

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, July 14, 2020

5:00 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
Will Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Dr. Delene White
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Mari Brunner
Kürt Blomquist
Mike Giacomo, Councilor
George S. Hansel, Mayor

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison

Members Not Present:

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM. He read a prepared statement explaining how the Emergency Order #12, pursuant to Executive Order #2020-04 issued by the Governor of New Hampshire, waives certain provisions of RSA 91-A (which regulates the operation of public body meetings) during the declared COVID-19 State of Emergency.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting: May 12, 2020

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of May 12, 2020. Ms. Thomas-Smith seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

- a) Review Rules of Order and compare with other advisory boards (samples attached)**

Chair Mitchell asked if the Mayor wanted to say anything about the Rules of Order. The Mayor asked if the rules were distributed to all members. Ms. Mattson replied yes, and they are the

standard rules that the City Attorney wrote. The Mayor stated that he recommends letting this go for now; it is not much of a priority, as they have not been meeting in person and there are other things going on.

Mr. Blomquist stated that all committees are supposed to adopt the rules at the beginning of the year. He asked if the PCC has done that. Ms. Mattson replied that Irene Davis signed it on December 10, 2019 and the PCC voted to adopt the rules. Ms. Brunner stated that they have to re-adopt the rules every year, as they get amended.

The Mayor made a motion to place this item on more time for now. Mr. Blomquist seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

b) Student Exchange – Update on Postponement – John (place on more time)

Chair Mitchell stated that he has nothing to report, other than being up to date with students who might be interested next year. He has no updates on other topics in agenda item C). He asked if anyone else did. Hearing no response, he moved on to D).

c) Planning for Future Exchanges with Einbeck

- 1. YMC, dance, rugby**
- 2. Dedication of Einbeck's old synagogue meeting space to coincide with October's visit – delegation from Cohen Center**

d) Discuss Promotional Activities/Media Opportunities to Help Promote PCC Events and Exchanges – Dawn

Ms. Thomas-Smith reported that she touched base with Wally Secord for soccer photos. She continued that he was traveling. When he is back they will connect and identify an easy way for him to share the photos so the PCC can start building a library of photos of past exchanges.

Ms. Brunner asked if the PCC has social media accounts other than Facebook, and if the group would be okay with her being added as an administrator so she could help post content. She continued that she found an interesting article and forwarded it to Ms. Mattson, but she could post it directly if the group is okay with that. Ms. Thomas-Smith replied yes, help is always welcome. Chair Mitchell thanked Ms. Brunner. He asked if there was more discussion.

Mr. Blomquist stated that the City has a social media policy, which he assumes Ms. Brunner has signed, since she is a City employee. He continued that whoever is posting content should run it by the Chair first, so they do not run into the issue of something that is posted being taken the wrong way. Ms. Brunner asked if that is the protocol that exists, or if that is a proposal. Discussion ensued. Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she will find the document she/the PCC created with guidelines and criteria for what to post. She continued that she does not see a lot of

risk in what they were planning to post, but if they want to go through the process of filtering it through Chair Mitchell that can make sense.

Mr. Blomquist lost his cell phone connection to the meeting at approximately 5:23 PM.

Chair Mitchell asked how other groups in the City do it. Ms. Brunner stated that the Community Development Department does not necessarily run the posts by anyone first, but if Chair Mitchell is willing to take on the role she thinks that would be fine. She asked if Facebook is the PCC's only social media account. Ms. Thomas-Smith replied yes.

Chair Mitchell stated that Keene High School requires parental consent for the public use of any photos taken of students. He would be surprised if the City allowed the PCC to post things in their name if they are not interested in covering it a bit closer. And what do they need to do to protect young people? Discussion continued. Mr. Schoefmann suggested someone talk with Mr. Secord to see what kind of agreements he had with students/families for participation. Chair Mitchell replied that he will talk with Mr. Secord. He continued that the PCC should probably have their own release for parents to sign, for going forward. Ms. Thomas-Smith replied that she can draft that. Chair Mitchell and Mr. Schoefmann thanked her.

Chair Mitchell asked if there was more discussion. Mr. Schoefmann stated that he is happy to be another set of eyes on any potential post. Chair Mitchell replied that he does not mind doing that, either; he just wants a framework so they can all understand what is appropriate.

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to accept Ms. Thomas-Smith's report. Ms. Brunner seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

5) Communications

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone knew of any communications. Hearing no response he moved on.

6) Reports

a) Treasurer Report – Delene

Dr. White reported that the balance is zero in the appropriation account.

b) City Fundraising Update – Delene

Dr. White stated that the PCC did not receive the City funding that they were hoping to get; that money has been reallocated. She continued that their balance will remain zero. Ms. Mattson said there is a second sheet. Dr. White stated that the balance for account 80156 for FY 19-20 is zero (the appropriations account). The balance for account 80146 is \$18,770.06.

Mr. Blomquist returned to the meeting at 5:30 PM.

