KEENE CITY COUNCIL
Council Chambers, Keene City Hall
November 5, 2026
7:00 PM

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTES FROM PRECEDING MEETING

- October 15, 2026 Minutes

A. HEARINGS / PRESENTATIONS / PROCLAMATIONS

1. Proclamation - Honoring and Thanking Veterans for their Service
2. Community Recognition: Keene State College Men's and Women's Ice Hockey

B. ELECTIONS / NOMINATIONS / APPOINTMENTS / CONFIRMATIONS

1. Confirmations - Energy and Climate Committee

C. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Resignation - Connie Joyce - Heritage Commission
2. Ken Kost - In Support of Single Lane Configuration on the North Side of Central Square
3. Autumn DelaCroix - In Support of Single Lane Configuration on the North Side of Central Square
4. Sam Jackson - In Support of Single Lane Configuration on North Side of Central Square

D. REPORTS - COUNCIL COMMITTEES

1. Court Street Drain Replacement Acceptance of Permanent Easements

2. Guitard Homes Court Street Cottage Court Acceptance of a Utility Easement
3. Verbal Update: Traffic and Safety Assessment of School Street
4. Councilor Filiault - Request to Review Planned Traffic Lane Configuration Around Central Square
5. Direct Referral: Communication/Dorrie Masten - Concerns Related to Downtown Infrastructure Project
6. Downtown Infrastructure Project Update
7. Residential Property Revitalization Zone (RPRZ) Application 128-130 School Street
8. Execution of a Federal Funding Project Agreement for the THT Phase 2 Project NHDOT#45251
9. Acceptance of Donations from Pathways for Keene
10. 3 Million Gallon Tank Repair - Recommendation for Additional Scope of Work
11. Re-allocation of Funds from the Sullivan Road Bridge Project to the George Street Bridge Project
12. Execution of an Agreement for Engineering Services with KenWave Solutions, Inc for the Scope of the Transmission Water Main Inspection Project
13. Relating to the Execution of a Change Order with Structural Preservation Services - City Hall Parking Garage Rehab Project

E. CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

F. REPORTS - CITY OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS

1. Resignation — John Therriault — Conservation Commission
2. Resignation - Jill Bouchillon - Heritage Commission

G. REPORTS - BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

H. REPORTS - MORE TIME

I. ORDINANCES FOR FIRST READING

1. Establishing a Moratorium on Large-Scale Data Center Uses Ordinance O-2026-17

J. ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING

1. Relating to Wells Garage Lower Level Public Parking
   Ordinance O-2026-16

K. RESOLUTIONS

1. Relating to the Allocation of Funds for Construction of the Monadnock View Cemetery Expansion Project
   Resolution R-2026-42
2. Relating to an Appropriation of Funds for Water Supply Technical Services
   Resolution R-2026-56

NON PUBLIC SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, October 15, 2026. In the absence of the Mayor, the City Clerk called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. Roll called: Randy L. Filiault, Michele A. Chalice, Catherine I. Workman, Bryan J. Lake, Jacob R. Favolise, Laura E. Tobin, Robert C. Williams, Philip M. Jones, Kris E. Roberts, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Edward J. Haas, Molly V. Ellis, and Thomas F. Powers were present. Councilors Laura E. Ruttle-Miller and Mitchell H. Greenwald were absent. A motion to elect Councilor Powers as Temporary Chair was made by Councilor Filiault and duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion carried unanimously with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Chair Powers took his seat at the dais. Councilor Filiault led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING

A motion by Councilor Filiault to adopt the October 1, 2026, meeting minutes as presented was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion carried unanimously with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Powers announced upcoming dates of interest in October and November 2026:

- October 17: Keene Pumpkin Festival
- October 18–October 24: New Hampshire History Week
- November 3: State General Election Day. Polls are open in Keene from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Contact the City Clerk with any questions about elections, voting, or absentee ballots, or visit the City website (KeeneNH.gov). There is an online sign-up for those wanting to volunteer

PROCLAMATION - FRIENDS OF THE KEENE PUBLIC LIBRARY FALL BOOK SALE

Chair Powers welcomed former Mayor Kendall Lane. Chair Powers read into the record and presented Mr. Lane with a Proclamation declaring October 23 to October 25, 2026, as Friends of the Keene Public Library Days and urged citizens of the Monadnock Region to visit the Fall Book Sale at the Keene Public Library in support of continued excellent Library programs and facilities.

Mr. Lane said the Book Sale is the largest single fundraiser that the Friends of the Public Library, and in effect the Public Library, do on an annual basis to support the Library. He strongly encouraged anybody watching this to participate in the Book Sale. The last Book Sale, in April 2026, set a record for the most revenue that they had ever taken on a single sale: he said there is a lot of demand for books out there. He commented on people looking at their devices and thinking that is the future. Well, he said books have not gone away, and the Friends of the Public Library strongly encouraged people to visit the Book Sale. He noted there is a wide variety of books, thousands that are available. He pointed out that over the past year the Friends of the Library gave $55,000 to the Library to support Library programs; spent $10,000 on museum passes; spent $7,500 supporting Reading for Ribby and set aside $80,000 for the Light Program at the Library. So, he said the funds raised at the Book Sale over the years have been going to a very useful purpose at the Library. Mr. Lane strongly encouraged everyone to visit the

Book Sale. Mr. Lane also mentioned the November 3, 2026, Election and urged participation, stating that it is critically important to support democracy through literacy and civic participation.

PROCLAMATION - NATIONAL PHARMACY WEEK

Chair Powers welcomed Katheryn Fisher of Cheshire Medical and representatives. The Chair read into the record and presented Ms. Fischer with a Proclamation declaring the third week of October as National Pharmacy Week, encouraging all residents to recognize and celebrate the pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, student pharmacists, and pharmacy teams whose expertise, compassion, and commitment contribute to health, safety, and well-being of our community.

Ms. Fisher recognized all the pharmacy people in the City of Keene during this pharmacy week, noting that the representatives present were just a small example of it. She is a licensed advanced pharmacy technician at Cheshire Medical Center. She was joined by Park, a certified pharmacy technician who went through an apprenticeship program, Amanda, and Tyler, who is Cheshire Medical Center's first pharmacy resident and just starting his pharmacy career. During the next week, she encouraged everyone to go out and thank pharmacy personnel across the City for all their hard work, because it is hard work.

PUBLIC HEARING - ORDINANCE O-2026-09-A - RELATING TO SHORT-TERM RENTAL USES

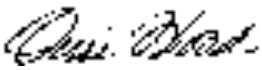
Chair Powers opened the Public Hearing at 7:15 PM and the City Clerk read the Notice of Hearing. The Chair welcomed Senior Planner, Mari Brunner and Community Development Director, Paul Andrus. Chair Powers called forward item C.2., a Communication from Cole Mills in opposition to proposed Ordinance O-2026-09-A, Relating to Short-Term Rental Uses. Chair Powers accepted the communication as informational.

Ms. Brunner explained that the intent of the Ordinance is to fill a gap in the City's regulations that was created when the City changed its definition of family in order to comply with recent changes to state law. She explained that short term rentals have been operating in Keene for a long time without any local regulation. However, with this new "family" definition in place, this use is no longer allowed because it is considered to be a transient use, which means that the guests stay for durations of less than 30 days. Therefore, this Ordinance proposed to formally recognize short-term rental uses by creating a use definition in Article 8 under the category of Commercial Uses. The proposed definition is, "a dwelling, or any portion thereof, that the owner or the lessee of the dwelling offers for occupancy for a fee for fewer than 30 consecutive days. Short term rentals can be hosted, where the dwelling is the primary residence of the owner or lessee, or non-hosted, where the dwelling is not the primary residence of the owner or lessee." Along with this definition, Ms. Brunner explained that there were two use standards proposed. The first would require that any short-term rental property located in a residential district maintain the appearance of a residential property. The second is specific to non-hosted short-term rentals and it would require them to post the contact information for the owner or their agent; if the owner or agent does not live within one hour of the property, they have to post the contact information for somebody who does live within one hour, who can handle emergency situations.

Ms. Brunner said staff were also asked to take another look at the zoning districts where these uses are allowed and to look into the pros and cons of creating a rental registry. So, staff did quite a bit of research into this topic and came back with more information at the next workshop, which was held on September 14, 2026. Two people spoke at the second workshop, but both were mostly asking clarifying questions and not necessarily in favor or opposed. Ultimately, the Joint Committee of the Planning Board and Planning, Licenses and Development Committee voted unanimously to amend the Ordinance to allow short-term rentals in the downtown growth and the downtown core districts. Then, the Planning Board voted unanimously to find the Ordinance, as amended, to be consistent with the Master Plan, and the PLD Committee voted to refer this Ordinance back to Council for this Public Hearing. Ms. Brunner summarized that discussion from the Public Workshop. She said that when staff were looking into this, they did quite a bit of research into the different ways that short-term rentals can be regulated, noting there are a lot of pros and cons to this regulation. So, they tried to investigate what was actually happening on the ground in Keene at this time and came to the conclusion that right now, short-term rentals are not a big problem. So, staff's recommended approach is to take this as an incremental approach to figuring out the correct balance between regulating this use and spending City resources wisely. Staff did a report through AirDNA, which found that in the last 12 months, there were only 80 active short-term rentals, which represents less than 1% of Keene's housing supply. To provide a sense of scale: in more touristy destinations, short-term rentals can take up anywhere between 10% to 40% of the housing supply. So, Ms. Brunner said one thing staff were planning to do is continue to monitor and watch the numbers in the community and if there were any concentration in a certain area, they would keep an eye on that and come back to the Council to report changes. For now, staff recommended starting with simple, low cost, easy to enforce regulations, which would essentially be maintaining the status quo, and then coming back for future modifications if it becomes necessary.

Chair Powers opened the floor to public comments.

Hearing no comments, the Chair closed the Public Hearing at 7:23 PM, except that written comments would be accepted up until 1:00 PM on Tuesday, November 10, 2026. This would be before the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee at their regular meeting on November 12. No additional public comments would be accepted at that meeting.

A true record, attest: 
City Clerk

PUBLIC HEARING – RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY REVITALIZATION ZONE (RPRZ) APPLICATION 128–130 SCHOOL STREET

Chair Powers opened the Public Hearing at 7:24 PM and the City Clerk read the Notice of Hearing. Chair Powers welcomed an introduction from Community Development Director Paul Andrus, who was joined by the applicant, Mr. Evan Ray, owner of the property at 128–130 School Street. Mr. Andrus said the City's Committee for the Residential Property Revitalization Program (RPRZ) reviewed the application and determined it was complete. Mr. Andrus reminded the Council that the RPRZ Program was approved in December 2025 to encourage

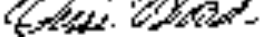
reinvestment in existing residential properties and support additional housing opportunities. He said tonight's Public Hearing process was the Council's opportunity to get an overview of the project and for the public to review it as well and provide any comments. Following the Public Hearing, the application would be referred to the Finance, Organization and Personnel (FOP) Committee for their review and recommendation whether to approve it and if so, what the length of the duration of the tax abatement would be. Then, the application would come back to Council for final approval. Mr. Andrus welcomed Mr. Ray to describe the specifics of the project before Mr. Andrus would review the eligibility criteria and specific questions the Council may have.

Mr. Ray provided a brief overview, noting that the project involves converting an existing underutilized barn on his property into an approximately 646-square-foot, one-bedroom apartment, increasing the property value from two residential units to three. This investment will repurpose the existing structure to create additional housing in Keene, while preserving the building and maintaining its residential use. Mr. Ray said that the 79-E Tax Relief Program was definitely a motivating factor in the decision to pursue this project just because of the financial incentive.

Mr. Andrus reviewed the high-level criteria for the 79-E Program in terms of the project being reviewed for completeness. Mr. Andrus said this is an existing housing unit/structure that is currently two units. It is connected to the structure that is proposed to be renovated and repurposed into one housing unit: 646 square feet. The approximate investment is $76,250. The property meets the eligibility criteria for age, at least 40 years old; the main structure was built in 1880, and the barn structure was built afterward, but meets that 40-year criteria. The property is on municipal water and sewer. In terms of meeting the criteria for the number of units, it is below four units on the site. It exceeds the threshold of $50,000 for the project. As far as public benefit is concerned, it is creating one additional unit of housing, so Mr. Andrus said it would be increasing housing supply without developing a new principal building, which is a part of the RPRZ program. Mr. Andrus said it is consistent with the Comprehensive Master Plan to expand housing opportunities. He said it is also efficient reuse and reinvestment: conversion of an existing underused barn/garage and investment in an older residential property. Its improvements are intended to support safe, functional residential use. Mr. Andrus described the next steps. First, would be to receive public testimony tonight. Then, the application would be referred to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, which would consider the application's eligibility, public benefits, and duration if it is approved for tax relief.

Chair Powers opened the floor to public comments.

Hearing no comments, the Chair closed the Public Hearing at 7:30 PM, except that written comments would be accepted up until 1:00 PM on Tuesday, November 10, 2026. This would be before the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee at their regular meeting on November 12. No additional public comments would be accepted at that meeting.

A true record, attest: 

City Clerk

NOMINATIONS - ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE

Mayor Kahn renominated Catherine Koning and Matthew Bolton to move from Alternate to Regular members of the Energy and Climate Committee, with terms to expire December 31, 2028. Chair Powers tabled the nominations until the next regular meeting.

CONFIRMATION - HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Mayor Kahn nominated Mackenzie Perkins to serve as an Alternate member of the Human Rights Committee, with a term to expire December 31, 2028. A motion by Councilor Filiault to confirm the nomination was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

COMMUNICATION - COUNCILOR JONES - REQUEST FOR PROCLAMATION HONORING AND EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO ALL VETERANS FOR THEIR SERVICE

A communication was received from Councilor Philip Jones, requesting that the City Council suspend its Rules of Order to act on his request that the Mayor present a Proclamation at the next City Council meeting honoring and expressing gratitude to our veterans for their service.

Councilor Jones noted that in his discussions with the Mayor, he would like to present this Proclamation at the next City Council meeting on November 3, 2026, so this was time sensitive.

A motion by Councilor Jones to suspend Section 26 of the Rules of Order was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

A motion by Councilor Jones to adopt the wording of the presented Proclamation was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion carried unanimously with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

PLD REPORT - KIWANIS CLUB OF KEENE - REQUEST TO USE CITY PROPERTY - TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

A Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report was read, unanimously recommending the Keene Kiwanis Club be granted permission to use downtown City rights-of-way on Friday, November 27, 2026, to conduct the 2026 Tree Lighting Festival, subject to the licensing requirements identified in the staff report including associated road closures and authorization of free parking. All permissions granted herein are subject to compliance with the City-approved safety protocol document, which becomes a part of this license. Approved event footprint, road closures, and areas of use may be amended based upon the status and conditions of active downtown construction, including allowing event activities within or adjacent to construction areas when conditions safely permit, provided such adjustments are consistent with public safety and the general scope of the approved event. A motion by Councilor Filiault to carry out the

intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Workman. The motion carried unanimously with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

PLD REPORT - REQUEST TO CONSIDER RESTRICTING THE SALE OF 7-HYDROXYMITRAGYNINE (7-OH) AND CONCENTRATED KRATOM PRODUCTS

A Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report was read, unanimously recommending that the City Attorney be directed to create a draft Ordinance restricting the sale of kratom products to individuals under the age of 21. A motion by Councilor Filiault to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Jones.

Councilor Williams noted that he first wrote the letter about this in July 2026 after the legislature had failed to pass legislation in 2025. He said that the very day after he wrote the letter to City Council, the federal government announced that they were finally going to think about doing something. That is exciting, however, moving on the federal government's pace, it had not happened yet. At the state level, he noted that kratom legislation was being reintroduced, but it would probably be well into 2027 when that passes. So, he said the Council considered what it could do about this, bearing in mind what the federal and state governments may be doing; the City did not want to develop a definition that the state would then supersede and the City would have to resolve it, so the thought was to give the state some time to get it right. In the meantime, he said the PLD Committee had a very good presentation from a couple of representatives of the youth community, who had done quite a bit of research and outreach, exploring where this is sold in Keene. Councilor Williams commended the work they had done, and he thought they made a really good case that the Council could at least raise the age to 21 to keep it out of the hands of high school kids, for example. Councilor Williams said he thought that was a good idea. So, he said the thought from the Committee was to raise the age of sales to 21, which would be something pretty simple to do now, and to wait and see what the State of New Hampshire comes up with, acknowledging that the City may need to adjust this later. Councilor Williams urged the other Councilors to support this.

