that everyone is purchasing their own individual airline tickets; they are
109 not doing a group purchase. He continued that tickets are expensive right now and likely to get
110 even more expensive. Travelers are responsible for that cost, but once in Einbeck, they are
111 hosted and transported by folks in Einbeck. The following year, the Keene people who traveled
112 to Einbeck then host people from Einbeck when they come to Keene, and are expected to do an
113 exceptional job in providing for their guests. Probably next year’s hosting will be a little bit
114 different than in years past, because the PCC is looking to have more family social events at
115 people’s houses, as opposed to mainly out-on-the-road events and restaurants.
116

117 Chair Mitchell asked to go around the table and get a count of who will be traveling to Einbeck
118 in October, so they can start putting together the list of travelers for October 7 to 17. Discussion
119 ensued. PCC members said whether they were a “no,” “soft yes,” or “hard yes,” and whether a
120 family member would be traveling with them.
121

122 Mr. Madison gave thoughts on people to reach out to, for potential exchanges, such as coffee
123 roasters and bakers. Discussion ensued. Chair Mitchell stated that he had a casual conversation
124 with the Mayor about the idea of two City Council members going on the trip. Discussion
125 continued, and PCC members also talked about how it would be good to have a representative
126 from each Rotary Club. Chair Mitchell stated that the number of travelers is already up to about
127 14. He continued that the optimum group size is about 18 to 20. Discussion continued about
128 opening it up to one more City Councilor, which would mean three government representatives –
129 two Councilors and the Mayor, if Mayor Kahn is going. Ms. Brunner spoke about how in the
130 past, when multiple Councilors have traveled, they have been Councilors who were already PCC
131 members. If they were just randomly chosen Councilors, how would they choose?
132

133 Discussion continued about the number of travelers and the makeup of the group. Mr. Lins stated
134 that for any travelers who are not PCC members, it should be clear to them that they are expected
135 to host Einbeck visitors when they come to Keene. He continued that you have to “have some
136 skin in the game.” Councilor Ruttle-Miller replied that that is the first time she has heard that
137 information since joining this committee, so that is indeed important for people to know.
138 Discussion continued about how if someone is unable to host guests at their house, they are
139 expected to pitch in with helping in other ways. Hosting is fun and rewarding, not something
140 scary.
141

142 Chair Mitchell stated that he agrees with Ms. Brunner’s point and they will keep that in mind
143 when working with a City Councilor. He continued that it would be good to have someone from
144 the Fire, Police, and/or Public Works Departments, too. Discussion ensued about previous trips
145 with Fire and Police Officers and the lasting friendships with Einbeck counterparts.
146

147 **D) MC2 Update – Exchange Details**

148

149 Chair Mitchell stated that last they heard, Mr. Blunt said that preparations for the MC2 exchange
150 were right where they should be, and he thought the fundraising was coming along well. He
151 continued that that is a good sign. It is the PCC’s goal to help foster the first few visits of an
152 exchange, and then hopefully the organizer takes it over and might come back to the PCC when
153 they need a hand. Mr. Blunt is doing great.
154

155 **5) Communications**

156 **A) Kerstin Hillebrecht – Einbeck dance exchange presentation and email** 157 **request** 158

159 Chair Mitchell stated that Kerstin Hillebrecht has sent several emails and she and others in
160 Einbeck are very excited. He continued that they have received extra funding. The dance
161 students coming to Keene is a well-received program in Germany. They will be in Keene while
162 the PCC is in Einbeck.
163

164 Councilor Ruttle-Miller stated that since she will not be going to Einbeck in October, she could
165 help with whatever is needed here in terms of transportation/picking people up, and being the
166 liaison here. PCC members thanked her. Chair Mitchell stated that it would be great for

167 Councilor Ruttle-Miller to help with some sort of official greeting, such as a tour of City Hall.
168 Discussion ensued.

169
170 Mr. Schoefmann asked whether Mr. Blunt/MC2 was planning on doing fundraising at Pumpkin
171 Fest. Chair Mitchell replied that they will have to ask Mr. Blunt. Discussion ensued about how
172 the PCC will miss Pumpkin Fest this year, since it coincides with their trip to Einbeck.
173 Discussion continued about flight timing and rates, and about how it used to work to save money
174 by getting group rate tickets, but how the airlines no longer give that option.
175

176 **6) Reports**

177 **A) Treasurer Report**
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179 Mr. Weisenberger stated that the fundraising account remains steady at \$17,777. He continued
180 that the general appropriations is at \$16,705, which reflects the \$2,100 MC2 donation.
181

182 Mr. Lins made a motion to accept the treasurer report. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion,
183 which passed by unanimous vote.
184

185 **7) New Business**
186

187 Chair Mitchell stated that new business to discuss would be the PCC giving financial help to the
188 MC2 exchange and dance exchange, but none of the representatives from those exchanges are
189 here today, so maybe that is for next month's agenda. He continued that the PCC typically helps
190 those exchanges each season, and maybe they should discuss it.
191

192 Mr. Schoefmann stated that a while ago, the PCC talked about having a schedule for
193 organizations to come to the PCC to request funds, so the PCC is not blindsided by requests. He
194 continued that most people end up coming on the same schedule with their requests, due to the
195 schedules of their programs, but the idea of the PCC creating the schedule is something for PCC
196 members to think about between now and the next meeting. Councilor Ruttle-Miller asked if the
197 PCC gets many requests. Mr. Schoefmann replied that depending on the year, it could be three or
198 four per year. Discussion ensued about how sometimes the requests are rather substantial, and
199 how the PCC's ability to help may be affected by whether Keene is hosting Einbeck guests that
200 year, and so on and so forth, so it helps the PCC with financial planning if they know when
201 requests are coming. Discussion continued about how the PCC could decide on the amount of
202 money to give each organization, and the idea of creating and clarifying the PCC's guidelines for
203 requests.
204

205 Councilor Ruttle-Miller asked if the PCC would ever contribute funds toward the cost of
206 anyone's flights to Einbeck. Mr. Schoefmann and Chair Mitchell replied no, the PCC has never
207 used any of its money, whether fundraised or from the City, for any adults' travel costs.
208 Discussion ensued about how there is a public misperception some people have that the PCC
209 members use tax dollars to travel to Germany, so the PCC draws a hard line in the sand on this.
210 Travelers pay for their own flights.
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212 **8) More Time**

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A) Fundraisers

i) Cookbook Updates – compilation (Input from Einbeck meeting?)

Mr. Lins stated that a couple of hours before the meeting, he sent the group a grid of where the cookbook project is at with recipes, who contributed them, whether they are in both German and English, and so on and so forth. Discussion ensued about translating recipes to German. Mr. Lins asked people to let him know if they think certain categories of recipes need more entries. He continued that it would be helpful to have more recipes from people in Einbeck. Chair Mitchell replied that he and Mr. Schoefmann will mention that tomorrow when they talk with the Einbeck committee. Ms. McCollester stated that she is glad to help as needed. Mr. Lins stated that it would be great to have at least a prototype of the book to bring to Einbeck with them in October, and maybe they could sell it at Pumpkin Fest this year, if it is ready.

Ms. Brunner stated that she noticed that most of the recipes contributed so far are German, even the ones submitted by Americans. She asked if that is what they are going for, or if they want more non-German recipes. Discussion ensued about possible American dishes to contribute recipes for.

ii) Taste of Keene – vending beer/non-alcoholic drinks, raffle, info booth

Councilor Ruttle-Miller stated that the Taste of Keene website is a little confusing, but it seems like vendor forms are due around the end of April or beginning of May. She continued that “nonprofit water vendor” forms are due May 1. Discussion ensued about due dates. Mr. Schoefmann asked if anyone recalls what the PCC had talked about doing. Discussion ensued about how attempting to sell water might not be worth the effort, since many other nonprofits will be doing that, and the weather makes a difference. Mr. Schoefmann asked if the group wants to participate in the Taste of Keene this year. Mr. Madison replied that he thinks maybe not this year, but maybe in the future. Others agreed.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that the only thing he would say is that if MC2 has an interest in vending at the event in the name of their exchange, he would be happy to help with that. He will reach out to Mr. Blunt. He personally is not up for leading anything regarding prepared food. Discussion ensued about whether nonprofits are even allowed to make/sell food there, or if only restaurants can do that. Mr. Madison stated that nonprofits are only allowed to sell water.

9) Next Meeting: May 12th, 2026

10) Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,

259 Meagan McLaughlin, Executive Assistant