

City of Keene
New Hampshire

PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, December 8, 2020

5:00 PM

Remote Meeting via Zoom

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison

Members Not Present:

Kürt Blomquist

1) Call to Order

Chair Mitchell 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. He called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

2) Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)

Roll call was conducted.

3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting – October 13, 2020

Ms. Thomas-Smith made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 13, 2020. Mr. Schoefmann seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

4) Board Business

a. Planning for Future Exchanges with Einbeck

1. Future Exchange Ideas – YMCA, Dance, Rugby

Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Schoefmann about rugby. Mr. Schoefmann replied that the rugby group's activities are not happening during the pandemic. He will pitch the idea at the next

board meeting. Chair Mitchell replied that Jürgen Herbst can supply them with names of Einbeck's sports groups if Mr. Schoefmann would like to start a conversation. Mr. Schoefmann replied that they can do that.

Chair Mitchell stated that he knows that COVID-19 is affecting everything. He asked if there is anything to talk about.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that it might be good to continue looking for someone to take over any soccer exchange they might be interested in supporting. If people have ideas for anyone to contact, that would be good. Ms. Brunner suggested they put together a document giving a summary or explanation of what it takes to coordinate that program. Chair Mitchell asked if Ms. Mattson has anything formal like that. Ms. Mattson replied no, they would need to contact Wally Secord. Mr. Schoefmann asked if she has his contact info. Ms. Mattson replied yes, she will share it with him.

2. Student Pen-pal Ideas

Chair Mitchell stated that he visited with Fuller School and the fifth grade is interested in participating in a pen pal program. He continued that he did not go to any other schools because he was not sure how many pen pals they wanted to generate right off the bat. He asked if Ms. Thomas-Smith had ideas. Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she reached out to Tom Sullivan. He shared that logistics wise it worked out every couple months to exchange letters. There was a little bit of onus on the teacher's part, to make sure every kid had a letter. Mr. Sullivan suggested middle school students. When he did the pen pal program he had third grade students. Maybe fifth grade students would be more independent than third graders; he felt that middle school students might be more engaged and independent, able to write on their own and keep it going a little longer from the student perspective instead of having it be teacher-driven. But he had positive things to say. He thought his counterpart in Einbeck had probably retired, too.

Chair Mitchell asked if they should work with the fifth grade as well as explore the middle school. Ms. Thomas-Smith replied that she thinks they could do both, as long as both levels have willing and engaged teachers and students. Discussion continued. Ms. Thomas-Smith, as a parent of a seventh grade student, offered to reach out to the middle school and ask. Mr. Schoefmann, Chair Mitchell, and Councilor Giacomo spoke in favor of that idea.

b. Discuss Promotional Activities/Media Opportunities to Help Promote PCC Events and Exchanges - Dawn

Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that the focus of the PCC's conversations have been around finalizing the survey and talking about the distribution logistics. She continued that the survey was rebuilt from a City perspective. The next steps seem to be having the PCC look that over and seeing if it is ready to go, then discussing where to distribute it and how, and whether to open and close during a certain window.

Mr. Schoefmann asked if Ms. Landry shared a link to the finalized survey with Ms. Mattson. Ms. Mattson replied yes, but Ms. Landry put it up and took it down, saying she could not leave it up until they were ready for it to be distributed. She thinks she created the survey for email, not social media. Mr. Schoefmann replied that they want it available for email and social media. He asked if the full committee needs to weigh in on it, or if Ms. Mattson and Dr. White can do this on their own. Ms. Mattson asked if anyone feels the need to see the questions again to approve them. Mr. Schoefmann replied that the committee was pretty happy with it last time. He would be happy with sending it out. He continued that anyone who has emails of people the survey should be sent to, send those names and email addresses to Ms. Mattson. They could also reach out to Mr. Secord for any contacts he has. Ms. Mattson replied yes, she needs any email addresses anyone has, because she currently only has physical addresses. Discussion continued. Dr. White has some email addresses from people involved with the exchange in October 2019 and will send them to Ms. Mattson, and Chair Mitchell will send her parents' and students' emails and emails of some community supporters.

Ms. Brunner suggested having a social media post like "Have you ever participated in an exchange? Please take this survey." Ms. Mattson agreed with that idea. Mr. Schoefmann suggested that they ask Ms. Landry to start with a social media link and let her know that the PCC is working on collecting a list of emails.