Councilor Haas wanted to thank the City's Health Officer for the research they did looking into this. He said that raising the age to 21 seemed to be in accordance with any of the merchants who are selling it in the City already. So, he said it would not impact them. However, it would raise awareness of this as a health issue. So, Councilor Haas said the City would be in a good place here.

The motion carried unanimously with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

First, City Manager Elizabeth Ferland announced the commencement of Fall Leaf Collection. The Public Works Department sent out a notice that they are going to start November 9, 2026. Look at the City of Keene's website (KeeneNH.gov) to find your street and it will list the week for collection. Residents are asked to place their leaves on the edges of their lawns, not to push

them into the streets, and to leave them loose (i.e., do not bag the leaves). The City Manager understood that it could be a challenge because if there is a snowstorm, pickup may be delayed, but she said they will be there, so place the leaves at the edges of your lawns.

Next, Councilors were provided with a Workforce Demographics Report that was created by HR Director, Darcy Newport. The Report highlights some important trends in our City workforce and why we need to continue planning for the future. Nearly half of our employees have been with the City for less than five years, while 51 employees have 20 or more years of service. The City Manager said it is important to recognize that much of the turnover we have experienced over the last several years has been driven by retirements, resulting in a significant transition in our workforce. The report also identifies employees who are retirement eligible. That does not mean they are going to retire, but they can any day if they want to. They are eligible, and so that is something the City monitors in each department. This has been a significant focus of Deputy City Manager, Andy Bohannon's, work, particularly in the areas of employee retention, leadership development, succession planning, and knowledge transfer. She said the City had been intentional about preparing for the next generation of employees and leaders, and that includes data, reinforcing the work, and the ability to transfer that information when someone who has been with us for a very long-time leaves. So, as we look ahead, particularly with our Compensation Study currently underway and future budgets, the City Manager said the City continues investing in its employees, developing its future leaders, and preserving the institutional knowledge necessary to maintain the quality of services we have here at the City of Keene. She called it good data for the Council to take a look at.

The City Manager provided an update on the City’s revaluation. The Assessing Department was finishing up the 2026 revaluation with our contractor Vision Government Solutions. The final values were set and had been submitted to the New Hampshire Department of Revenue. Any property owner who attended an informal hearing with Vision should be getting a notice of final value as a result of their hearing. The letters were expected to be mailed Friday, October 16, 2026, and may take a week or so to get to the owners. The next step for property owners who wish to challenge their assessments would be for them to go through the abatement process after the tax bills have been received. Abatement information will be available on the Assessing Department website after bills go out. The City Manager stated that the City did not know the tax rate at this time, which everyone wanted the answer for; the state was still working with the City and School to have their final numbers before the New Hampshire Department of Revenue would set the tax rate. The City Manager said the City anticipated that the tax rate would drop significantly, but it would not be final until they have all those numbers.

The City Manager also reported that the US Army Corps of Engineers New England Division had been working on a study for the Beaver Brook Watershed that was nearing completion. The City Manager anticipated a presentation to the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee in January 2027. The preliminary draft findings indicated limited cost-effective mitigation options, which she called disappointing because a lot of effort went into this study, with the most viable near-term measures being maintenance of existing flood control systems, ongoing monitoring, and emergency systems. When this report is brought forward, staff would also present how the study's findings connect to the City's Hazard Mitigation Plan and identify estimated costs for some of the lower hanging fruit projects in that Plan. That will be brought

forward also through the next update of the Capital Improvement Plan. The City Manager knew this was something Councilor Haas had been following very closely.

City Manager Ferland also mentioned a staff-referred item from a few weeks prior. The Council had received a letter from a resident of the Edgewood neighborhood regarding trash along the Appel Way path earlier in October 2026. The City Manager said the trash appeared to be associated with abandoned encampments. The City identified the property owner as a part of a much larger parcel located behind the Hannaford Plaza, with which the Council is familiar from past conversations. Ownership of the property may be changing, and staff were working to identify a practical solution for addressing the cleanup. It is an abandoned encampment: it is not one where anyone is currently residing.

Lastly, the City Manager shared that she had tasked the Community Development Department with developing a more consistent way to track the City's progress on housing development and to provide annual updates to the Council. These are the housing goals that the Council has established as a part of its long-range plans but also as a part of its Council Goals. With some of the new technology the City has implemented, she said they should be able to collect and report this information more easily. She said she is looking for dashboards but at this point would take a report that tells the City how much progress it has made since adopting these goals. She said staff were also looking at ways to track financial impacts of the City's housing and economic incentives; they know 79-E and some of the other incentives work but it would be great to be able to track the number and value of the projects, the amount of assessed value receiving tax relief, and when those benefits expire. The City Manager said staff were improving some of the technology they were using and should be able to do this, with the goal to provide the Council with meaningful data to evaluate whether these programs are helping the City to achieve its housing and economic development goals, while also understanding financial impact. Once they have developed a consistent reporting format, she would report back to the City Council.

REPORT – CITY OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS - FISCAL YEAR 2025 STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER) GRANT AWARD ACCEPTANCE – FIRE CHIEF

A memorandum was received from Fire Chief Gregory Seymour, recommending that the City Council suspend its Rules of Order and authorize the City Manager to do all things necessary to accept the Fiscal Year 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to support the hiring of eight (8) additional full-time firefighters for the Keene Fire Department. Authorization to expend grant funds and approve associated budgetary amendments will be brought forward separately through the Finance, Organization and Personnel (FOP) Committee.

Chair Powers welcomed comments from the City Manager, who said this was on the Council's agenda to accept a SAFER Grant for just over $1.6 million to hire up to eight firefighters. This is a grant that the City had applied for at least three times. She was very excited the City had been successful and Fire Chief Gregory Seymour was present to talk about it. There is a timeline for accepting the Grant, so this would require a suspension of the Council's Rules. Once notified of the award, there are 30 days to accept the Grant. This evening, the Council was talking about

accepting the Grant. Next would be additional conversations at the FOP Committee about the match and how the City would fund that match, the long-range plan, and the financial impacts over the next four years of implementing the Grant. The City Manager recognized Chief Seymour, who she said deserved a lot of credit for the City being awarded the Grant.

A motion by Councilor Chadbourne to suspend Section 26 of the Rules of Order to act on this time sensitive matter was duly seconded by Councilor Lake. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

Chair Powers welcomed Chief Seymour, who said the City Manager provided an incredible introduction. The Chief said they were present requesting that the City Council suspend its Rules to authorize the City Manager to do all things necessary to accept the fiscal year 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response, or SAFER, Grant award to the Keene Fire Department by FEMA, with a total federal share of $1.676 million. The SAFER Grant is a federal program designed to increase the number of frontline firefighters available to respond to emergencies, improve firefighter safety, and help communities achieve appropriate emergency response staffing. Our department has been awarded funding for eight additional firefighters, representing two additional members on each of our four shifts. This award offers an opportunity to address several long-standing operational challenges, including the cross staffing of apparatus, overlapping emergency incidents, increasing call volumes, and the demands placed on our existing personnel. He said that additional staffing would improve our ability to deploy Fire and EMS resources, strengthen our initial emergency response, and better protect both our firefighters and the residents of Keene. The grant provides federal funding toward eligible personnel costs at a rate of up to 75% during the first two years and 35% during the third year. The City will be responsible for the required non-federal share, along with other costs not covered by the federal grant. Chief Seymour wanted to emphasize that tonight's request was for grant acceptance only. They were not seeking authorization to expend the grant funds or approve necessary budget amendments; they would return via FOP for those portions. The reasoning for the request tonight was suspension of the Rules for the federal government's 30-day deadline, which would be October 25, 2026. Chief Seymour said this Grant represents an important opportunity for the City of Keene to improve its emergency response capabilities while receiving substantial federal assistance toward those improvements.

A motion by Councilor Chadbourne was duly seconded by Councilor Lake to authorize the City Manager to do all things necessary to accept the Fiscal Year 2025 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to support the hiring of eight (8) additional full-time firefighters for the Keene Fire Department.

Councilor Filiault wanted to stand to applaud the City Manager, Former Chief Martin, and Chief Seymour for their efforts getting this Grant, stating third time is the charm and kudos to everybody involved. Councilor Filiault wanted to point out that during his 28 years on the City Council, the Council had always supported the Keene Fire Department (FD), not only in words but in action and funding: always. Despite some recently misleading comments in the media, Councilor Filiault stated that the Council’s support for the Keene FD had never changed nor

wavered. He said this Council is currently doing and always will support the Keene FD in words and actions. He said to hold them accountable by their actions, but you would see the Council's actions always support the Keene FD.

The motion carried unanimously with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

REPORT – CITY OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS - ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS - FINANCE DIRECTOR

A memorandum was received from the Finance Director/Treasurer, Kari Chamberlain, recommending that the City Council accept donations totaling $5,750, and the City Manager be authorized to use each donation in the manner specified by the donor. A motion by Councilor Chadbourne to accept the donations with gratitude, and that the City Manager be authorized to use these funds in the manner specified by the donor was duly seconded by Councilor Lake.

- $4,250 in donations to honor nature photographer, Lee Porter, who recently passed away. Lee enjoyed capturing wildlife photos at Ashuelot River Park. The first $2,000 in donations will be used toward an existing granite bench engraving at Ashuelot River Park, and additional donations in his memory will be used for ongoing care and maintenance of the park. Donations received from:
    - Douglas & Charlene Baxter - $100
    - Stephen & Denise Bell - $100
    - David Bulger - $100
    - Joanne Cochi & Clifford Bull, Jr. - $50
    - Geoffrey & Mary Burke - $50
    - Robert & Gayle Donahue - $50
    - William & Regina Kieckhafer - $100
    - Barry & Roberta Kirshner - $250
    - Daniel & Janet LaFleur - $50
    - Linda's Closet - $50
    - Thomas & Susan Masiello - $50
    - Phyllis Pownall - $200
    - Bill Riley & Liz Simon - $100
    - Timothy & Diane Roberts - $50
    - David Schwartz - $50
    - Jerry Slavet - $100
    - Charles & Marcy Southgate - $50
    - Charles & Sharon Stone - $100
    - Richard & Lorry Taylor, Jr. - $100
    - Michael & Jeanne Thieme - $200
    - Garry Weiner - $2,000
    - Thomas & Marcia Wessels - $50
    - Lisa Wharff - $100
    - Steven & Kimberly Willens - $200
- $500 from Cersosimo Industries, Inc. for the 2026 Keene International Festival

- $1,000 from Hamblet Electric Charitable Foundation for the 2026 Keene International Festival

Councilor Chadbourne extended her sincere appreciation to the donors on behalf of the City for their generosity and support of our community. She said we are very lucky to live in a community, which cares so much and wants to contribute in all ways, including monetary.

The motion carried unanimously with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

REPORT – CITY OFFICERS AND DEPARTMENTS - GILBO AVENUE PLANNING CHARRETTE - REQUEST FOR LETTER OF SUPPORT – SENIOR PLANNER

A memorandum was received from Senior Planner Mari Brunner, recommending that the Mayor be authorized to submit a letter of support for the Gilbo Avenue Planning Charrette Application to Plan New Hampshire by November 3, 2026.

A motion by Councilor Filiault to suspend Section 26 of the Rules of Order to act on this time sensitive matter was duly seconded by Councilor Favolise. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

Chair Powers welcomed comments from City Manager Elizabeth Ferland. She recalled that the City had talked about doing a study of Gilbo Ave., which is something that the residents had talked about as well. She said there was an opportunity for the City to apply for a Plan New Hampshire charette. The application was due the prior Friday, October 9, 2026. She thanked Senior Planner Mari Brunner for taking the lead and submitting that application on behalf of the City. Now, she said City staff were looking for letters of support from the City Council and Planning Board. The reason for suspending the Rules of Order was because the letters were due by October 30, 2026. She added that the typical fee is usually $6,500 but she thought they may be able to have most or all of that covered through the Housing Opportunity Program (HOP), which is a benefit of the City being a Housing Champion. So, she said there was a lot of work to be done for the future of Gilbo Avenue and the timing of this was really good.

A motion by Councilor Filiault that the Mayor be authorized to submit a letter of support for the Gilbo Avenue Planning Charrette Application to Plan New Hampshire by November 3, 2026 was duly seconded by Councilor Favolise. The motion carried unanimously with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

MORE TIME - DRAFT ORDINANCE AMENDMENT REGULATING DOGS AT DOWNTOWN EVENTS

A Planning, Licenses and Development Report was read, unanimously recommending that this item [Draft Ordinance Amendment Regulating Dogs at Downtown Events] be placed on More Time to allow additional input from the public. Chair Powers granted More Time.

ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING - RELATING TO WELLS GARAGE LOWER LEVEL PUBLIC PARKING - ORDINANCE O-2026-16

A memorandum was received from Parking Operations Manager Chelsea North, recommending that Ordinance O-2026-16 be referred to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee. Chair Powers referred Ordinance O-2026-16 to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee.

ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING - RELATING TO ZONING MAP AMENDMENT - 0 HOWARD STREET - MEDIUM DENSITY TO CONSERVATION - ORDINANCE O-2026-13

A Planning, Licenses and Development Report was read, unanimously recommending the denial of Ordinance O-2026-13. Chair Powers filed the report. A motion by Councilor Filiault to adopt Ordinance O-2026-13 was duly seconded by Councilor Jones. On a vote with one Councilor voting in favor and 12 Councilors voting in opposition, the motion to adopt Ordinance O-2026-13 failed. Councilor Chalice voted in the minority. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

RESOLUTION - RELATING TO THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE MONADNOCK VIEW CEMETERY EXPANSION PROJECT- RESOLUTION R-2026-42

A memorandum was received from City Engineer, Bryan Ruoff, and Parks and Recreation Director, Carrah Fisk-Hennessey, recommending that Resolution R-2026-42 Relating to the Allocation of Funds for Construction of the Monadnock View Cemetery Expansion Project be referred to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee. Chair Powers referred Resolution R-2026-42 to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

A motion by Councilor Filiault to go into non-public session for consideration of the release of non-public minutes pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(m) was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

The session began at 8:04 PM. The regular session reconvened at 8:11 PM.

A motion by Councilor Filiault to seal the minutes of the non-public session held this evening as divulgence of the information would render the proposed actions ineffective was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

A motion by Councilor Filiault to retain the following non-public minutes because the reason the minutes were originally sealed still applies was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne: discussion items 2. and 3. from September 4, 2025, discussion item 1. from November 6, 2025,

and discussion item 1. from March 19, 2026. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 13 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Ruttle-Miller and Greenwald were absent.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 8:12 PM.

A true record, attest: Cassi Wood
City Clerk

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Mayor Jay V. Kahn

Through: Terri Hood, City Clerk

Subject: **Confirmations - Energy and Climate Committee**

Council Action:
In City Council October 15, 2026.
Nomination tabled until the next regular meeting.

A true record;

Attest: _____
City Clerk

Recommendation:

Attachments:
None

Background:
I hereby nominate the following individual(s) to serve on the specified Board or Commission:

Energy and Climate Committee

Catherine Koning — December 31, 2028
Moving from Alternate to Regular Member
Slot 8

Matthew Bolton — December 31, 2028
Moving from Alternate to Regular Member

Slot 9

2026-484

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Connie Joyce

Through: Terri Hood, City Clerk

Subject: **Resignation - Connie Joyce - Heritage Commission**

Recommendation:
Accept the resignation of Connie Joyce from the Heritage Commission with gratitude for her service.

Attachments:
1. Resignation Letter_Connie Joyce

Background:
Connie Joyce is an alternate member of the Heritage Commission. She has submitted her resignation effective October 14, 2026 for personal reasons.

2026-509

October 14, 2026

Megan Forston
Planning Technician
Community Development Dept

Dear Megan,

Effective today, for personal reasons, I am submitting my resignation as an Alternate member of The Heritage Commission.

Sincerely,

Connie Joyce

Connie Joyce

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Ken Kost

Through: Terri Hood, City Clerk

Subject: **Ken Kost - In Support of Single Lane Configuration on the North Side of Central Square**

Recommendation:

Attachments:
1. single lane - revised

Background:
Ken Kost is requesting the City Council uphold its previous decision approving a single 22-foot travel lane along the north side of Central Square.