Chair Mitchell asked if the \$18,000 is the combination of City money and fundraising money. Ms. Mattson replied no, it is the money that KSC transferred to over to the City long before she came here. She continued that they keep it separate to keep track of the appropriations.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that they anticipate receiving the \$5,000 from the City next year; the redistribution of the funds this time was just for this fiscal year. Mr. Blomquist stated that the committee needs to sit down and document some history. He continued that one of the difficulties was that it was not clear [to the City Council] what the PCC has done over time. So they should document how many students have participated in exchanges, how many exchanges have occurred, how many mixed exchanges and how many participants, and so on and so forth. They tried to come up with those facts and figures at the last minute but it was not enough. Someone made the incorrect statement that “the average Keene citizen does not benefit from this,” and it is important for the PCC to be able to disprove that statement. They can do this by taking the time to go through the memories and document the exchanges and the community involvement, so they have the information at their fingertips when the questions and comments arise. Discussion ensued. Councilor Giacomo added that they have to be able to talk about, more specifically, where the money going, how much the programs cost, and why. The average person does not understand the expenses.

Councilor Giacomo stated that officially speaking, the money that the PCC would have gotten was not “redistributed,” it was just removed. He continued that it did not technically go to anyone else; it is complicated. He explained how Councilor Filiault originally requested to give the money to the HRC but at the last minute he decided to remove that part of the statement so it was just revoking the money from the PCC. At the same time, Councilor Manwaring put in a request to increase funding for nonprofits, which was unrelated.

Chair Mitchell stated that Mr. Blomquist is right that they should prioritize promoting and explaining the work of the PCC. He asked if, before they move to the agenda item of fundraising, there was more discussion. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

Ms. Brunner made a motion to accept the report. Ms. Thomas-Smith seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

7) New Business
a) Fundraising Ideas

Chair Mitchell asked Ms. Mattson if she could email the PCC a copy of the last direct ask letter that went out. Ms. Mattson replied yes. Chair Mitchell asked the PCC members to look it over and edit/do some work on it and send it to him or Mr. Schoefmann, and maybe they could fine tune it or customize it toward people they want to send it to. That could lead to/be preparation for direct asks in person.

Mr. Schoefmann replied yes, that is one approach – thinking of people or organizations to seek support from. Chair Mitchell replied yes, and maybe this is a good time to approach past supporters and travelers; they are likely aware that the PCC lost their expected funding and might have a soft spot for them. Ms. Brunner stated that if they had stories or quotes from past participants to include in a letter or social media posts that would be helpful in getting funding from the City and in approaching people when asking for donations. Chair Mitchell replied that he has letters and quotes from parents and students who have traveled. Mr. Schoefmann replied that if Ms. Thomas-Smith and Dr. White can put together any numbers they have, regarding the numbers of exchanges and participants, he could start cataloging that. They will probably have to reach out to Irene Davis to a certain degree. Chair Mitchell stated that he will reach out to Mr. Secord to ask him for information as well. Dr. White stated that she could speak to her experience hosting violinists last October. She has contact information for some folks and would be happy to do outreach in that way.

Dr. White stated that to Ms. Brunner’s point about gathering stories, if they could do a Google survey, she or someone else could put that together and ask some simple questions about the exchange they participated in and share a sentence or paragraph about what their experience was like. Maybe they could even have a “donate” button attached, if they are allowed to do that.

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she has a logistics/structure question – the PCC could go crazy with surveys and forms and donation requests, but are they allowed to? For example, the capital campaign for the Keene Public Library was driven by the Friends group. Was that a City committee or a Board of the Library? How does this work? Mr. Blomquist replied that that is a good question. He continued that the PCC is a City committee and typically donations to the City need to be accepted by the City Council. They can see if there is documentation about the PCC being separate. The money the PCC receives from KSC is in a separate account because it otherwise would be subject to the City’s regulations. Discussion continued. Mr. Schoefmann asked if he and Mr. Blomquist should look into this. Mr. Blomquist replied yes, and Ms. Brunner.

Dr. White asked if she could start drafting the survey form, without the donate button. Mr. Schoefmann replied yes, if she is so inspired, he would encourage her to do that. He asked that she then send it to Ms. Mattson to send to the rest of the committee for review.

Chair Mitchell asked if they should be in touch with Sandra Howard, regarding people’s experiences of exchanges. Dr. White replied that she is in touch with her. She continued that there is a listserv Ms. Howard put together for exchange participants, and she could contact people through that, but they should probably wait until they have a better idea of what they are doing (e.g. website, Facebook, stand-alone form). Chair Mitchell agreed and spoke of the need for PCC members to do anything they can to create as big of a list as possible of people who have benefited from the exchanges. He continued that they should save and send lists/names to

him and Ms. Mattson so they can start compiling this information. Ms. Mattson replied yes, and quite a few people did donate.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that they has to tease out how to accept donations, before moving on to other initiatives, so this month he will do that and confirm what the process looks like. That might help them determine the next steps.

Dr. White stated that another fundraising idea is to collect items related to/from Einbeck to raffle or sell. For example, her guest from Einbeck brought her something that goes back centuries, a linen cloth that is pressed and decorated; a beautiful, signature, artistic item from Einbeck. Ms. Mattson replied that when they did a raffle before, it went very well and everyone loved it.

Chair Mitchell stated that that list of people is really important. He continued that they should start totaling names as fast as they can, and then they can make plans from there.

Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to accept this as informational. Ms. Thomas-Smith seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

8) Next Meeting – September 8, 2020

9) Adjourn

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,
Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison