ADOPTED

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 8, 2026 **5:00 PM** **2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall**

Members Present:
John Mitchell, Chair
William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Mari Brunner
Eric Weisenberger
Gerald Kuhn
Andrew Madison
Derek Blunt
Doris McCollester
Gerald Lins

Staff Present:

Members Not Present:
Councilor Laura Ruttle-Miller

1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting: August 11, 2026

Mr. Lins made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of August 11, 2026. Mr. Weisenberger seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4. Board Business

a. October Einbeck Visit

Mr. Schoefmann stated that the City received the official invitation to Einbeck from Mayor Sabin Michalek, which he will pass around.

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone had questions about the trip. Mr. Schoefmann stated that this week, he will set up the WhatsApp discussion group for participants. He continued that there will be 20 travelers. Meagan McLaughlin has most people's flight information.

Chair Mitchell stated that the recent meeting for travelers, held at Black Cloud, went very well. He continued that people got to know each other, and it was very nice for Black Cloud to host them. September 22, 2026, at 6:00 PM, will be the next and final meeting for travelers, at Mr. Schoefmann's mother's house in Walpole. He will give directions in the WhatsApp group.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mr. Lins put together a draft of expectations for travelers. He asked if copies were distributed at the meeting for travelers. Others replied that they talked about it at the meeting. Mr. Schoefmann asked if he should get copies for the next meeting for travelers. Others agreed.

b. Pumpkin Fest Participation (10/17) – Derek, Mari, and Will

i) Vote on Pumpkin Fest budget

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he and Mr. Blunt did some research on what they will need for a budget for Pumpkin Fest. He continued that he thinks the total costs for the ingredients and supplies they would need in order to make and sell food would be about $750. Their estimate is $704, but contingency would be good.

Mr. Weisenberger made a motion for the Partner City Committee to authorize the expenditure of $750 on supplies for Pumpkin Fest. Mr. Kuhn or Mr. Lins seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Discussion ensued about supplies needed, such as grills, spatulas, tongs, a warmer, gloves, tables, fire compliance items, and tents, and who has access to what, and what is still left over from last year. Mr. Schoefmann stated that as the date gets closer, he and Mr. Blunt know who to reach out to if they need help.

Mr. Blunt asked if the signage still exists. Discussion ensued about banners and signs. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he will follow up with Ms. McLaughlin about whether she knows where a banner is.

Mr. Blunt stated that they need to figure out the prices for the items they will be selling. He continued that two years ago, they sold bratwurst for $5.00, hotdogs for $3.00, and drinks for $2.00. He does not have records for last year's prices, but he knows they increased the prices. Discussion continued. Mr. Blunt stated that in 2024, they had a card reader, since they had network access, which brought in an additional $500, approximately. He continued that last year, they could not use a card reader because the network was too clogged for them to connect. Mr. Schoefmann stated that the PCC requested to have their booth in front of Black Cloud this year, so maybe Black Cloud would kindly give them access to their wi-fi network. Discussion continued with ideas and thoughts about how to use a card reader.

Chair Mitchell asked if there was anything else about Pumpkin Fest. Mr. Blunt stated that if anyone who will not be in Germany could help at the booth, even just for an hour, that would be great. Ms. Brunner replied that she, Mr. Schoefmann, and Mr. Weisenberger will be in town. Ms. McCollester stated that she can help, too. Mr. Blunt stated that he will reach out via email to the

group or individuals about what help is needed, such as working the booth, use of a pick-up truck, and set up and break down. Discussion continued about transporting and setting up the items for the booth.

5. **Communications**
    a. **Mayor Kahn received invitation from Dr. Sabine Michalek**

Chair Mitchell stated that again, Mayor Kahn received the letter from Sabine Michalek, so they have officially been invited.

6. **Reports**
    a. **Treasurer Report – Eric**

Mr. Weisenberger stated that the fundraising account remains at $17,777. He continued that there has been a little bit of movement in the general appropriations account, which is at $16,238. That reflects the $200 Pumpkin Fest registration fee and a check for the $367 they owed the Colonial Theatre for last year's welcome dinner.

    b. **Annual Report Presentation – 9/23/26 at 6:00 PM, City Hall Council Chambers**

Mr. Schoefmann explained, for those who did not know, that the City Council asks City committees, commissions, and boards to give them an annual report at a meeting. Chair Mitchell added that he has given these annual presentations in the past, and typically, they are happy for people to show up, and he answers the Council's questions about the PCC. Discussion ensued about how the meeting on September 23 will be the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure (MSFI) Committee, one of the City Council's standing committees.

Chair Mitchell stated that MSFI Committee meetings are public, and anyone is welcome to come. He continued that it will probably be about a 15-minute presentation. It will be great to tell the Council about how the PCC has had 64 German visitors in Keene, and about all the connections they have going.

7. **New Business**

Chair Mitchell asked if the PCC should consider getting a new banner or two. Mr. Schoefmann replied that he can check with Ms. McLaughlin first about whether they still have one. Discussion ensued about the size, appearance, and content of the banners the PCC previously had, what they might want from a new banner, and the need to determine the costs. Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Kuhn to look into the PCC purchasing a vinyl banner in Keene. Mr. Kuhn agreed. He asked how big it should be. Discussion ensued and Ms. Brunner suggested ten feet. Chair Mitchell suggested two feet by eight feet and two feet by four feet. He clarified that this is just to check prices, not to buy right now. Discussion continued about whether there would be enough time to have the PCC approve the expense in time to use the banner at Pumpkin Fest, or whether this would be too rushed. The group decided to just use/make a temporary, makeshift banner this year and work on getting the vinyl one for next year.

8. **More Time**
    a. **Fundraisers**
        i) Cookbook Updates

Chair Mitchell asked if there was a cookbook update. Mr. Schoefmann stated that Mr. Lins had sent an email saying what was needed. Mr. Lins replied that if anyone has more recipes to contribute, they can send them in, but at some point, they need to just call it done and start looking at the formatting. Chair Mitchell asked if he included any of the travelers who are not PCC members. Mr. Lins replied that he is not sure; he probably just emailed the people from the group Ms. McLaughlin emails when she announces the PCC meetings. He will check. Chair Mitchell replied that other travelers might possibly be good sources of recipes. Mr. Lins replied that is true, but at some point, they need to just find a stopping point for recipe collection and move on with the project.

Chair Mitchell asked if Mr. Lins thinks the cookbook project is approximately half finished, a quarter finished, or something else. Mr. Lins replied that it is probably 75% finished. He continued that they have a lot of material, and they might get a few more submissions. Chair Mitchell asked if Mr. Lins would open it to Sandra Howard's list of people. Mr. Lins replied that he does not personally know her, but sure, he would be open to her and the people she knows participating. Chair Mitchell replied that he would be happy to send Ms. Howard a message.

9. **Next Meeting: October 13, 2026**
10. **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker