

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, January 20, 2022. The Honorable Mayor George S. Hansel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Roll called: Bryan J. Lake, Gladys Johnsen, Randy L. Filiault, Robert C. Williams, Philip M. Jones, Andrew M. Madison, Kris E. Roberts, Raleigh C. Ormerod, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Mitchell H. Greenwald, Kate M. Bosley, and Thomas F. Powers were present. Catherine I. Workman, Michael Giacomo, and Michael J. Remy were absent. Councilor Greenwald led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Hansel announced that Staff would be making their traditional presentations before the City Council and the Planning Board on the Capital Improvement Projects for the 2023–2029 fiscal years. These presentations will be at the Michael EJ Blastos Community Room on Saturday, January 22. Mayor Hansel referred the CIP to the Planning Board and the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee. The FOP meetings for January 27, February 10, and if necessary, February 24, will start at 5:30 PM with a light meal in advance. A public hearing will be scheduled for March 3, 2022 at 7:00 PM.

Mayor Hansel also announced that the Legislative Delegation meeting is being hosted by the County on Monday, January 24 at 6:00 PM in Delegation Hall.

Councilor Powers led the Council in wishing the Mayor a happy 36<sup>th</sup> birthday.

#### MINUTES

A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt the January 6, 2022 minutes was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley and the motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### PRESENTATION – GREATER KEENE & PETERBOROUGH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – REGIONAL BRANDING AND MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Mayor Hansel welcomed Luca Paris, CEO and President of the Chamber of Commerce, and Julie Schoelzel, Project Manager promoting the regional campaign, for a presentation on the regional branding and marketing campaign by the Greater Keene and Peterborough Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Schoelzel began by stating that regional branding is important because it is the process of defining a regions' distinct and authentic qualities and capturing them with a simple and compelling, honorable story. A regions brand or reputation is the first step to consideration for a visit, move, job, or investment. Then, regional marketing is the act of sharing that story to attract our desired audiences through communications and tactical efforts that serve the region's objectives. This is not about logos and taglines; it is about a strategic roadmap for competing as a region. Ms. Schoelzel stated that the sky is not falling but we need to take action, because our regional population declined by one half percent between 2010 and 2020. She said this does not seem all that earth shattering, but by 2040, our 65 plus population will have expanded from 15% to 30% of our population, which she thought everyone could agree would impact the workforce substantially. Meanwhile, she said our K–12 population has shrunk by 15–25% in enrollment

regionally since 2007, and enrollment at our local colleges and universities has declined substantially in the last 10 years.

Ms. Schoelzel continued sharing some other key facts. The latest unemployment rate for November 2021 was 2.2% for Cheshire County, meaning roughly 900 people are looking for work, which is far from enough to fill the over 4,000 open positions within a 25-mile radius of Keene. In 2020, University of New Hampshire anticipated two-thirds of regional employees retiring in the next five years, which would have a negative impact on their organization's efficiency. She said that trend has accelerated because people are retiring much earlier due to the pandemic and the stresses it is causing just for working. She said this also presents a unique opportunity. A December 2020 Gallup Poll showed that close to half of Americans expressed a preference for living in either a town or rural area, rather than a city or suburb, which is a distinct increase from 2018, when only four out of 10 thought that country living was ideal. Ms. Schoelzel said that Torrington, CT, Pittsfield, MA, and Lebanon, NH all went from a negative net migration rate in 2019 to positive net migration rate in 2020; this trend had not happened in many years and is related to people realizing they could work from these rural areas. Many more workers are feeling confident that opportunities can be found outside large urban areas. However, she said a challenge is that our region is not widely understood. While we are well regarded by those who do know us, not enough people know us. Only one in five people in NH are very familiar with the Monadnock Region and there is low intent to work, live, or go to school here. Only one in 10 people in MA are very familiar with our region, and only one in three in Massachusetts, even though we're there and then knock region is. Positively, however, she said our region does not need to repair any reputation and has the opportunity to start fresh; it is better to be unknown than to be known for something that we have to recover from.

