

City of Keene  
New Hampshire

**MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, October 12, 2016**

**6:00 PM**

**Council Chambers**

**Members Present:**

Randy L. Filiault, Vice-Chair  
Robert J. O'Connor  
Stephen L. Hooper  
Gary P. Lamoureux

**Staff Present:**

Thomas Mullins, City Attorney  
Elizabeth Fox, Human Resources  
Director/ACM  
Don Lussier, City Engineer  
Kürt Blomquist, Public Works Director  
Brian Costa, Police Chief

**Members Not Present:**

Janis O. Manwaring, Chair

Acting Chair Filiault called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and explained the procedures of the meeting.

**1) Liberty Ebright – Speeding on Jordan Road – Request for Speed Humps**

Liberty Ebright, of 312 Jordan Road, introduced herself and her children. Ms. Ebright stated that she and her family moved here last summer and they enjoy living in the semi-rural area. She continued that the speed limit is 30 miles per hour on Jordan Road. People frequently cut through at really fast speeds. The City is repaving Roxbury St. and she was hoping Jordan Road would be up next. She continued that they are asking to have speed humps installed, like the ones on North Lincoln Street. There are a lot of families that have moved in in the past few years with small children. It is not uncommon for people tailgate her rather aggressively when she is driving the speed limit. Ms. Ebright asked if the City can monitor the speeds of vehicles on Jordan Road to get an accurate reading of how fast people are driving. She continued that she would be happy to gather signatures from other people on the street in support of her request.

Don Lussier, City Engineer, stated that the petitioners raised a couple of issues, of which speed is primary. He continued that he would like to get measurements, collect data, and see what the speed issues are. When they do have the measurement data they will see if the speeding is at a certain time of day, which would suggest the need for an enforcement approach, or if it is across the board, which would require a different approach. He wants time to look at the situation more carefully, review the collected data and talk with law enforcement, so he can come back with recommendations.

Acting Chair Filiault asked how many cycles he needs. Mr. Lussier replied two meeting cycles. Acting Chair Filiault stated to Ms. Ebright that in about a month, this will come back to the MSFI Committee and someone will notify her of that meeting.

Mr. Lussier stated that Jordan Road is scheduled, in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for FY18, to be repaved. He continued that it would be any time after next July.

Ms. Ebright stated that she saw a speed monitoring device on a utility pole on Jordan Road. She asked if that was put up by the City or someone else. Mr. Lussier replied that his staff put that up just in the last couple of days in response to Ms. Ebright's letter. He continued that they have started collecting the data and will continue to collect it for a longer period of time. Ms. Ebright replied that the location of the device is at the sharpest turn on the street, at the top of a hill, and it is probably where people are driving the slowest because of that. She continued that the City might not get an accurate/broad picture because of that. Mr. Lussier replied that he will take a look.

Councilor Hooper asked how much the speed indicators cost. Public Works Director Kurt Blomquist replied between \$5,000 and \$6,000, and years ago they bought two for the Keene Police Department (KPD) and two for the Public Works Department.

Mr. Lussier stated that they can be operated in two different modes – either displaying the vehicles' speeds, or just recording the speed data without displaying it. The KPD tends to use the speed indicators more as a deterrent and corrective measure, by displaying the speeds to drivers, whereas the Public Works Department does not display speeds to drivers when they are collecting data like this, because that tends to slow drivers down.

Acting Chair Filiault asked if there were any more questions or comments. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

Councilor Lamoureux made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor O'Connor.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee placed the request requesting speed humps on Jordan Road be placed on more time for two cycles while City staff gathers information.

## **2) Councilor Jones – Effort to Show Support for Police Personnel**

Councilor Jones stated that many communities are showing support for their police departments and this movement is happening all over the country. He continued that the thin blue line is a way of showing the police personnel that the community appreciates the job they do. Councilor Jones shared pictures of other efforts. The movement started as a third grade class project in Tennessee. Children started painting lines all over the place and the City said it needed to be more structured. The first community to officially do this was in Ohio. Wayne, NJ was the first community in NJ to do it. Since then, 72 communities in NJ have done it. Most do it on Main Street but that is not feasible in

Keene due to the median. He suggests Marlboro Street, since that is where the police station is. Before and after each shift, Police Officers will travel Marlboro Street. This support would be important to the Police Officers, but even more so to their families. Councilor Jones indicated this should not be an expense to the City because all that is needed is to add blue tint to their paint. He suggested show of support just be on Marlboro Street though others have suggested the street where the State Police Barracks is located. He continued that someone had asked about the Fire Department, but suggested the street is too narrow for a line down the middle. They could probably do it for the West Keene Fire Department, but he does not know what color they would use. So he is keeping it simple by just requesting Marlboro Street. They could look at other places later on.

