

City of Keene
New Hampshire

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 17, 2026

6:30 PM

**Council Chambers,
City Hall**

Members Present:

Randy L. Filiault
Michele A. Chalice
Catherine I. Workman
Bryan J. Lake
Jacob R. Favolise
Laura E. Tobin
Robert C. Williams
Philip M. Jones
Edward J. Haas
Laura E. Ruttle-Miller
Thomas F. Powers
Mitchell H. Greenwald
Kris E. Roberts

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Ferland, City Manager
Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney
Brandon Latham, Assistant City Attorney
Terri Hood, City Clerk
Steve Stewart, Police Chief

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

Members Not Present:

Bettina A. Chadbourne
Molly V. Ellis

1. Discussion Regarding Federal Immigration Enforcement Activities in Keene

Mayor Kahn called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and stated that the purpose of this Special Meeting is to discuss recent federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activities in Keene.

Councilor Powers led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Kahn stated that what brings them here tonight is the ICE activity in the Keene community over the last week. He continued that the lack of information about their presence and activities has caused some anxiety, anger, and accusations. The question people ask him most frequently is what good can come from tonight's Council meeting. He hopes everyone leaves with a better understanding of local government and law enforcement's role in federal immigration and customs enforcement, and the limitations placed on local government by federal and state legislature. Second, he hopes they learn, together, what resources exist to support local

people and families affected by ICE. Third, he hopes they as Councilors and elected officials listen to people in the community so they can pass along concerns to other people in elected office. Finally, the transparency they are giving to the issue this evening ought to be informative to other cities and towns in the state that might be experiencing similar ICE visits as Keene had last week.

The Mayor continued that Council workshops are designed to receive and discuss information. First, the City Attorney and the Police Chief will offer some information to the Council and the public. There will be about 90 minutes for public comment. Councilor Jones is also a State Representative. He and others who need to go to a County Delegation meeting tonight will be excused and there will still be a quorum.

Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney, stated that her role is to be an objective advisor to the Council and City staff about the laws that relate to their work. She continued that as such, she wanted to give an overview of some of the laws and legal structures relevant to tonight's conversations. First is the relationship between local, municipal law enforcement, and federal law enforcement. ICE is a part of the federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS). What she is about to say could also be true of other federal law enforcement agencies, such as the IRS, FBI, and USPS. Federal government structures are a product of the federal United States Constitution. Federal agencies act as the enforcement arm of the federal executive branch, authorized by Article II of the US Constitution. Article VI of the US Constitution contains the Supremacy Clause, which states that the US Constitution and federal statutes and laws shall be the supreme law of the land. Federal law applies throughout the country and cannot be undermined or ignored by the governments within the country. An application in the Supremacy Clause prohibits states and local governments from interfering with or controlling the operations of the federal government. It also means that ICE and other federal law enforcement agencies have jurisdiction and authority to act and enforce federal laws anywhere within the US. It means that state, county, or municipal governments cannot interfere with those operations without risk of violating the Supremacy Clause.

The City Attorney continued that other federal statutes have specific ways that law enforcement agencies at the local level must comply with federal law enforcement agencies. For example, United States Code Title 8 prohibits local law enforcement agencies from refusing to share information about someone's immigration status, if they have it, with federal immigration authorities. Laws were also created that directly prohibit local governments from adopting policies or taking actions that would interfere with federal immigration authorities. For example, in May 2025, the President issued Executive Order #14287, which ordered the Secretary of Homeland Security to identify communities with policies that are aimed to obstruct federal immigration law enforcement as "Sanctuary Jurisdictions," and the Secretary was ordered to suspend or terminate federal grants and contracts with those communities as appropriate.

The City Attorney continued that the New Hampshire legislature passed two bills last year that created several state statutes referred to in New Hampshire as the "Anti-Sanctuary City Laws." Those statutes prohibit local law enforcement agencies from refusing to comply with federal enforcement agencies that are enforcing immigration law. They also prohibit local municipal governments from adopting policies that could prevent local law enforcement agencies from

complying with the federal laws, the laws that require them to cooperate or communicate with federal immigration agencies. Those statutes are in RSAs, Chapter 106-P, 106-Q, and 106-R.

The City Attorney continued that related to the authority of local governments, she wanted to mention the statutory role of the City Council and City staff. By state statute and per the City Charter, Keene has a Councilor-Manager form of government, which means the City Council is responsible for the fiscal, prudential, and municipal affairs of the City, while the City Manager is the head of the administrative branch of the City government, supervising the administrative affairs of the City and carrying out the policies enacted by the elected body. It means the City Manager is responsible for overseeing the City staff and operations. To some degree, this might limit what the City Council has the authority and jurisdiction to do at times.

The City Attorney continued that separate from the federal statutes and the Supremacy Clause, she also wanted to mention the 287(g) agreements. Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act is a provision that authorizes the DHS to deputize state and local law enforcement officers to enforce federal immigration law. The New Hampshire State Police and several other New Hampshire municipalities have signed these agreements with DHS. Keene has not signed one of these agreements. A local law enforcement agency that signs a 287(g) agreement can be directed by ICE to perform ICE's functions and enforce immigration law anywhere that ICE has jurisdiction, which is anywhere in the US, not just within that municipal law enforcement jurisdiction.

The City Attorney continued that lastly, she wanted to address the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that the Keene Police Department (KPD) has with other municipalities in Cheshire County. At the Finance, Organization, and Personnel (FOP) Committee meeting in February, they discussed that this MOU is a mutual aid agreement between the municipal police departments in Cheshire County, intending to allow them to call upon each other for backup and assistance. The MOU is only among the municipalities in Cheshire County. It does not have any part with federal agencies. However, as discussed, a federal agency would not need to be requested to come to a municipality because their jurisdiction is federal.

Police Chief Steve Stewart stated that he was asked to give a bit of background in terms of the events of the weekend before last. He continued that his firsthand knowledge is limited. He is aware that officers from ICE came to the Police Station and checked in with the dispatcher to let them know that ICE would be in the City conducting some investigations. He is aware that ICE agents spent some time in the KPD parking lot waiting for each other, using it as a staging area before they went somewhere else. That is the gist of what he knows regarding that. In terms of going forward, what people could or should expect from the KPD is that every person they deal with, regardless of a person's immigration status or any other factor in their life, will be treated fairly and with respect and as much dignity as the situation allows. People should expect that the KPD will comply with the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office's guidance regarding Fair and Impartial Policing. KPD will never ask the victim of a crime or a witness to a crime about their immigration status.

Chief Stewart continued that in terms of future ICE operations in the City, if ICE asks for information about a person or a place, the KPD will give them the information they have. If ICE

is involved with an emergency and requires assistance, the KPD will respond. He will not be issuing any sweeping condemnations of any federal law enforcement agency, and he will not be banning them from the parking lots or KPD property. The KPD's mission is to treat everyone with respect, dignity, and fairness.

The Mayor explained the procedures for public comments, and the format of the rest of the meeting. He welcomed Mariana de Vreeze, present via Teams, from Congresswoman Maggie Goodlander's office. He continued that their office has pledged to be helpful to anyone in Congressional District 2 who contacts them with a request for assistance. The table in the room tonight has a couple of release forms, one for the Congresswoman's office to seek information on someone's behalf, and one that goes to ICE for ICE to provide information to the Congresswoman on her request. Copies of those are in the City Clerk's Office as well.

Mariana de Vreeze stated that she is Congresswoman Maggie Goodlander's Chief of Staff. She continued that their office is here to help any constituent or family member who would like Congresswoman Goodlander's Office to submit an inquiry on their behalf on a person's status, or location, or the next steps for any family members impacted by any ICE enforcement in the region. She encourages people to look at the forms and to reach out to Congresswoman Goodlander's office if they can be of assistance, and to spread the word in the community about this resource.

The Mayor stated that there is an immigration project in the local community. He continued that he has been provided with some information and resources they rely on and that they provide to people with inquiries. The QR code on the corner table goes to a couple of pages that provide information from the National Immigration and Law Center, the ACLU, and more. There are resources available to people if they want or need to become better informed.

Mayor Kahn asked for public comment.