Dr. White asked if they want to consider sending the survey, or one with different questions, to local businesses who might have engaged with/benefited from the exchanges in some way. Mr. Schoefmann replied there are a handful of businesses that maybe they could call or have a separate survey for. Dr. White replied that it would help them keep data regarding the impact, to keep that communication going with the City Council. Ms. Mattson stated that she might have a downtown list of businesses somewhere. Ms. Brunner stated that she has an excel sheet of downtown contacts updated as of March. She could share that but is not sure how many businesses were very active with Einbeck exchanges.

Ms. Thomas-Smith asked if there should be a cutoff date for people filling out the survey, which would give respondents a sense of urgency and make them more likely to fill it out, or if they should just keep it open. Discussion ensued. The group decided on having the survey open for a two-week period starting in January. Ms. Mattson asked Dr. White to send her the link again, and Dr. White agreed.

Mr. Schoefmann stated that he drafted holiday greetings to Einbeck, to be from Chair Mitchell on behalf of the committee, to post on social media. He did that with help from a friend from Frankfurt and sent it to Ms. Brunner, who drafted some social media posts, infographics to share today, to see what the committee thinks. PCC members viewed the infographics and gave positive feedback to Mr. Schoefmann and Ms. Brunner. Mr. Schoefmann stated that Ms. Brunner or Ms. Thomas-Smith can choose which infographic version they like and post it. Ms.

Brunner asked if the group is okay with the English version at the top of the graphic and German at the bottom. The group agreed and thanked Mr. Schoefmann and Ms. Brunner for doing this.

5) Communications

a. Mayor of Einbeck – letter and package

Mayor Hansel stated that he received a package of a lot of materials from Einbeck, including hundreds of copies of a coloring book created by various artists, to distribute to students in Keene. The logistics of getting the coloring books to students during the COVID-19 pandemic might be awkward, but this is a fun activity for the kids to engage with. Instead of just handing the coloring books out with no follow-up, it would be nice if the committee could somehow get some feedback or photos of the Keene students coloring, so they could share that with Einbeck. Mr. Schoefmann suggested that if they put together a short, quick letter to accompany these coloring books, describing what it is, and including a hashtag to use in social media. Discussion continued and it was noted that there is/was also a coloring contest associated with this, which might encourage engagement. Chair Mitchell could reach out to the SAU 29 Superintendent. Discussion continued about the intended age group and whether it is more appropriate for elementary or middle school, and the logistics of getting these to students and where. Ms. Brunner stated that given the number of copies they have, she agrees that distributing them at the Library and/or Recreation Department programs would be a better match than schools. The group tentatively decided on giving 50 to the Library and 50 to Parks & Rec, once they talk with the department heads of each to see if they have the bandwidth to do something with this. Mr. Schoefmann added that if they create and associate a hashtag to go with this, kids/families can post their own pictures to social media so the PCC is not responsible for trying to collect those.

Chair Mitchell stated that he received a communication, a notice that the Einbeck Mayor had been reelected. He continued that he sent a letter on behalf of the committee, recognizing her accomplishment and wishing her community the best of luck, and he shared that with Ms. Mattson. He got another email from Einbeck wanting information for their newspaper concerning Keene's response to COVID and how everyone is managing. He just sent a quick email to the editor about that. The Mayor stated that he and Ms. Mattson sent a letter, too, and the Burgurmeister sends him messages on Facebook and she is great, very communicative.

6) Reports

a. Treasurer Report - Delene

Dr. White stated that there are no changes to the Treasurer Report. Mr. Schoefmann made a motion to accept the Treasurer Report, which was seconded by Ms. Thomas-Smith and passed unanimously.

7) New Business

a. Fundraising Ideas

Chair Mitchell asked if anyone has ideas. He acknowledged that this is a challenging time. The Mayor replied that it is hard to fundraise around an unknown future. No one knows when things will start up again.

b. Discuss Einbeck's Street Art – Distribution to Schools

Chair Mitchell stated that they addressed this in a previous agenda item.

- 8) **Next Meeting – January 12, 2021**
- 9) **More Time**
 - a. **Review Rules of Order and Compare with other Advisory Boards – samples attached**
 - b. **Student Exchange – Update on Postponement - John**
- 10) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Britta Reida, Minute Taker

Further edits by,
Helen K. Mattson, Staff Liaison