

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Patricia Little, City Clerk
Kürt Blomquist, Public Works Director
Steve Russo, Police Captain
Elizabeth Fox, Assistant City Manager
Mark Howard, Fire Chief

Members Not Present:

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

1) COMMUNICATION – Phil Suter/Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce – Removal of Granite Curbing – West Side of Central Square – Sidewalk Café License

Chair Manwaring noted that Phil Suter was unable attend the meeting tonight. She continued that they will move this to their next session.

Councilor Lamoureux made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Filiault.

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee placed the communication from Phil Suter on more time, attached to the more time item “B. Dorrie O’Meara – Granite Curbing – West Side of Central Square.”

2) MEMORANDUM – City Clerk – Significant Items of Legislation

Patricia Little, City Clerk, stated that this is an annual process, which began with Bill Lynch when he was the Mayor. She continued that he was a former State Representative. A few other Mayors have been State Representatives, such as Mayor Russell and Mayor Lane. They come with a perspective and an understanding of the relationship between local and state government. Mayor Lynch approached her and the City Manager about

staff and the City Council taking a more active role in the legislative process. He started an exercise that has continued since 1994. In 2009 the City Council adopted a policy to institutionalize this process even more. The first part of the policy talks about being aware of legislation. The bills in Concord can affect the City and Keene's citizens dramatically. The second part is to actively take positions on bills, and go to Concord to testify. The City Council and its committees can expect to have staff show up at their meetings to give their professional opinions. With legislative meetings, people may come, or they may not. Many of those meetings are attended by lobbyists with very stringent perspectives, and you may not have the end users in attendance, the people who are most affected by the bills. It is not guaranteed that you will have that balanced input. Mayor Lynch was interested in making certain that the City created a relationship with the local delegation and the legislative committees in Concord, such as Municipal and County Government (which former City Council member Kris Roberts speaks to, as well as Bruce Tatro in Swanzey), Election Law, and Public and Municipal Affairs (which Senator Kelly has been a member of for a while.) When you testify on bills, you develop a relationship, and credibility for the City of Keene, for not just the position on that particular bill, but your professional perspective on what is going on in Concord and its effect on local government.

The City Clerk continued that it is important to follow through with this charge annually. From January until the end of the legislative season, at the City Manager's weekly department head meetings, legislation is an agenda item. She leads the discussions about what is coming up. They go around the room and speak about the issues that directly affect their operations. The City Council has been supportive and confident in staff taking positions from their professional perspectives and testifying on behalf of their departments in Concord. Some communities do not have that kind of trust in department heads and every position that is communicated to Concord is going through the City Council's process to authorize it, but the City Councils in Keene over the years have been comfortable with staff's positions. City staff members are careful to speak to the nuts and bolts of issues and stay away from the politics of them.

The City Clerk continued that there are concentrated efforts by department heads on a weekly basis, but the time comes when there is a political process, when they bring items to the City Council. They determine what the "significant" items of legislation are that warrant the City Council's attention - for example, legislative items that would trigger a budgetary impact or a significant operational impact, or dovetail well with the Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP). This year, they are a little light in the amount of bills coming to the MSFI Committee, and they are not sure why, but that is not so important. What is important is being consistent in this process.

The City Clerk continued that the Police Department will speak tonight to the legislative item. This City Council policy sets up the annual Legislative Delegation meeting, which they open to area selectmen, and their State representatives. It will be at the end of March. They try to piggyback that to a regional topic. This year representatives will come from the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) and the

Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC) to speak about economic development issues for the region. She encourages City Council members to go.

Steve Russo, Police Captain, stated that he is here to speak about House Bill 1619, proposed legislation that speaks to wanting hospitals only in Hillsborough County to be required to document every time someone is treated with Narcan, either prior to admission or while in the hospital. The hospital would be required to the Commissioner of Health and Human Services the number of people who have accepted or declined services from a Recovery Coach. This program offers recovery help from trained Recovery Coaches who have completed the accepted curriculum from the Board of Licensing of Alcohol and Other Drug Use Professionals. The Police Department feels it would be beneficial to have this legislation throughout the state, not just in Hillsborough County, for many reasons. The main reason is the Coordinated Access Point (CAP) program that will start very soon in Cheshire County. He thinks the money was just released today. There is another meeting about that program tomorrow night that Chief Costa will attend. As that program starts in Cheshire County, it is important for this legislation to be at least in Cheshire County, and everywhere else in the state that might be doing this program, which is becoming more and more necessary. The Police Department does not know why this bill only includes Hillsborough County; it probably has to do with the nucleus of population. They think it should apply throughout the state.

Councilor Lamoureux stated that he knows they work with Cheshire Medical Center. He asked if anyone has had discussions with other hospitals to make sure they are on board with this. Captain Russo replied that he cannot answer that. He asked the Fire Chief.

Fire Chief Mark Howard asked if the question is about hospitals' involvement with the CAP program. Councilor Lamoureux replied no, he wants to make sure area hospitals do not have negative feelings regarding the idea of applying this bill to the whole state instead of just Hillsborough County. Captain Russo replied that he does not know the answer to that, but he can find out. He continued that the CAP program here does not have anything to do with the bill specifically. They think this soon-to-be-implemented program will be a push to get this bill to apply to the rest of the state. No, he does not know about coordination elsewhere in the state. The legislative process they are doing here is to give the MSFI Committee their opinion on budgetary restraints, operations, or service delivery, and this falls under service delivery.

Chief Howard stated that this has been a dynamic, rapid process going on for the past several months. He continued that some weeks ago he and Chief Costa attended three or four meetings beyond the Mayor's Committee, regarding logistics. What they are talking about tonight is from a Police standpoint. He stands on a subcommittee through the NH Fire Chiefs that it is looking at a similar bill. Everything is happening so rapidly and everyone is trying to do the right thing. Many things are overlapping and may not be as coordinated as they seem. For the CAP program they have been working very closely with the hospital. Something unique they have, in this program for Cheshire County, is that all the patients Keene Fire picks up go to Cheshire Medical Center. Some may end up going to Peterborough, NH or Brattleboro, VT, and folks in the Fitzwilliam, NH area

may go to Gardner, MA. They just put out a communication to the Police and Fire Chiefs in the County, saying that they are trying to put the logistics together here. The State has awarded the funds for the program here in Cheshire County, and once they develop a model of the patient and coach interaction at Cheshire Medical, they will offer it to Peterborough, Gardner, and Brattleboro. Whether it is the legislation they are talking about tonight or other things, it has been a dynamic process to keep up with and they are doing the best they can.

Captain Russo stated that their focus in this process is on legislation that Keene department heads are taking positions on, and he is not sure how far they want to go to get opinions outside of Keene and let that influence what they think will be best for the area.

Councilor Lamoureux stated that he thinks this is a good program. He continued that if they are going to get support from the state, in the long run, they need to have as much information as possible and to know the numbers. He wants to make sure that everyone is on board, because his experience in his past history with other organizations was that it was hard to get everyone on the same page. This is a good start.

Councilor Filiault stated that he is Co-Chair of the City's committee on substance abuse, and the issues are overwhelming. He continued that he knew the city had an issue with substance abuse, but he is learning that just when he thinks he knows more, he finds out he knows less than he thought. Taking something relatively small like this step is actually a huge move forward. It will be pieces at a time. There will be overlaps. The epidemic has gotten so huge they need to go one step at a time. If they overlap something, okay, they can look at it and adjust. There is so little time to waste. Anything they do to try and slow down the out of control freight train is helpful.

Councilor Filiault asked: if there are, say, 20 Narcan revivals, are they finding that those are based on five or six individuals? The Fire Chief replied that he does not have the numbers with him tonight, but the Police and Fire Departments are getting requests, almost daily, for these statistics. He continued that they are tracking the number of patients, number of Narcan administrations, and number of deaths. He will post the information monthly, due to receiving so many requests. Numbers for January and February will be posted on the press release section of the Fire Department's website. Monthly, they will provide a total number of patients and Narcan doses. He continued that he thinks there have been 18 patients since January 1, 2016, with approximately 40 administrations of Narcan. Yes, there have been repeats. They gave Narcan to one person nine times, although that is not the norm. He asked if the Police are seeing trends.

Captain Russo stated that with the new statute they added a way to document when they go to a call. They are not arresting people. They document "drug overdose" so they can log it and keep track. He does not have the numbers tonight but he recalls that recently one person had Narcan three times in one weekend, but that is anecdotal, and the Fire Department has better numbers. It is true that they have to do this one step at a time.

If the bill only requires Hillsborough those numbers will be looked at and that is where the funding will go. Keene has had two deaths this year. He believes Manchester had nine. Keene is about one fifth of the size of Manchester, so, they are at the same per capita rate as Manchester. So if this legislation is just for Hillsborough, Cheshire County and other areas are missing out. Chief Howard replied that Manchester had 20 deaths, and Keene has had two, so per capita, they are pretty close.

Councilor Hooper stated that he commends Captain Russo and Chief Howard for tackling this. He continued that he saw John McCain on CSPAN, talking about drug enforcement, and he mentioned NH, specifically, as having a critical problem with heroin and opiates. It is unfortunate that NH is getting national attention. This is a massive problem and he endorses anything that is getting done to address this.

Chair Manwaring stated that there is also a perception, which probably comes from movies and other media, that when Narcan is given, people come back to life and are fine. She continued that sometimes people have Narcan at home but call for emergency services anyway. She asked for them to explain why a person who receives Narcan at home would still need to go to the hospital.

Chief Howard replied that that is a great question and he is glad she brought it up. He continued that this is the critical issue he is worried about. CVS recently reported that you do not need a prescription for Narcan. This means that people can go to CVS and buy Narcan, say, before they have a party. Federal and State funding for this is being driven by statistics. The way that the City tracked it ten years ago was different from how they have been tracking it for the past six to eight months. The Fire Department improved their procedures to make it more accurate, based on the calls they go to. The over the counter dose for Narcan is two milligrams. As he stated, there have been 18 people in Keene (since January 1) who received 40 doses of Narcan, which is a little over two doses per person. For example, EMTs responded to a person at Carpenter Field who had overdosed. It took four doses of Narcan for his respiratory drive to come back. That was after EMTs provided rescue breathing for 20 minutes. If a person overdoses and a friend who bought Narcan gives just one dose and does not know basic information about what to do, the person who overdosed spirals in the wrong direction. Maybe the friend only has one more dose available. The person might not wake up. EMTs have seen people putting a person who overdosed in a bathtub and trying to wake up them with cold water, which will not work. If a person has overdosed the friend needs to call 911 right away. It is not enough to just give them Narcan. The critical component is rescue breathing or full CPR. This is critical for the public to understand. In many cases, two doses of Narcan is not enough. On New Year's Eve, EMS, Police, and Fire responded to a call where a 60-year-old man died despite being given 10 milligrams of Narcan.

Chair Manwaring asked if people need to go to the hospital for breathing problems and heart problems. Chief Howard replied that they need to go to the hospital for supportive measures, which could be anything from being given life support to staying a couple hours and being released.

Councilor Filiault asked if much of the need for increased doses of Narcan is based on substances such as Fentanyl being cut into the heroin. Chief Howard replied that Fentanyl strengthens the heroin, but his concern is that they do not know exactly what is in what people are taking. Tomorrow it could be rat poison or cocaine. He continued that they have recently seen cases where paramedics turn around a person's respiratory drive but then their heart rates speeds up. Heroin does not cause that. Hypoxia could, or an overdose on cocaine. At least once, the paramedic in the field called the hospital because he was seeing an experience in the patient he had not seen before. The doctor's reply was, "I don't know. Get them in here; let's figure it out." It is a tough feeling for paramedics who think they have the tools and knowledge, to find out it is different because it is such a dynamic process.

Captain Russo stated that it is different from responding to a suicide attempt or accidental overdose, seeing a marked pill bottle next to a person's bed, and counting them out to get an idea of what the person took. This is like finding a very large, unmarked pill bottle and having no idea. Chief Howard replied that they normally do not know what a person took, unless it is a death and they get an autopsy report. Captain Russo added that they have the lab do an analysis if they find any residue.

Councilor O'Connor asked if HB 1619 is in committee and if they can add this other language to it. The City Clerk replied that it depends on where it is in the process. She continued that staff seeks the MSFI Committee's endorsement to influence this in any way that they can. Chair Manwaring asked if she is seeking their support for staff to support this bill with the addition of not just being limited to Hillsborough County. The City Clerk replied yes, with an amendment to expand it statewide.

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

On a vote of 5-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee recommends the City Council endorse City of Keene staff support of NH HB 1619 with an amendment to expand it statewide.

3) Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Chair Manwaring adjourned the meeting at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by
Britta Reida, Minute-taker