Steve Shook (of Hancock, NH) stated that he has been involved for the past five years as a volunteer, working with mostly Spanish-speaking families in the Monadnock region. He has a huge appreciation for the friendliness many people have shown. The annual Keene International Festival is wonderful, as are the ESL classes through the Community Education program. At those classes, you will see people smiling and laughing. They are not just learning English, they are finding community. It has been very painful in the past week that some of the families he knows and loves have gone into hiding. They have felt absolutely terrorized by what happened. He knows people whose dream was to make a new life in this community, and they are considering giving up. Feeling the terror, uncertainty, and unpredictability is too difficult. Many of the people who are working in this community would be missed very badly if they were not here. Some are working at Cheshire Medical Center, senior citizen homes, and on roofs. He loves the families he has gotten to know. They would be afraid to be here tonight, or to go to the Police Station to ask a simple question. The community does not want them to be afraid to go anywhere in the City, but they are. He beseeches Keene to not join in the 287(g) agreements, and to continue the ESL classes and other resources that exist. People who have come to this community from overseas add so much in so many ways, just as families of natural-born citizens once came from overseas.

Sandra Whippie (of Keene) stated that she turned 90 a few months ago, and she cannot think of a time when she has been more frightened. She continued that she works with schools and churches and young people. She has five families of great-grandchildren. Two of those families include children who have immigrated to this country. One family came from Mexico because the grandfather was hired to be a herdsman, and he brought his teenage daughters with him to work in Vermont. It is hard to find people to take care of cows. She was shocked when Stonewall Farm had to sell their cows because they could not find anyone to take care of them. The teenage daughters fell in love with Vermont boys, and now there are families involved. But they are frightened, here in Keene. Things are very different now than they were in all the years when she taught school. It concerns her that immigrant families are frightened to be in the community. And they have reason to be. That is what scares her.

Evan John (of Troy) stated that he represents a group of people who have come to the meeting. He thanks the Council for having this forum. The Town of Troy has a 287(g) agreement in place. The Town of Troy is responsible for about 30% of the arrests in New Hampshire. Route 12 is a major conduit. Keene is served by that major highway and the arrests take place along it. He does not believe any Troy residents have been arrested or detained. The Troy Chief of Police and his department are arresting people who are just passing through. The Troy Chief of Police is considering an extended agreement with ICE that would enable the department to receive grant funding for their purposes. His (Mr. John's) concern is that such an agreement would incentivize the department to arrest and detain even more people. His greater concern is that the Troy Police Department that serves a community of 2,000 people would become part of a federalized army or police state. He thinks that is a broad concern that many people share. They are watching the situation in Troy, hoping there is enough community involvement and participation to turn the ship. The Troy Chief of Police has fairly broad support in town. The selectmen are tacitly in support of his activities. Thus, it is a hard mountain to climb. He wanted to present this information to a larger forum, so everyone is aware. There has been a lot of press in the Keene Sentinel about it, and a lot of letters to the editor. It is an active concern.

Will Hunter stated that he has three questions, but first wants to qualify them with quotes from an August 13, 2026 article on the My Keene Now website:

- *“Kahn said he was not notified in advance that ICE would be in Keene. He said Police Chief Stewart was informed that ICE agents would have a presence in the City, but that notification did not include details about specific enforcement actions. The Mayor said much of what he learned about the activity came from residents and community members rather than through the police department.”*
- *“Kahn said he did not know the [detained] man's name or his current status, and that information available to him came from community contacts.”*
- *“Let's have a conversation among the City Councilors to see what understanding we need to build to keep people informed.”*

Mr. Hunter stated that his first question is how the Mayor or the City Council could possibly keep people informed and provide accurate information if the Mayor and the City Council are themselves choosing, by way of policy, to not be very informed except in the most minimal and

vaguest capacity, not even bothering to inform each other. Focusing specifically on the role of the KPD, here are additional quotes from the article:

- “‘You’re not going to obstruct. You’re not going to interfere,’ *Kahn said*. ‘And to the extent that you have resources, it really doesn’t say that you will cooperate. It says that you will not obstruct.’”
- “*He said New Hampshire law requires local authorities not to obstruct or interfere with federal immigration enforcement and includes potential consequences involving state aid.*”
- “*The Mayor said clarifying the role of the Keene Police Department is particularly important so residents understand what local officers can and cannot do when federal immigration agents are operating in the City.*”

Mr. Hunter continued that before he reads his question, he wants to read the following from the KPD’s website:

- “*The mission of the Keene Police Department is to protect life and property and to maintain order within the City, while assuring fair and respectful treatment of everyone.*”

Mr. Hunter continued that his second and third questions are: given the choice to remain uninformed about nearly every pertinent detail, or to even share what few details they had with others, how would it be possible to achieve the mission of protecting life, maintaining order, and assuring fair and respectful treatment of everyone, by also choosing this policy of non-obstruction? Given that the reason for a policy of non-obstruction is meant primarily to safeguard state funding, his question is how much money the City of Keene secured by refusing to learn or share any information about the impending abduction of one of its own, to degree that they effectively allowed it to happen. Government agents rolled into the City, abducted a neighbor, and roamed Keene streets, and local authorities chose neither to prevent this [business]—which he understands now is the law—nor to help inform the community or maintain any semblance of order, seemingly not even overseeing the operation at a distance. It is understandable that some things cannot be revealed to the public, but ICE is responsible for a host of very public mistakes elsewhere, some of which involved actions that led to deaths. Many people have concerns when ICE shows up, regarding who will be hurt, who will be killed, and who is next. The only conclusion people can reasonably draw is that unfortunately, no Keene resident is safe from its federal government, because its own local government refuses to sacrifice state funding. He urges them to make changes.

Joe Schapiro (of 288 Church St.) stated that he thanks the Council for having this meeting. He continued that he thinks every tragedy or unfortunate situation also lends an opportunity. In this case, this is not Minneapolis, and they have not seen people smashing windshields and killing people, but this is still a tragedy. When wage earners are taken from homes, parents are taken from their children, and families are separated, this is an enormous tragedy for the people involved, and for the people scared they could be next. There are many such people in Keene, who have some kind of immigration status. Some are citizens, some have green cards and are relatively safe, and some are in the process of developing some kind of status. This ICE activity in Keene was a big thing, even though only three people were taken.

Mr. Schapiro continued that he was disappointed by the City Attorney's presentation. It was very thorough, but to him it felt like instead of coming together to talk about how to enhance Keene and how to affirm what a wonderful and safe place Keene has been, it was about all the things they cannot do, instead of what they *can* do. Maybe some people here know more than others about the various laws, and he does not think the City Attorney said anything inaccurate, but he thinks they should focus on what they can do to make Keene a more welcoming, compassionate, kind community, rather than starting off by talking about all the things they cannot do.

Mr. Schapiro continued that his last question is for the Police Chief, who has said in the past that he has no intention of joining a 287(g) agreement, and in his presentation, said that his involvement was very limited. He asks that the Police Chief, in the future, respond to the question of what it means that if ICE comes, the KPD will give ICE people's names and locations, and why that is necessary.

Helen Fields (of Keene) stated that she moved to Keene three years ago to become a member of a civilized community. She continued that she lived in the woods for about 30 years. One of her neighbors went to Washington, DC on January 6, 2021, and she decided she did not want to be around people like that, so she came to Keene. [Years ago] on 25th Street in Baltimore, Maryland, a group called the Black Panthers were feeding and teaching the community's people who lived in poverty. The FBI told the Baltimore Police Department that they were going to show up and "*get those people*," which they had done in Philadelphia. The Baltimore Police Department surrounded 25th Street and stopped the FBI. Local police departments cannot do that today by law, as the City Attorney explained in her very accurate presentation. However, there are plenty of actions she would like the City Council to take, such as being there every time ICE pulls up next to a Keene resident and says anything. She wants the KPD budget to be increased in this time of crisis, because it will get worse before it gets better. She would like the City Council and KPD to create a thorough emergency plan, right now, to be there for every person in Keene who gets approached by any federal agent, no matter what department they are from.

Ms. Fields continued that she also wants the City to seriously research, if they have not already done so, how to prohibit federal agents from wearing masks. That is a danger and a threat. No one is allowed to walk into a bank with a mask on. ICE agents should not wear masks, and they should have cameras that the public has access to. She asks the City Council to research, get as many laws enacted as possible, and work with as many local citizens as possible to have a presence at every single approach to every single member of the community, every single time.

