

City of Keene
New Hampshire

MUNICIPAL SERVICES, FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

6:00 PM

Council Chambers

Members Present:

Janis O. Manwaring, Chair
Randy L. Filiault, Vice Chair
Stephen L. Hooper
Robert B. Sutherland

Members Not Present:

Gary P. Lamoureux

Staff Present:

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager
Thomas P. Mullins, City Attorney
Beth Fox, HR Director/Assistant City Manager
Tara Kessler, Senior Planner
Nancy Vincent, Library Director
Kurt Blomquist, Public Works
Director/Emergency Management Director

Chair Manwaring called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, welcomed the public, and explained the rules of procedure.

1) Periodic Reports from Boards and Commissions: Library Board of Trustees

Chair Manwaring welcomed representatives of the Library Board of Trustees: Ken Jue as the Chair of the Board's Finance Committee, and Judith Putnam as the Board's Treasurer and Co-Chair of the Capital Campaign.

Ms. Putnam reported that the library renovation is nearing completion. When the Friends of the Library and the Board of Trustees purchased the Masonic building in 2003, the future of that property was vague. After years of partial use and dreaming about the future, planning began in 2013 when the need for more library space was more apparent. Funds from the Trustees, the Friends, and the Heberton Hall cost center in the City's budget allowed designs and estimates to develop. The Friends funded a feasibility study and a Capital Campaign Committee was organized to raise \$5 million. The Friends funded the Capital Campaign staff person, the City contributed \$2 million, and MEDC secured tax credits successfully to make the \$8 million project possible. The Trustees committed \$296,000 to complete work in the library interior, which does not qualify for the New Market Tax Credit.

Ms. Putnam continued saying that not just dollars funded this project. She said so many people dedicated hours and years to this project including: Mayor Lane, City staff, City Council, the City Attorney, and the City Managers, as well as staff from the Library, Finance, Public Works, and Parks & Recreation Departments. She also thanked the Historic District Commission and Heritage Commission. Finally, she recognized the Library Director, the Trustees, and Friends of the Keene Public Library. She said all of

these people dedicated countless hours of time as there were always new challenges and solutions. She thanked everyone who worked so diligently to benefit the community for years to come. Ms. Putnam shared that the final touches were in progress. The public dedication of the new space and opening the doors to West Street will occur on June 23 at 2:00 PM; she invited the community to attend.

Ms. Putnam continued by recognizing community contributions to the Capital Campaign's \$5 million goal; 500 community members donated a cumulative \$5.1 million including 10 donations of \$100,000 or more. Those 10 donors will have rooms named after them in the new library spaces. The Trustees approved the names, which will be unveiled in the near future.

Mr. Jue said there are great expectations for the library. He hopes the renovations will enhance the library as a community center, demonstrate what the facility can offer, and show the community what it represents. He also thanked the City Council and staff on behalf of the Trustees for their support to make this project possible. He recalled the complexity of three parties—City, Friends, and Trustees—developing a project like this successfully and he thinks it is a great example of what partnerships are possible throughout the state.

Chair Manwaring asked what the Trustees' next project is now that the renovations are finished. Mr. Jue said the Trustees look forward to collaborating with many community members to update their strategic plan.

Councilor Filiault noted the library dedication is the same weekend as the Walldogs Festival. Ms. Putnam said the Trustees are aware and most festival activities will end that Sunday morning. Councilor Filiault said the festival could draw more of a crowd to the dedication.

Councilor Hooper congratulated the Trustees and others for the effort and recognized Ms. Putnam's modesty in highlighting the hours dedicated; he truly appreciates the sacrifice.

Councilor Sutherland made the following motion, which Councilor Filiault seconded.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee recommends that the report from the Library Board of Trustees be accepted as informational.

2) West Street Dam Workshop – Planning Department

Senior Planner Tara Kessler shared updates on an opportunity related to the West Street Dam. She recalled speaking before this Committee in December 2018 with an update on West Street Hydro. Ms. Kessler said that a multidisciplinary research team studying tools for decision making around dams selected Keene as a study site. City staff are hosting a workshop at the Keene Recreation Center on June 11 from 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM.

Researchers from the Rhode Island School of Design will use diverse visualizations to share possible alternatives for the dam: keep the dam as is, remove the dam, add a fish ladder, or add a bypass channel. They are interested in how people make decisions about dams based on the visualizations and information presented on real dam scenarios, including real impacts to wildlife and the economy, for example. The researchers will share their assessments of the process so Council and staff are informed when ready to take action on the dam in the future. The City has no obligation to take action on any of the information shared. The research team is also collaborating with the University of Rhode Island's Environmental and Natural Resource Economics department to mail a survey to a random sample of the community to follow-up on different scenarios. The anticipated attendance is 30 or more, participants will work in breakout groups and be asked to complete pre and post surveys.

In response to a question from Councilor Sutherland about opportunities for recreation, Ms. Kessler noted that in all the scenarios the researchers will present consider recreational impacts.

Councilor Filiault made the following motion, which Councilor Sutherland seconded.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee recommends the workshop update be accepted as informational.

3) Authority to Accept a Utility Easement – Public Works Department

The Public Works Director presented a request to accept an easement from the resident at 25 Wright Street. The City Engineer has been working on a repaving project and Water & Sewer staff identified an at-risk fire hydrant to replace. The goal is to move the hydrant behind the sidewalk and further from the street, which the property owner has agreed to allow on their property. To do so, the City will have an easement for the hydrant on that property so future property owners are aware. He recommended the City Manager do all things necessary to accept and execute this easement.

Councilor Hooper made the following motion, which Councilor Filiault seconded.

On a vote of 4-0, the Municipal Services, Facilities & Infrastructure Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a utility easement for the purpose of relocating a fire hydrant on 25 Wright Street.

4) Adjournment

With no further business, Chair Manwaring adjourned the meeting at 6:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Katelyna Kibler, Minute Taker