

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

4:30 PM

City Hall, 2nd Floor Conference Room

Members Present:

Tom Link, Chair
Kathy Frink, Treasurer
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Lilly Hart
Wally Secord
Karen Parsells
Antje Hornbeck
John Mitchell

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

Others Present:

Members Not Present:

Irene Davis, Vice Chair
Ken Meola, Police Chief

1. Call to Order

Chair Link calls the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

2. Roll Call –Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting: January 13, 2015

Ms. Thomas-Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of January 13, 2015. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

4. Board Business:

a.) Fund Raising – Sub Committee’s Report

Chair Link asked if any meetings took place in reference to additional funding options. He continued, stating that at the last meeting many fiscal items were discussed including the question of the Pumpkin Festival and other fundraising options. Chair Link stated that a letter was written to get the original \$5,000 instead of \$3,500 from the city as it once was before financial hardship occurred. He stated that the letter was sent to the City Manager and a confirmation was received. Chair Link asked if anyone knew about the status of the Pumpkin Festival. Ms. Parsells asked when the city would vote on this. Chair Link stated that he believed it was the end of January. He continued, stating that he has not heard any official decision about the festival however.

Ms. Thomas-Smith reported that the budget is discussed in March. Ms. Mattson confirmed that the public hearing for the budget occurs in early March, so a decision from City Council on the Pumpkin Festival may occur by this time.

Ms. Parsells stated that the Fundraising Sub Committee will have a meeting on February 24, 2015 at 4:30 PM at Panera Bread. Chair Link stated that he may join the meeting.

Ms. Parsells stated that Stonewall Farms may have an Oktoberfest this year which would be a perfect venue. She asked who the new director was. Ms. Hornbeck stated that she is unsure what the status is with the farm at this point but we can bring forward the idea. Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that the farm has an event coordinator. Ms. Parsells stated that she will contact the farm. Chair Link reinstated that he will try to make the meeting and that the subcommittee report is that there will be a meeting held on February 24, 2015.

Chair Link stated that finding a corporate sponsor like KWS in Einbeck may assist the financial need of the committee.

Ms. Thomas-Smith made a motion to accept the subcommittee report. Ms. Parsells seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

b.) Police, Fire & Public Works exchange – part of 3 year plan – Ken

Chair Link asked if anyone has any update on this item due to Chief Meola’s absence. There was no discussion. This item will be tabled until the next meeting.

c.) School Exchange – Keene/Einbeck

Mr. Mitchell stated that the teachers just had a meeting and they have been in contact with Germany. He reported that between 7 to 10 German students will be coming in the fall. Mr. Mitchell reported that the dates of October 25th to November 15th were provided to Germany. He continued, stating that one teacher suggested a summer visit instead.

Mr. Mitchell stated that a committee has been created in the Cheshire Career Center with about 7 members to decide what events will occur. The vocational director has also been contacted and he believes there will be some funding available. Mr. Mitchell stated that there are many generous people willing to host the adults but there is still a need for housing students. Mr. Mitchell stated that in April he will be looking for students from Keene High School and Cheshire Career Center who will want to go to Germany and in exchange host a German student. He continued, stating that the major discussion from the last two meetings was allowing students who would not be able to go over to Germany due to financial restraints. He continued, stating that four vocational teachers have pledged financial support for the student youth groups. Teachers are hoping that perhaps this will encourage others to help support students in the community.

Mr. Mitchell stated that the expense is a deterrent for certain students who are also academically advanced. Chair Link stated that Ms. Davis heard from Albert Thormann in reference to purchasing airline tickets and he wanted specific dates. Ms. Davis wanted Mr. Mitchell to give details on an invitation with a date. Mr. Mitchell stated that the dates discussed were sent today and the German educators can choose from these dates. Mr. Mitchell stated that visas were in question but he explained that he was unaware of the protocol. Mr. Mitchell reinstated that the dates provided for the exchange were October 25- November 15, 2015 when the school is free.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he was unsure if they wanted a more specific time. Mr. Secord stated that they may be waiting for a formal invitation that is notarized. Mr. Mitchell stated that he will email again tomorrow to check. Mr. Secord stated that a specific time should be delivered. Chair Link asked where the email will be sent. Mr. Mitchell stated that he has been corresponding with Susan Retki and Dirk Heigher. Chair Link asked Mr. Mitchell to send a copy to Ms. Davis, Mr. Thormann, and himself as well. Mr. Mitchell asked if Chair Link would send Mr. Thormann's email to him. Ms. Parsells asked how many days the students would stay in Keene. Mr. Mitchell stated that these specifics have not been determined. Ms. Parsells asked about host families and how long they would be willing to have individuals. Mr. Mitchell reinstated that there are no hosts for students yet. Mr. Mitchell stated that George DuBois hosted two students ten years ago and he may be able to host again. He continued, stating that getting students in Keene to sign up for the exchange in April will be a good way to get hosts for German exchange students.

Ms. Frink stated that the committee's event in October should be incorporated when students come to Keene. Mr. Mitchell stated that there should be a casual welcoming meal and a formal meal with the city as well. Chair Link stated that there may be people from Keene going over in early October. It has been on the fence due to the Pumpkin Festival. He continued, stating that the band in particular could stay with families, practice, and play together. Chair Link stated that it could occur where students go to Einbeck and then German individuals would come here very shortly after. He continued, stating that this would keep the inertia going.

Mr. Mitchell asked Mr. Secord if a contract for the hosting parents is necessary. Mr. Secord replied that in his experience, Keene usually went to Germany first. He continued, stating that you are providing them with meals but the itinerary should be completed before they come. Mr. Secord stated that he has put together the itinerary in advance of the first meeting. Mr. Mitchell

asked when the itinerary should be sent to Germany. Mr. Secord stated that he would send the itinerary about 6 months before. He continued, stating that his exchange is relatively easy because the same events occur.