Sean O'Mara (of 19 Martin St.) read his prepared comments out loud:

"First of all, I believe that American citizens, elected leaders, and law enforcement should all follow the law, as long as the laws are moral and just. However, as Americans, we have a long and patriotic history of resistance to immoral and unjust laws, as well as the use of laws to inflict suffering or vindictive cruelty. Our nation was born out of a movement to resist what our founders believed to be immoral and unjust British laws. In the 1850s, thousands of Americans actively defied the racist and inhumane fugitive slave laws. In the mid-20th century, heroic Americans resisted unjust and immoral segregation laws. So today, to say that ICE is simply

enforcing a law would be akin to someone in the 1960s saying that Bull Connor was just enforcing the law. The question then, and the question today, is not what is simply legal, but rather, what is moral. Our laws and how we implement them should be a reflection of our society's morals, not a shield to use to justify immoral or vindictive cruelty. In this moment, I hope the City and the community of Keene chooses to respond in a way that reflects our humanity and our morality, instead of simply using the law as an excuse to accept immoral cruelty."

Steve Lindsey (of Franklin St.) stated that he is a former State Representative and a lifelong Keene resident. He continued that he lives across the street from the roofer who was taken away, so this is personal for him. Before that roofer moved in, the house was known as "narcotics place," where people came at all times of night. After the police cleared out the house and it was sold, the roofer moved in with his family and others, with children in the yard, and made it a much better place. This man and his crew are hard workers. He had never seen someone try to fulfill the American Dream as much as this man did. This man did more for this country than he himself ever did. It was impressive to watch.

Mr. Lindsey continued that before this man and his family moved in, he (Mr. Lindsey) tried to get the City to put more lighting on Franklin St. A lot of activity in the night takes place on Franklin St., Church St., and Elm St. City staff told him that increased lighting there would be unfair to other neighborhoods. Then, this man who is a roofer moved in, with trucks and ladders. He installed his own lights on three sides of his house, and drove off the drug dealing that had been happening on the corner of Roxbury St. and Franklin St. He is a good man, and he was improving the neighborhood until this situation erupted. He (Mr. Lindsey) would speak the highest of this man.

Denise Burchsted (of Keene) stated that she wanted to make three specific requests. She continued that as others have noted, there have been a lot of things the City cannot do that have been highlighted, but there are many things they *can* do. People in Keene watched a secret, armed police abducting people off Keene streets. This is fundamentally unsafe. As a bare minimum, the public has a right to know the identity of federal agents moving around in the City. The public has a right to know their names, and what agency they work for. She wants the City to have a policy that if City staff cooperates with the DHS, the agents need to identify their names and the agency they are working with. That seems very basic, and that information should be public. We do not live in a country or City that needs a secret police. That same information should be shared regarding the agents who were here last week, and their agency. People presume they were ICE agents, but they cannot really know. She wants to know who they were and what those many vehicles parked there were. She wants the City Council to reach out to the congressional delegation and the Governor and find out why those agents needed so many vehicles. Given the amount of space in those vehicles, based on the demographic information she found online, those vehicles could have held almost 10% of the Hispanic population of the City. She questions why the agents would need that much space to move that many people, and why they were in Keene to do that. That is a basic question the public deserves the answer to. That level of preparation for removal of people from Keene amounts to declaring the intention of ethnic cleansing. We know from scholars of events in other places in the world that declaring the

intention precedes genocide. It is horrifying that this is happening in Keene. She wonders if the community has the moral clarity to act to prevent that from escalating.

Councilor Jones left at 6:43 PM.

Áina deDanaan (of 37 Cottage St.) stated that on Sunday, August 9, 2026, she learned that the wife of a community member who had been abducted by ICE the day before was contacted and told to come pick up her husband's keys at the KPD. She (Ms. deDanaan) was concerned for this woman's safety, so before this woman went to the KPD, she herself went to the KPD parking lot to check for ICE's presence in the area. She went in and asked, hypothetically, how a situation like that would be handled. What she learned shocked her. The KPD told her that the keys were returned to ICE. Instead of returning the family's property to the family, the KPD handed the property back to ICE. That meant ICE would be the ones to track down and approach this woman whose husband they had just taken, with all the fear and risk that carries. It would have been better for this woman to simply walk into the KPD and retrieve her husband's keys. She understands that KPD is obligated to assist ICE when presented with a judicial warrant. She is not asking anyone to break that law. But choosing to hand over a resident's personal property to a federal agency seems beyond what the law requires. That was a choice that made a frightened, grieving woman more vulnerable, not less.

Ms. deDanaan continued that tonight, she is asking the Council and the KPD for three things. First, a clear, public accounting of what KPD's actual policy is regarding cooperation with ICE, where the legal obligation ends and where discretion begins. Second, a commitment that when KPD holds a resident's personal property, that property is returned to a member of the person's family, not handed to a federal agency as a matter of convenience or default practice. Third, a public commitment that the KPD's priority is the safety of all Keene residents, not smoothing the path for ICE beyond what the law strictly requires. The KPD is supposed to serve and protect this community. She asks them to make sure that includes families like this one.

Sam Jackson (of Court St.) stated that like others in the City, she is disturbed by the blatant kidnapping and disappearing of Keene community neighbors. She continued that she knew it would end up here, even though deep down, she did not believe it was possible. Possible naivete aside, ICE has kidnapped our neighbors, stolen away with friends, fathers, and husbands, left families in disarray, and enshrouded our City in terror. She feels it, as do hundreds of people. This assault has no place in Keene. They cannot allow this terrorism to be the future. Neighbors are on alert, sprinting to help. Communities interweave their skill sets to support the neighbors who remain after the dark wave. Donations pour forth from residents of Keene and surrounding areas, but the Councilors and City staff members hold unique positions of power. She asks what the City Council and the KPD will do during this dark wave. She wants to know the extent to which the KPD cooperated with ICE. She wants to know if the KPD investigated the individual agents and confirmed their identities, and whether they made a record of individuals who entered the City, and their vehicles' makes, models, and license plate numbers; and whether they cross-referenced that information with federal records to verify that the individuals claiming to be federal agents were indeed federal agents. This is not interference; this is basic investigation. She heard that someone went around a roundabout the wrong way. She wants to know if the KPD

pulled them over and ticketed them for that. The City needs to push back. If you are complacent, you are complicit.

Autumn DeLaCroix stated that she hopes the City Councilors are organizing however they can to ease the burden, the threat, and the fear many Keene citizens face. She continued that she understands there is astounding little the Council can officially do. The state and federal governments do a lot to hobble local government. But she hopes they remember that they are citizens, too, like the dozens she knows who have organized to patrol, keeping eyes on the street; like the volunteers running grocery orders to afflicted families who are afraid to leave their homes; like the generous carpoolers who seek to ensure vulnerable neighbors and coworkers are not driving, and so, do not need to present a license when inevitably stopped for unrelated reasons on their way to the job site; like those who know what size diapers are needed and make sure families are supported when their family order is upended.

Ms. DeLaCroix continued that time and again, the most valuable thing the community has had is the opportunity to know where detainees are going and keeping them in contact with Legal Aid. That requires accountability of federal agents who are encouraged to work behind a smokescreen and behind masks. If the KPD can confirm that any assailants/operators/kidnappers are in fact ICE agents, by name, badge number, and federal record, that ensures they are accountable and increases the chances that our neighbors who are detained without evident cause see an ounce of due process. More importantly, responding to every such threat ensures that bad actors who would take advantage of the chaos do not get away with impersonating ICE. By no means can anyone encourage officials to stand in ICE's way, but they should not stand aside, either. Complying in advance is dangerous. All it takes for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing. They need to ask questions, videotape, confirm license plates, badges, and IDs. There is a lot the City can lawfully do to slow down the blitz that ICE is attempting, not impeding ICE, but ensuring that people's rights are respected.

The Mayor stated that an invitation to the regional director of ICE was issued prior to this meeting. He continued that it was not responded to.

Karla Sully (of Keene) stated that she is here to speak not about the ICE detainment that recently took place, but the way the City has responded to it. She continued that she saw comments online saying things like, "*Deport them,*" and "*Clean Keene,*" and a desire to contact ICE to report individuals. She would like to appeal to the Council and everyone listening to look at each person living in Keene as a neighbor. Instead of accusing each other, she hopes people can ask questions and be curious about the struggles that not just immigrants have, but that everyone has or will have. At some point, each of us will be in a position in which we are vulnerable and in need of help. Examples are illness, disasters, tragedies concerning our loved ones, or old age. She hopes people find space in their hearts to look at the individual as a person, a neighbor, a parent, a friend. She believes the City can do this, approaching people with questions, meeting their neighbors where they are at. One of her favorite quotes is, "*Draw close to one another with patience. Put ourselves in the place of others' stories and suffering and recognize that we share the same dreams and the same hopes. There are no enemies, only brothers and sisters.*"

Robert Gogolen (of 27 Langley Rd.) stated that he wants to strongly remind the Council that the US has a long tradition of civil disobedience. He continued that to the extent that the Council can practice civil disobedience in executing its role in Keene, he encourages them to do so, because what is going on is immoral and awful.

Tina Stevens (of 32 Union St.) stated that she works with immigrants, as a volunteer and as a teacher. She continued that she can only speak to what she experienced on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. On Union St. on Sunday night, she saw an ICE vehicle, black with red lights blinking on the dash. Behind that was a KPD vehicle, driving behind the ICE vehicle. One of her neighbors was very concerned, as she has an immigrant family who has been here for ten years, and she saw the ICE vehicle in front of her residence. This neighbor asked her (Ms. Stevens) what to do, and she told her neighbor about what she knows from the wonderful support group she is a part of in Keene. Keene has many people who work together and let each other know what is going on with their immigrant friends and how to best support them. She applauds these community members who support each other. She is grateful to be a part of that group and to work with immigrants in Keene.

Ms. Stevens continued that near where the gentleman was taken, there was concern about some other people who felt unsafe. Community members worked together to find a place for the people who felt unsafe to go. ICE agents had been pounding on their door. The residents are scared. She is not sure how many students she will have in the fall, because some of them might be afraid to come to her class. As others have already said, immigrants in Keene are so grateful to be here and be part of the community, and she, the volunteers, and the people who work with immigrants have always assured them that Keene is a wonderful, safe community. She loves living here, and she hopes everyone can come together and support their immigrant neighbors.

Ms. Stevens continued that her question is why, if the KPD was not working directly with ICE, KPD vehicles were following the ICE vehicle. Also, she saw an increase in KPD activity on her street. A sense of fear was instilled in the residents of the street. One of her neighbors who has been here for a long time, who has a spouse and child, came home scared. Some people had followed her home from her job in Keene so that she could make it home safely. She (Ms. Stevens) thinks that maybe the public is not being given the complete information.

The City Manager stated that she wants to clarify that the black SUV with the red lights was from the Keene Fire Department (KFD). She continued that that is a command vehicle in the KPD, and the KPD and KFD go together. It was not an ICE vehicle.

Theresa Quigley (of 9 Drummer Rd.) stated that she teaches in Keene and lives here with her family. She continued that she does not feel safe with ICE in the streets. She has had only positive experiences with the immigrants in the community. As a teacher, she wants reassurance that no ICE activity will be near schools in Keene. She does not know what the law says about that, but she fears for the families who will not come to school due to fear of potential ICE presence in and around schools.

Marie Duggan (of 330 Hurricane Rd.) stated that she is grateful for this Council workshop. She continued that in these difficult times, it is important for people to come together and talk with

each other. It is not the same on the internet or TV. She thinks they need something different from the Council and all the elected representatives. She votes Democrat, but all four of the delegates voted for the Laken Riley Act, which gave the government the right to indefinitely detain people. In the past, people could trust a little more that the government was not going to push through things that were so ugly, so she can understand how that could catch people off guard. Regarding what she wants the Council to do, she has read that when immigrants are detained and they finally get to court, it really makes a difference when the community shows up to support them. She thought Steve Lindsey was convincing that his neighbor, the roofer, is a great asset to the community. She would love to show up and support him, if the Council could tell the public when and where that hearing will be. Maybe people could arrange to go as a group. She also heard that a Brazilian woman arrested in Troy had to spend \$35,000 to get out of prison to go back and take care of her young citizen grandchildren. Maybe there could be a Go Fund Me for legal defense for people who were taken in Keene, and the City Council could support the work. She imagines immigrants do not want to initiate that, because no one wants to identify themselves.

Ms. Duggan continued that she has always had a lot of respect for law enforcement, and she has a lot of respect for the Police Chief Stewart, who exudes basic decency. The idea that there are people on the streets who wear masks and do not identify themselves is chilling. To her, they are not law enforcement, even though she understands that legally, they are. To her, Police Chief Stewart and the KPD are law enforcement and she respects them. The people who wear masks and do not identify themselves reminds her of what happened in the time of Nazis. She grew up in a town with many Jewish people. Her best friend lost 30 relatives in the Holocaust, which was a common story, probably even for people in this room. Because of that, people thought, oh, Germans must have been terrible people. But now here she is now, not knowing how to respond to this situation. She cannot, as an individual, run out into the street and protect her neighbors. It is important to find ways as a group to do that. The City Council brings everyone together.

Carolyn Ogren (of Keene) stated that it might not be news to a lot of people, but it seems from the commentary on social media that it is new to many here in the community that people from all over the world who come to this country do so by following the laws that exist now. She continued that if they were seeking asylum at the border, they were given the opportunity to do that. If they came with or got a green card, they are here legally, based on the laws that exist. If they are naturalized citizens, they did that legally. If they are adopted, their family did that for them, legally. These human beings have followed every existing law to come here and become members of the community and of the US. It is apparent that people often consider that that is not enough, but that is not immigrants' fault. They have come following the existing laws. For the US, DHS, and ICE to change that narrative and make it appear as though the immigrants are the ones who are in the wrong, when the laws that could benefit them and solve this problem need to be affected by the people in Congress and by the federal government to change the laws so that they can become legal citizens in a more effective way, that is what is happening broadly in the US. In towns and cities all over the country, "We the People" are the only bulwark in support of immigrants. If we do not support them and find ways to make it possible for immigrants to live in community with us as our neighbors, friends, and family members, then we are not living up to the tenets of this country, as individual citizens.

Bill Bradford Hutchinson (of Keene) stated that he is “the bravest man in the room.” He continued that he is not a fan of Donald J. Trump, but he supports the office of the President of the United States of America, and the current office holder is Donald J. Trump. US immigration law is federal, passed by Congress. It is very clear. He would like to speak to three City Councilors specifically, about their role in organizing a gridlock of Main St. last Monday night, from Church St. all the way down past the roundabout at Winchester St. and Marlboro St. They did that because last weekend, federal law enforcement, enforcing federal law, slid into Keene with a warrant, picked up an individual, and slid back out, no muss, no fuss. That could have been the end of it, but no, the “flying monkeys, the virtue signalers, the social justice warriors who only care about their feelings, with their tunnel view,” said Donald Trump and his MAGA Republicans are going to start a civil war this year, leading up to the Presidential election a couple of years ago. That was two years ago. Monday night, August 10, 2026, there were three City Councilors and outside organizers not from Keene, “Antifa-style” with combat elbow and knee pads, helmets, and masks, on the Common. They did all that because federal law enforcement quietly slid into Keene to serve a warrant and slid back out again. That is all it needed to have been. Instead, there is this meeting. August is supposed to be the Council’s vacation. But the social justice warriors and virtue-signalers, based on their emotions, had to make a big to-do. And, Mr. Hutchinson continued, “This kind of thing gets people killed.”

Dan [no last name verbally given] (of Harrisville) stated that he grew up in Keene, Harrisville, and Marlborough. He continued that he spent time on Central Square when he was a little kid. It is important to say it like it is, and this is racism. There is no neutral in matters of oppression. If you are neutral, you stand with the oppressor. In a few decades, white people will no longer be the majority in North America. Keene will be inhabited by people of all colors. His question is, years from now, what the City officials want their children and grandchildren to think of the decisions the City officials are making today. He asked if they want their children and grandchildren to think about how well their parents and grandparents followed the law, or, as a previous speaker said, whether their parents and grandparents did what they felt was morally right.

Clara O’Brien (of Keene) stated that she is deeply concerned about the well-being of her neighbors. She continued that she feels like the City, state, and federal leadership have let people down in the worst possible ways. She has been asking for answers and has been given basically a pat on the head and a runaround. People have said, “*Oh, we don’t control the chief of police,*” and “*Oh, we don’t have the ability to regulate anything.*” That is not good enough. She is asking for courage in a very scary moment when the rules no longer seem to apply. The rules they were raised to believe in do not make sense anymore. Their neighbors are being snatched, and their friends are living in fear. It does not feel safe. She is begging and demanding that her representatives and the people whose salaries she pays, like the Chief of Police, do better. They have clout and a voice bigger than hers. They need to use their voices to speak up for the vulnerable. Ms. O’Brien continued, “*If we do not take care of the least of us, what are we as a society?*”

Melanie Griffin stated that she does not feel safe saying her town out loud, which is sad. She continued that she has heard many people talk about safety and fear, but she wants to say that there is a lot of grief tonight, too, about what is happening to the City. This is supposed to be “a

progressive City with the heart of a town,” and this is not the Keene she knew. The other day, she saw a Hispanic family with young children come out of a local store and instead of feeling a fondness, smiling and thinking about how cute the children were, she instead felt grief for that family. That is not okay.