Subject: Support for single 22’ lane on the north side of Central Square

November 5, 2026

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

I am writing to urge the City Council to maintain its January 2, 2025 decision approving a single 22-foot travel lane along the north side of Central Square. This decision was the right choice then, and it remains the right choice today. It reflects our city’s declared vision for a walkable, multi-modal downtown and aligns directly with professional engineering recommendations.

Reversing this decision would disregard both our foundational planning documents and expert data:

- **Alignment with Our Adopted Vision:** Keene has made explicit commitments to pedestrian safety and walkability.
    - **The Master Plan (“Connected Mobility”):** Prioritizes shifting downtown from vehicle-centric infrastructure to safe, multi-modal access.
    - **Complete Streets Guidelines:** Designates the downtown core as a “Slow Street,” establishing that pedestrian safety is paramount and vehicular traffic must proceed at reduced speeds.
    - **Roadway Safety Action Plan (RSAP):** Highlights severe safety risks for pedestrians crossing Main Street and Central Square. As one resident powerfully noted in the RSAP survey: *“Main Street has a lot of great crosswalks but it’s still scary to cross because of all the lanes of traffic… I walk around Keene but I would never let my kids.”*
- **Grounded in Traffic Engineering & Safety Science:** Both our engineering consultant and Keene’s city engineer recommended a single lane for this location—the most complex intersection in the city, where five streets merge.
    - **Effective Speed Management:** Multi-lane traffic naturally encourages higher speeds and side-by-side maneuvering. A single lane intentionally calms traffic to a safer, uniform pace.
    - **Safer Pedestrian Transitions:** Paired with the raised crosswalk next to the Common, a single lane eliminates dangerous, aggressive lane changes, allowing drivers to focus entirely on pedestrians in crosswalks.

The Council made a well-considered, data-driven decision that honors our community’s goals and protects public safety. The facts, the data, and the need for a safe, vibrant downtown have not changed.

I respectfully ask you to honor your original vote, trust the experts, and keep Keene moving forward toward a safer, more walkable downtown.



Ken Kost

51 Railroad Street, Keene

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Autumn DelaCroix

Through: Terri Hood, City Clerk

Subject: **Autumn DelaCroix - In Support of Single Lane Configuration on the North Side of Central Square**

Recommendation:

Attachments:
1. DelaCroix_Communication

Background:
Autumn DelaCroix is in support of the City Council maintaining its previous decision approving a single 22-foot travel lane along the north side of Central Square.

Mayor and Councilors 11/3/2026

In all my years in Keene 2 lanes of the rotary at the head of the square have been a consistent point of conflict. A huge number of drivers don't seem to understand that there are multiple lanes, and many of those that do see them as something to be circumvented. As long as 2 lanes remain there there will be more accidents, more chaos, more speed, and generally a worse environment in what should be one of the nicest parts of town.

I have heard whispers that some councilors intend to back down from the commitment to 1 lane at the head of the square that had previously been agreed upon. Whispers that the same councilors that have insisted the details of this plan have been set and aren't ready to be changed now think very little of changing them to quell a whining from a hypervocal minority, some of which don't even live in Keene.

I expect our councilors to represent Keene, not outside interests that want to treat our beautiful Main Street as though it were a highway, passing through with no intention of slowing to stop in at the businesses in town, or to ever walk its streets.

Perhaps our councilors forgot that Central Square is a destination, not simply the center of a rotary to be bought out by special interests, but a place designed for people to frequent, enjoy, and hold events at. Two lanes of traffic dramatically increases the speed of all cars on the traffic circle and reduces the appeal of the square. There's also increased risk to pedestrians forced to unnecessarily cross 2 lanes of traffic, incidentally increasing the extent to which pedestrians slow traffic because they have twice the distance to cross during which drivers must remain stopped.

As it is, the north side opposite the square is a constant point of pedestrian conflict, and the changes necessary to accommodate 2 lanes would reduce the space expected to be made available in an infamously tight pedestrian corridor.

The raised Crosswalk originally proposed is a second vital tool to ensure pedestrian safety, by reducing speed, reminding vehicles that they are entering a pedestrian space, and increasing visibility of pedestrians as vehicles grow ever taller, with worse sight lines.

The City Council previously approved these plans for well-considered reasons, do not make the mistake of backing away from safety for the benefit of a few who would like to make our downtown their fast track to go elsewhere.

-Autumn DelaCroix (Court St. Keene, NH)



CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Sam Jackson

Through: Terri Hood, City Clerk

Subject: **Sam Jackson - In Support of Single Lane Configuration on North Side of Central Square**

Recommendation:

Attachments:
1. Jackson_Communication

Background:
Sam Jackson is in support of the City Council maintaining its previous decision approving a single 22-foot travel lane along the north side of Central Square.

2026-518

11 November 2026

Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,

It recently came to my attention that the Council is considering adjusting the previously-approved Main Street Phase 1 Design, a project currently underway. The adjustment, as I understand it, is to add a second lane going around the top of the square, going so far as to remove the raised crosswalk. I am concerned about this because, simply put, it prioritizes vehicular travel (which here incentivizes increased speed) over pedestrian safety, comfort, and ease of travel.

Please bear in mind, our Main Street is meant to function not as a thoroughfare but as destination – not a place to pass through, but a place to go to. Multiple lanes in one direction give drivers the subconscious message that it is safe and appropriate to go higher speeds (I won't go into why here, but reach out if you're curious to know more). The faster traffic moves, the less likely it is for anyone to stop. In this way, adding an additional lane decreases the likelihood someone will stop on a whim to visit our businesses. Worse, if it feels too stressful to drive around so many other cars, some destination visitors may change their minds and go elsewhere.

The increased speed increases danger for people traveling by foot or wheelchair. There are lots of graphics that clearly articulate how increased speeds lead to greater injury and death. Exact numbers will vary, but the trend is the same:
When an impact with a pedestrian is at

20mph, there's **>20%** likelihood of severe injury or death
30mph, there's **~50%** likelihood of severe injury or death
40mph, there's **>80%** likelihood of severe injury or death

The change in rate here is important. I have seen people breech 40mph on Main Street around the head of the square, which literally puts our citizens in grave danger.

The priority here should be pedestrian safety first, vehicular flow-through last.

On that note, it is also important to keep the raised crosswalk for two big reasons: The bump slows traffic and reminds vehicles they are entering a pedestrian space, a place where people walk; and it eases pedestrian travel into the square, making the walking experience more comfortable, which encourages more walking and greater use of the Central Square park.

If merging around pedestrianized spaces is truly a concern, and I believe it should be, I strongly recommend ditching the idea of adding a lane at the head of the square. Instead, perhaps you could revisit Phases 2 and 3 to reduce Main Street down to one lane in each direction to completely eliminate merging issues altogether. I mean, let's be real: our Main Street has the same number of lanes as the Main Street in NYC, and we simply do not move that many people, nor do we have enough citizens to pay for the additional asphalt and maintenance.

Stats and attitude aside, I'm relieved to hear the MSFI Committee voted in favor of keeping only one lane at the head of the square. I hope the full Council will follow that recommendation.

Sincerely,



Sam Jackson
Court Street
Keene, NH 03431

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Court Street Drain Replacement Acceptance of Permanent Easements**

Recommendation:
On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute permanent easements and temporary access agreements with the affected property owners for the access, installation, and future maintenance of the Court Street Culvert Replacement Project.

Attachments:
None

Background:
Bryan Ruoff, City Engineer, stated that as part of the Court Street Drain Replacement Project in the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), staff identified four properties the City will need an easement from. He continued that this is to construct, maintain, and repair in the future a culvert that replaces an existing culvert on Court St. It is about 200 feet northeast of the intersection of Court St. and Evergreen Ave. The existing drain is about 30 feet below Court St. The most feasible way to construct it is to install the drain with a horizontal directional drill under the road. This would prevent the need to dig up the road and have Court St. dead ended at that location. To do that, they need to extend about 30 feet onto four properties: 649 Court St., 646 Court St., 650 Court St., and the property immediately north of 649 Court St. at Guitard Homes Cottage Court, which is currently being developed. It is possible some of these properties will end up not needing an easement and could just have a temporary access for construction. Those details are still being worked out as staff negotiates with the property owners. The project design is about 60% complete, and ready for construction next summer when low flows will be in that channel.

Pam Slack (of Keene) asked how much it would cost to purchase those easements. Mr. Ruoff replied that currently, the City is not offering money for these easements. Ms. Slack asked if they will. Mr. Ruoff replied there is no plan for that.

The following motion by Councilor Ellis was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

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

City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute permanent easements and temporary access agreements with the affected property owners for the access, installation, and future maintenance of the Court Street Culvert Replacement Project.

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #D.2.

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Guitard Homes Court Street Cottage Court Acceptance of a Utility Easement**

Recommendation:

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a permanent easement with the property owner for the access and future maintenance of the public water and sewer utilities for the Guitard Homes Cottage Court Project.

Attachments:

None

Background:

Mr. Ruoff stated that the City Council voted at the October 1, 2026, meeting to accept the infrastructure, water, and sewer being installed as part of the project as public infrastructure, upon the completion and satisfactory confirmation by Public Works staff on the project. In doing so, the City requires an easement to maintain those water and sewer main utilities as part of the project. It is important to note that the City is not taking on the road. That still will be privately owned and maintained. Because of that, the City is also not taking on the drainage. That will be privately owned and maintained. This is a request for authorization to execute and record an easement for the maintenance of those utilities included as part of the Cottage Court project that the City Council confirmed the City would take at the end of the project.

The following motion by Councilor Favolise was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a permanent easement with the property owner for the access and future maintenance of the public water and sewer utilities for the Guitard Homes Cottage Court Project.

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Verbal Update: Traffic and Safety Assessment of School Street**

Recommendation:
On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends City staff continue to monitor traffic, implement improvements to address identified safety concerns, including creating an ordinance to reduce the speed to 25 miles per hour, and report back in six months.

Attachments:
None

Background:
Mr. Ruoff stated that Public Works staff, in conjunction with a request from *See, Click, Fix* performed a traffic study on School St., with traffic counts and vehicle speed monitoring. The study went from late May into June, to get a good idea of traffic counts and speeds before the end of school. The results indicated an average traffic speed of 17.4 mph, and about 2,100 vehicle trips per day on School St. The 85th percentile was 25.6 mph, which is about five miles per hour lower than the speed limit in that area. In consideration of the petitioner's request, staff repeated the study in the last two weeks. It yielded similar results for both the average speed and the 85th percentile. They are actually slightly lower. That could be a result of the approximately 100% increase in traffic volume. The June traffic count was about 2,100 and the current traffic count was about 4,250. That significant increase was largely caused by the detour for the downtown project.

Mr. Ruoff continued that staff reviewed potential traffic calming measures based on the average speeds, 85th percentiles, and the amount of traffic. They would not recommend the previous suggestions of a raised intersection or speed bumps. The study results do not meet the criteria for those, based on a Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) analysis. Volume of traffic is potentially the biggest concern on School St. There are potential options. However, since the current condition is based on the detour traffic, staff would not recommend implementing anything right now. Traffic speeds indicate that the traffic calming due to the narrowing of School St. is working. Staff recommend continuing monitoring of the situation, identifying potential safety implementations, and a report back to the MSFI Committee in six months when the Central Square work has been completed.

Councilor Favolise stated that he is not questioning the MUTCD guidelines, but by his rough math, there still could be 630 or 640 vehicles with speeds above that of the 85th percentile. He would guess that in at least a few cases, speeds are significantly above that. He wants to be mindful that even if the 85th percentile benchmark shows there is no problem on School St., he worries that residents might interpret that as the City saying there are no problems at all on School St. He does not think that is staff's intention. If 600 vehicles are going above the 85th percentile speed, that is still a lot of vehicles.

Mr. Ruoff replied that normally, he would agree with Councilor Favolise's point, but not in this case, because he has the raw, breakdown numbers. Staff got an hourly speed breakdown for every five miles per hour. Categories are speeds of 1 to 5 mph, 6 to 10 mph, 11 to 15 mph, and beyond. About 3% of vehicles exceed the 30-mph speed limit. That is a small number. The 85th percentile does not speak to how few vehicles are speeding. He was looking at the difference between the posted 30 mph street and the 25-mph street. One idea is to post School St. as 25 mph and include it in Chapter 94, Section 372 as a 25-mph street. Traffic data suggests that is the appropriate speed for that street. That might bring the speeds of a few cars down five or ten miles per hour. Some people think they can drive 35-mph in a 30-mph zone, so if it were posted 25 mph, that could bring changes. That is low-hanging fruit. Staff could draft an ordinance for that speed change on School St. Councilor Favolise thanked Mr. Ruoff for the additional context.

Chair Greenwald invited the letter-writer to speak.

Duncan Hilchey (of 45 School St.) stated that he appreciates the City taking up this issue and for gathering this data. It is convincing to him that maybe his and others' impressions of the problem are greater than it is, but he is glad to hear they will continue to monitor it and to consider low-hanging fruit possibilities. People do not see a speed limit sign until about one third of the way into School St. It would be nice to have one closer to West St. Going north on School St. from West St., there is no speed or school zone sign until you are close to Summer St. It would be great if drivers could see a school zone sign soon after turning onto School St. People use Winter St. as a shortcut to School St. There is a length of road where people pick up speed without realizing they are driving too fast. It would help to have the extra sign.

Chair Greenwald asked if that could be handled administratively. Mr. Ruoff replied that anything related to safety implementation can be done at the direction of the Public Works Director. He continued that as staff continues to monitor these conditions and look at potential actions to take, they could also meet with Mr. Hilchey to make sure staff understands the full extent of the concerns and problems and consider other things to implement.

Councilor Tobin asked if it is correct that speed limits are lowered during certain hours in school zones. Mr. Ruoff replied yes. Councilor Tobin asked if the Public Works's traffic study took this into account. For example, a vehicle traveling 30-mph would be considered speeding, during certain times of day. Mr. Ruoff replied that it would take more time to get that detailed breakdown, but they do have hour by hour data. They were limited to the location in which they put up the speed counter. They would need to set it up at another location to get that data and confirm that information. As early as tomorrow, they could start gathering that additional information, confirming that drivers are slowing down within the school zone when they are supposed to.

Councilor Tobin stated that before the Committee's last conversation about these School St. issues,

she stood and watched for a while. Coming from Court St., turning onto School St., it seemed like many people were not stopping at that stop sign, merely slowing down. She wonders if staff could look at stop sign compliance, which would impact safety and the perceived speeds in the area. Mr. Ruoff replied yes. Staff can work with KPD to get a good handle on that.

Councilor Ellis stated that she thinks shifting the street to 25-mph would be helpful, because there are many pedestrians. She asked if Public Works staff could create and bring the Committee a draft ordinance on that. Mr. Ruoff replied yes.

Councilor Workman stated that to clarify for the public, these traffic studies were done in-house. She lives within this block and is concerned about the increase in numbers. She understands the calculations and the parameters the City follows, but she thinks improvements are still needed and monitoring should continue. This was a good discussion.

Mayor Jay Kahn stated that he thinks it makes sense to have this zone be 25-mph. On Court St., as traffic approaches School St., just south of the School St. intersection, there is a 25-mph zone on Court St. Since School St. will intermittently be a detour for the Downtown Infrastructure Project, he thinks adding School St. to the list of 25-mph zones would be a good recommendation from the Committee.

Mr. Hilchey stated that raised crosswalks are another consideration. Maybe the data will show those would help slow traffic speeds. Many neighborhood residents would like to see them. In addition to vehicles, they are concerned about occasional motorcycles that are loud and unsafe. Speed bumps would help.
Don Lussier, Public Works Director, stated that he heard talk of a “draft ordinance.” He continued that since the Committee only meets once a month and it is a long process, if the Committee agrees, staff could bring an ordinance to Council for a first reading on the next cycle. At the Committee’s November meeting, they could make a recommendation. If staff brought the draft to the Committee in November, instead of right to the Council, it would not be implemented until December. Chair Greenwald replied that sounds good.

The following motion by Councilor Workman was duly seconded by Councilor Tobin.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends City staff continue to monitor traffic, implement improvements to address identified safety concerns, including creating an ordinance to reduce the speed to 25 miles per hour, and report back in six months.

Chair Greenwald reaffirmed for the Committee that the ordinance would be ready for a first reading at the Council meeting in November.

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Councilor Filiault - Request to Review Planned Traffic Lane Configuration Around Central Square**

Recommendation:
On a vote of 4 to 1, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Council not reconsider the current plan of one traffic lane around the north section of Central Square and maintain the one lane plan. Chair Greenwald voted in opposition.