Ms. Frink stated that in March students from a musical group will be coming for a weekend to the high school. She continued, stating that there is an itinerary explaining responsibility of meals and transportation. Ms. Thomas-Smith suggested looking back at previous minutes for the itinerary. Mr. Secord stated that he will give Mr. Mitchell a copy. Ms. Parsells reported that there is a form for students coming in March for families to fill out along with a background check. Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that all host families were required to do a background check.

Mr. Secord suggested checking host family homes when they sign up for exchange students to make sure everything is up to par. He continued, stating that in the past there have been issues where the student does not get the ideal experience. This has occurred on both sides. Mr. Secord stated that some homes would not have internet, television, or other amenities that may make the student more comfortable. He continued, stating that it is best to give the students a good experience.

Ms. Frink made a motion to accept the School Exchange report. Ms. Parsells seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

d.) Band exchange – Keene High/The Mendelssohn School contact – part of 3 year plan

Chair Link stated that Ms. Davis was in contact with Jim Logan at the high school and they would try to set up a talk. He continued, stating that there may be a great opportunity in pursuing the high school band director who is in the process of retiring. Mr. Mitchell stated that he talked to Erik, the Band Director, recently and he is intrigued with the idea but has concerns. He continued, stating that he is worried if the students would need to practice before traveling over. Mr. Mitchell stated that he tried to explain that the students are likely to be absorbed in the group in Germany. Chair Link asked if he would like that idea better. Mr. Mitchell stated that he was not sure because it took him some time to explain the concept and have it understood fully. Chair Link stated that it is important to cater to what he is most comfortable with. Mr. Mitchell stated that he gave Chair Link's contact information to Erik. Mr. Mitchell reported that Erik was worried about the student's ability to play on their own. Chair Link stated that getting him connected to someone in Germany may be helpful as well.

Mr. Secord stated that it is the opportunity to visit another country not necessarily to make the best music. Mr. Secord stated that it would be great to bring the best players but it does not always work out that way; it is who is available. Chair Link stated that getting Jim Logan's blessing and connecting with someone in the music department is a good start. Ms. Hart stated that she spoke to the band director at Fall Mountain School and he previously had bad experiences with kids staying at hosts families without direct supervision of adults from their country. Ms. Hart stated that this seems like a big hurdle for him. Mr. Secord stated that the teacher needs to be responsible for the kids when they leave home and it is important to have an authoritative personality when necessary.

Chair Link stated that more options will be explored. Ms. Hart stated that after a few good exchanges the director may be interested. Mr. Secord stated that it is a huge undertaking. He continued, stating that this committee has been doing so much good for the town with the exchange program and he is upset about the Pumpkin Festival's fiscal support and a lack of support for the committee.

Ms. Secord made a motion to accept the Band Exchange report. Ms. Hart seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

e.) Facebook page – social media – Lilly & Dawn

Ms. Hart stated that she sent Mr. Thormann two emails about the Facebook coordination, but she has not heard anything yet. Chair Link stated that he receives messages from Mr. Thormann but nothing about social media. Ms. Hart stated that Mr. Thormann wanted to know our vision for social media and specific ideas so they can create a plan. Ms. Thomas-Smith asked if it is separate from the Google-Docs. Ms. Hart stated she asked about both in correspondence. She continued, stating that they are two different needs but she wrote Mr. Thormann in reference to both. Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that Google Docs should have a separate item.

Chair Link stated that he will be meeting with Paul Miller at the Keene Sentinel. He continued, stating that it will be difficult to have reporters and editors understand the language on Einbeck's website and articles may be lost in translation. Chair Link asked if things should be translated via Google.

Ms. Hornbeck stated that the Keene community needs to know more about the Einbeck and she is willing to volunteer her translating services for a weekly column perhaps. Ms. Hart stated that it depends on the goal. She continued, stating that the Keene Sentinel staff members can start with Google to translate and if they are interested in a specific topic she will also be available for translation on a case by case basis. Chair Link stated that he will ask Mr. Miller what the paper is specifically looking to do and their needs. Ms. Hornbeck stated that she would be willing to write articles if Mr. Miller is worried about the shortage of staff.

Ms. Thomas-Smith suggested bringing past and future news together for the Keene Sentinel like upcoming visits. This would take the pressure off of creating new pieces. Mr. Secord favored Ms. Hornbeck's idea because the staff is very small. Chair Link stated that we just need Mr. Miller's approval and great things can come from this. Ms. Hart suggested reviewing the museum also.

Chair Link asked about signs in the city of Keene and how the conversation begins in reference to getting Einbeck's name on the "Welcome to Keene" signs. Ms. Mattson stated that she would look into this. Chair Link suggested that Einbeck's name be under the City of Keene sign. Ms. Hornbeck suggested printing out the sign from Einbeck for review. Ms. Hart suggested graphics

to make the two seals merged; this is similar to The Rotary Club. Chair Link stated that it is difficult to read words underneath the city sign and the two merged signs may be more visible.

f.) Communications:

g.) Reports:

- a.) Treasurer Report – Kathy Frink

Ms. Frink stated that no changes have occurred since the last meeting. The balance is still: \$16,561.90.

h.) New Business:

None at this time

- i.) **Next Meeting:** Next meeting date: March 10th, 2015

j.) More Time:

10. Adjournment

Ms. Secord made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Thomas-Smith seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Lana Bluege, Minute taker

February 10, 2015