Ms. Griffin continued that as someone else mentioned, the comments on social media are scary. But being undocumented is not a criminal violation; it is a civic infraction, and undocumented people should not be treated like felons. ICE is not coming after “the worst of the worst;” they are coming after contractors, roofers, teachers, and nurses, and they are separating families. It is completely out of range of reality and what is needed. There are laws and processes for civic infractions. ICE is not following the law. They are anonymous men in unmarked cars, running around our streets. At the very least, the City needs to demand that anyone coming here representing ICE needs to have “ICE” on their vehicles in big letters, and “ICE” on their badge, along with their name. The City can ask for that; this is our town. People are being disappeared. It is illegal and it is not American. As Dan mentioned, this is racism. It is not a coincidence that it is black and brown people who are getting disappeared. People have to stand up, speak out, and push back, as much as they can. She hears that the City officials cannot impede ICE, but they need to speak out, be present, and stand up, because this is just the beginning. ICE will come back, and the more people are out there saying they do not want ICE, do not approve of what ICE is doing, and will not enable ICE, the better. She appreciates the Sheriff of Cheshire County not being an enabler and not being compliant with ICE by signing a 287(g) agreement. She thanks all the members of the public who are here tonight, because they give the Councilors and the City staff the courage to stand up, because now the Councilors and the City staff know how the community feels.

Chloe Gross (of Keene) stated that she thinks many people in the room would agree with her that they do not want ICE in Keene and they do not want the KPD to collaborate with ICE. She asks the City Council to do everything they can to protect all of the community members.

Ryanne Asher (of Keene) stated that she does not believe the Police Chief and she has lost trust in the Keene government. She continued that she has friends asking her if they have any protections as legal immigrants. They ask if the police will protect them, as legal immigrants, from the people who are coming after them. People have seen that full citizens have been detained. It is completely inadequate to see what happened the other weekend and stand here in front of all these constituents and shrug and say they cannot help. This is a crowded room of people who care. She has heard a lot of people talk tonight about being scared and feeling grief. She understands. But they cannot let people take their hope and they cannot think that ICE is more powerful than citizens as a group. Hope does not come without fear, and hope does not come without grief. You have to feel the fear and the grief and still find the hope. She hopes this collection of government officials and the Police Chief, whose salaries the community pays, and whom the community votes into office, can do better.

Mohammad Saleh (of Keene) stated that he has been active member of the Human Rights Committee for eight years and he is also co-founder of a local nonprofit that settles asylum seekers from around the world. He continued that many of them are traumatized by the recent events. Prior speakers have mentioned specific, useful ideas that he thinks the Council should

consider. He is an immigrant who understands that immigration laws are not black and white. He has been held back at the airport for hours, separated from his children, when he has worked 16 years as a researcher with the Air Force and he has been a citizen for 30 years. And if it happened to him, he cannot imagine what other people are going through who are not as equipped with resources as he is. Eleazar Ayala is a man he had the fortune to rescue from ICE with the support of the community. Mr. Ayala was arrested because he had a flat tire, and someone called, and he had an accent, so he was facing deportation. He (Mr. Saleh) went to the lawyer, who said there was no case. The lawyer said it was a hopeless case. He asked the lawyer if he would say the same thing if the person he was representing were his brother. It is about morality, as people have mentioned tonight. The lawyer took a moment and said, *"No, there is actually a path here."* They took that path, and after two years of appeals that people in the community funded, they had a celebration at Wheelock Park when Mr. Ayala was released from ICE custody. That shows the power of empathy. He implores and begs the Council and City staff to consider that when they are looking at the recommendations.

Mr. Saleh continued that his other story is about an interesting conversation he had with an ICE officer when he went to rescue a person. The ICE officer barked an accusation at him. He (Mr. Saleh) replied that if the officer knew his story, he probably would feel differently. The ICE officer called him (Mr. Saleh), and became his friend, asking him how he was doing. Mr. Saleh continued that he is begging everyone to take a moment and get to know their neighbors. When we know each other, we can solve the problems.

Judy Lang (of Nelson) stated that she used to live in Keene. She continued that when she lived in Nelson, her daughter attended an international program and would bring people from other countries home when they needed a place to be during the holidays. One day a gentleman from Paraguay was walking down Main St. in Keene and saw a police officer coming on the same side of the street. He panicked and said to her (Ms. Lang), "Come on, come on," due to his fear of people in authority. That was her first introduction to fear from people from other countries. Now, she knows it firsthand and repetitively, through the cultures of people in the community. She charges the Council and City staff to do the best they can do. To not just uphold the law, as they must, but to question it, and remember the humanity that is inside every one of us. She asks them to remember what it was like to hold their child or a loved one's child the day they were born, because that is the responsibility we have and the responsibility we have for the children's future. She is nervous to be here, but she is here, bearing witness to what happens to our community. She would be glad to talk with the Council more, not here, and not with names and locations. She asks them to draw upon their inner strength now and from this day forward. There is a lot of work to do, with a lot of good people doing the work.

Mayor Kahn stated that some of the goals they had for this meeting were connecting with other organizations in the community that are resources for those in need. He continued that relative to that question, if someone from Project Home is here, or someone connected with a family fundraising effort who wanted to identify those resources, they should feel free to do so. He appreciates that there are organizations in the community. For the City to be able to share their contact information with people is a virtue of their governing role.

Mackenzie Perkins stated that he has resided in Stoddard and Keene. He continued that he knows how beautiful Keene is and everything people do for the community. He implores people go to places like Project Home, Keene Mutual Aid, Monadnock Collaborative, Rights and Democracy (RAD), and all these grassroots organizations that are a little more funded by our voices. These are important to help make the changes that are needed. He implores people to find what they can do as individuals, for the community. There are due processes that stand between them and what they want. If the due process is coming too late, he has found it easier if the people do it themselves.

Bridget Archibald (of Keene) stated that she relocated here with her family nine years ago from Minneapolis. She continued that she has been in close communication with people in Minneapolis for several months. She does not feel safe sharing her full address here because she does not want it to be used against her later. She does not want to risk being targeted or have her family or neighbors targeted. She has already been shadow banned on social media, so even though she is sharing information in alignment with her values, these constraints are real. She has family members and friends who have been directly impacted by the terror of ICE. Doctors, attorneys, teachers, all US citizens, have been pulled over by ICE and interrogated and intimidated, because of the color of their skin. People's cars were legally registered and ICE pulled them over anyway. This is happening in our country. People are being abducted. In winter in Minnesota, people were brought to the middle of nowhere and left to freeze to death. Things escalated quickly in Minnesota, and they can escalate quickly here, too. Things are already escalating in Troy, which is about 15 minutes away. It is a testing ground, she is speculating and deducing, based on the data she has seen from Minneapolis. She implores the Council and the KPD to protect the citizens of Keene and surrounding areas.

Brittany Hughes (of Keene) stated that she is concerned about the fear and uncertainty ICE tactics create in Keene neighborhoods, tearing families apart and undermining trust. ICE expansion outpaces accountability. Their surging numbers have no room for the required training to deal with any local population. They do not meet the standards to understand federal law in order to comply with it. When there are no consequences, it means there will be no changes. ICE does not have intervention training. They constantly allow their own agents to use excessive force, as the whole world has seen. People cannot trust them when they do not even stop each other.

Bill Hay stated that his wife was one of the people who started Project Home. He continued that it can be found at <http://projecthomenh.org>. A few years ago, his wife had been having lunch with some friends, and one suggested they get a bus and go down to El Paso to pick up a bunch of people. They thought more about it, and eventually made contact with people. Keene now looks very different than it did three years ago. The organization is now way beyond anything they had expected. He encourages people to keep up the good work.

Joe Schapiro stated that the Mayor mentioned resources for helping people. He continued that there is a Go Fund Me page to assist families affected by the recent raids. The Council could discuss whether to put that Go Fund Me on the City website, if they had permission from the people who started it. The Mayor replied that they are individuals, and he appreciates the privacy

and privileged information that has been shared with him. He looks forward to people providing guidance as to what can be shared.

Grace Johnson stated that she lives 20 minutes outside of Keene and used to live in Keene. She continued that she works with Project Home. She asks that City staff and Councilors research what other municipalities and other local law enforcement agencies have done and what they have come up with to creatively protect their residents. She asks that they all find trusted places for themselves to talk about and think through what they can do in their roles, because she is sure there are things people have not thought of yet, and they will not think of them just in their own heads. They need space to talk with each other, and to reach out to trusted, respected people in the community. Maybe Sheriff Eli Rivera would be open to talking about what they can do from the law enforcement perspective. Maybe they could hire a consultant. She is thinking about the apocryphal story, the urban legend about Denmark during World War II, that when the Jews were required to wear the Star of David, all of Denmark wore the Star of David. There are things that people can do that they have not thought of yet.

Cindi Nadelman (of Keene) stated that she has lived in the state for more than 20 years. She continued that she is glad she is taking the opportunity to speak out, which she does not normally do, but it is important for everyone to come together like this. Her question about authority is who invites federal agents to the city and why. She wonders how they know the federal agents are who they say they are, and if the City officials can ask them for identification. When she was in the Air Force, she wore a uniform, and people knew she was in the Air Force. Although you can buy an Air Force uniform and pretend, it is against the law to impersonate a law enforcement officer. She wonders if it is against the law to impersonate an ICE agent, which she knows people have done. It is important for people to stand up for what is right, which is not always what is legal.

Mayor Kahn thanked everyone for coming tonight and providing input and for the challenge they have given the City Council and City staff. He continued that if they were not up to accepting the challenge, they would not have scheduled this meeting. But it is challenging. Not all of the suggested actions can be taken, but he thinks there are some needed answers the City can provide and there are statements they can make. He recognizes that the City Council and City staff need to stand with the community. They need to stand for the safety of people in the community. They need to represent what this community has been for many years, which is welcoming, with respect and dignity for all people. He is not sure where that leads them for the future. The Council will discuss strategies. They could not have gotten to that conversation without the public's input, so he thanks them. The Council will be acting on behalf of its constituents and the people of Keene.

After a five-minute recess, Mayor Kahn asked to hear from the City Manager.

The City Manager stated that for starters, she emailed the Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief and asked them to make sure there is KFD identification on the black SUV with the red light. She continued that there is something on the back, but it is not very clear, so having clearer identification will help. It is important for her and City staff to try and address these sorts of issues right when they come up, instead of letting them go.

The City Manager continued that she wants to thank everyone who came tonight to speak. She listened closely and took lots of notes. Before tonight's meeting, she did research on things that other municipalities have done and the creative ways they have addressed some of these concerns. The hurdles that New Hampshire's "anti-sanctuary" bill have brought require Keene to get creative. Looking to Minneapolis or another state does not always directly correlate here in New Hampshire, which is a challenge. She wants to start by affirming her trust and confidence in the KPD. She does not think this is about the KPD. The Police Chief and other City department leaders and officers serve this community with professionalism, sound judgement, and a commitment to treating people fairly and with dignity. She believes that and has seen it and witnessed it. She has been here long enough to know.

Tonight, the City Manager continued, as the Council begins these conversations, it would be helpful if they could identify areas of consensus where the Council believes additional guidance of clarification or work should be done. They know not every concern raised tonight falls within the City's authority, and not every question will have a clear answer. There is always gray, and when you interpret things, if it is not super clear, that may be the answer as well. It would be helpful to understand the Council's thoughts after listening to all the input. Based on the Council's discussion tonight, she will work with the Police Chief, in consultation with the City Attorney and Deputy City Attorney, to distinguish what the City can appropriately address, what falls within the Police Chief's independent law enforcement responsibilities, and what lies outside of municipal jurisdiction. She then will report back to the City Council on what she thinks are appropriate next steps. Those might include administrative actions within the City Manager's authority, clearer public information, and/or a review or clarification of existing City policies and procedures. Sometimes it is just about referrals to the appropriate agency or community resource, which they talked a little about tonight. The Council is on break and will not be meeting formally for the next couple of weeks, but that is what she intends to work on during the next couple of weeks before the Council comes back in session. She asks the Council to build some consensus tonight on things they are interested in hearing or learning more about.

The Mayor stated that he has some ICE Rapid Response cards to share, which came from Emily Daigle. He continued that Ms. Daigle gave him her name and contact information so that people could contact her with questions. The card possesses the kind of information that the QR code links to, although he cannot verify that it has all the same information. City Clerk Terri Hood asked if the intent is for it to be part of the record. The Mayor replied yes. The City Clerk replied that she will make sure it is in the record and available to anyone who wants it.

Councilor Filiault stated that as a Councilor and a lifetime Keene resident, he wants to thank everyone who showed up tonight and everyone at home watching on TV. He continued that government only works when everyone gets together, and silence is never an option. He thanks the City Attorney for her clear presentation on exactly what Keene can and cannot do. The City Council has limited purview, which they know.

Councilor Filiault continued that as a Vietnam Veteran, he was directly involved in a resettlement of over 125,000 Vietnamese refugees during the initial evacuation of Vietnam. Thus, the issue of immigration is personal to him because he was directly involved with it. They

did the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees because it was the right thing. It was not Democrat or Republican; it was about humanity and decency, which is something the current federal administration knows nothing about. Regarding what to do now, his advice to people is to vote. Midterms are coming up. To change the laws, they need to change the people who write the laws.

Councilor Chalice stated that the primary is September 8, 2026 and she encourages everyone to vote. She continued that the country is facing a 2,450% increase in the number of people without a criminal record being held in ICE detention on any given day. Judges throughout the nation have ruled against ICE detention practices in roughly 90% of the cases. She is new to the Council, but her understanding is that several successful policies that this City Council has put into place were not supported by their legal counsel. It is incumbent upon each of them as citizens *“to overthrow an unjust and immoral government.”* She asks the Council as a whole, as an individual and a Councilor, what their role is here.

Councilor Workman stated that she agrees with a lot of what was said tonight. She continued that she wants to highlight that what is happening now is affecting the local economy. The number of vendors that came to the Keene International Festival decreased last year and will likely decrease this year. People are not coming to Keene if they have to go through Troy to get here. Keene State College (KSC) serves international students, but parents will not want to send their children here. She wants to highlight the trauma this is causing the entire community, not just those who are impacted. She does not have the same confidence and trust that the City Manager has. She listened tonight to the many inconsistencies that came from people. Those inconsistencies erode trust. Late last year, she had private conversations with the City Manager, the City Attorney, and the Police Chief. She wants to know what will be different than those conversations, because she had gone to them wanting to be proactive rather than reactive. They could have avoided all of this if they had taken a more proactive approach back in February 2026.

The City Manager stated that she disagrees with Councilor Workman’s statement. She continued that they had talked about the Troy Police Chief and the issues with addressing that and how best to address it. The Keene Police Chief talked to the Troy Police Chief, and he said he was not going to come here anymore. They dealt with the Troy issue with him coming into the City without needing further action. The activities of ICE would have happened regardless of the Troy Chief of Police. She does not think these two things should be combined. Councilor Workman replied that she and the City Manager can respectfully disagree, but she knows the conversations she had with the City Manager.

Councilor Lake stated that he thanks the community for coming and sharing their stories, especially the story about the individual who was removed from the community, and the positive impact the individual had on his neighborhood and the people around him, and the loss the community will feel because of his removal. He looks forward to the City Manager’s report and the suggested actions they can take to keep the community safe.

The Mayor stated that City employers are concerned about how this is affecting their businesses. They heard that from someone today. He wants to reiterate that employers did reach out to him and he reached out to some, too. Yes, this has an economic impact as well as a social impact.

Councilor Favolise stated that he is grateful to live in a civically-engaged community like this where people show up on a Monday night to speak to these issues. He continued that he looks forward to Councilors' concrete ideas, but he wants to be careful about not overpromising and underdelivering, given the kinds of restrictions at the state and federal level in terms of legislation. He does not want to give false hope to people, in terms of presenting specific solutions. He hopes some creative pieces come out of tonight's conversation, but there is a lot that the City Council cannot do, which is a frustrating reality to sit with and live with.

Councilor Tobin stated that the overwhelming thing she heard tonight was about fear for safety. She continued that it is kind of two things. One could say that this ICE action "only took three people," but the word "only" is in itself problematic, and this impacted a lot more people than that in the perception of safety and how people feel, which is impacting the culture in the area. She is not clear about whose authority each thing falls under, but she sees opportunities to communicate better. It is strange that information about such a big event in the community, even though little information could be provided, came through rumors. That was frustrating. She would have liked something from City staff saying, "Here's what happened." That did happen tonight, but after a week of escalating tensions. The way that fear impacts the people who live here is disturbing and it breaks her heart. She heard that a citizen is considering writing a phone number on their skin in case they were taken and did not have their phone with them to have someone's number to call. The same day, another friend was telling her that she was contacted and told that she should keep her proof of citizenship on her dashboard so that she would not have to reach for it if asked, because someone might think she was reaching for something else. This person was born in the United States, as were her parents. She (Councilor Tobin) was wondering if she herself needs to carry around proof of citizenship. But she does not have to, because she is white. That is not fair. That is not okay.

Councilor Williams stated that he had a "second-row seat" to the events as they unfolded, so he will try to fill in some of the information people might not have heard. He continued that the first indication that something was going on was on Friday, August 7, 2026, when they got a red alert from a group in the Upper Valley saying ICE was taking people in New Hampshire. That day, they heard three people were taken in West Lebanon, five people were taken in Londonderry, and one was taken in White River Junction. That is one reason why he thinks this is a regional surge of ICE. On August 8, 2026, he got a call that ICE had arrived in Keene. Right away, he circulated that information to as many people as he could. One way he communicated it was through a Facebook post. Facebook tends to show things to people that will make them angry to get a response, so there was a wave of angry responses, directed at him, at immigrants, and Keene, from all over the country, because that is what happens on Facebook. The information, as it unfolded on Saturday, August 8, 2026, was that people were called to a job near or on Baker St. and were arrested when they showed up at that job. The information they have says three people were arrested. They think two were arrested in that event and they do not know where the third person was arrested. All they know about the third person is that they were seen in ICE detention. They only have their first name, and no other information about the person. It is a disgrace that they are unable to get more information. As he understands it, one of the people who was taken chose to agree to be deported. He understands that ICE can put a lot of pressure

on people to make that decision. There was a rumor about a person being hung upside down until he agreed to sign an agreement to be deported.

Councilor Williams continued that on Sunday, August 9, 2026, they tried to figure out what happened. The incident about the keys was very concerning to him. The keys were given to the KPD by ICE and then returned to ICE, and the very next day, ICE showed up at the home. He himself got a call that morning when ICE showed up at the home. He was 30 or 40 minutes out of town and figured he would miss ICE if he went to the home when he returned to Keene, so he went to the Police Station to check and see what was going on. He was not prepared for what he saw. Two scary-looking black vans, transit vans with quite a bit of capacity, were parked next to the Police Station but closer to the Keene Ice area. There were four agents dressed in tactical gear, standing around and waiting to do something. He took a picture, which is the picture that circulated widely. It was blurry because his hands were shaking. Soon after that he witnessed, from the parking area next to the Police Station, in the section with a "Police Only" sign, about five ICE vehicles, or vehicles believed to be ICE. They all got in a convoy and rolled out from the Police side of the parking lot. He was grateful the Keene Sentinel showed up quickly and tried to give chase to one of the black vans as it departed. The ICE drivers have a lot of practice with losing people who are trying to follow them. They did so by making an illegal turn at the roundabout and they got away. The rest of the day had a lot of rumors, including rumors about people taken from the hospital, which was not true. What happened was a lot of people who worked at the hospital stayed home, and their coworkers were scared that they had been taken. He is so sorry this is happening to people, and he is so sorry to people in immigrant communities who are feeling fear because of this. His heart is with them.

Councilor Jones stated that he is scared and upset and he has a lot of good friends in the Spanish community who mean a lot to him. They were too scared to come tonight, even though they are properly documented. They are scared to go to work. He is ashamed to be part of a society that is like this right now. No one thought this would be happening in 2026.

Councilor Jones continued that he thanks the City Attorney for mentioning the three RSAs, because he has been looking at them all week to see what kind of amendments can be made to them. He wants to point out what they are up against as a City. RSA 106-Q states that the New Hampshire Attorney General "*can sue noncompliant local entities.*" Below that are the penalties. Courts can impose injunctive relief and punitive damage, including fines up to 25% of total state funds received to the local entity. If that ever happened to Keene, "we would kill ourselves trying to cut services." That would be a major thing to be up against. Those RSAs need amendments. Lastly, he wants to bring up the difference between an administrative warrant and a judicial warrant. The police cannot act on an administrative warrant. ICE can. If ICE is acting on an administrative warrant, they cannot even call the police in, unless a judicial warrant is issued. Regarding the 287(g), he has a question of whether they can react to an administrative warrant or if it still has to be a judicial warrant.

The City Manager replied that Keene does not have a 287(g) agreement and there is no interest in Keene signing one. Councilor Jones replied that communities around them have 287(g) agreements. The City Manager replied that is true, and her understanding is that those communities can act and do whatever ICE tells them to do, under their authority.

The City Attorney stated that the language in 287(g) agreements she has reviewed, as all the templates are available on the federal government website, says that any municipality that signed a 287(g) agreement with ICE will act under the supervision of and at the direction of ICE. She continued that as she said earlier, ICE having jurisdiction federally means they can direct those municipalities wherever they have jurisdiction. To the question of judicial versus administrative warrants, she understands what Councilor Jones is talking about, but she does not know if the distinction will come up with the interactions from the federal government to the local government. The federal government has the authority to ask local government for information. It does not necessarily matter what type of warrant they have, from her understanding. She believes the distinction is that an administrative warrant is executed by the department, while a judicial warrant would have been reviewed by a judge. If they are pursuing under either warrant, they have the right by federal statute to ask local government for information either way.

Councilor Roberts stated that listening to what some people brought up today, and looking at the audience, he noticed hardly anyone of color was here. He continued that looking over the Census data, they expect that in 2013, the population of Keene peaked and would level off and slowly go down. The population up to 2030 is predicted to be mainly white. The population after 2030, to help maintain it, will have a lot of people of color. He remembers in 2015 when he sat here and said, *"Be careful with the Pumpkin Fest."* The Council was voting on whether to give Pumpkin Fest a license. He said they would not be bullied by a bunch of criminals and he voted in favor. But the Council voted not to give Pumpkin Fest a license, which sent out the signal that Keene was not safe. That had a big effect on the population, school enrollment, and KSC. Right now, they might be looking at the small stuff. What are they going to do about ICE? What are they going to do to tell people of color that Keene is a welcoming and safe place? They are saying they cannot do this or that because of what the law says. They can walk a fine line and make sure they do not upset any law, while they give the death knoll to the future of Keene. They have to ensure that people want to move to Keene because it is a safe, welcoming place where they want their children to grow up.

Councilor Roberts continued that the man who was just taken came to Keene because it was a welcoming place. He created a business and helped his neighbors. He has American citizen children. If Keene is not welcoming, no one is coming, and the few who are here will leave. Then it will be an older, white City, quicker than anyone planned. Without young people of every color to replace the aging white population, there will be no businesses. They need young people of all colors to come here. Our community is based on youth. For the last month, for example, the building on West St. was bought and the plan is to make it into senior housing. That is not telling young people Keene is a nice place to come, and now they are in a position where they are telling people of color it is not a nice place to come.

Councilor Roberts continued that part of being a social scientist is laying out the demographics. Demographics show whether a city survives, just goes along, goes downhill, or thrives and moves ahead. That is the 15 City Councilors' responsibility. As a previous speaker said, they need to think about what to say to their children and grandchildren when they ask, years from now, *"What did you do during the war?"*

Councilor Haas stated that he would like to get into the specifics of what the Council can do. He continued that for starters, he would like the City to publicize Congresswoman Goodlander's contact information on the City's website and Facebook page, and maybe produce a video about it, too, to make that resource available to people. Second, as Councilor Tobin alluded to, when ICE activity comes into the City, the information that flows around is from the people who turn out to object to the ICE activity, and from coverage by the Keene Sentinel and other media. He would look to the KPD to supervise those situations and to respond when that is happening, not to engage or do anything inappropriate, unless something is called for, but at least to observe and give a solid report to the public about what was happening, when, where, and how. That could be information people could rely on, rather than the social media storm that erupts.

Councilor Haas continued that additionally, the City could entertain an ordinance that prohibits masked law enforcement officers, without specifying anything. The KPD is not masked, nor are law enforcement officers from the state or county. The ordinance, if possible, could also require body cameras for law enforcement officers in general, to make a statement that that is what you should expect when you are in Keene. That goes to what Councilor Roberts said. It would increase people's confidence in the City.

Councilor Haas continued that finally, it is on all of them to reach out to Project Home and the other groups that are doing the work, like Councilor Williams's group.. They should all be involved and push the work forward. The City has to do things in the City's name, but individuals can all do things in their own names, so he encourages people to do so.