Acting Chair Filiault stated that this would cost \$100 or less. He continued that he would like to see contributions, to show support, instead of just having this money taken out of the general fund. Councilor Jones stated that he thinks it is a good idea – it would show even more appreciation.

Councilor O'Connor stated that he found out that NJ has the most lines like this. He continued that Waterville, NJ has red lines for the Fire Department and he recommends looking into that. Councilor Jones replied that in some places, a red line symbolizes a location of racial conflict where blood was spilled. He hopes they would separate from that if they do red paint.

Acting Chair Filiault stated that since this is brand new he suggests they stick with just Marlboro Street and then expand later if it goes well. He asked for staff comment.

Police Chief Brian Costa stated that since he first became aware of Councilor Jones's letter he has been trying to find the correct words to convey his and the entire department's appreciation for this thought. He continued that he cannot find the perfect words but he thanked Councilor Jones. Something he wants to share, which speaks to the morale of the KPD and the relationship they have and value with the community, is something he wrote and said to the entire Police Department in the morning when he returned from Washington, D.C. "the Thursday before the events in Dallas:"

*This was the first message I received this morning when I awoke – 'Welcome home, I hope you had a good trip. Please know that we are keeping all of our officers in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult week. We are very thankful for the KPD and also for our community.'* Chief Costa noted this message was from a long time citizen in Keene without any direct ties to law enforcement. Chief Costa continued that he sent this email to his entire department with these additional words: *"The above sentiment is shared by many more in this community than not. This did not happen by itself. It is because of how we carry out our respective duties on a daily basis even when it is not enjoyable to do so. This is yet another tough week for law enforcement, which we will get through by continuing to support each other and our community. More than ever, we will cling to our department's mission statement, which is to protect life and property, maintain order in the city, while ensuring the fair and respectful treatment of everyone.*

*Know that these difficult jobs that you have chosen are ones that add value to the lives of many. Your efforts and your performance of your duties and responsibilities are appreciated more than is often articulated. Be safe, God bless."*

Chief Costa continued that they value their relationship with the community. Councilor Jones's project is very much appreciated. The point he wants to bring up to the City Council is that the Police Department recognizes the support they have, but what happens when another worthwhile organization, like for breast cancer awareness, comes to the City Council and asks for a similar display?

Mr. Blomquist stated that he understands Chief Costa's perspective. He continued that yes, this is something that can be done. He understands the difficulty Chief Costa was saying about only going so far. There are many worthwhile organizations out there, like the Red Cross helping with flooding, the National Guard, and so on and so forth. The only advice he can give tonight is: the City can accomplish this work. The question is how they will determine, at the end of the day, whether they are only going to have this blue line or how other requests will be handled.

Councilor Clark stated that there must be a code book that the Public Works Department uses. He continued that lines, signs, directions on the street, etc. are there for public safety. He asked if there are any limitations to putting marks on the street that do not have anything to do with public safety. Is that allowable? If so, should they do it? Could it in any way confuse people? Everyone here knows that they do appreciate the KPD and they are very lucky that much of what is going on in other places in the country is not happening here because Keene has a very professional police department. He does not want to start doing something for well-intended reasons that would cause problems down the road.

Mr. Blomquist stated that the MUTCD is the guidelines that the City of Keene uses. He continued that lines and colors of lines mean certain things and they are consistent throughout the country. There is nothing specifically that prohibits the blue line. The MUTCD does not specify what goes between the lines. Other communities have limited this to a small area, such as Main Street. Boston puts the shamrock on the streets when there is the marathon, for example. Other communities have placed different symbols on their streets. Usually it is local and limited in area. That would be the concern – having a blue line on Marlboro Street, red line somewhere else, pink line somewhere else, and so on and so forth. This would certainly get confusing because it is not the norm that people are used to seeing when they are driving. It is not prohibited, but he recommends the blue line be in a limited area, with a limited scope, so people recognize that it is something special.

Councilor Hooper stated that there are months that are set aside for recognizing certain causes, like Black History Month. He continued that maybe they could have a blue line for a special week or month that deals with Police safety or Police recognition. The line would designate respect for the KPD for that week or month but not be permanent.

Councilor Lamoureux thanked Councilor Jones for bringing this forward and starting the conversation. He continued that across the country law enforcement and emergency personnel are being targeted, which is a change of lifestyle for everyone. Not just law enforcement, but other municipal personnel are “taking some of the wrath of the community.” Many of the people he has spoken with really do support Keene’s emergency services. Police Officers, Firefighters, and everyone else in emergency services do a great job. Councilor Lamoureux noted that although he loves the idea of this; he is concerned about what would happen across the City. Walier Chevrolet put a sign up thanking police. Having signage across the city would give more coverage than a line. He thinks there are alternatives to do the same thing, to start the conversation, and allow people to understand that the City has really good emergency services. Hopefully nothing here will happen like what is happening across the states.

Councilor O'Connor stated that every May is Memorial Police Week. He continued that that is something to look at. They have services in Washington, D.C., and a memorial in Concord. May 13 is the national date and May 20 is the NH date.

Councilor Jones stated that Mr. Blomquist is correct – there could be other organizations asking for colors, but they could set precedence by putting in the background notes that this is a City department they are doing this for. He continued that it would make it more significant. He thinks Keene would be the first in NH and if Keene does this it will start showing up in other communities around the state. Small departments still face danger. You just never know what it is like to be out on a job. He thinks the City Council should show appreciation for the job the Police Department does by painting the blue lines down Marlboro Street.

Conan Salada, of 132 Kennedy Drive, Keene, stated that for the record, he served four years of active duty in the Army. He continued that people tell him “thank you for your service” all the time. He does not support this proposed effort. It could send the wrong message to law enforcement officers and the community: that all Police Officers, regardless of their actions, are heroes. Heroes, to him, are people who perform selfless acts of courage and bravery. There are heroes in the KPD. They should be recognized personally. They should not broad stroke them all as heroes just because they wear the uniform. Law enforcement officers who perform badly should also be recognized individually so the whole department is not demonized. Law enforcement officers know what they are getting into. It is a dangerous job, although some other professions are even more dangerous. Officers are trained and paid accordingly. That should be the thanks enough. Individuals who go above and beyond should be called out and appreciated, but not the entire force. They should all be held to the highest standard because of the immense authority they wield. The blue line would serve as a reminder that they *always* have the support of the community and that is the wrong message. It is like giving a participation trophy to every person on a team, which sets people down the wrong path. This also brings up the question, as others have said, of “Where does it end?” Teachers might want a colored line of their own. Lots of organizations do good work, like the Fire Department and the Red Cross. There are heroes in every profession. Before you know it the whole city could be painted like rainbows.

Chair Filiault stated that he agrees with Councilor Jones and thinks he is correct. He continued that he thinks they are overthinking the issue of everyone wanting something. They do not have to treat everyone the same, or always think, “What are others going to think?” This particular request has already been done, although this would be the first in NH. He tries to ride with the Police four to five times a year and can say that this is not a sleepy town. The KPD is a very professional department. He does not think painting the blue line would have negative effects. Some people will not like it, but the City Council cannot please everyone. There are other things to look at, like what Mr. Blomquist and Chief Costa were talking about. They cannot do this tonight. He wants this to be on more time so staff can answer some questions. Cost is not an issue. If there are no objections he asks for a motion for more time for one cycle so staff can answer questions and Chair Manwaring will be back so they can fully discuss it.

Acting Chair Filiault asked if any members of the public had further comments.

Mr. Blomquist asked which questions, specifically, the MSFI Committee wants staff to report back on. Acting Chair Filiault replied the actual cost, and a bit of research about other communities that have done this and whether the results were positive or negative.

Thomas Mullins, City Attorney, stated that he is not overly familiar with how the Public Works Department does painted lines and where they go. He asked if the City has the independent authority to do this, should the City Council request it, or if there are code requirements. Mr. Blomquist replied that no action from the City Code is needed. He continued that the City has the authority, through the Public Works Department staff’s interpretation of the MUTCD. From the City Council perspective it is about the policy of where the lines would go. Other communities have symbols on the road in limited areas for special events. They would want to make sure the City is clear on this – lines would be in a limited area, so there are not lines all over the place. It would be confusing.

The City Attorney asked if he is saying: one thing they might do is look at other communities and see how they have formalized this, through a policy, resolution, or declaration. Mr. Blomquist replied that that is correct. He continued that his sense is that it is limited scope, in areas like “the downtown,” not all over. He does not recommend this for large areas. It is about trying to control who, where, and what. It could become problematic if schools and other organizations started putting lines everywhere.

Acting Chair Filiault asked for further comment. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

Councilor O’Connor made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lamoureux.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends the communication regarding showing support for the Keene Police department by painting a blue line on Marlboro Street be placed on more time for one cycle.

**3) Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, Acting Chair Filiault adjourned the meeting at 6:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Britta Reida, Minute Taker