

06/04/2026

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, June 4, 2026. The Honorable Mayor Jay V. Kahn called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. Roll called: Randy L. Filiault, Michele A. Chalice, Catherine I. Workman, Bryan J. Lake, Jacob R. Favolise, Laura E. Tobin, Robert C. Williams, Philip M. Jones, Kris E. Roberts, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Edward J. Haas, Laura E. Ruttle-Miller, Molly V. Ellis, Thomas F. Powers, and Mitchell H. Greenwald were present. Councilor Roberts led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING

A motion by Councilor Greenwald to adopt the May 21, 2026 meeting minutes as presented was duly seconded by Councilor Powers. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Kahn announced upcoming dates of interest in June 2026:

- Thursday, June 4, 2026: The season opener for the Keene SwampBats. Their next game will be Saturday June 6, 2026 at 6:30 PM on Alumni Field. Mayor Kahn encouraged supporting the team that brought a conference championship to the City of Keene in 2025 as they defend their title.
- Friday, June 5, 2026 through Sunday, June 14, 2026: Keene Art Walk sponsored by Monadnock Arts Alive
- Saturday, June 6, 2026:
  - Taste of Keene Food Festival from 11:30 AM to 3:30 PM: Buy tokens online at <https://www.tasteofkeene.com>. They will also be on sale during the event at the event headquarters located at the head of Central Square by the flagpole.
  - Goose Pond Spillway Bridge dedication at 10:00 AM sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department. This was a donor-sponsored contribution to the City, which the Mayor called a vast improvement, so people no longer must walk through the spillway. He thanked the Savings Bank of Walpole, who was a generous donor for that project.
  - New Hampshire D-Day Remembrance Day
- Saturday, June 13, 2026:
  - Annual Keene Outdoor Craft-fest & Classic/Muscle Car Exhibition at Keene Middle School
  - Jazz orchestra concert at the Keene Middle School
- Sunday, June 14, 2026: U.S. Army 251st Anniversary
- Friday, June 19, 2026: Juneteenth Celebration sponsored by the Human Rights Committee at Fuller Park
- Tuesday, June 30, 2026: City Council Fiscal Policies Workshop at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers

The Mayor also congratulated MoCo Arts on the tremendous success of its production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at The Colonial Theatre on May 30, 2026, and May 31, 2026. The performance showcased the remarkable talent and artistry of students from second grade through high school, and he thanked MoCo Arts, its sponsors, volunteers, families, and supporters for

enriching the community through the arts. Mayor Kahn commented on the 150 kids who participated in the event who were dancing hip hop, ballet, and tap.

Lastly, Mayor Kahn encouraged local businesses, organizations, schools, civic groups, and communities throughout the Monadnock Region to sign up to participate in the Monadnock 250 Parade on July 4, 2026, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Register today at <https://www.monadnock250.com> to be a part of this community celebration. Community organizations who sign up will receive a banner to use as they march down the street. The deadline to sign up was the week of this meeting.

## PUBLIC HEARING - PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 OPERATING BUDGET

The Mayor announced that there were copies of the budget books available, as well as a QR code to download the budget book in advance of the Public Hearing.

Mayor Kahn opened the Public Hearing at 7:10 PM and the City Clerk read the Notice of Hearing.

The Mayor noted at this point in this process, the City Manager had presented a set of recommendations to the City Council clearly pointed out in the budget proposal. The Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee (FOP) spent approximately one month going through the Budget section by section, hearing from department directors about their budgets, any changes or accomplishments over the past year, and goals that they have for the coming year. There were opportunities for the Committee to make amendments to the Budget at their last meeting, so the public would notice that some of the numbers had been altered, and the Mayor would highlight any significant changes. Following this hearing, there would be no further public testimony unless it is in written form and there would be no further consideration by the FOP Committee. The next consideration of the budget would be by the full Council on June 18, 2026 and the public must provide any written comments by June 9, 2026 at 1:00 PM to the City Clerk. Those written comments must be signed and submitted to the City Clerk, and they will be read the record of the FOP Committee at its June 11, 2026 meeting. Mayor Kahn welcomed the Finance Director / Treasurer, Kari Chamberlain to the dais. The Mayor went through the Budget department by department, welcoming members of the public to offer comments on any section.

The Mayor provided page number references corresponding to the first page on which the applicable department or budget item is presented to assist the public following along via the budget book posted online.

Overview (p. 6): Mayor Kahn said the proposed fiscal 27 operating appropriations of all funds is now \$80,225,389 with only \$32,941,678 raised by property taxes. The operating budget has about \$20 million of funds that are raised in other manners: intergovernmental transfers, grants, and license fees, etc. That brings the general Operating Budget up to approximately \$52,000,000. The total amount that is raised through property taxes is less the amount that goes to the war services credits. So, the gross property tax effort is \$33,381,578 and that includes \$439,900 for war service credits that are authorized by the state and the City Council. Overall, this budget is increased by \$2.6 million over the budget of FY 26. That represents an 8.3% increase in the

overall adopted budget. That sits within the City Council's Fiscal Policy guidance and has a tax impact of \$1.14 on the City tax rate. To cover what are the major drivers to the \$2.6 million increase: \$1.4 million is for salary and benefits that are either negotiated or part of a 3% general increase in salaries. There is a \$560,000 staffing increase for the Fire Department to lift the staffing levels per shift to 12 from the current level of 11. The remaining \$600,000 is distributed to cover all other kinds of expenses, including some program increases. The Mayor explained he would highlight any program changes while going through the Budget. Overall, the proposed tax rate when including local education tax, the state tax, and the County's increase, would have an overall increase that is 9.86% over the fiscal year 2026 rate and it could bring the rate to over \$37 per thousand. However, the Mayor wanted to remind the public that this is a reevaluation year. The reevaluation will drive that number down by possibly 30% based on current Department of Revenue Administration guidance. Debt service is also included in this budget and sits within the 12% cap that is set in the fiscal policy guidance. The debt level is at \$4.9 million.

Elected and Appointed Officials (p. 37): The smallest part of the Budget are the Mayor and Council's portions, with a total appropriation of \$287,548. The Finance Committee altered some of that Budget: a \$3,500 increase for training opportunities for the Mayor and Council attending events, conferences, and trainings; a \$3,000 increase for the Human Rights Committee; and a reduction of \$450 to eliminate a Sentinel subscription that was offered at a discount for Council members.

Outside Agency Funding (p. 42): This year has total funding of \$334,764.

Community Funded Events (p. 45): This includes support for events such as the Independence Eve Fireworks, 4 on the 4th Road Race, Clarence DeMar Marathon, and Keene Music Festival. This budget represents the cost to cover budgeted in-kind services provided by the City for public safety.

Alan Stroshine (of 27 Salisbury Road) is Race Director for the Clarence DeMar Marathon and a proud member of the Keene Elm City Rotary, which is the direct beneficiary of the Community Funded Events. He was simply present to say thank you for the Council's long-standing support of this event, which would be the 48th Clarence DeMar Full Marathon and 12th Half Marathon, in addition to the Kids' event and Super Senior event, all being held on Sunday, September 27, 2026. He is eternally grateful for the relationship the Marathon has with the City. The partnership with the City makes the event better. Every single year, they spend a lot of time together with City staff (during the protocol process) going over, updating, and improving protocols so that the community is safe, runners are safe, visitors are safe, and it is a very successful event. He extended his thanks and does not take the support for granted. Mayor Kahn thanked him for his comments, stating the dollars the City puts forward are minuscule compared to the total volunteer efforts that go into these events; the funds raised independently by the sponsoring groups far surpass whatever the City is putting forward. He said it also brings the City recognition to host these events. Mr. Stroshine agreed it is significant as this year their event is expected to have participants from 35 states, Canada, and the U.K. represented. And, all these participants will be visiting Keene.

Michael Remy (of 55 Castle Street) was present as Vice President of the Board for Let It Shine, which puts on the Pumpkin Festival, and President of the Board for TOK, Inc., which is taking over Taste of Keene in 2027 from Keene Young Professionals Network who had put on the event for five years. Taste of Keene would still be the same event in the future, just under its own organization named TOK, Inc. Both events would be working around the downtown construction; the Pumpkin Festival will be getting creative with placement of the pumpkin tower. He invited everyone to the 2026 Taste of Keene Food Festival on Saturday, June 6, 2026, from 11:30 AM to 3:30 PM. Mayor Kahn thanked Mr. Remy for all his efforts, calling it a great kickoff to the summer season.

Councilor Jones reminded the public and newer Councilors that Community Funded Events are not money paid out but in-kind services the City performs and for accounting purposes, numbers are assigned.

Capital Appropriations FY 2027–2033 (p. 49): To cover the costs of the downtown project, there are dollars added into this budget that are a part of the overall debt financing and use of fund balance as well. In this budget and in the CIP plan, there is \$5.6 million appropriated to the downtown project and that is added to dollars previously assigned. Mayor Kahn said capital appropriations are not funded by debt and in this Budget, they total \$7,367,049. He highlighted the inclusion of sidewalks and street improvements and funding for the Robin Hood Park improvements.

City Manager (p. 53): The recommended appropriation is \$863,022. This includes the restructuring of the energy management program. This actually manifests savings in the City Manager's Budget for the coming year.

City Attorney (p. 61): Total amount recommended is \$489,275. There are no significant changes in that budget.

City Clerk (p. 63): This includes document storage and the total amount for the year is \$796,808.

Assessing (p. 72): The total amount for the Assessor's budget is \$483,799. There are no significant changes other than to say that the revaluation is this year, and some additional small dollar amount was added to the Budget.

Human Services and Collections (p. 78): The total amount recommended is \$4,066,899. In this section is a \$50,000 increase to the Human Services budget. It is the amount that the City set aside this year with an Operating Budget change to support the warming center in collaboration with Hundred Nights Shelter and United Church of Christ and a number of other volunteer organizations in the City.

Human Resources (p. 88): The Budget is \$794,877. This includes some of the benefits programs that the City offers to employees.

Information Technology (p. 93): This total Budget is \$2,187,156. It includes dollars for moving some services to cloud-based software, which is enabling some workplace efficiencies in several

departments in the City, as well as some cyber security provisions now that we are in the cloud-based world. Between those, that is \$107,000.

Fire (p. 99): The total Budget is \$10,489,601, which includes the \$525,460 addition for four additional firefighters', personnel expenses, uniforms, and training expenses. It would substitute for significant overtime expenses, which exceed the budgeted amount increase. That is largely due to emergency ambulance services that the City has picked up with the loss of a private provider. Mayor Kahn said safety is job number one for the City and the Fire Department, and having this fourth person on each shift is an essential part of the Budget. In addition to this is an increased dispatch expense; these are dispatch services that the City is billed for at \$103,000 in this budget. The proposal for additional firefighters was adopted at the prior FOP Committee meeting after a significant amount of study was done by the department.

Library (p. 107): The total amount required for the library in the coming year is \$2,031,983.

Parks and Recreation (p. 112): This Budget totals \$2,366,304 and includes a \$15,000 appropriation to replace the boiler at the Sumner Knight Chapel in the cemetery on Washington Street, which the Mayor called a necessary improvement. The Budget also includes some resurfacing at the Wheelock Park and Knight Street recreation courts. There were some significant programming suggestions for after school, summer, and for activating a volunteer network.

Facilities (p. 123): A \$1,898,777.00 appropriation. This includes a \$25,000 request to repair the geothermal system, which is needed at the Public Works site on Marlboro Street.

Police (p. 133): The total amount recommended for the year is \$9,520,965. That is a decrease in the Police Department Budget year over year because of vacancies that have been unable to be filled. Yet, Mayor Kahn said there are sufficient funds to fill the additional vacancies that exist within the department. Anyone interested in joining the Keene Police Department, please talk to Chief Stewart.

Airport (p. 143): The budget is \$902,000.

Community Development Department (p. 150): That budget is \$1,693,000 and includes the movement of a part-time planner position that is currently funded out of the General Fund to a full-time Assistant Sustainability Planner, with additional duties that support the Department. That additional funding is a part of a donation that was solicited by the Energy and Climate Committee that carries a three-year \$25,000 commitment that is enabling the City to move to a full-time position. The Mayor said this position should help with implementing Master Plan efforts and its major environmental initiatives.

Public Works (p. 160): Requires an appropriation of \$5,924,121. This includes \$30,000 additional dollars for tree replacement, and \$75,000 additional dollars for street lighting replacements with LED fixtures around the City.

Peter Hansel (of 61 Bradford Road) spoke in favor of the Assistant Sustainability Planner position, which he believed would be a part-time role to start. He encouraged the Council to keep the position in the Budget. He was helpful in raising some of the private funds that are going to this position and thinks it is a unique opportunity for Keene to demonstrate to other communities around the state the possibility of having a public/private venture like this. He said the Mayor mentioned \$25,000 and said that is a per year for three years commitment from private donors to the Budget. He said the hope is this position will demonstrate savings to the City and other useful opportunities to be more sustainable going forward. Mr. Hansel said there is a wonderful plan for achieving energy sustainability in Keene and the City has taken a leadership position around in the state on that vein. This would allow the City and the Energy and Climate Committee to be more effective and do more than they can now with just volunteers. So, Mr. Hansel urged the Council to keep this position in the Budget.

Dee Robbins (of 11 Hancock Street) has been a resident of Keene since 2004 and was present to support the Assistant Sustainability Planner position. She has been involved with the Keene Clean Energy Team since its inception in 2017 and wanted to make some points. She read some consistent things in the 2007 Keene Climate Adaptation Plan and 2025 Comprehensive Master Plan. First, is that this is hard work that really requires a sustainability coordinator. She read from the 2007 Climate Adaptation Plan, “first steps to begin implementation and ensure long-term success to ensure the longevity of the City's climate protection planning efforts, Keene should consider hiring a sustainability coordinator as recommended in the CCP Action Plan and reiterated in this document.” So, she said this had been suggested for a long time. The 2025 Master Plan also noted strong public support. Ms. Robbins cited her experiences with 500 people marching in the Climate March in 2017 to the more than 40 people on the Clean Energy Team, the Resolution for 100% Renewable Energy, and an interfaith Climate Café with more than 100 people from five faith traditions in the community, including an Abenaki speaker. Wherever she goes, she hears plenty of support for this position. Ms. Robbins quoted the 2025 20-Forward Master Plan, from the sixth Strategic Pillar – Flourishing Environment, “there is an established and strong environmental stewardship ethos in Keene.” She said that is absolutely her experience of Keene and she hoped the Council would take that seriously as the public is hoping to move forward with this energy plan.

Mayor Kahn moved from the Operating Budget to the enterprise budgets. These are self-supporting entities that include water and sewer utilities. To support the budgets for these two services, there is a recommended 5% rate increase for most of the charges that are for sewer and water in the coming year. As offered testimony, Mayor Kahn said these are trying to play catch up for the failure to adjust rates in past years and is a second year of moving towards trying to recover not just the inflation over this anticipated year but trying to recover a couple of percent per year for the lack of increases in the past.

Sewer Fund (p. 208): Covering \$6,948,343 dollars. There are a number of specific project improvements: insulated doors at the loading dock, increased costs related to chemical expenses for the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), increased fees for sludge hauling and disposal, and some solar devices that are being acquired to save additional operating dollars in the future. In the capital projects that are being taken on for fiscal 27, the Mayor said there are a couple that are significant to the City's future. One is at the Black Brook Pump Station. That is a long

distance to get to the WWTP, so upgrading that pump station is a pretty important step to further development in that area and sustaining the development that exists. There is also the Martell Court bypass project, which is providing some insurance for the City to ensure the wastewater that needs to get to the plant is in fact reaching there, and there is no single point of failure in the system.

Water Fund (p. 223): Raising \$5,310,000 in the coming year. This includes dollars that relate to paving. That is an increased expense related to the main water breaks the City experienced. There is also an ongoing effort to refurbish the Court Street pump station. That will require additional expenses in the coming year. They are also facing increased chemical testing expenses, as well capital improvements, which are being covered, that are a part of the improvement program for fiscal 27, including the Fox Avenue and Glen Road pump stations.

PC Replacement Fund (p. 189): Raising \$72,000 in total appropriation for the year.

Equipment (Fleet) (p. 238): This is for all the vehicles that the City uses, including emergency services as well as the Public Works Department, and more. That budget is \$3,022,997 and is also mostly on a chargeback system.

Parking Fund (p. 176): A special revenue raising \$1,216,000 and that includes dollars for capital improvement on the City parking structure, which is ongoing currently.

Solid Waste (p. 195): Also a special revenue fund that includes the Landfill and Transfer Station. The total amount being raised here is \$6,026,984 and includes a reduction in personnel expenses related to some transition in personnel. It includes for fiscal 27 a climate-controlled processing project, as well as an important project for fire suppression systems related to lithium batteries or other failures.

With no further public comments, Mayor Kahn closed the public hearing at 7:59 PM, except for written public comments, which would be accepted until 1:00 PM on Tuesday, June 9, 2026. Written comments must be signed and submitted to the City Clerk by that date and time to be included in the record. No further public comments would be accepted after this submittal deadline.

The Mayor also reminded the Councilors that their Rules of Order require them to submit a written communication to the City Clerk containing any proposed amendments to the Budget Resolution. The deadline for City Councilor submittal is 4:00 PM on Tuesday, June 16, 2026. The Mayor encouraged them to submit any proposed changes as soon as possible to allow staff review. Any communications received would be placed on the June 18, 2026, Council agenda for consideration prior to the adoption of the Budget Resolution.

Finally, copies of Section 15 of the Rules of Order related to Voting and Conflicts of Interest were provided to Councilors and they were asked to review them to ensure any conflicts related to them or their household members were disclosed, particularly those related to specific changes requested for any of the outside agencies receiving funding in the budget, as they would need to acknowledge the conflict and vote on these allocations separately to allow recusal.

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A true record, attest:   
City Clerk

CONFIRMATION - ASHUELOT RIVER PARK ADVISORY BOARD

Mayor Kahn nominated Richard Roth to serve as an Alternate Member of the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board, with a term to expire December 31, 2027. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to confirm the nomination was duly seconded by Councilor Powers. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

COMMUNICATION - KEENE MUSIC FESTIVAL - REQUEST TO USE CITY PROPERTY –  
KEENE MUSIC FESTIVAL - SEPTEMBER 5, 2026

A communication was received from Pablo Fleischmann requesting the annual license for use of downtown City property on September 5, 2026, to conduct the Keene Music Festival. Mayor Kahn referred the communication to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee.

COMMUNICATIONS - COUNCILOR HAAS - REQUEST FOR PROJECT INFORMATION  
SIGNAGE AND ENHANCED PUBLIC OUTREACH FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS;  
ELIZABETH HANSEL - REQUEST FOR RESOLUTIONS REGARDING SINGLE-USE  
PLASTIC REDUCTION; AND SKYE STEPHENSON - TREE REPLACEMENT ALONG  
MAPLE AVENUE

The first communication was received from Councilor Ed Haas requesting the City enhance public communication regarding capital projects by providing project information and design details on site once the final design has been approved, as well as during project implementation; he also requests that community meetings be held as major projects move from concept to final design and construction to provide residents with project updates. A second communication was received from requesting Elizabeth Hansel, on behalf of members of the St. James Church Creation Care Committee, requesting that the City take action to reduce plastic waste; the letter requests that the City adopt a resolution eliminating the purchase and use of single-use plastic bags, food service products, and Styrofoam containers by the City and at City-sponsored events, and to adopt a resolution urging the New Hampshire Legislature to enact a statewide ban on single-use plastics in businesses. A third communication was received from Skye Stephenson requesting that the City plant one or more Liberty Elm Trees as replacements for some of the trees that were removed along Maple Avenue. Mayor Kahn referred the communications to the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee.

MSFI REPORTS - TERRI O'RORKE - REQUEST TO ADDRESS NUISANCE DOG  
BARKING DURING DAYTIME HOURS; REPORT OUT - CONCERNS RELATING TO  
CARS CONGESTING ROYAL AVENUE DURING SCHOOL PICK-UP; AND NHDOT  
RECONSTRUCTION OF RT. 101 - PROJECT UPDATE

The first Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee report was read, unanimously recommending accepting the communication Request to Address Nuisance Dog Barking During Daytime Hours as informational. A second Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee report was read, unanimously recommending accepting the Report Out on Concerns Relating to Cars Congesting Royal Avenue During School Pick-Up as informational. A third Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee report was read, unanimously recommending accepting the report from the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) as informational. Mayor Kahn filed the three reports as informational.

#### MSFI REPORT - COURT STREET WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT PROJECT - PROJECT EASEMENTS

A Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute temporary access agreements and permanent easements with the affected property owners necessary for construction and future maintenance of the Court Street River Crossing Water Main Replacement Project. A motion by Councilor Greenwald to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Workman. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### MSFI REPORTS - STAFF REPORT - CHEMICAL DETECTIONS IN GROUNDWATER; AND DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT UPDATE

The first Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee report was read, unanimously recommending accepting the Report Relative to Chemical Detections in Groundwater as informational. A second Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee report was read, unanimously recommending accepting the Downtown Infrastructure Project Update as informational. Mayor Kahn filed the reports as informational.

#### FOP REPORT - APPOINTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending in accordance with RSA 21-P:39, I and City Code of Ordinances Section 30-58(a), the appointment of Rick Wood as the City's Emergency Management Director effective July 1, 2026. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Greenwald. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### FOP REPORT - EXECUTION OF CONTRACT - DESIGN SERVICES FOR ASHUELOT RIVER PARK GREENSPACE PLAYGROUND CONSULTANT SELECTION

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a professional service contract with Lu-La Studio for conceptual design services required for the Ashuelot River Park Greenspace project for an amount not to exceed \$34,980.00 with funding to

come from Project Cost Center (65M002BB-300-O-521020). A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Lake. Mayor Kahn noted that this is funding from an anonymous donor. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### FOP REPORT - EXECUTION OF CONTRACT - FIRE DEPARTMENT – PROFESSIONAL HEALTH SERVICES (PHS)

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute a contract with Professional Health Services (PHS) to provide NFPA 1582 occupational medical physicals. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Lake. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### FOP REPORT - ACCEPTANCE OF 2025 FEMA SAFER GRANT

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to apply for the 2025 FEMA SAFER Grant. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Lake. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### FOP REPORT - EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT WITH WRIGHT PIERCE FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES DURING CONSTRUCTION FOR THE MARTEL COURT PUMP STATION BYPASS FORCE MAIN PROJECT

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute an agreement with Wright Pierce for the scope of Engineering Services during Construction for the Martel Court Sewer Pump Station Bypass Force Main Project (32JM012A) in an amount not to exceed \$465,000. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Lake.

Councilor Haas emphasized that this is building resilience into the City's systems. He said that a lot of times, capital projects get done, and things get forgotten, particularly that they must be maintained. You must have a way to bypass things when they are maintained now. Some things can be shut off for a while and others can be just left off. But, things like sewer treatment, like water, and other critical utilities—the City must be able to maintain them and have the ability to take them offline during maintenance. So, looking forward to future capital expenses, Councilor Haas said we always have to think about what the bypass is if something goes wrong. He was sure this vote would pass but asked Councilors to keep it in mind for the future.

The motion to carry out the intent of the FOP Committee report carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT - EXECUTION OF A CONTRACT CHANGE ORDER FOR CONSTRUCTION SERVICES WITH VORTEX FOR THE FY26 STORMWATER SPOT REPAIRS PROJECT

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a contract change order with Vortex in an amount not to exceed \$78,000 for the FY26 Stormwater Spot Repairs project. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Lake. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

The Deputy City Manager, Rebecca Landry, reported that Councilors were provided with binders on their desks relating to the downtown project. Staff had been learning from other communities as the downtown project had evolved over the years, and one of the key takeaways was for the Public Works team to pull together this binder. Over the coming months and phases of the project, businesses will have the opportunity to add documents to this binder that are important to their understanding of the project and the impact it will have on their businesses. The intention is for these to be a handy reference for business owners affected by the project. The binder already contains an overview of the projects, background information, contact lists, and that type of information. As more information becomes available, such as detailed construction schedules, staff will distribute this additional content. Section Five is reserved for the Downtown Business Group and information that they wish to disseminate to the business owners.