Attachments:
None

Background:
Councilor Filiault stated that he submitted a letter to the Committee a month ago. He continued that a couple of years ago when the Committee was discussing the changes downtown as part of the Downtown Infrastructure Project, initially there was going to be a 20-foot lane going around Central Square. He asked the Public Works Director what the minimum lane requirement was, and he said 11 feet. With that, the Committee and Council approved 22 feet going around Central Square, for two 11-foot lanes. At that time, the Committee said they would discuss it more later. And here they are.

Councilor Filiault continued that he recommends two 11-foot lanes instead of just one lane with paint coming out from the common, squeezing into one lane. He realizes the Public Works Director disagrees, but he thinks two lanes would work better than one. One lane during peak travel hours would pinch traffic too much. There will be traffic coming off Main St. and Washington St., and cars backing out in front of The Stage. Some people said it would be safer with one lane. However, currently there are about 40 feet “of no man’s land” out there. As you drive around the common, there is enough room for three lanes. Two 11-foot lanes, painted as such, would have a calming effect. The City painted two 11-foot lanes in front of the college, and it is slowing traffic there. No one rushes through there.

Councilor Filiault continued that another safety issue, regarding going around the common, is that there will be a large, raised crosswalk. That is like a large speed bump. That will slow traffic down at any time of day or night. The width will be 22 feet, reduced from about 40 feet, and there will be a raised crosswalk, so he thinks the safety issue is a little overhyped. It will be safer for pedestrians to

cross the street to the common, because the walk will be shorter and with a raised crosswalk.

Councilor Filiault stated that people might say that the Council already made its decision and they should stick with it. However, if they had gone with the original recommendation from staff, they would have paved from Washington St. to Court St. right now and there would not be a Central Square as people know it. He and Chair Greenwald fought this proposal long and hard. Many times, they heard City staff and other people say it was a great plan, and that is why easels with the plan were in the City Hall lobby and at the library, saying it was the plan that was going to happen. Fortunately, after much discussion, the original proposal of paving from Washington St. to Court St. and eliminating Central Square as people know it was defeated, but only by an eight to seven vote. If one Councilor had voted the other way, the project would be very different now. His point is that the City Council can make changes. That is their job. This whole project has involved making changes as it progresses. In this case, the Council needs to do what he considers is the right thing.

Councilor Filiault continued that over the weeks since he submitted his letter, dozens of constituents have asked him about two lanes versus one lane. Not a single one thought one lane would work better than two. To him and the constituents he talked to, it is common sense that two lanes would work best. He knows City staff will speak after him and explain why they think he is wrong. He understands that the Committee's process is sometimes to accept submitted letters as informational, but he requests that the Committee not do that. He wants an up and down vote of the Committee members and the full City Council. Their constituents need to know how their Councilors feel about such recommendations, because many of them feel their input on the downtown project has not been heard.

Mr. Lussier stated that he will not disagree with Councilor Filiault, but he will remind the Committee of the process they went through. He continued that the screen shows a graphic of the design that was originally presented to the Committee in 2024. The configuration it shows is one 20-foot lane across the head of Central Square. People had concerns about that, as Councilor Filiault said. Staff switched it to a 22-foot lane, which would allow for two single lanes through that space. The argument at the time was that today, the intersection operates as if it were a single lane. The vast majority of traffic heading south on Washington St. is heading either south on Main St. or out West St. or Roxbury St., not turning around and going back up Court St. Similarly, with the traffic coming from Main St. or Roxbury St., the majority of those turning movements are headed toward Court St. Those two streams of traffic have to operate as a zipper. The southern traffic is heading north, the northern traffic is heading south, and they need to pass each other. They sort of have a forced yielding and interweaving action right now.

Mr. Lussier continued that the raised crosswalk, which Councilor Filiault mentioned, is one of the concerns he (Mr. Lussier) has with the two-lane configuration. If he were heading south down Main St., there would not be room for him to merge with the lane of traffic before hitting the raised crosswalk. He does not want to try and switch lanes while on top of a raised crosswalk. A driver would have less than 100 feet to make that switch, from the northernmost lane to the southernmost lane and heading south. It would be similar for drivers heading north and going up Court St. They would go over the speed hump and have less than 100 feet to merge with the traffic on the righthand lane and get over and head up Court St. The engineering team recommended it be a single lane to allow the yield to happen. Washington St. traffic will have a yield sign. Drivers will be required to yield to traffic coming in from the south. They will all single file over the raised crosswalk and then diverge into their different directions. That recommendation from the engineering team was approved by the City Council.

Mr. Lussier continued that there will be 22 feet of pavement from curb to curb, and four feet of that will be a shoulder hatched with white paint. If it turns out that Councilor Filiault was correct and the single lane was a terrible idea, it would be a relatively easy process to eradicate those pavement markings and mark it as two lanes. However, he himself remains convinced today that a single lane is a better way to manage the traffic. When they were studying this question, Stantec demonstrated through their modeling software that a single lane would work fine.

Mr. Lussier continued that he does not want to oversell it. The single-lane design will not substantially improve the traffic delays that have always happened on Central Square. There have always been backups and delays during peak traffic hours, and this will not solve that. The traffic improvements the analysis showed were marginal. They were mainly due to the lane selection being clearer and simpler, and the more modern traffic signal equipment that is more adjustable to the demand.
Chair Greenwald asked if the Marlboro St. roundabout is single lane. Mr. Lussier replied that it is a hybrid roundabout. Going north-south, you have two lanes, and going east-west, you have a single lane. Chair Greenwald replied that the public interprets it as two lanes, regardless of what lines are there. He continued that assuming the public will use the Central Square roundabout in a single-lane manner, when a vehicle is trying to back out, it will stop traffic entirely. How he sees it is that Central Square traffic is chaotic, but it works. Since 1970, he has been amazed at how it works. It is so chaotic that the public drives slowly and cautiously, but it works, as a two-lane roundabout. He questions why they would want to change something that is working. As Councilor Filiault said during the design and at Committee meetings, just to get the design moved along, at least they preserved the option. Now it is reality time.

Mr. Lussier stated that it was the City Council's decision and remains so. He continued that at this point, they could change it, with no consequence. Chair Greenwald replied that they are having the discussion early enough. It is not finished and not paved, so they are not changing anything at all.

Councilor Favolise stated that the workshop at which the City Council discussed this extensively was right after he was elected to Council. It was his first full meeting. He recalls Councilors having legitimate reasons on both sides of the discussion. He asked if Mr. Lussier could speak about the issue of drivers backing out of parking spaces, which he has heard some conversation about in the community, and which Chair Greenwald alluded to. He does not think that was discussed a lot when the initial decision was made. He asked if it is accurate that backing out of parking spaces will be problematic.

Mr. Lussier replied that it is another reason he likes the single lane configuration. With a single lane, a driver could back out, and others would still be able to go around them to the left. He would also point out, that condition exists everywhere where there is diagonal parking on Main St. Throughout the downtown, there is diagonal parking with two lanes of traffic. When a driver backs out, it stops that lane of traffic.

Councilor Tobin stated that Councilor Filiault mentioned something about adding the additional lane as a traffic calming measure. She asked if Mr. Lussier could speak to that. Mr. Lussier replied that he does not think two 11-foot lanes would have any more or less traffic calming impact than a single lane.

Councilor Workman stated that she agrees with Councilor Filiault that the Councilors can change their minds and update aspects of the project still, but she does not necessarily agree that this is one

of the best changes to make at this time. She continued that as Mr. Lussier said, driver behavior already creates one lane here. Even with a roundabout with two very distinct lanes, people will often just go around it as if it were one lane. She wants to mention that the single lane at the head of Central Square increases pedestrian safety going to and from the common. For pedestrians trying to cross there, having a single lane means only having to worry about one vehicle and not two, which will make a big difference.

Councilor Workman stated that for the record, as an MSFI Committee member, she received no calls or emails about this matter. Councilor Favolise stated that he received a voicemail today from Chris Coates, who expressed concern about the bottleneck and asked him to put that on the record. Chair Greenwald stated that he received calls and has been stopped on the street. He continued that no one can understand the single lane idea, which is fine. Stantec did all kinds of wonderful work. Chair Greenwald asked for public comment.

Pam Slack (of Keene) stated that she has a graphic to share, which she personally paid for and thinks is a better representation of the design than the official one. She continued that she had this graphic done because she could not understand how traffic was going to go around Central Square. Originally, the road width was going to be 18 feet. After discussion, it was changed to 20 feet. That was still not enough, so now it is at 22 feet.

Ms. Slack indicated a portion of the road that is currently 33 feet wide, the crosswalk from the church over to the common. She continued that it was changed to 18 feet, and now to 22 feet, which is important and would allow the two 11-foot lanes. When this project came to the MSFI Committee, which she chaired, there was no traffic study done about this. Stantec did a kind of study, for one week, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. An individual did a kind of study, for keenesquare.org/design, from 5:00 to 6:00 PM every day to see how many vehicles went through there. From 5:00 to 6:00 PM on Main St., there were about 1,000 to 1,200 vehicles. That does not include the morning traffic. She has lived on the east side of Keene for almost her whole life. This will impact the east side. The traffic coming in at 5:00 to 6:00 PM from Roxbury St. is 200 to 350 vehicles. The traffic coming in from Washington St. is 350 to 600 vehicles. She is not a traffic engineer, but she wonders how all those vehicles would fit into the square with one lane.

Ms. Slack continued that her second concern is about traffic backing out of parking spaces from The Stage or any of the several businesses that are above The Stage. Drivers backing out will tie up traffic. She does not want to hear staff saying that drivers can go around vehicles that are backing out. They should just put in the two lanes.
Ms. Slack continued that for her, wanting two lanes has nothing to do with the bike lanes. This was a compromise for the bike lanes. The bike lanes are going in. She asks the Council to change this back, or leave it to two lanes, so the traffic can move slowly so there is not a continuous backup downtown. She comes to work at 8:00 or 8:30 AM and the traffic is backed up to Marlboro St. just to get to the square with one light. She cannot imagine how that will be impacted.

Ms. Slack continued that she asks the Committee to not accept Councilor Filiault's letter as informational. She would like to hear a roll call vote. She does not buy into the idea of safety for pedestrians. She looks at the safety for people on the road, coming into the city. One lane is not enough.

Dorrie Masten (of Swanzey) stated that she owns real estate in Keene. She continued that she appreciates Councilor Filiault's and Ms. Slack's comments as well as Mr. Lussier's. She speaks from

a business standpoint, not logistics. The downtown project is hitting downtown merchants hard. They would like to believe there is light at the end of this tunnel and that they will be able to maintain business in this city when the project is over. She drives Central Square every day. She has been documenting the project regularly. Currently, the roundabout is not being used as one lane. It is currently two lanes. There are dots in the middle and white lines on the edges. Two sets of vehicles drive around the common, all day. Yes, traffic is merging. Yes, a new sidewalk is going in in front of the church. She does not agree that it needs to be a fancy, raised one. She wonders if they expect heavy usage of that crosswalk, because right now, that crosswalk does not get much use. She does not see the need for it. If that is what prevents Mr. Lussier or others from thinking the roundabout could be two lanes, she does not think the raised crosswalk is necessary. She would rather have the traffic kept rolling.

Ms. Masten continued that even right now, backing out of a parking space by The Stage is difficult, as it is all over downtown, but people are managing fine, because the traffic coming from Roxbury St., Washington St., and Main St. can still flow. The people who have spoken in favor of two lanes have been in Keene for a long time, having grown up here, and they know more than most people in this room about how the downtown operates. They are clearly saying, leave the square as it is. It works. The way it works is quite impressive, and it does not need to be changed. They want to make sure The Stage, the church, the bank, and other businesses continue to be successful. When The Stage, which is probably the most popular restaurant in the city, has a line too long, customers go to other nearby restaurants, including hers. Thus, many businesses benefit from The Stage at the head of the square, so if The Stage is harmed, they all are, too. Thus, to her, this is business, but also logistics. Having two lanes just makes sense.

George Benik, owner of The Stage, stated that his first question is whether paint would stop cars from going over the paint. If there is traffic, people will utilize the area either way, so it does not make sense to him as a business owner. Cars backing out have always been a problem, but as Ms. Masten said, it is a problem they have had for 45 years. His business is flourishing. Everyone is doing well downtown. He questions why they would shrink the area and make it harder for drivers to back out or slow down traffic. He supports two lanes. He does not think they need the raised sidewalk. He sees how many people are using the crosswalk over to the square, and it is minimal. The safety issue is minimal. He does not recall seeing anyone get hit by a car in the last 45 years. Maybe once.

Andy Holte (of Forest St.) stated that he does not know which option would be better. Most people in the room do not know, either. It is easy for people who have driven for many years to have opinions about what works well when driving, but they are not traffic engineers. The plan was to put in one lane and have the option to change it. This feels like manufacturing an issue they have not yet experienced, trying to change it before the project is even done. This does not feel necessary. He does not have strong feelings about one lane versus two. His concern is how they think about this decision. He hears people saying that there is a traffic issue and they need to solve it, doing whatever it takes to make traffic move as smoothly as possible. That ignores the tradeoffs. Councilor Filiault's letter mentioned cost. There is always a tradeoff with projects and cost. This one would have very little cost, but it is ignoring other tradeoffs. The topic of safety comes up a lot. Yes, this will be much safer than before, but that is not an argument to not do more for safety. They should do as much as they can to make it a safe environment. Another consideration is the experience of being outside, walking around, dining outside. Someone said that not many people use the crosswalk currently. That is a reason to make it a raised crosswalk, and to make the crossing distance shorter, because the current conditions discourage people from crossing there.

Mr. Holte continued that there would be a tradeoff to moving cars quickly through the square, regarding what that does to the environment. On Route 101, for example, everyone wants to move cars through there quickly and efficiently, which works, because you would never want to sit and eat on the side of Route 101. Moving cars through quickly is the opposite of having an environment that you want to spend time in and enjoy. If the goal is to make the Central Square area successful for the businesses, it would be good for vehicles to be moving more slowly through the area. No one wants to wait in traffic or wait for someone to move out of their parking space, but at least in your car, you have climate control and a comfortable seat and you will only have to wait a couple of minutes. The tradeoff would be having a place that is much more enjoyable to be outside in. That is how he looks at this decision. They should look at all these factors, not just the question of how to move cars through as quickly as possible. He thinks that should be the lowest priority.

Councilor Filiault stated that the Public Works Director said they should try one lane, and if it does not work, they can always go to two lanes. He continued that he thinks it should be the opposite, starting with two lanes, and going to one lane if that does not work. He challenges the Public Works Director to prove him wrong.

Councilor Tobin stated that she remembers the Committee discussing this at length. She did not have a strong opinion about one lane or two until she saw the animation of traffic and where people would be crossing. Currently, the green space of the common is underutilized. It is also very difficult to access. When the Committee talked about expanding it, they talked about making access easier. As she recalls, the plan was to see how one lane worked. If it was problematic, there would be enough space to make it two lanes. As she heard from Mr. Lussier tonight, traffic would have to stop for vehicles to back out if it were two lanes. If it were one lane, drivers could navigate around the vehicles backing out. Because of the X of traffic, people will need to merge either before the crosswalk or just after. She hopes that before drivers get to the crosswalk they will be looking to either side for pedestrians. That seems like the safer way. Regarding the issue of one lane versus two, she does not feel differently than she did when the Council last voted on this.

Chair Greenwald stated that he thinks this matter should go before all 15 Councilors. It is significant enough that they should all weigh in.

Councilor Ellis stated that the Council already discussed this at length before she joined. She continued that she sees no reason to change the decision of the Council before they know it is not working. She agrees with Mr. Holte. She is not a traffic engineer and does not know whether one or two lanes are better. However, she disagrees with the sentiment that there are not many pedestrians here so the City does not need to do much for them. She thinks there might be more pedestrians if the City made Central Square more hospitable to them. They had a great opportunity to make Central Square bigger, greener, and more pedestrian-friendly, but decided against it. Thus, she does not want to move toward making Central Square more car-friendly and more hostile to pedestrians.

Ms. Masten stated that it is true that the Council voted on this already. She continued that she believes that when it was discussed at prior meetings, the plan was for the road to be narrower, and two lanes would not have been possible. That has since changed dramatically. They talked about traffic studies. A simple Google search will tell you that before you turn two lanes into one and cause bottlenecking, road rage, accidents, and more, first, that one lane should have its own traffic study. And it does not. Maybe the Council could review that. As Ms. Slack said, an individual did a traffic study for keenesquare.org, but only between 5:00 to 6:00 PM for one week. Stantec’s study was a little more in depth, but it was not just for the head of the square, which has many lanes of traffic

going into one lane. She thinks the full City Council should consider this.

The Mayor stated that he favored two lanes from the start, and he still does. Two lanes go through the entire downtown area. The plan had the option of going to one lane, which was a discussion. They did not go there. It seems that the amount of conflict in the Central Square area, where all the traffic merges, is the place to continue that consistency around. People have to look out for every spoke and arm and crosswalk. That is what calms traffic there. He has observed that this is a rather safe roundabout right now. In the three years he has been in City Hall, he has not seen a single emergency vehicle respond to a pedestrian or traffic incident there. Thus, what is there is working. Preserving it is in the best interest.

Roberta Mastrogiovanni (of Court St.) stated that she has property on Main St. and Marlboro St. and travels through the Central Square roundabout multiple times a day. She continued that she has lived in town for 40 years. Moving to one lane will be a disaster. Traffic will back up and people will avoid driving on Main St. Downtown business owners will suffer. She agrees that if this is not broken, they should not fix it. She is confident that Central Square will be beautiful, and she sees no need for raised crosswalks. Those will be more of a hazard. They could use markings or find other creative ways to increase pedestrian safety. They should not create a traffic nightmare on Main St. Right now, everyone knows the traffic pattern. It is a double lane going around. In fact, there are three lanes that become two. Reducing it to one lane would be a big mistake.

Chair Greenwald stated that the Committee needs to move this forward with some recommendation to the Council. He continued that he is prepared to make a motion if someone else does not want to. He recommends two lanes. Councilor Tobin stated that she recommends one lane. Chair Greenwald asked the City Attorney how they should word a motion. City Attorney Amanda Palmeira replied that they could make a motion either way and see how the vote goes.

The following motion by Councilor Tobin was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

The Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Council not reconsider the current plan of one traffic lane around the north section of Central Square and maintain the one lane plan.

The Mayor stated that he thinks the manner of maintaining what they currently have as a plan would be to accept the letter as informational. He continued that however, as Chair Greenwald said, it is likely to have an amendment at the full City Council, regardless of what the Committee adopts.

The City Attorney replied that as the Committee is aware, if their recommendation is to accept an agenda item as informational, the tradition has been for the Council to not vote on it. It would be accepted as informational pro forma. If the Committee wants to continue with the existing plan and have the Council vote on that and not have it just be accepted by the Council as informational, she recommends the Committee not have a motion to accept it as informational. That would get the Council to vote, instead of it just being read into the record.

The motion passed on a vote of 4 to 1. Chair Greenwald was opposed.

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Direct Referral: Communication/Dorrie Masten - Concerns Related to Downtown Infrastructure Project**

Recommendation:
On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends that the communication regarding concerns related to the Downtown Infrastructure Project be accepted as informational.

Attachments:
None

Background:
Dorrie Masten (of Swanzey) stated that as she explained in her letter, a couple of weeks ago, a pipe broke in downtown Keene. It was originally scheduled to be without water from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Around 12:30 PM, the pipe burst, and chaos followed. She originally had a hard time accepting the downtown infrastructure project but came around to it, accepting that the work had to be done. She was, and still is, against "all the fluff." When the pipe broke, it reminded her and others who fought this project that the work needed to be done. However, she and others had no idea what was happening with the burst pipe. It was a mess. Mr. Lussier was running in the back alley with the Casella crew. Casella workers were running all over town. Around 12:30 PM, Mr. Lussier came to her restaurant and told her the water would be off for another two to eight hours. They dealt with it. Casella brought them portapotties and staff did their best to get through the day with disposable dishes. Then, she found out her restaurant should have been placed on fire watch. When she called Mr. Lussier and told him, he did not believe fire watch was necessary during the day. It is in effect 24 hours a day and it is important.

Ms. Masten continued that she thought originally that 39 Central Square did not have water as well and told all of her tenants they could not use water. It turned out that 39 Central Square did have water, because the water comes in off of Winter St. and Court St. Her restaurant also did not have a fire suppression system. Although the fire suppression system comes in off the back of the building, as she confirmed with the Facilities Director of the county, those pipes connect to the pipe that was broken. They were never told their fire suppression system was not working. She was very upset when she found out, because they were still cooking. The restaurant's hood system has the foam

backup system, but had there been a major fire, they would have been in big trouble. She is not sure how the fire department could have responded anyway, given that there were holes in the earth from construction and the fire trucks cannot fit in the alley out back. Everyone in the building was in danger and it was unnecessary.
Ms. Masten stated that even if the Committee accepts her letter as informational, she asks them to ensure a plan is put in place for life safety during this project. She questions why there was not temporary water for a scheduled shutoff. The scheduled shutoff was for four hours. In New Hampshire, restaurants must close if they do not have water for two hours. Staff at her restaurant kept cooking, not knowing. She called the New Hampshire Fire Marshall's office to ask what the protocol is for such situations. She was told the fire department, engineer, and the health department are all supposed to communicate. She cannot change what happened October 1, but she asks the Committee to take this seriously and send this to Council to make sure there is a plan in place for what to do if this happens again. If a pipe breaks, they should know where the next one is to shut it off. She hopes there will be a backup water tank. This is serious enough, and this is a big enough project that has only just begun, for the Councilors to authorize whoever makes the plans to sit down and have a meeting, to do something about this.

Chair Greenwald stated that the phrase "direct referral," to him, indicates that the City Manager takes this very seriously. He continued that he and the Mayor agreed, which is why Ms. Masten's letter, which normally would have gone to the Council and then been referred to the Committee, went straight to the Committee. It is being taken seriously. He does not disagree with anything Ms. Masten is saying. There need to be contingencies, as water is essential, for fire suppression and otherwise.
Ms. Masten stated that she has one more comment. When she spoke with the Facilities Director from the county, he and Mr. Coates had no idea this had happened, until she told them about it. The Facilities Director told her they do not have a lot of people in the building, but it only takes the loss of one life to matter. He also told her that something to think about is how the entire history of Cheshire County sits in that one building. Lives are at stake, which is what is most important. There needs to be a way to tell everyone in every building that is shut off what is happening, and maybe communicate with the health department, too, because she did not see them, either. She cannot stay to listen to Mr. Lussier's response, because she has to go back to work right now.

Mr. Lussier stated that first, he wants to explain in more detail what was happening and the chain of events that preceded Ms. Masten's concerns. He continued that Ms. Masten owns two abutting properties on Central Square, 44 Central Square, the Pour House restaurant, and the Ann Henderson building. He has a graphic showing the City's water mains and fire lines. Off Winter St., there is a fire line and a service line that run into the backside of the larger of Ms. Masten's two parcels.
Mr. Lussier continued that regarding where these records come from, they are a compilation of over 100 years of history. Some records are kept on hand-written cards from whenever the service lines and valves were installed. The Pour House property is labeled as "43 through 45 Central Square." The Pour House is 44 Central Square. It is connected from the rear of the block. A note on the card says, "*See small plan book*." That is a separate set of records maintained in the engineering office. Similarly, 48-49 Central Square is the former Chamber of Commerce and refers to that same plan. Another slide shows a more modern set of cards, records related to services. They are drawn in Computer-Aided Design (CAD) and updated when a project like the Downtown Infrastructure Project updates a service connection. These are the records used when a contractor needs to work on a private service. It helps them locate it and helps locate the shutoff valves. Those are the records City staff had when planning the project.

Mr. Lussier continued that two of the properties refer to the “small plan book,” which has a hand-drawn sketch showing a single line coming in off West St. that feeds the back side of the Russell Block and 33 West St., the County offices. Another line goes into the back of the former Chamber of Commerce, and another line goes into the back of Ms. Masten’s property. The best he can ascertain from talking with engineering staff and folks who were on the ground is that there was an assumption made. Ms. Masten’s two buildings share a common fire service. That was replaced in 2014 when the City did the Winter St. project. He thinks when the engineer reviewed the records and saw that the water and sewer were reinstalled from Winter St. in 2014, they assumed that was for both the fire and the water. That is the sort of assumption that was reflected in the contract documents. The fire line was correct. That fire line serves both buildings. He wishes Ms. Masten was here to hear it, but he wants to reassure her that her building was never without fire suppression during this day of work. The fire line remained on and active the whole time. However, the assumption that the domestic line was also reconfigured at that time was incorrect. Her northern building was supplied off Winter St. The Pour House, specifically the domestic service, was not supplied during that service.

Mr. Lussier continued that on the day in question, Casella was scheduled to make the first of four connections that will run between the new water mains they have been installing over the last month around Central Square to West St., Roxbury St., Washington St., and Court St. They were going to remove about 40 feet of pipe, install a new valve and a new length of pipe, and leave it there to build off of as they connected up the rest of the pipes around Central Square. Before you can cut into the old pipe, you need to isolate the work area and drain it. Working with City staff, they identified the four valves, one right in the mouth of Central Square, one at the northern end of Federal St., one at the northern end of St. James St., and one right next to St. James on the main line that runs down West St. However, two of those valves were installed in 1891. The newest of the four was installed in 1930. Obviously, those are well past their prime. Staff had concerns about being able to use them and have them function properly during the event, so they also looked at a secondary plan, where to go if the valves did not operate properly. Ms. Masten’s misconception was that the crew did not have a backup plan that day, and that everyone was running around not knowing what to do. In fact, the crew had a best-case scenario plan and a backup plan for all of the valves not being operable. Depending on what happened, that might have meant turning off two additional valves, one on West St. at School St., and one on School St. on the branch line that goes north from West St. On Federal St., the next available line was right at the intersection with Lamson St. That valve was new in 2016, so the crew was confident about that one.

Mr. Lussier continued that for the Central Square valve, the backup plan was to turn off three valves. One was on the main line that runs down Main St. Another was on that same main line that runs up towards Court St. The third was on the crossover that goes from the western side of the square over to Roxbury St. Most of the valves worked fine that day, but three had problems. They were all leaking, and not giving the crew a good shutdown. The crew did their notifications based on that secondary plan of having to go to the secondary valves. Based on that, they notified National Grange they had a fire service only, not domestic line. They notified the property on the corner of School St. and West St. The Public Library is fed off of Winter St. The Cheshire County building did receive a notice. The three properties on West St., the lingerie store, One West, and the former Chamber of Commerce, received notice, as did the two properties on the southern side that fronted onto that. All of the properties that face onto West St. received notice as being potentially affected by the shutdown. They did not include Ms. Masten’s restaurant, because they assumed her property was fed off of Winter St. That ended up being an incorrect assumption. To that extent, he apologizes and takes full responsibility for that.

Chair Greenwald asked if there is a sprinkler line in the Pour House. Mr. Lussier replied yes. It is apparently fed through Ms. Masten's adjacent building. He checked that record earlier tonight and confirmed that she is only paying for a single sprinkler line, the one fed off the 39 Central Square property. The one that comes off Winter St. feeds both buildings.

Mr. Lussier continued that in terms of the notification, staff typically does doorhangers. The contractor is required to hand them out a minimum of 72 hours before a planned shutdown. In this case, they were handed out six days before the planned shutdown. Casella was optimistic about the length of the shutdown. They said in the notice that they expected people would be out of water for four hours, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Unfortunately, because of the difficulties in getting a good shutdown and getting that resolved, Casella did not begin the work until a little after 12:00 PM. Thus, the four-hour shutdown that should have ended at 1:00 PM in fact ended a little after 5:00 PM and it ended up being about five hours.

Mr. Lussier continued that the three valves were still leaking. More water was coming through than Casella could manage in the excavation. Thus, they had to go to what he calls the contingency plan. They turned off two valves at Winter St., one near the common, and one near Roxbury St. That was successful in getting the flow from two of the leaking valves to stop. All those were able to operate properly. There was no contingency that he found acceptable for the Roxbury St. valve. The next available valve was at Gilbo Ave, also from 1891. It would have affected many properties on Main St. At that point, the flow leaking through the valve was about 50 gallons per minute. The contractor was able to manage that residual flow in the excavation just using normal construction pumps. They decided to cut the pipe, do the work, and manage the water in the hole with the pumps.

Mr. Lussier continued that by a little past 5:00 PM, all the properties down West St. were turned back on, and everything was back in service. This is now a dead end where all of the lines come in. When the valve failed during the operation and they were unable to get a shutdown, the valve body actually cracked. It was flowing catastrophically. They could not pressurize that valve without taking it offline and removing it. By that point, it was 6:00 PM and not a good time to start that work. The way it was left was that the two valves at Winter St. were off, Central Square was off, and Roxbury St. was off. That meant that 1 West St. and the block on the corner of Roxbury St. did not have fire lines. Their domestic services were restored, but they did not have fire service overnight.

Mr. Lussier continued that that is a good transition to talk about fire safety, which he appreciates was a big focus of Ms. Masten's letter. As he said, and confirmed with records, 44 Central Square was never without fire service. However, two properties were left without fire service overnight. He discussed that with Fire Marshall Rick Wood. They worked out a plan for how to manage that. That contingency plan calls for the Fire Department to be notified of the situation and having a plan in place to provide water to the fire services through the outside connections. Typical with commercial construction is to have a connection on the outside of the building, and you might see an "FDC" sign. That is a way for a fire department to force water into a building's fire suppression system if something happens with that system. The plan was that in the event of an incident, the Fire Department would provide pressure to that FDC through the external interface. He himself communicated that contingency plan to Fire Chief Seymour by phone. Staff also emailed KFD officers. An internal email distribution list, the "Hydrant Use" group, includes the Water/Sewer staff who maintain the hydrants, the engineering staff, and all KFD officers. Public Works staff uses that distribution list to communicate when a hydrant is found to be inoperative, is taken out of service for maintenance, or is being put back into service. This time of year, staff are removing water from hydrants and winterizing them, and they use that distribution list to notify people which ones have

been winterized. If the KFD needs to use a hydrant, they use the distribution list to notify Public Works staff that they need to winterize it.
Mr. Lussier continued that Ms. Masten's letter said that KFD was not notified. He wants to assure the Committee that that was not the case. KFD was well aware of the situation overnight. Staff also reached out to both property managers. George Downing, Project Ombudsman, has made connections with many people. He was able to get Mr. Lussier in touch with both buildings' property managers. He (Mr. Lussier) notified both property managers that afternoon about the situation and about their fire suppression system not having water pressure overnight. KFD had been notified and a plan was in place for if there was an incident. He asked the property managers to remind their tenants to make sure their smoke detectors were working.

Mr. Lussier continued that lastly, he wants to address the topic of the fire watch. When Ms. Masten called him a couple of weeks ago and asked if she was supposed to have a fire watch, he was surprised by the question. He had thought it was only required for overnight issues. Since she called, he discussed it with Mr. Wood and did more reading on it. Mr. Wood confirmed that neither the NFPA guidelines nor the state's Fire Code require a fire watch. However, if an impairment of the fire suppression will last more than 10 hours in any 24-period, the authority who has jurisdiction is required to take certain action, with several actions to choose from. In this case, that is Mr. Wood. That mitigation measure, depending on the Fire Marshall's decision, could include a temporary water supply, a fire watch, turning off all heating elements, or evacuating the building. The contingency plan he and Mr. Wood developed was to supply water to the buildings in the event of an incident. Thus, as far as the Fire Marshall is concerned, the City met that requirement through their actions that afternoon.

Councilor Tobin stated that she appreciates the review of fire safety. She continued that as she understands it, Ms. Masten's concerns were about communication. She asked what the communication plan is for if something does not go according to plan, to update people as the issue is being resolved. Mr. Lussier replied that the primary communication is in advance. The City requires customers to be notified at least 72 hours in advance of a planned interruption to service. That was done. He was in Ms. Masten's restaurant that morning, as soon as staff knew what was going on and that her property would be affected. He apologized for the unplanned interruption. As he said, City staff's information and communications are based on their records, and their records are not perfect. It is probably true that throughout the day, as crews were working and things were happening, they were not in Ms. Masten's doorway every hour to give an update. They could have given Ms. Masten and others more updates.
Councilor Tobin stated that she works from home, and recently, she could not figure out why her internet suddenly stopped working. It turned out that people were replacing a cable outside. She had the same question about what the communication plan was. Without knowing when her internet would work again, she did not know what to tell the people she works with who rely on her. Thus, it is important for staff to update people during such unplanned interruptions to service. If they are talking about just a few businesses for a span of two to three hours, it does not seem unreasonable to expect staff to be communicating with those few businesses to say that they have not been forgotten about and that they are still working on the problem. That would allow business owners to relay information to their staff members and customers. For example, maybe a restaurant would switch to pick-up only. Without updates about what happened and how the work is progressing, business owners do not know what to expect.
Councilor Tobin continued that she does not know what conversations staff has had with Ms. Masten since the incident, but it is almost two weeks later, and Ms. Masten is still concerned that she did not have fire protection, even though she did. It might have been helpful for staff to clarify that with Ms.