Councilor Ruttle-Miller stated that she, too, is grateful to everyone who came tonight. It is great to see that so many people care. She encourages people to attend other Council meetings, too. She continued that the signs when entering New Hampshire say "Bienvenue," because the state has historically had a large number of immigrants. The signs have felt very hypocritical to her in the last few years. She grew up in a county with a significant French-Canadian population. It was not rare to hear people having a full French conversation next to you in the grocery store, restaurant, or hair salon, and many people speak French at home with their families. Many of the people who grew up in that area have varying immigration statuses. Yet it somehow feels like people, even from that background, have forgotten that they were very recently immigrants. She studied history and understands that there are constant changes in historic trends in immigration, but with that always comes xenophobia, racism, and scapegoating. Right now, they are seeing a lot of that. It is currently the larger trend as far as immigration goes. They should welcome people into communities, not look to scapegoat them as the problem when they are unable to find something else to rally against. It is like everyone points at the people they feel are different and are less protected.

Councilor Ruttle-Miller continued that she was very nervous coming to tonight's meeting, expecting to hear hateful and upsetting things. She is so proud of the people of Keene for standing up for their neighbors. She wants the City to do better.

Councilor Powers stated that the number of people in this room and downstairs is reflective of how concerned the community is about everyone who lives here, especially the one or two people who are no longer with us but may be back. He continued that if the Council can support

that family, they ought to do it, whether it is one Councilor or a group, in any ways they can, however small. He echoes the Councilors who encouraged people to vote. As they have talked about tonight, the Council has little control over much of what is going on, other than to protect the community. Those things need to be changed. The world is very different now than it was two and a half years ago. They need to see changes that will help these things not to happen in the future. He thinks the Council will do what is right, although he does not think that tonight they will know what that is. The community knows that the Council has heard everyone and that they know there is an issue. They will address it in the right way, instead of a reactive way, so it will yield greater results than what they have seen in the last few months around the country.

Councilor Greenwald thanked the Mayor, the City Attorney, the City Clerk, the City Manager, and Police staff. He continued that a lot of thought and a lot of hard work went into tonight's meeting, and he is proud of all of them and the Council, and the public for coming out. There have been lots of great ideas, lots of emotion, and the unfortunate reality is that the City does not have control of a federal organization. That is very frustrating. They can say anything as emotionally as they want, but they cannot tell a federal organization what to do or how to do it. He is troubled by the lack of credible information. He thanks Councilor Williams for his account of the events, which is the first information he has heard about this. He will not listen to Facebook rumors and nonsense. The inaccuracies on Facebook get repeated so much they take on the illusion of truth.

Councilor Greenwald stated that he thinks the City Manager has a great plan to distill what has been said and to come up with something. He thinks back to the 1930s. Whoever would have believed [what was to come]? As others have said, vote, vote, vote. The only way people can really change things is by voting for the state and federal people who will change the laws. A man in office was elected with this kind of a platform; unfortunately, the country brought this upon itself. People need to vote for change.

Mayor Kahn stated that his story is that he is in this world because two victims of Nazi Germany met in Chicago, and he is here. When Civil Rights confrontations took place in the 1960s, it was the federal government that came in and prohibited fire hoses from being used on US citizens. He was 15 years old, and in his *"my parents don't know and I know better"* mood said, *"This would not be a government action. Our government would not support this kind of thing."* His mom said, *"Don't be so certain."* So, here we are. And he is not so certain. He thinks masked, unnamed officers without proper badges, in our community or anywhere in the country, is something to be objected to. He personally has no qualms about doing that or advocating that the City make a statement in support of those who have made that statement before. They would not be original in making that statement.

The Mayor continued that he is struck by the statute and the vagaries of it, and he takes up Councilor Jones's offer to continue to peruse the statutes, but "obstruct and impede investigations" is without definition. He thinks there is a role for the City Manager and maybe the Police Chief to begin to explore that and help Councilor Jones or other legislators to push on the state authorities to clarify that, whether in statute or through the Attorney General. Keene runs a risk, and they are here to protect the taxpayers. That is the vise the state and federal government can put them in. They do not want to be the first and they do not want to be the

example. They need to proceed in unison with other cities, and he hopes they can. Part of that is the legislative role and part of that is in collaboration. He is in favor of using City resources to put the information out. He thinks linking the Go Fund Me page would be a harmless act on the City's part to try to help people in need. It might even establish a fund for people who will be in need in the future. He appreciates Project Home. He does not know how boldly the organization wants to be identified, but they are a resource for the community, and they are monitoring information that will undoubtedly change over time.

Mayor Kahn continued that he thinks there is a challenge to the KPD, the Police Chief, and the City Manager. The goal posts on policing have moved, and it puts Keene in an unfair position. They need to figure out whether there are tactics that would improve the safety of Keene citizens. He does not know how to do that and adhere to other guidance they are provided with, but he is willing to trust and he wants to hear about it. If these goal posts are moving, Keene will move with them and create some guidance and clarity. He hopes they find something positive from this session, because that was the Council's and staff's intent, to not just be passive, but to find something positive to come from this incident.

Councilor Chalice stated that she needs to correct her statement in which she implored people to vote. She continued that New Hampshire representatives right now at the federal level all voted for the Laken Riley Act, which has highly exacerbated the horrors that are happening. She asks that people make their own choice to vote, and keep very clearly in mind with what the current people we have in office have already voted for. She does not think those people will change. People need to be very clear about who they vote for. If they want to see something different, they should vote for change.

Councilor Tobin stated that she read something about a community having areas designated where a judicial warrant was required to enter. She wonders if that is possible, and if that is something that maybe places like the Library or the Rec Center could do, require a judicial warrant to enter. She continued that she had another thought, in terms of how they are taking action. The City Manager mentioned having emailed the Fire Chief about having clearer identification on the SUV, which is great. Steps like that are important. It helps people feel heard and to understand the steps the City is trying to take, and that the City is listening.

Councilor Williams stated that one of the shortfalls of the information they have is the ability to find out who has been taken. He continued that he would love for City staff to come up with some system, whether it would be going to the Police Chief or going to the New Hampshire Attorney General. He wants to know so that the families and employers of those who have been taken can be contacted, and so that support can be provided to these families. They do not even know who they are. They think that three people were taken from Keene, but that number could be higher. The "three people" information was not information they were provided with, but rather information they had to track down from the affected people. It is quite possible it is an undercount. They do not believe anyone was taken on Monday, but they do not know for sure. They know some people had interactions with ICE. A father and son were walking along and had to provide identification so that they could go home. They were very frightened by that. Fortunately, they had papers with them. Someone else was detained at a construction truck and later released. We had to follow up to find that information with the owner of the construction

truck. It is information that is being hidden from the community intentionally. They need to figure out how to get that information and get it to people who can help.

Councilor Ruttle-Miller stated that regarding coming to a consensus on what type of work needs to be done, to echo what Councilor Greenwald and Councilor Williams said, there has been so much going on, and it feels like a whiplash situation, but if ICE comes again, people in the City need faster communication. They need immediate texts, calls, and emails. It needs to be better. She also wants to say, to the woman who spoke about having lost trust in local government, she is so sorry she feels that way. She hopes people can see the Council is here to be as transparent and honest with the public about the information they have available to them as possible. She has written down as many of the questions that people asked as she could, and she and the other Councilors are always willing to take calls and emails and answer questions. She encourages people to try and trust them, although she knows it is hard to trust government in general. The Councilors are people's neighbors. She has been a Councilor since January 1, 2026. She is a member of this community and she ran for Council because she cares about Keene. She stands with the community.

Mayor Kahn stated that this is the Council's break, and they all deserve a break. They will all be communicating with people in the community and he hopes they do not have more incidents that cause them to need to hold special meetings between now and September 17, 2026. He also does not want to see them being dormant on following up with people. To that extent, he wants the City Manager to follow through with her suggestion to meet with City staff, the City Attorney, Police Chief, and whoever else she feels is important to the conversation. When they get back together on September 17, 2026, that is an opportunity for the Council to hear back from the City Manager, and they will see where to go from there.

The Mayor denied an audience member's request to speak again, due to the public comment portion of the meeting being over. He continued that people who could not attend tonight, or people in attendance who have additional comments, can get their comments to the City Clerk's Office so they can be shared with the Councilors.

The Mayor thanked everyone for coming tonight. He continued that this has been valuable, knowing now that there is a network of people in the community who want to communicate with the Council. He encourages people to share information with each other as best they can.

2. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Reviewed and edited by,
Terri Hood, City Clerk and Kathleen Richards, Deputy City Clerk