REPORTS - CITY OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS - 2025 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS - GRANT MATCH CORRECTION

A memorandum was received from Fire Chief Jason Martin, requesting that the City Council correct its prior approval of the 2025 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant to reflect the correct in-kind soft match amount of \$1,799.25, and authorize correction of the background information previously provided to Council regarding this grant award. A motion by Councilor Powers to suspend Section 26 of the Rules of Order to introduce and act on the correction of the grant match was duly seconded by Councilor Lake. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors voting in favor.

A motion by Councilor Powers was duly seconded by Councilor Lake to correct the prior approval of the 2025 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant to reflect the correct in-kind soft match amount of \$1799.25, and authorize correction of the background information previously provided to Council regarding this grant award. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

REPORTS - CITY OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS - WARRANT FOR UNLICENSED DOGS - CITY CLERK

A memorandum was received from City Clerk Terri Hood, recommending that the list of unlicensed dogs be referred to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee for their

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review and recommendation regarding issuance of the warrant for unlicensed dogs including authorization to issue forfeiture fines pursuant to NHRSA 466:14. Mayor Kahn referred the list of unlicensed to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee.

Mayor Kahn noticed the number of unlicensed dogs was less than some past years, so he congratulated the City Clerk and thanked the dog owners who were complying to a greater extent than in the past. The City Clerk agreed she was very happy about it.

#### ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING - RELATING TO WATER & SEWER UTILITY CHARGES - ORDINANCE O-2026-07

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Ordinance O-2026-07. Mayor Kahn filed the report. Ordinance O-2026-07, Relating to Water and Sewer Utility Charges, read for a second time. A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt Ordinance O-2026-07, with an effective date of July 1, 2026, was duly seconded by Councilor Lake. The motion carried on a roll call vote with 14 Councilors voting in favor and one Councilor voting in opposition. Councilor Workman voted in the minority.

#### ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING - FISCAL YEAR 2027 WAGE SCHEDULES ORDINANCE - O-2026-11

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Ordinance O-2026-11. Mayor Kahn tabled the Ordinance until the June 18, 2026, City Council Meeting to be taken up after the Budget adoption.

#### RESOLUTION - REQUESTING TERMINATION OF STATE OF NH POLICIES AND DOWNSHIFTS THAT BURDEN LOCAL PROPERTY TAXPAYERS FOP COMMITTEE REPORT AND RESOLUTION R-2026-23

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending that the City Manager be directed to introduce a resolution for consideration at the next City Council meeting requesting an end to state downshifting and unfunded mandates that increase pressure on local property taxpayers. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Lake.

Councilor Jones said this is just a communication tool to the State Legislators, Executive Councilors, and the executive level being the Governor. He said Keene is not the first to have mentioned these problems; in March and April 2026, there were over 50 warrant articles from the SB-2 towns supporting these same issues. He said the problems that are hampering cities are ubiquitous across the state. So, Councilor Jones called this Resolution a communication tool to all the above-mentioned people, letting them know that the Council is concerned about what is happening and what is downshifting to the City at this level. He said, having been up in Concord, that the message was not reaching the Legislators. He said the Committee agreed to send the letter to all the Legislators, Executive Councilors, and the Governor to try and express the Council's concerns to them all. Mayor Kahn thanked Councilor Jones for bringing this forward, calling it a sign of leadership. Whether this action by the City of Keene has an impact

immediately or it is a cumulative effect that other towns will join over the next legislative season, the Mayor thinks it is an expression that many towns ought to be wanting to reiterate on their behalf. He said putting the two dollar amounts together for Rooms and Meals and for the Retirement expenses accounts for approximately 6% of the City's budget, or a couple of million dollars being compensated by a tax rate. Mayor Kahn called the impact significant.

Councilor Haas appreciated the detail in this now-living document, which he said everyone should carry with them as they go around the state, visit with other communities, and make them aware of what these numbers really are. He thanked the Committee for putting something together in hard copy and Councilor Jones for initiating it. Mayor Kahn also thanked the City Manager for hearing the testimony, as the \$2 million impact could now be cited.

Councilor Favolise said one thing the Council should think about moving forward is whether specifically addressing this to the Governor by name is helpful or harmful to the Council's message and focus on the issue. Mayor Kahn appreciated any specificity the Councilor wished to offer. The Mayor continued that the intent was to send the Resolution to all 430 elected officials in the state. Councilor Favolise noted that in reading "therefore be it resolved..." that the Governor was the only individual called out by name. Mayor Kahn asked if the Councilor wanted to offer an amendment. Councilor Jones noted the letter would be meant for the Governor in general, but we specifically have one Governor. That was the only reason why the Governor's name was there. He said it could be changed and generalized to just say "the Governor" if the Council so wishes.

Councilor Ruttle-Miller said the reason why she thought this Resolution was so important is that at this year's State of the State (in February 2026) the executive stood up and said that the reason why costs are unmanageable is because of all of the cities and towns and that it has nothing to do with the state level. Councilor Ruttle-Miller thinks this was a direct reflection of comments that the current sitting Governor has made about local governments, and that does not just have to do with local elected officials, it has to do with firefighters, police officers, people who do make their own budgets. She said that seemed like a slap in the face to municipalities across the state. To Councilor Ruttle-Miller, leaving the Governor's name in the letter—directly as the person who stated that the state government has nothing to do with the affordability crisis—was appropriate at this time.

Councilor Tobin felt that it was a strong letter that articulated a pattern throughout time and the impact, which she really appreciated. In terms of Councilor Favolise's comment, Councilor Tobin was partly inclined to agree. With respect to Councilor Ruttle-Miller's comments, Councilor Tobin thought that oftentimes we must choose between whether we want the actual problem fixed or whether we are angry and want to almost pay back a person because of something that they said. Councilor Tobin said she just wanted to be careful that the issue the Council addresses is the actual problem itself. She said that when looking at a pattern of history, going back to 1967, it is not just the one governor who has been responsible for making all these decisions. She said we have one governor right now.

Councilor Jones said the background notes would show that the Council's intent was to send hard copies to local Legislators and a hard copy to the Governor. So, when addressing it, it will

be to a specific Governor. All the rest would be receiving this digitally. He wanted to point out that by sending a hard copy to the Governor, it would have her name on it. Mayor Kahn agreed.

Councilor Roberts agreed with Councilor Tobin; this is not a republican payback or democrat payback. He said it had been all the governors. He cited examples from 2010 when there was democratic leadership. He said there had been people on both sides of the aisle for political reasons who had not looked at all the small towns and cities. So, Councilor Roberts agreed that all the governors going back in time must be called out because in a lot of ways they lacked the moral courage to take care of the towns and the citizens of New Hampshire.

Mayor Kahn said it seemed like the debate or comment was whether Keene call upon the Governor generally or Governor Kelly Ayotte, specifically.

Councilor Favolise made a parliamentary inquiry. He asked whether the intent was for the Council to vote on the Resolution at this meeting or send it back to Committee. The Mayor said the intent was for there to be a vote on the Resolution tonight. The City Attorney agreed that was the intent. Regarding the Committee process, the Resolution was requested and the City Manager submitted the Resolution to be considered tonight. A Resolution could go through the typical process of being referred to Committee from Council and then back to Council but that was not the intent with this Resolution. The City Attorney said it was available tonight for adoption.

Councilor Workman said, regarding including the Governor's name, she thought the overall document highlighted that multiple governors are at fault. However, she thought the City was asking and calling upon Governor Kelly Ayotte for immediate action because she is the Governor right now and that is who could act right now. Councilor Workman thought leaving her name in would be completely appropriate.

Councilor Jones reminded everyone that the Council was not here to lay blame; yes, the blame goes back. He said this is a communication tool to those who are presently there and could make corrections.

Councilor Ruttle-Miller clarified for the record that she was not thinking about this as payback. However, she agreed with Councilor Jones that this is the current sitting Governor, so Councilor Ruttle-Miller was unsure who else to call upon without making a specific reference, without saying "all future Governors henceforth." Councilor Ruttle-Miller was clear that she was not saying she wanted to pay back somebody but that she wants recognition from our executive level that things are becoming untenable for normal citizens in this state and something needs to change immediately.

Councilor Lake said he broached this the first time at Committee, suggesting that the communication should generally refer to the Governor. If it would be a one-time letter, he thought he would be more okay with calling out the current sitting Governor by name, but this would be a Resolution on the City's files with no end date. So, he did think it was more appropriate to call generally on the Governor.

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The following motion by Councilor Lake to amend Resolution R-2026-23 to refer to the Governor by title only in the Resolution was duly seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Discussion ensued briefly to confirm the word “Governor” would be capitalized.

Councilor Jones said he was fine with the amendment but noted that when the Resolution is mailed out it would still be addressed to the Governor by name.

The motion to amend Resolution R-2026-23 to refer to the Governor by title only in the Resolution carried unanimously with 11 Councilors voting in favor and four Councilors voting in opposition. Councilors Chalice, Williams, Ruttle-Miller, and Ellis voted in the minority. Resolution R-2026-23-A was created.

The motion to adopt Resolution R-2026-23-A carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

The motion to carry out the intent of the Committee report carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### RESOLUTION - RELATING TO THE APPROPRIATION OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE 2026-2027 FISCAL BUDGET FOR FIRE PERSONNEL - FOP COMMITTEE REPORT AND RESOLUTION R-2026-24

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending that the presentation regarding Fire Department Staffing be accepted as informational and that the City Manager be directed to introduce a Resolution for first reading at the next City Council meeting related to Funding Fire Department Staffing. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Lake. The motion to carry out the intent of the Committee report carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

The City Attorney clarified that the Committee’s recommendation was to take an action and it was not just informational, so it did require a vote to carry out its intent.

A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt Resolution R-2026-24 was duly seconded by Councilor Lake.

Councilor Filiault agreed to this and expressed the importance of adding these four firefighters. He recalled the early 2000s when he was one of the members of the call company of certified firefighters, and there would be 27 firefighters at any particular scene. He called that a thing of the past, stating people cannot get out of work. So, he called this extremely important because the Department is down to what looks like eight firefighters, but it is really down an extra 27 from the early 2000s. As much as he said the City is trying to be tight with taxes, he called it imperative to pass these four extra firefighters.

Councilor Chalice said that the existing firefighters are putting in 60 to 70 hours per week and these are people we are counting on to be very specific in dire circumstances. She could not speak strongly enough to the fact that we are protecting current employees by hiring additional employees to make sure they have a safe working environment and that we treat current employees well and allow them to be human beings.

The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

RESOLUTIONS - RELATING TO APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR THE FY 2026-2027 BOND ISSUES: ASHUELOT RIVER GREEN SPACE, RESOLUTION R-2026-10; ASHUELOT RIVER DAM REPAIR OR REMOVAL, RESOLUTION R-2026-11; DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS & RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT, RESOLUTION R-2026-12; GILBO AVE SOLAR PAVILLION PROJECT, RESOLUTION R-2026-13; LOWER WINCHESTER STREET RECONSTRUCTION, RESOLUTION R-2026-14; ROADWAY PRESERVATION & REHABILITATION PROGRAM, RESOLUTION R-2026-15; ROBIN HOOD PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, RESOLUTION R-2026-16; STORMWATER RESILIENCY PROGRAM, RESOLUTION R-2026-17; MARTELL COURT BYPASS PROJECT, RESOLUTION R-2026-18; DOWNTOWN: SEWER IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM, RESOLUTION R-2026-19; WATER DISTRIBUTION IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM, RESOLUTION R-2026-20

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending adoption of Resolution R-2026-10. A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending withdrawal of Resolution R-2026-11. A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending adoption of Resolution R-2026-12. A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending adoption of Resolution R-2026-13. A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending adoption of Resolution R-2026-14. A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending adoption of Resolution R-2026-15. A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending adoption of Resolution R-2026-16. A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending adoption of Resolution R-2026-17. A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending adoption of Resolution R-2026-18. A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending adoption of Resolution R-2026-19. A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending adoption of Resolution R-2026-20.

A motion by Councilor Powers to accept the withdrawal of Resolution R-2026-11 Relating to Appropriation of Funds for the Ashuelot River Dam Repair or Removal was duly seconded by Councilor Lake.

Councilor Ruttle-Miller asked for clarification on this withdrawal, seeing how she heard during her time on Council that “this comes up like a bad penny, apparently.” Deputy City Manager Landry believed it would not be included in the next Budget year but was being pushed out.

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Mayor Kahn thought for the same reasons it had been pushed out in the past; he did not think there was a clear Resolution on what the recommendation would be for replacement or removal.

The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

Mayor Kahn announced that the remaining bond resolutions were tabled until the June 18, 2026, City Council meeting to be considered after budget adoption.

#### RESOLUTION - RELATING TO THE 2026/2027 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET RESOLUTION R-2026-09-B

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2026-09-B.

A red-lined "C" version of the Budget resolution was provided in the Council packet.

A motion by Councilor Powers to recommend that Resolution R-2026-09-B be amended, and the resulting "C" version of the Resolution be tabled until the June 18, 2026, City Council meeting was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault.

Councilor Powers said the reason for this was due to the need for a number of calculations just before passing the Budget at the FOP meeting. He said all the numbers were correct, they were just not in the right columns but would be fixed when it comes forward to Council for a vote.

The motion to amend Resolution R-2026-09-B, and the resulting "C" version of the Resolution be tabled until the June 18, 2026 Council meeting, carried unanimously.

Mayor Kahn tabled Resolution R-2026-09-C until the June 18, 2026 meeting.

#### RESOLUTION - RELATING TO FUNDING FOR THE DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT - RESOLUTION R-2026-21

A Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2026-21. A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt Resolution R-2026-21 was duly seconded by Councilor Lake.

Councilor Filiault said it was no secret he made some comments that there are still parts of the project he seriously has issues with. He felt the Council needed to pass this particular Resolution because no matter the parts of the project he liked or did not, this would bring down the cost to the taxpayers. So, he said it was important to pass this Resolution because these monies would be something the taxpayers would not have to pick up. So, he hoped the Council would pass this.

The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

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A motion by Councilor Greenwald to go into non-public session to discuss land matters pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(d) and legal matters pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(L) was duly seconded by Councilor Workman. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor. Mayor Kahn requested the following people remain present for the session: Finance Director Kari Chamberlain, Community Development Director Paul Andrus, and the Conservation Commission Chair, Gary Flaherty. At 9:04 PM, Mayor Kahn called a recess before the session began at 9:08 PM. Councilor Powers exited the session at 9:50 PM.

The public session reconvened at 10:10 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. On a roll call vote, 14 Councilors were present and voting in favor. Councilor Powers was absent for this vote.

A true record, attest:   
City Clerk

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Kahn adjourned the meeting at 10:12 PM.

A true record, attest:   
City Clerk