Masten instead of waiting to talk about it at this meeting.

Chair Greenwald stated that this incident underscores why the downtown project is occurring. The pipes are old. He asked if some of the valves were repaired. Mr. Lussier replied that none of the valves will be remaining in service. The crew installed one temporary valve so they would have a good valve to use during the next series of shutdowns, but none of the valves that malfunctioned were repaired, because the ones on Central Square are all getting replaced. The ones on West St. further to the west will go into the City's list of valves that need replacement. That will be a separate project.

Councilor Favolise stated that he appreciates the detailed explanation and the clarifications. He continued that Mr. Lussier has said many times that "the records aren't perfect." Thinking back to Ms. Masten's concern about the speed and accuracy of communications, he asked if staff have double-checked the records they have. Work will continue downtown for quite a while. There will be more interruptions, and not all will happen neatly within the planned three- or four-hour window, as is the nature of it. He asked if staff have, thinking about the next time something needs to be communicated, double-checked the records of which downtown business lines are hooked up where, to check for inaccuracies.

Mr. Lussier replied that operationally, staff have discussed with the Casella team that they should not be optimistic in predicting how long work will take. If there is a disruption, it would be better to warn customers that it could be up to eight hours and then turn service back on in five hours, rather than the other way around. Regarding Councilor Favolise's question, he guarantees that crews will find things during this construction project that the City has no record of. It is not a matter of City staff needing to check their records for errors; it is more that the records just do not reflect what is in the ground.

Councilor Workman stated that she has a similar concern to Councilor Tobin's, that communication seems to be the real issue here. She still has not heard a definitive plan for communication. They should plan for more things to go wrong in a situation like this. People who were not initially perceived to be impacted might end up being impacted inadvertently. She wants to hear a plan for how they will handle a similar situation moving forward.

Mr. Lussier replied that he has been thinking about what Councilor Tobin said about giving more updates during the course of the interruption. Not every day of the project will involve work this risky or this impactful, but he thinks that when the team is doing "high stakes" work like this, it would be wise to schedule Mr. Downing to be dedicated to that task that day. Mr. Downing can be the person who is walking around to give periodic updates.

The following motion by Councilor Ellis was duly seconded by Councilor Tobin.

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee recommends that the communication regarding concerns related to the Downtown Infrastructure Project be accepted as informational.

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Downtown Infrastructure Project Update**

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

Attachments:
None

Background:
Mr. Lussier stated that in terms of work completed, this past month has been mostly focused on the water main work, along with connections to the adjacent buildings around the square. City staff anticipated challenges surrounding the existing utilities, but the challenges have been greater than anticipated, with telecom utilities, specifically. Telecom utility companies informed the crew where the utilities were located, but what was not realized or communicated was, for example, that some of the duct banks are 14 feet wide, and in one instance, two duct banks were stacked on top of each other. Today, the crew replacing the service line going to a set of buildings on Central Square had to go down more than 10 feet to get past the duct banks. Duct banks are typically two or three feet below ground. Casella has been doing a great job getting through these challenges, and they have made great progress.

Mr. Lussier continued that the water lines around Central Square are scheduled to begin testing next week. Before the new pipes can be used, they must go through a two-part testing sequence. First, the crew tests them for water tightness. That is a hydrostatic test. They fill a pipe with water and pressurize it to about twice what it will ever see and monitor its pressure. The pipe needs to be able to hold the pressure for at least an hour, to prove it does not leak. Next is a bacterial test. They flush the line and fill it with a high dose of chlorinated water to kill off any potential bacteria. Then, they discharge that chlorinated water down the sewers, and put regular, clean, drinking water in the pipe for 24 hours. They then test that water for the presence of bacteria. If they find any bacteria in the sample, they have to start all over again and redo it. Before a pipe is put into use, it must be watertight and completely sanitary.

Mr. Lussier continued that also next week, sewer replacements will begin. At the same time, crews

will be doing exploratory excavations to prepare for the drainage work. They said there is a chance they would bring in a second vacuum excavator next week. That noisy machine is useful for when you are dealing with other utilities and you have to dig around duct banks and gas lines. You can do it with that machine versus an excavator where you have to literally dig by hand with shovels. The exploratory excavations will help make sure that when the crew starts laying drains, they will not be running into any conflicting pipes. The drainage work is expected to begin in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Lussier stated that he wants to thank the contractors for their efforts last week. They did a nice job cleaning up before the Pumpkin Fest. They have been leaving their tract equipment on Central Square over the weekends. Last weekend, they kept a couple of pieces out as displays and even decorated them for the festival, but other than that, they brought all of their equipment off site to clean up Central Square and make it part of the event footprint. He appreciates that effort.
Mr. Lussier continued that the next Coffee and Hard Hats meeting, to not be held on Veteran's Day, has been rescheduled to Tuesday, November 3, 2026, at 9:00 AM. It will be in the Transportation Center.

Mr. Lussier continued that finally, Mr. Downing has been distributing copies of the new and improved project schedule phasing plan graphic. It has also been updated on the City's website.

George Downing, Project Ombudsman, stated that this morning, Mr. Lussier had suggested he put together a log of how many people he had been talking to and that sort of thing. However, he was only in the office for about 35 minutes today, because he was out here for various other reasons. He will instead give the Committee a picture of what he does and how he talks to people on a regular basis, without the data behind the numbers. This week has been outside the norm. As Mr. Lussier mentioned, Public Works staff and Rebecca Landry pulled together a printable version of the new construction phase schedule that is on the website. Andrea Bixby from Public Works gave him about 100 copies last Friday. From then through today, he has been walking to the businesses and handing those out to put in their binders. It has been nice to see how many businesses have their binders right there, instead of stuck on a shelf in the back somewhere. He is glad people are truly using the binders as a reference. He got to 27 businesses last Friday afternoon, south of Railroad St. He thought it was most important to get to them because they are the ones immediately impacted by this change in schedule. The other days this week he has been getting to the rest of the businesses. There are about 10 he has not gotten to. A couple of those are not open on Mondays and Tuesdays. Others are therapists and he does not want to just walk into their offices if he does not have a schedule, so he has been trying to communicate with them via text or email. He will finish getting the binder updates out soon.

Mr. Downing continued that it has been a good opportunity. He finds that now that this has been publicized, people are a little more interested in finding out how it will be impacting their businesses. Counter staff are more likely to say, "Oh wait, the owner wanted to talk to you," so he has been able to. The graphic was great. He can hold it up against the old plan and explain the schedule, so people have at least some idea of when to expect work in front of their businesses, which is the kind of information people really want to hear. He has been having some good conversations. He has also met a couple of people he had not been able to meet in person before and had only communicated with via phone or email, so that was good. That includes two new owners since this fall started. One just purchased the former Monadnock Family Services, the 64 Main St. block, this month. It was great to meet them and talk with them. He hopes the business owners have been finding this as helpful as he has.

Mr. Downing continued that when he is not spending so much time walking to all these businesses downtown, he typically receives two to four calls, emails, or texts a day. Most are questions he can answer, such as what the ribbon colors on the trees mean, when the crew tags the trees, or why a detour is going specifically the way it is going instead of another way. Some questions he gets need to be elevated either to GPI, the oversight engineers, or to Public Works because they are things he does not have the authority to deal with or does not have information about. He has a similar number of outgoing calls and emails each day, responding to communications from earlier days that he just found out the answers to, or to an ongoing email chain. A few business owners are in continuous conversation with him, not in a bad way. For example, George Benik's son calls or emails him about once a week with questions about how things are impacting The Stage, and they are always good questions. He also takes a daily walk and drive through the project area so he knows what the public is experiencing as opposed to what the contractors tell him they are experiencing. That is helpful for when he gets calls. Someone will say they saw a detour that did XYZ, and since he has been to the area, he knows what the caller is talking about. There were two or three days when he did not get down to the project area, and he got things wrong, so he tries hard to do that walk and drive.

Mr. Downing continued that there is not a good way to track this, but he also gets stopped on the street. Many more people now are aware of who he is and what he is doing, which is great, but it is not something he can document. The questions people stop him to ask have lately been about the trees or how the free parking works. His other assignment is to go out once a week with a subcontractor who takes photos and videos of existing conditions of all of the buildings. That puts him on the street and in the buildings, and when he is up and down Main St. for that, probably a couple of times an hour, he helps someone navigate the parking kiosk and how to get the free parking as opposed to just throwing money into the meter in frustration.
Mr. Downing continued that Public Works provided colored prints of the final project, which they have up on the windows at the Gilbo Ave. site, which is very helpful. The prints are beautiful, done by Kayla Smith, a Keene High School student who interned at Public Works this summer. One of her assignments was to do those beautiful, colorized pictures of what the downtown will look like. People stop and look at those prints all the time. When he can tell that they are trying to figure something out, he goes out and talks to them about it. It has been great publicity for the project.

Mr. Lussier added that the electrical equipment box behind Corner News has a mural painted on it, also by Kayla Smith. He continued that that box had been frequently marked with graffiti, so the Highway Superintendent had the clever idea of having someone paint the mural on the box. There has been no graffiti or tagging since.
Mr. Downing stated that based on how positive it has been for him to go around with the image of the new construction phases and actually having useful information to bring to businesses, he would like to start a conversation with Public Works and GPI, and Casella to a degree, but they are more tied up in the day-to-day work, to figure out a regular schedule where he can bring useful information. He wants to have a reason to stop by, rather than just popping in. He does not want to be a nuisance to business owners, which he would be more likely interpreted as if he just popped in regularly without something useful to share with them. Maybe once or twice a month he can do that, if they can figure out what is useful information to bring to people that would make people want to see him and take the information on board.

Councilor Workman stated that Mr. Downing does quite a bit as a part-time employee. She continued that it sounds like he is responding to calls and emails in a timely manner. She asked what the timeframe is for a return call or email that someone should expect, such as 24 or 48 hours. She asked what his general availability is as a part-time employee. For example, she wonders if he is

trying to be available for a few hours every Monday through Friday, or something different. It sounds like his hours might flex depending on the need of the project.

Mr. Downing replied that it has been very extensive this fall, as the project kicked in. Casella has three crews out there now. He is in every day. He anticipates the hours he needs to be in to start reducing as they settle into a more consistent pattern. Generally, he finds it most helpful to be in in the mornings. He rarely responds to texts and emails on weekends. If there is an emergency, he is not the person to be contacting on a weekend anyway. On weekdays, he responds to messages within 24 hours. If a message comes after he has left for the day, he generally will not get it until the next time he is in. If a message comes in while he is at work, he usually replies the same day. Otherwise, the next day. It rarely takes longer than that.

Councilor Favolise asked Mr. Lussier to explain what a “duct bank” is. He continued that his second question is whether people downtown should expect any disruptions based on that work. Mr. Lussier replied that a duct bank is a series or bundle of conduits. Nowadays, people use PVC pipes as conduit to run electrical lines or telecom lines underground. Rather than just having one pipe by itself, if a telecom company is putting in conduits, often they will put in a series of them. Say, two or three conduits wide and a couple deep. To protect those conduits, since they are just plastic pipes, they will often form up and encase them in concrete. That concrete is what they call a “duct bank.” Utility companies are required to mark out and locate those facilities for the contractor so they are not damaged during construction. That is the “dig safe process.” That was done. The utility companies located the duct banks based on their records. The work around it is that within the limits of that, where the duct banks are expected to be, the crews are required to either hand excavate within a certain distance for telecom, either 12 or 18 inches, or use a vacuum excavator to dig around it. That way they are not using a big, heavy, hydraulic excavator to dig that and potentially damaging the pipe. If City staff or Casella causes a break to the telecom line, something has gone wrong. And to be clear, he does not think the Downtown Infrastructure Project work is what broke the telecom line Councilor Tobin was talking about.
Councilor Favolise stated that the Committee has frequently talked about the dual downtown uses, with the business owners, staff, and property managers of residential spaces, and then the residents themselves. He asked if Mr. Downing has been interacting more with any of the residents directly. In the past, he had expressed not wanting to wait outside people’s apartment doors to share with them the latest updates, but he wonders if, as Mr. Downing has become more recognized downtown, that has extended to downtown residents as well.

Mr. Downing replied that he thinks it has, maybe not as much as he would like it to, but there is no way for him to force that issue. He continued that notifications go through property owners or property managers. He has been getting calls and emails from people who identify themselves as residents of downtown properties, asking questions about the project, so he is starting to see some of that. He assumes some of the people who stop him on the street are downtown residents, but he cannot say for sure. People are getting to know him more but not necessarily by sight, because it is not like he goes up to people’s apartments to introduce himself, but by name, at least.
Councilor Ellis stated that recently, she was at a meeting with several members of the Keene Downtown Group, and they expressed their compliments to Mr. Downing. They said he had been in a lot and had provided a lot of information. She thanks Mr. Downing for all of his work.

The following motion by Councilor Favolise was duly seconded by Councilor Workman.

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

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Residential Property Revitalization Zone (RPRZ) Application 128-130 School Street**

Recommendation:

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the structure proposed for redevelopment located at 128-130 School Street is a qualifying structure as defined by RSA 79-E:4-b; that the structure is not within a currently defined Tax Increment Financing District; that the structure is not a residential property subject to an election for tax assessment relief under the low income housing tax credit program of RSA 75:1-a; that the proposed rehabilitation cost estimates exceed the threshold amount of $50,000 and constitutes substantial rehabilitation; that the property is served by city water and sewer; that this proposed rehabilitation is consistent with the City's Master Plan; and that the proposed rehabilitation provides the following public benefits as required by Resolution R-2025-35:

1. It adds at least one unit of new housing;
2. It maintains owner occupancy of a residential building;
3. It promotes efficient design, safety, and a greater sense of community in a manner consistent with the Keene Comprehensive Master Plan.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Application for real property tax relief on any assessed tax increment resulting from the substantial rehabilitation of the qualifying structure be granted for a period of four years beginning with the completion of the substantial rehabilitation as determined by the City's Community Development Department, and conditioned upon the property owner granting to the City at the time of substantial completion a covenant ensuring that the structure shall be maintained and used in a manner that furthers the public benefits for the period of the tax relief, to be recorded at the Cheshire County Registry of Deeds at the cost and expense of the property owner. Further, the Committee recommends that the City Council waive the inclusion of a lien against proceeds from casualty and flood insurance claims in the covenant.

Attachments:

None

Background:

2026-460

Community Development Director Paul Andrus addressed the Committee first. Mr. Andrus stated this project is located at 128-130 School Street and is an application for property revitalization program tax relief. He stated staff has accepted and reviewed the application as complete. There was a public hearing held on this application on October 15. He explained the Finance Committee's role today is to consider whether the proposed project provides sufficient public benefit to warrant approval of the requested tax relief and to forward a recommendation to full council, along with the timeline.

Mr. Andrus introduced Evan Ray, property owner and applicant who is present tonight.

The Chair asked for a quick overview from the applicant. Mr. Ray stated the application is to expand a duplex into a three-unit property; the second floor of the barn would be converted to a one-bedroom unit, approximately 646 square feet in size.

Councilor Lake commended the project and clarified that originally the applicant had also asked for the second floor reconstruction as well but that is no longer part of this application. He added that state law prohibits the City from doing this more than one time for any property in a 20-year period. He asked whether the applicant intends on reconstructing the first floor at some future time. Mr. Ray stated the first floor most likely would remain as is because the neighborhood is low density.

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

That the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the structure proposed for redevelopment located at 128-130 School Street is a qualifying structure as defined by RSA 79-E:4-b; that the structure is not within a currently defined Tax Increment Financing District; that the structure is not a residential property subject to an election for tax assessment relief under the low income housing tax credit program of RSA 75:1-a; that the proposed rehabilitation cost estimates exceed the threshold amount of $50,000 and constitutes substantial rehabilitation; that the property is served by city water and sewer; that this proposed rehabilitation is consistent with the City's Master Plan; and that the proposed rehabilitation provides the following public benefits as required by Resolution R-2025-35:

1. It adds at least one unit of new housing;
2. It maintains owner occupancy of a residential building;
3. It promotes efficient design, safety, and a greater sense of community in a manner consistent with the Keene Comprehensive Master Plan.

Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Application for real property tax relief on any assessed tax increment resulting from the substantial rehabilitation of the qualifying structure be granted for a period of three years beginning with the completion of the substantial rehabilitation as determined by the City's Community Development Department, and conditioned upon the property owner granting to the City at the time of substantial completion a covenant ensuring that the structure shall be maintained and used in a manner that furthers the public benefits for the period of the tax relief, to be recorded at the Cheshire County Registry of Deeds at the cost and expense of the property owner. Further, the Committee recommends that the City Council waive the inclusion of a lien against proceeds from casualty and flood insurance claims in the covenant.

Councilor Lake stated the last time this item was discussed the Committee had talked about setting some precedence regarding the number of years that the City would grant for these applications. The basis would be up to five years for this program, an additional two years if there are units being

added and an additional five years for historic buildings.

He indicated last time it was discussed because the applicant was adding two units they would be give the two additional years. However, the applicant is only proposing one unit; hence the time would be reduced to a year. The Councilor went on to say he had suggested a base of two years for some of these projects, plus one year for the one unit. He felt this also meets that criteria for maintaining owner occupancy of a residential building, which he felt was an important public benefit. The Councilor suggested he would recommend for the first zero to five years to add an additional year and felt four years makes sense for this project.

Councilor Lake moved to amend the motion to four years instead of three years. The amendment was seconded by Councilor Roberts.

Councilor Chadbourne asked if there was a time limit for maintaining owner occupancy. Mr. Andrus stated this is not a requirement of the program. He noted the last project the City approved was not owner occupied. This is not something the City would track nor is it a requirement of the program.

Councilor Roberts asked whether staff knows how much lost revenue the City would incur going from three years to four years. Mr. Andrus stated this is a conversation he has had with the Assessor who indicated this would be difficult to estimate at this time. The Councilor asked for this cost to be determined for future projects.

Councilor Chadbourne stated she is concerned about these amendments; being this generous and how it impacts other property owners. She stated this is a great benefit to the person that is coming forward with this application and it does contribute to the community. She stated she is concerned about the precedent the Council is setting by giving out tax relief.

Councilor Chalice stated she supports what Councilor Chadbourne stated and noted the City is rewarding people who have the money to be able to do this but was comfortable with three years and setting a precedent that for one unit it is three years and additional time for any additional units.

Chair Powers stated the reality is that the value of the property is being increased and felt there was no loss of revenue; another taxpayer is not paying for any portion of this project. The property will be taxed at full value at the end of the term.

Councilor Chadbourne stated she was not implying what the Chair stated but that this individual is receiving substantial benefit and the question is do we want to keep adding more years? Is that fair in the long run?

The amended motion carried on a 3-2 vote, with Councilors Chalice and Chadbourne voting in opposition.

The motion as amended carried on a 5-0 vote.

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Execution of a Federal Funding Project Agreement for the THT Phase 2 Project NHDOT#45251**

Recommendation:

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a project agreement with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the Transportation Heritage Trail Phase 2 Project (NHDOT Project No. 45251) and to accept and expend funds from a Federal Highway Administration "Transportation Alternatives Program" grant for said project.

Attachments:

None

Background:

Public Works Director, Don Lussier addressed the next item. He stated this is an authorization for a contract; an agreement with the NHDOT. He noted the City was selected for a grant for phase two of the Transportation Heritage Trail. He stated phase one ends where the Old Rail Bed meets the Route 101. Phase 2 will pick up where that project leaves off. It includes the installation of the Historic Pro Bridge over Route 101. The project will also include safety railings on the Stone Arch Bridge.

Mr. Lussier stated this grant program requires a 20% local match with an 80% federal share. DOT estimates the total project at 3.1 million. He explained the project would go through a preliminary design phase, engineering study with public outreach and then construction.

Councilor Chalice asked for clarification on the amount being requested today. Mr. Lussier stated staff is not asking for any funds tonight. The Council has already appropriated approximately $71,000 for the local share which is in the FY27 CIP. What staff is requesting today is authorization for the City Manager to enter into the agreement for the project with the NHDOT.

Mr. Chuck Redfern of 9 Colby Street addressed the Committee and stated Pathways for Keene is committed to raising approximately half of the local share as it has done with all projects on the trail system since 1995.

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

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a project agreement with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for the Transportation Heritage Trail Phase 2 Project (NHDOT Project No. 45251) and to accept and expend funds from a Federal Highway Administration "Transportation Alternatives Program" grant for said project.

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Acceptance of Donations from Pathways for Keene**

Recommendation:
On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and expend a donation in the amount of $35,746 from Pathways for Keene for the Engineering Services for Transportation Heritage Trail Phase 2 project.

Attachments:
None

Background:
Mr. Lussier began by stating that Pathways for Keene has been around for nearly 32 years and has been raising money for our trail network. He stated as mentioned by Mr. Redfern earlier, Pathway for Keene has committed historically to raising half of the local share that is required for these grant funded projects.

Mr. Lussier introduced the Treasurer for Pathways for Keene, Kurt Blomquist. Mr. Blomquist stated as mentioned, Pathways for Keene has committed over the years to fund half of the local match. For this project again, they will be presenting a check to City Council for $35,746.

He went on to say as the Public Works Director indicated the next phase of this project would be the construction phase, which is scheduled for FY31. He indicated at the present time Pathways for Keene is only about $60,000 below what they need to match half of that grant but are expecting 100% of the funding to be available.

Mr. Blomquist noted their biggest fundraiser is the four on the 4th and this year is their 25th anniversary.

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

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and expend a donation in the amount of

$35,746 from Pathways for Keene for the Engineering Services for Transportation Heritage Trail Phase 2 project.

2026-501

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **3 Million Gallon Tank Repair - Recommendation for Additional Scope of Work**

Recommendation:
On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to add and execute additional scope of work as part of the 3 Million Gallon Water Tank Repair Project 34JI004A.

Attachments:
None

Background:
Mr. Ruoff addressed the next agenda item and stated that the City was significantly under budget on the scope of planned CIP project work for the rehabilitation of the three million gallon water tank at water treatment plant. The total budget for the tank repair was roughly $3.1 million. The funds that were allocated towards that were $2.4 million in FY23 and the remaining was allocated in FY25. Of the $3.1 million that was allocated, roughly $1.5 million has been spent for the original scope of the repairs, and roughly $1.6 million remains as unspent.

What staff is looking to do at this time is at the water treatment plant there are valves that date back to the 1920's and there is also some interior rehab to the tank that staff would like to address. The cost for this work is estimated to be around 1.2 million, which is within the remaining budget of 1.6 million. Staff is requesting to utilize these remaining project funds for that scope of additional work.

Councilor Lake asked whether the additional work is going to be done in house.

Mr. Ruoff stated the project has been designed in house but is looking to bid out the project.

Mr. Lussier explained what staff is asking is to augment the CIP project Council approved using the existing appropriations.

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

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to add and execute additional scope of work as part of the 3 Million Gallon Water Tank Repair Project 34JI004A.

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Re-allocation of Funds from the Sullivan Road Bridge Project to the George Street Bridge Project**

Recommendation:
On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to re-allocate $125,000 in project budget from the Sullivan Road Bridge Replacement Project (75M020B) to the George Street Bridge Replacement Project (75M020A).

Attachments:
None

Background:
Mr. Ruoff stated this request is for the reallocation of funds for the Sullivan Road Bridge project to the George Street Bridge replacement project. He explained that in 2023, City Council approved funding through Resolution 2023-07 to provide a local match anticipating receiving FEMA funding for the rehabilitation of the Sullivan Road Bridge. Through their process, FEMA decided not to provide those funds to the City and the City currently does not have a project planned for the rehab or replacement of that bridge; it is not a highest priority as far as bridges.

What staff is requesting is to use revenue received from New Hampshire Legislature specifically for bridges as a City's match for the George Street Bridge Project. If there are funds unspent as far as the George Street project, the City would then continue to use it in the bridge replacement program. Essentially reallocating funding that was directly appropriated for Sullivan Road Bridge.

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

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to re-allocate $125,000 in project budget from the Sullivan Road Bridge Replacement Project (75M020B) to the George Street Bridge Replacement Project (75M020A).

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Execution of an Agreement for Engineering Services with KenWave Solutions, Inc for the Scope of the Transmission Water Main Inspection Project**

Recommendation:
On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute an agreement with KenWave Solutions, Inc for the Transmission Water Main Inspection Project (34JW016A) in an amount not to exceed $134,280.74.

Attachments:
None

Background:
Mr. Ruoff stated the next agenda item is the request to execute an agreement for engineering professional services with KenWave solutions for the scope of the transmission water main inspection project.

The City received three submissions for this project and it was added in the last CIP as an identified need based on the number of water main breaks in the transmission main. This project will perform a detailed inspection of the 2.5 miles of the City's 16-inch water transmission main, identify deficiencies in areas that need to be repaired or replaced.

The Selection Committee consisting of City staff, reviewed the proposals. The low bidder fell short of the scope the City is looking to accomplish. As a result, the Committee went with the second low bid whose qualifications and previous work experience are exemplary in this type of work.

Councilor Chalice stated she is looking forward to the results so that the City could be better prepared for what is needed.

Councilor Favolise thanked staff for providing concise details to Council in the past few months as to how bids are awarded.

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

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute an agreement with KenWave Solutions, Inc for the Transmission Water Main Inspection Project (34JW016A) in an amount not to exceed $134,280.74.

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Relating to the Execution of a Change Order with Structural Preservation Services - City Hall Parking Garage Rehab Project**

Recommendation:
On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a contract change order with Structural Preservation Services, Inc. in an amount not to exceed $67,000 for the City Hall Parking Garage Rehab Project (22M006AA).

Attachments:
None

Background:
Mr. Ruoff stated a month ago he had requested a change order for structural preservation services. The contractor did a good job on the parking garage but unfortunately a very small item that was done at the very end of the project was not accounted for in his request for the previous change order amount. The previous change order amount was for $65,325. Staff is requesting an additional $1,600 more for stair tread repair that was done at the last minute and was not accounted for in the $65,325. Mr. Ruoff apologized for this error. He added because the $1,600 wasn't included in the original amount, staff couldn't execute the change that they needed for the work that was completed for the project.

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

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a contract change order with Structural Preservation Services, Inc. in an amount not to exceed $67,000 for the City Hall Parking Garage Rehab Project (22M006AA).

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Mari Brunner, Senior Planner

Through: Paul Andrus, Community Development Director

Subject: **Resignation — John Therriault — Conservation Commission**

Recommendation:
Accept the resignation of John Therriault from the Conservation Commission with gratitude for his service.

Attachments:
1. 2026-10-19_JTherriault_Resignation_1

Background:
John Therriault initiated the City's effort to become a "Bee City USA" community in early 2020 and was appointed to the Conservation Commission as an alternate member in July 2020 to help with pollinator programming in Keene. Since that time, John has served on the Commission as an alternate member and provided leadership for the Bee City USA program, including preparing and submitting annual reports, conducting pollinator education and outreach, and sharing his extensive knowledge with the Conservation Commission to help them in their role with reviewing and providing recommendations on NHDES wetland applications as well as the Planning Board's Surface Water Protection applications.

From: John Therriault
To: Mari Brunner
Subject: Resignation from Conservation Commission
Date: Monday, October 19, 2026 5:31:52 PM

Mari,

Due to medical reasons, please do not consider me for another term on the Keene Conservation Commission.

It has been an honor to serve and inject Bee City USA goals into the commission's discussions.

Regards,

John Therriault
Sent from my iPhone

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Megan Fortson, Planner

Through: Paul Andrus, Community Development Director

Subject: **Resignation - Jill Bouchillon - Heritage Commission**

Recommendation:
Accept the resignation of Jill Bouchillon from the Heritage Commission with gratitude for her service.

Attachments:
1. Resignation Letter_Jill Bouchillon

Background:
Jill Bouchillon is an alternate member of the Heritage Commission. She has submitted her resignation effective November 13, 2026 due to an upcoming relocation.

2026-508

October 26,

Keene Heritage Commission
City of Keene
3 Washington Street
Keene, NH 03431

Dear Members of the Keene Heritage Commission and Mayor Kahn,

Please accept this letter as formal notification of my resignation from my alternate seat on the Keene Heritage Commission, effective November 13, 2026, due to my upcoming relocation.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve on the Commission and to contribute to the preservation and celebration of Keene's rich history and cultural heritage. I have thoroughly enjoyed working alongside such dedicated community members and appreciate the opportunity to have been part of this important work.

Thank you for the wonderful experience, and I wish the Commission continued success in all its future endeavors and preservation efforts.

Sincerely,

Jill Bouchillon

Jill Bouchillon
s.bouchillon@yahoo.com

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #I.1.

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Amanda Palmeira, City Attorney

Through:

Subject: **Establishing a Moratorium on Large-Scale Data Center Uses**
Ordinance O-2026-17

Recommendation:
That Ordinance O-2026-17 be referred to the Joint Planning Board & Planning Licenses and Development Committee.

Attachments:
1. O-2026-17 Appendix A_Data_Centers_Moratorium
2. 10-21-2026 Keene Planning Board - Data Center Moratorium Findings of Fact

Executive Summary:
This ordinance, requested by the City Council and the Planning Board, is intended to create a temporary, one-year moratorium on the establishment, construction, or operation of what the ordinance defines as "large-scale data centers" or "cryptocurrency mining facilities" with the City of Keene.

Background:
On September 17, the City Council unanimously voted to refer to the Planning Board a request by Councilor Phil Jones to consider an ordinance establishing a temporary moratorium on data centers and cryptocurrency mining facilities. Such a moratorium is enabled by RSA 674:23, and is initiated upon findings of facts by a local planning board. Following the City Council's referral, on October 21, the Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council enact a one-year moratorium on data centers or similar uses and issued findings of fact in support. This ordinance, with the appended findings of fact, would create a temporary, one-year moratorium on the establishment, construction, or operation of what the ordinance defines as "large-scale data centers" or "cryptocurrency mining facilities" with the City of Keene.

ORDINANCE O-2026-17

CITY OF KEENE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-six

AN ORDINANCE Establishing a Moratorium on Large-Scale Data Center Uses

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

That Chapter 100 of the City Code of the City of Keene, New Hampshire, as amended, is hereby further amended by adding as Appendix A the language as follows:

Appendix A. Temporary Moratorium on Large-Scale Data Centers

A.1 – Purpose

The purpose of this ordinance establishing a moratorium on the establishment, construction, expansion, or operation of certain data center uses for one year within the City of Keene is to:

(1) Protect the public health, safety, welfare, and natural resources of the City of Keene and its residents;

(2) Provide adequate time for the study of potential land use, environmental, infrastructure, water supply, and fiscal impacts associated with data centers, a rapidly expanding form of land use at a scale not specifically addressed in the City's Land Development Code prior to this ordinance;

(3) Prevent development that could conflict with or undermine the Keene 2025 Comprehensive Master Plan and other goals and policies of the City of Keene; and

(4) Allow time for City of Keene staff and officials to develop thoughtful and appropriate regulations on data centers and similar uses.

A.2 – Authority

The authority for this moratorium is RSA 674:23, which permits the legislative body of a municipality, at the recommendation of its planning board, to enact one-year temporary zoning ordinances to preserve the status quo in certain circumstances.

A.3 – Definitions

The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this article, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning, and the meanings ascribed in this section shall only apply to use in this article:

(1) "*Cryptocurrency Mining Facility*" means a Data Center consisting of at least one computer on one continuous property for the purpose of securing a blockchain protocol or network through computational processes, as well as purchasing, selling, staking, or exchanging digital assets, i.e. cryptocurrency, as a Principal Use.

(2) "*Data Center*" means a facility composed of networked computers and equipment that businesses or other organizations use to organize, process, store and disseminate large amounts of data. Data Centers may be, but are not limited to, Cryptocurrency Mining Facilities, server farms, cloud computing facilities, or colocation centers that rely on specialized infrastructure such as industrial-scale cooling systems, backup generators, high-capacity electrical equipment, or similar systems necessary to sustain continuous operation of computer systems. Data Centers do not include facilities owned or operated by a telecommunications, broadband, cable, internet, or wireless services provider that primarily supports commercially available telecommunications network operations or broadband internet access.

(3) "*Large-scale Data Center*" means a Data Center greater than 20,000 square feet or utilizing greater than 5 megawatts of energy at peak usage.

(4) "*Principal Use*" means the main or primary use conducted on a lot or located within a building or structure, as distinguished from an accessory use.

A.4 – Moratorium

(1) Effective upon the adoption of this ordinance, no applications shall be accepted, processed, approved, or issued for:

(a) Site plan approval;

(b) Subdivision approval;

(c) Building permits;

(d) Conditional use permits;

(e) Special exceptions;

(f) Variances (to the extent applicable); or

(g) Waivers

for the establishment, construction, expansion, or operation of any Large-scale Data Center or any Cryptocurrency Mining Facility within the City of Keene.

(2) This moratorium shall apply to all zoning districts within the City of Keene.

(3) This moratorium shall not impact existing Data Centers in operation as of the adoption of this ordinance.

(4) This moratorium shall be in effect for one year from its adoption.

(5) During the moratorium period, the Community Development Director or its designee shall conduct a review of Data Center land uses; evaluate appropriate zoning districts, performance standards, and permitting frameworks, if any; consider human health, environmental, infrastructure, natural resources, and fiscal impacts thereof; and develop and recommend appropriate zoning amendments.

_____

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

TO:	The Honorable Jay Kahn, Mayor of Keene & Members of Keene City Council
FROM:	Mari Brunner, Senior Planner
THROUGH:	Paul Andrus, Community Development Director
DATE:	October 21, 2026
SUBJECT:	Planning Board Findings of Fact – Data Center Moratorium

At the Planning Board meeting on September 28, 2026, the Board voted unanimously to recommend City Council pursue an ordinance enacting a one-year moratorium on data centers or similar uses based on the following findings:

1. **New or rapidly evolving land use**

Data centers represent a new and rapidly expanding form of industrial land use at a scale that is not specifically addressed in the City's current Land Development Code.

2. **Inadequacy of existing regulations**

The current zoning framework:

- Does not differentiate between traditional and emerging large-scale (or "hyperscale") Data Centers
- Does not define or regulate Cryptocurrency Mining Facilities
- Does not include conditions or performance standards reflecting their unique impacts
- Does not address the potential scale and/or intensity of these facilities

As a result, without a moratorium, development could proceed in a manner inconsistent with the City's goals and needs before regulations are put in place.

3. **Potential impacts require further consideration**

The Planning Board has identified several areas of concern:

- Water resources, including impacts on aquifers and groundwater
- Public and environmental health, including from waste heat generation, noise, and pollution
- Energy needs, including uniquely high demand and potential need for new infrastructure
- Fiscal impacts, especially the uncertainty related to the relative municipal tax revenue and municipal costs resulting from the use
- Transportation concerns, including traffic resulting from construction or during power outages.

4. **Risk of premature development**

Absent a moratorium, there is a substantial risk that data center projects may be proposed under existing regulations, such projects could vest development rights inconsistent with future regulation and with the master plan, and the City's ability to thoughtfully plan its long-term future would be compromised.

5. **Consideration of the Master Plan**

The proposed moratorium is consistent with the following goals in the 2025 Comprehensive Master Plan:

Thriving Economy Pillar

- Prioritize economic sustainability and resiliency

Connected Mobility

- Create a connected and accessible network of multi-modal transportation infrastructure
- Prioritize vulnerable road users in infrastructure design, operations, and maintenance
- Expand and promote environmentally sustainable mobility options that are convenient and attractive

Vibrant Neighborhoods

- Support a built environment that encourages social connections and interactions
- Foster a high quality of life for all residents
- Ensure safe and efficient movement around town

Adaptive Workforce Pillar:

- Meet quality of life needs and reduce workforce barriers, such as housing availability, childcare, and transportation
- Prioritize workforce and community health and wellness

Flourishing Environment Pillar:

- Promote smart land use and development
- Prioritize environmental protection and sustainability
- Sustainable Energy Plan:
    - Meet 100% of the electricity needs of all Keene residents, businesses, and other electricity customers with renewable sources of energy by 2030.
    - Meet the community's transportation, heating, and cooling needs using renewable sources of energy by 2050.

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Relating to Wells Garage Lower Level Public Parking**
Ordinance O-2026-16

Recommendation:
On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption Ordinance O-2026-16.

Attachments:
1. O-2026-16-Relating to Wells Garage Lower Level Public Parking_Referral

Background:
Deputy City Manager Rebecca Landry addressed the Committee on this item and stated she wanted to provide some background information about why staff is recommending adding public parking to the Wells Garage, which is an existing parking structure.

She stated parking services annual budget goals include identifying parking needs and implementing solutions to meet those needs. Those needs change over time. Wells Garage at the present time is underutilized and is close to downtown businesses, which creates a good opportunity. Ms. Landry noted there are permit spaces that are sitting empty right now, while there is also demand for public spaces close to downtown businesses.

Another good opportunity is that the City can add public parking that will enable utilization of that facility. Converting underutilized permit spaces to public pay by hour spaces, also advances the Council's goals of minimizing the burden on the taxpayers by making sure the parking fund remains self-funding and ensuring the infrastructure supports the various needs of its residents and businesses.

Parking Operations Manager, Chelsea North addressed the Committee next. Ms. North stated the parking system over the last few years has seen some changes. Some of those changes include changing the Wells Garage, which was previously pay by hour parking to permit only. She stated the utilization of this Garage is not what it used to be. She stated one of the reasons for this is the change to the overnight and winter maintenance parking restrictions. Because people are able to

park on the street overnight except for during times of declaration, there is no real reason to have an overnight permit, which was the majority of the permits. She noted the City went from having a near permanent waiting list to having 50% occupancy. As a result, the City wants to make better use of the spaces by opening it back up to the public.

Ms. North went on to say during the FY27 budget cycle the City would need to evaluate the increase of fees. She indicated although this was not mentioned in the budget cycle, this is another way to provide additional revenue to the parking fund, especially in light of the free parking that is being offered on Main Street and Central Square for the last four months of the calendar year.

Ms. North stated during the free parking discussion she had provided information that this revenue source could create up to $127,000 based on $2.00 an hour charge which she indicated is higher than on street, but this is the only covered parking the City offers to the public. This is premium parking during hot summer months and winter months, giving people an ability to get their car out of the elements and make it easier for them to come and go. She further stated she based the number off 50% occupancy and that number comes from historical data from when the parking garage was opened to the public for pay by hour.

Ms. Landry stated she wants to mention that these are not overnight spaces. They are pay by hour until 5:00 pm. They can stay until midnight but then have to be vacate by 6:00 AM. She added there is also still plenty of space for overnight permit parking.

Ms. Chalice asked if we are saying these spaces are only during the day until midnight, does the City miss the potential for additional revenue for these new spaces to allow those people to stay overnight. She asked whether there was a reasonable way to accomplish this without putting undue work on staff. Ms. North stated this is something staff will need to look into in the future. Currently the parking system as written in the Code is effective from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. There has not been a provision to pay for parking during the night. The City offers permit parking for people who use the Garage for overnight only. There are multiple types of quarterly permits, including one for just evening hours which equates to about $0.15 or $0.16 cents an hour.

Ms. Chalice stated she was referring to guests who come to the hotel and want to park in a covered area and are going to be there overnight. Ms. North stated the hotel has their own spaces, which they oversee and pay for into the parking fund. If this is something that they would like to expand into the covered parking, the hotel would need to work with the City on this.

Ms. Landry indicated the City needs to keep its eye on the parking fund. Permit parking is a revenue source for the City and if we provide free parking elsewhere, it impacts that permit parking; it is about balancing how many spaces are permitted versus pay by hour.

Councilor Lake asked how many spaces are going to be opened up for pay by hour parking. Ms. North stated it will be between 40 and 50 spaces open to the public at all times which will be sectioned off from the spaces that are guaranteed to the quarterly permit holders.

Councilor Roberts felt this is going to be a tremendous service for the community.

Councilor Favolise stated he would like a discussion from the Committee relating to the $2.00 rate to make sure it was the correct amount. He further stated a recent Sentinel article referred to a dozen new apartments opening downtown and questioned whether this influences staff’s thinking around

the number of permitted spaces the City might want to retain. Ms. North responded by saying the major factors for Wells Garage being turned into a permit only space is because of the number of apartments that were being converted downtown and at the time that was the right thing to do. However, a few years later, it is time to reverse course and provide a better equilibrium with the spaces. She noted the way the garage is sectioned out operationally, there is nothing saying that if the demand for permits goes back up again, the City can't revisit this issue.

Councilor Chalice asked how staff arrived at the $2.00 rate and asked how that compares to other locations in the City. Ms. North stated $2.00 an hour is the highest per hour charge the City would charge. The rationale behind that is because of the covered parking and City rates are fairly low compared to regional rates. Staff did not find this to be unreasonable.

Councilor Lake stated he is in support of this rate but would like to reconsider this issue in the future.

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

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption Ordinance O-2026-16.

ORDINANCE O-2026-16

CITY OF KEENE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty Six

AN ORDINANCE Relating to Wells Garage Lower Level Public Parking

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

"That the City Code of the City of Keene, New Hampshire, as amended, are hereby further amended by deleting the stricken text and inserting the bolded text in section 94-211 "Meter Rates" of Chapter 94 entitled "Traffic, Parking, and Public Ways" as follows:

Sec. 94-211. - Meter rates.

(a) The meter rates set forth in this chapter pertain to all single space parking meters, multi-space meters and any other payment technologies.

(b) Parking rates.

(1) On street parking is defined as any metered space directly accessed from the roadway, except for Roxbury Plaza and Library Annex Lot.

a. Rate of parking is $ 1.00 for one hour of time.

(2) Off street parking includes Elm Street, Commercial Street, Wells Street lot, Gilbo East and West parking lots, City Hall and any other assigned location.

b. Rate of parking is $0.50 cents for one hour of time.

(3) Covered, off street parking includes the lower level of Wells Garage and any other assigned location.

a. Rate of parking is $2.00 for one hour of time.

_____

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

In City Council October 15, 2026.
Referred to the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee.

City Clerk

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee, Standing Committee

Through:

Subject: **Relating to the Allocation of Funds for Construction of the Monadnock View Cemetery Expansion Project**
Resolution R-2026-42

Recommendation:
On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2026-42.

Attachments:
1. R-2026-42 - Allocation of Funds for Monadnock View Cemetery Project_Referral

Background:
City Engineer Bryan Ruoff and Parks and Recreation Director Carrah Fisk-Hennessey were the next two speakers. Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated staff has discussed previously the need for this cemetery expansion. She indicated the Committee had asked how many spaces this expansion would provide and how long this expansion would last.

Ms. Fisk-Hennessey stated the master plan for the cemetery expansion is for 5,700 graves. She noted the trend right now is more towards cremation and with cremation, you can fit two cremation spaces for each cremation plot. In addition, you can fit three cremations on top of each full burial plot. When referring to 5,700 full burial plots what is being referred to are 9,500 to 10,500 burials that could happen in this expansion as a whole.

It is phased into 12 different sections. Each section is about 500 full graves. Staff is striving to be as efficient as possible, and to have what the community needs in terms of expansion space.

Mr. Ruoff addressed the Committee next. He stated in securing funding for the project, the City has advertised the project for bidding. The amount that is being allocated is 1.4 million dollars, which will be paid by the Trustees. The funds will be paid by the City and the City in turn will be reimbursed by the Trustees at each payment requisition from the City. Mr. Ruoff stated they are bidding this time right now to get far enough ahead that lots are ready for next year. There are almost no plots remaining in the cemetery.

Mr. Ruoff stated there are items that would be completed such as landscaping if there are funds available. The bid opening is scheduled for next Tuesday and staff will expedite the review on the same day, confirm the low bidder and provide a recommendation to the Trustees for their approval to award the next day.

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

On a vote of 5 to 0, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends adoption of Resolution R-2026-42.

CITY OF KEENE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty Six

A RESOLUTION Allocation of Funds for Construction of the Monadnock View Cemetery Expansion Project

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Keene, as follows:

WHEREAS, The City has a planned Capital Improvements Project, planned to start construction in FY27 for the Monadnock View Cemetery Expansion Project as part of the Cemetery Improvements and Expansion Program (65J0028A); and

WHEREAS, The City and the Cemetery Trustees desire to execute the most efficient and cost effective project and maximize the benefits of the available funding for our residents and the community;

WHEREAS, the most cost effective and efficient option to the City is to bid, award, and to construct the full scope of the Cemetery Expansion Project as one project in lieu of multi year, phased projects as previously planned;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED That the sum of ~~One million, four hundred thousand dollars~~ ($1,400,000) is hereby appropriated in fiscal year 2027 for the purpose of funding the Monadnock View Cemetery Expansion Project (65J0028A) scope, which will be reimbursed by the Cemetery Trustees, based on the actual costs necessary and paid by the City for the scope of the improvements for the project.

_____

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

In City Council October 15, 2026.
Referred to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee.

City Clerk

CITY OF KEENE
NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: November 5, 2026

To: Mayor and Keene City Council

From: Aaron Costa, Asst. Public Works Directors/ Operations Mgr.

Through: Elizabeth Ferland, City Manager
Donald Lussier, Public Works Director

Subject: **Relating to an Appropriation of Funds for Water Supply Technical Services Resolution R-2026-56**

Recommendation:
That Resolution R-2026-56 be referred to the Finance, Organization & Personnel Committee for consideration and a recommendation to the City Council.

Attachments:
1. R-2026-56-Appropriation of Unallocated Water Fund Balance

Background:
The City owns and operates three groundwater production wells located off Court Street. Together, these wells are a valuable drinking water resource capable of producing approximately 2.6 million gallons of water per day.

The Court Street Well Field is bordered by Bretwood Golf Course and the Green Wagon Farmstand. Several groundwater monitoring wells are located throughout the area surrounding the production wells. The City's Laboratory Division routinely collects and analyzes samples from these wells to monitor for various contaminants.

Pesticide and fungicide compounds have been detected in the monitoring wells. In 2025, a low-level detection of the fungicide Iprodione was also identified in Production Well No. 3. On May 27, 2026, the Laboratory Division presented information on chemical detections in groundwater to the Municipal Services, Facilities and Infrastructure Committee (MSFI).

Follow-up testing conducted in summer and fall of 2026 identified additional low-level detections of Butylate, Chlorfenson, and Hydramethylnon in the production wells. The Butylate and Hydramethylnon results were below their respective human health benchmarks. Chlorfenson is no longer in use, and no human health benchmark has been established for this compound. Testing also detected t-Butanol, or tertiary butyl alcohol (TBA), at a concentration below the New Hampshire

Ambient Groundwater Quality Standard (AGQS).

In March 2026, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) provided the City with a recommended scope of work. The scope includes installing additional groundwater monitoring wells, updating the groundwater model, and conducting further data analysis and reporting. This work will help the City and NHDES better understand how pesticide compounds are migrating through the groundwater aquifer.

NHDES also recommended that the City apply for Local Source Water Protection grant funding to help offset the cost of installing the additional monitoring wells. The application deadline was November 1, 2026. The City submitted an application requesting $30,000 in grant funding and expects to be notified of an award decision in early 2027.

City staff contacted Aries Engineering and received a proposal to complete the recommended scope of work. Aries Engineering is familiar with the Court Street Well Field, having previously performed groundwater modeling in 2017 and a dissolved arsenic evaluation in 2020. Based on the firm's technical expertise and familiarity with the well field, staff will recommend sole-source procurement of Aries Engineering to complete this work.

Financials:
Approximately $87,000 in unspent project balance remains available in the Water Supply Protection Program (34MI010A). The anticipated project costs and funding are as follows:

- Aries Engineering proposal: $120,000, including approximately 20% contingency, to complete the NHDES-recommended scope of work.
- Additional pesticide analysis: $40,000.
- Total anticipated program cost: Approximately $160,000, before any grant funding is received.
- Existing available funds: Approximately $87,000.
- Requested appropriation: $75,000 from Unallocated Fund Balance.

The requested appropriation of $75,000, combined with the existing program balance, would provide sufficient funding to cover the anticipated project costs.

CITY OF KEENE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty Six

A RESOLUTION Appropriation of Unallocated Water Fund Balance

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Keene, as follows:

That the sum of $75,000.00 be appropriated from the Unallocated Water Fund Balance to the Water Supply Protection Program (34MI010A).

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Jay V. Kahn, Mayor