Next, Ms. Schoelzel displayed the project leadership: Luca Paris (Chamber President), Julie Schoelzel (Project Manager), Jamie Townbridge (Yankee Publishing), Kenny Ballard (Kenny Ballard Consulting), Patty Blake (People's United Bank), Chris Coates (Cheshire County), Rebecca Landry (City of Keene), Zach Luse (Paragon Digital), Jarvis Coffin (Hancock Inn), Tim Murphy (Southwest Regional Planning Commission), Emily Hall Warren (Badger), Jeff Whitcomb (Communications Group), Ed Coppola (The Richards Group), and Jessica Garcia (The Keene Sentinel).

Ms. Schoelzel said that the marketing and branding partner is Northstar out of TN and FL. All Northstar does is place branding, and they have two decades of experience in over 200 communities. Their process is immersive and inclusive. The first step is stakeholder and community education. They were here in October 2021 for five days, when they toured over 200 miles of the region and met with many key stakeholders. Northstar's second step, which they were in the process of currently, is research and gathering insight. She said it is more than who, what, why, and how, but they also look at how the region is known today so they have something to measure against once the region launches its marketing. Next, Northstar will work with the community on brand identity and message development to define the brand more. The subsequent step would be to develop action ideas, the marketing plan, and then rollout. In addition to these efforts, Ms. Schoelzel said that what is helpful about this process is that it

would help us identify the target audiences that we need to hit. She said it is very easy to say everyone would want to live here and it is wonderful, but we really need to target specific demographics most importantly to make sure we have a workforce going forward. There are four key areas in the campaign's goal: workers in general, college students, young families, and tourists who could develop interest in working here.

Next, Ms. Schoelzel explained what is expected to happen. They expect wider and more frequent consideration from visitors, investors, employers, residents, and workers; as well as converting our key economic metrics to more tourism and investment, expanding and diversifying our employment base, attracting new residents and workers, and increasing return migration, such as people who graduate from here spend a few years elsewhere and decide to come back. She shared an example of another community that Northstar worked with that had to change its name entirely. She said that Keene has a lot to be known for, such as great recreational activities and a thriving art scene, which makes for great quality of life and a great place to raise a family.

Next, Ms. Schoelzel shared how the City Council could help with spreading the word, educating, and advocating. If any Councilors knew of other organizations that would appreciate this presentation, she welcomed that information. She shared information with Councilors for a survey she hoped they would participate in to help Northstar identify what makes the area special and what people wish would be different. She said that individuals could also sign-up to be brand ambassadors, which means that when the branding rolls out, the individual would help with community education to ensure a cohesive roll out. Ms. Schoelzel welcomed questions.

Councilor Roberts said that 20 years ago, the City could count on people going to college, leaving Keene for a while, and then coming back to settle down and raise kids here. There used to be 1,800 plus students at the high school, which is now down to approximately 1,300. He asked if any effort was made to reach out and find out why people in their late 20s and early 30s stop coming back to Keene. Mr. Paris said that part of this process is trying to get as much information as possible from people. He is an example of someone who left the region and the came back, and he mentioned others who did the same. He said he was unsure what is missing, but that the survey process would help to identify some of those factors. He hoped that many would participate so that diverse voices are heard. He said it is important to remember that this process would not answer all questions, like housing problems, but it would start to get people thinking about this region as a place worth considering when looking for a more rural lifestyle. He said we have the unique opportunity with a City that feels rural but has art and technology, is innovative and exciting. He said we have everything as a region and now the goal is to formulate the story so that people want to come and come back.

Councilor Bosley referred to that statistics of one in 10 people in MA being able to recognize this region. She wondered if they were questioned about where the region is in general or whether they knew where the City of Keene was, which she said is the heart of the Monadnock region. When Councilor Bosley speaks to people when traveling she said people would never know where she was from if she said the Monadnock Region, but they recognize where Keene is on a map. She wanted to understand the processes for identifying and branding the Monadnock Region and how Keene was associated specifically. She also wanted to know what the process

would be to help the City transition because it is already a touristy City with trails, etc. Mr. Paris said that in the 20 years he has lived here, he has created a life on Main Street. When he travels, he finds it hard to say he is from Keene and have people know what he is talking about. Mr. Paris said that when he took this job, he realized that Keene is the heart of the region and has the notoriety. However, he said we need to figure out the whole story that brings the region together because Keene does not live on an island; without all the towns around Keene doing well, Keene and the whole region will not do well. He said there has to be a balance and that is why the survey is important and the process is important to ensure the best and more effective branding and marketing. This process is developing the story that will benefit both Keene and the region. He said that because Keene is the heart of the region, Northstar wants to hear the stories here and all around through the survey. Mr. Paris believes in this process, which should provide a better understanding come March or April. Ms. Schoelzel answered Councilor Bosley's question about the statistics, which were from a UNH survey about the term "Monadnock Region." Ms. Schoelzel said that one interesting thing about the term is that it already has a life of its own organically. She recalled a New York Times article, with a full front page in the travel section on the Monadnock Region, which mentioned Keene and walking downtown. Ms. Schoelzel said they are focusing on both the Monadnock Region and Keene.

Councilor Jones thanked the Chamber of Commerce for taking on this project. He looks forward to the process and would gladly be an ambassador when the time comes. He said they need to address the weaknesses in the region that visitors see that are easy for locals to overlook. He congratulated Mr. Paris and Ms. Schoelzel on this project.

With no further questions or comments, Mayor Hansel thanked Mr. Paris and Ms. Schoelzel for their presentation.

#### CONFIRMATION

A motion was made by Councilor Powers to confirm the following nominations to the Zoning Board of Adjustment: Jane Taylor with a term to expire December 31, 2024 and Richard Clough with a term to expire December 31, 2023. The motion was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. On roll call vote, 12 Councilors were present and voting in favor. Councilors Remy, Giacomo and Workman were absent.

#### NOMINATIONS

Mayor Hansel re-nominated Councilor Michael Giacomo to the Partner City Committee, with a term to expire December 31, 2023. He also nominated Heidi Schwieger as an alternate to the Human Rights Committee, with a term to expire December 31, 2024. Mayor Hansel tabled the nominations until the next regular meeting.

COMMUNICATION – COUNCILOR REMY – CONFLICT OF INTEREST – KEENE YOUNG PROFESSIONAL’S NETWORK – REQUEST TO USE SURPLUS COMMUNITY EVENT FUNDS

A communication was received from Councilor Remy, submitting a conflict of interest regarding the Keene Young Professional's Network request to use surplus community event funds for the Food Festival.

A motion by Councilor Powers to accept Councilor Remy’s conflict of interest was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley and the motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

COMMUNICATION – COUNCILOR MADISON – CONFLICT OF INTEREST – KEENE YOUNG PROFESSIONAL’S NETWORK – REQUEST TO USE SURPLUS COMMUNITY EVENT FUNDS

A communication was received from Councilor Madison, submitting a conflict of interest regarding the Keene Young Professional's Network request to use surplus community event funds for the Food Festival.

A motion by Councilor Powers to accept Councilor Madison’s conflict of interest was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley and the motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – COUNCILOR RANDY FILIAULT – REQUEST TO USE EXCESS NH ROAD TOLL CREDITS AS THE CITY'S MATCH FOR THE LOWER WINCHESTER STREET PROJECT

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending that the Mayor and City Manager submit a letter to the State on behalf of the City in support of the opportunity for the City to obtain surplus motor vehicle highway toll credits to fund the 20% local City match required to obtain Federal transportation grant funds and to take any appropriate action to accomplish this purpose.

A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

The motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – 79E COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION TAX RELIEF APPLICATION FOR 112 WASHINGTON STREET

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending granting a period of five years for this application.

The report further recommended that the City Council determine that the structure proposed for redevelopment located at 112 Washington Street is a qualifying and historic structure as defined by RSA 79E; that the structure is not within the tax increment financing district, but the structure is not a residential property, subject to an election towards tax assessment relief under the low

income housing tax credit program of RSA 75-1A; that the proposed rehabilitation costs estimate exceeds the threshold amount of \$75,000 and constitutes substantial rehabilitation that is at least \$5,000 of the total rehabilitation costs and is devoted to energy efficiency in accordance with the US Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation; that the proposed rehabilitation is consistent with the City's master plan, and that the proposed rehabilitation provides the following public benefits as required by Resolution R-2018-33: 1. Enhances the economic vitality of downtown areas. 2. Enhances and improves a structure that is culturally or historically important on a local, regional, state or national level, either independently or within the context of a Historic District Town Center or Village Center in which the building is located. 3. Promotes the preservation and reuse of existing building stock throughout a municipality by the rehabilitation of historic structures, thereby conserving the embodied energy in accordance with energy efficiency guidelines established by the US Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. 4. Promotes efficient design, safety, and a greater sense of community in a manner consistent with the Keene Comprehensive Master Plan. 5. Results in an increase in energy sustainability and conformance with the City adopted greenhouse gas emissions, as determined by Home Energy score of at least six and demonstrated carbon emissions reduction of at least 10. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the application for real property tax relief on any assessed tax increment resulting from the substantial rehabilitation of the qualifying structure be granted for a period of five years, beginning with the substantial rehabilitation as determined by the Page 25 of 72 City's Community Development Department, and conditioned upon the property owner granting to the City at the time of substantial completion, a covenant ensuring the structure shall be maintained and used in a manner that furthers the public benefits for the period of the tax relief to be recorded at the Cheshire County Registry of Deeds at the expense of the property owner.

A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

Councilor Powers disclosed that Joshua Gorman, the applicant is his second cousin. He continued that he previously disclosed this fact during Mr. Gorman's initial application at both the Committee and the Council level and that no Councilor had raised an objection to his presenting the recommendation of the Committee.

The motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

Mayor Hansel commented that he was glad to see this 79-E program starting to get utilized. He said it is one more thing that the City can be proud of and he thinks Keene is using it for a lot smaller projects than some other places in the State. He said the City was taking a program enabled by State legislation and making it accessible to a lot of different people, not just big developers, which the City should be proud of.

FOP REPORT – 79E COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION TAX RELIEF APPLICATION FOR 310 MARLBORO ST., LLC

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending granting a period of five years for this application.

The report further recommended that the City Council determine that structure proposed for redevelopment located at 310 Marlborough Street is a qualifying structure as defined by RSA 79E; that the structure is not within a currently defined tax increment financing district; that the structure is not a residential project subject to an election for tax assessment relief under the low income housing tax credit program of RSA 75-1a; that the proposed rehabilitation cost estimates exceed the threshold amount of \$75,000 and constitutes substantial rehabilitation; that at least \$5000 of the total rehabilitation cost is devoted to energy efficiency and according to the US Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation; that the proposed rehabilitation is consistent with the City's Master Plan; and that the rehabilitation provides the following public benefits as required by Resolution R-2018-33: 1. Enhances the economic vitality of downtown areas. 2. Promotes efficient design safety and a greater sense of community in a manner consistent with the Keene Comprehensive Master Plan. 3. Adds to the City's employment base by creating at least one new full time job and keeps downtown area. 4. Directly supports the integration of public art in the downtown, 5. Promotes development of a sustainable building stock in the downtown that achieves a nationally or internationally recognized green building standard. Therefore, the committee recognizes the ability for real property tax relief on any assessed tax increment resulting from the substantial rehabilitation of the qualifying structure be granted for a period of five years, beginning with a substantial rehabilitation as determined by the City's Community Development Department and conditioned upon the property owner granting to the City at the time of substantial completion, a covenant ensuring that the structure shall be maintained and used in a manner that furthers the public benefits for the period of the tax relief to be recorded at the Cheshire County Registry of Deeds at the expense of the property owner.

A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

Discussion ensued. Councilor Chadbourne expressed excitement for the project. Councilor Jones also expressed excitement and recommended revisiting Resolution R-2018-33, which might need to be adjusted to conform with State law.

The motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### FOP REPORT – KEENE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK – TASTE OF KEENE – USE OF SURPLUS COMMUNITY EVENT FUNDING

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending that unspent funds from the City's FY-22 community event budget be used to help offset the cost of City services for the Keene Young Professionals Network Downtown Summer Food Festival tentatively scheduled for either June 4 or June 5, 2022. Costs over the above available funds will be the responsibility of the Keene Young Professionals Network. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion passed with 12 Councilors present and 11 voting in favor. Councilor Madison was recused.

FOP REPORT – RADIO REPROGRAMMING GRANT REIMBURSEMENT – DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and spend \$1,400.00 awarded from the Department of Safety under the 2019 Homeland Security Grant for the radio reprogramming grant reimbursement initiative. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – AGREEMENT FOR LEASED PARKING – LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute an agreement with Millar Realty, LLC for the lease of four parking spaces at 67 Winter Street. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – WINCHESTER STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT – CONTRACT CHANGE ORDER – CITY ENGINEER

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a change order with McFarland Johnson for professional services associated with the Winchester Street Reconstruction Project, for an amount not to exceed \$12,000.00. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – COLONY COURT SEWER REPLACEMENT PROJECT – ENGINEERING CHANGE ORDER – CITY ENGINEER

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a contract change order with Dubois & King for engineering and technical services on the Colony Court Sewer Replacement Project, for an amount not to exceed \$72,000. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – LOWER WINCHESTER STREET RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT – PROJECT AGREEMENTS – CITY ENGINEER

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute an inter-municipal Agreement with the Town of Swanzey relative to the Lower Winchester Street Reconstruction Project (NHDOT Project No. 40666).



The report further recommended that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute a three-party Project Agreement with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the Town of Swanzev for the Lower Winchester Street Reconstruction Project (NHDOT Project No. 40666).

A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### FOP REPORT – WELLS STREET PARKING FACILITY – DESIGN AND TECHNICAL SERVICES FOR REPAIR

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending that funds appropriated in FY-22 for miscellaneous minor repairs to the Wells Street Parking Structure be designated for design and technical services for a large scope of repair work. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee reports was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne. The motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

#### CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

The City Manager spoke about the Fire Staffing Committee that she created, which had highlighted the need for more support at the Fire Department (FD), but she said the need was long before Covid-19. She established the committee to review staffing needs at the FD. The Fire Chief has requested more firefighters, which she said was not in response to the recent fire prevention backlog; the only request for staffing related to that last year was a request for additional part-time administrative support, primarily for scheduling appointments. The City Manager said this is an issue larger than that. The Committee she established includes Council representation by Councilors Powers and Remy, in addition to representation from the Fire Union and FD leadership, and Finance and HR representatives. This Committee will review all aspects of Fire Department staffing to come up with recommendations for future budgeting. In the interim, the Fire Chief has made temporary adjustments, such as adding a 10<sup>th</sup> person to the shift a few weeks ago, and he has tasked the Fire Department leadership team with bringing forward other interim options. These changes obviously impact the bottom line of the FD budget, and so the City Manager may need to come back to the City Council towards the end of the fiscal year to shift funds from other sections of the budget to cover any overages that occur. The City Manager will be monitoring this situation and updating the Council periodically. The Staffing Committee will review data related to number of calls, call history and trends, how we respond to a call, and how many people and what pieces of equipment respond and why. They will review our current ambulance service agreements with some of our surrounding towns and analyze the impact of the change made to have 24-hour shifts, and whether the change helped us or hurt us. At the time of the change, the Union felt strongly that it would reduce sick time usage in the Department, which obviously impacts overtime costs and demand for firefighters to cover shifts beyond their own; this will be analyzed because Covid-19 has impacted sick time usage, which is being tracked separately to evaluate trends.

To complicate matters, the City Manager said there is a changing dynamic happening with the ambulance service in our region. She recalled the Council presentation about the County acquiring the Dilizio Ambulance Service, which will impact the region and needs to be included in this overall staffing evaluation.

The City Manager has also been meeting with the FD shifts over the last few weeks and would continue. She said that one thing we cannot quantify in dollars and cents is the toll of working 80 hours and more in a week, week after week; we cannot quantify the toll it takes on a person and a person's family. In the City Manager's opinion, this is the most important driver of this conversation; the healthy and wellbeing of our team is her priority to allow them to do their jobs well and provide the level of service that our community has come to expect. She said this must be our focus. However, she is convinced that there is more than one way to accomplish this. The City Manager is asking the Staffing Committee to help her do this through a thorough analysis over the next several months, which should culminate with recommendations to help us get where we need to be.

Additionally, the City Manager said she would be remiss to not comment on the recent Cobblestone fire downtown. She said there was a lot to be proud of the FD team for in their response. The City Manager publicly acknowledged the FD and the heroic save of a resident on the second floor and the assistance provided to our firefighter who became disoriented and low on air. She said everyone should be proud to have such a capable group of people working for us. Additionally, she acknowledged the Police Department for their assistance helping to set-up hose lines and ladders before the mutual aid assistance arrived. She said it is not feasible for any community to have enough on duty fire Staff to respond to a fire of this magnitude. She said we rely on our mutual aid partners and help from other communities, but before they arrive, we rely on our City team, including the PD and sometimes the on-duty Highway crew. She said it is impressive to see the Departments come together and support each other, which she does not think we acknowledge enough. She thanked everyone involved that night for being crucial to the success.

The City Manager went on to note that this evening began the process for review of the fiscal year (FY) 2023–2029 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Councilors received a complete proposed CIP document, with the usual table of contents and appendix for easy reference. The upcoming meeting schedule was included on the final page of the City Manager's message. The first meeting at the Blastos Room would be a different format than usual, with Councilors in four groups, rotating for 30-minute presentations and discussions with each Department (ending at 11:30 AM). Most comments will be on the first two years of the plan, with mention of projects in later years.

The City Manager continued talking about what is new in the CIP document this year. In an attempt to reduce debt and lessen the impact of necessary infrastructure projects, the proposed CIP plan includes three important new elements:

1. It incorporates the \$2.5 million of ARPA local fiscal recovery grant funds as debt reduction in the first three years of the plan and \$850,000 per year to reduce debt

issuance for the roadway preservation and rehabilitation program. We bond our road preservation projects every year to the tune of about \$1.3–\$1.4 million.

2. It deposits surplus funds in the amount of \$875,000 annually in a new capital account to fund wholly or in part projects in future years of the CIP. These funds are used to reduce debt issuance on current revenues for projects. These first two things will save the City approximately \$1.5 million in interest over the 10-year life of a bond.
3. In this plan, we move closer to level funding the use of what we refer to as current revenues and capital reserve appropriations each year of the plan. This is the number that directly impacts the budget. It is the net annual debt issuance, capital reserves, grants, etc. being used to fund a project. It is the net amount required as part of the operating budget, each year.

The City Manager said the CIP is a financial plan for the City's largest expenditures, which is reviewed and amended over time; it is a living document that is changing constantly. The budget adopted in June/July is the document that actually allocates the dollars associated with these capital expenditures for that budget year. The closer we get to creating a plan that provides for stable capital investment, year after year, the more predictable the impact of our infrastructure investments will be on our budget. The review of new projects requires two things happen: a decision related to the need of the project and then a decision as to where in the project should be placed or can be placed. Sometimes that means adjusting other projects to accommodate a project that has a bigger priority. The capital projects in the first year of the plan as adopted by the Council will be included in the Operating Budget. Next year, because we do the full review every other year, the capital projects including the second year will be reviewed as part of the operating budget process and adjustments will be made as necessary at that time, as guided by the Council Fiscal Policies, Council Goals, and the City's Master Plan. The City Manager said this CIP process provides a framework to consider projects over time within the context of the community's vision, values, and goals, along with the impact on property taxes and utility/other rates.

The next step in the process is a series of FOP meetings that will provide the opportunity for review of all projects in all years of the plan. The first FOP meeting is scheduled for January 27 at 5:30 PM, with a public hearing on March 3 and a vote of the Council on March 17. Immediately thereafter, we begin the internal review and preparation for the Operating Budget, which is then submitted to the Council on May 1, when this FOP process starts all over again.

#### ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS – FINANCE DIRECTOR

A memorandum was received from the Finance Director recommending that the City Council move to accept the list of donations presented.

A motion by Councilor Powers to suspend the Rules of Order to allow the acceptance of these donations on first reading was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne and the motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Remy, Giacomo and Workman were absent.

A motion by Councilor Powers to accept the following donations and that the City Manager be authorized to use each donation in the manner specified by the donor was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne and the motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

The City Manager and Mayor Hansel extended the City Council's recognition and appreciation to the following very generous donors:

The Keene Fire Department received donations in memory of retired call firefighter Charles "Charlie" Harris from the following donors: Deborah Mess (\$50), Rebecca Barrett and members of the Bretwood Golf Course Ladies' League (\$25), Kenneth and Sandra Johnson (\$20), Jean and Brian Barden (\$50), and Margaret and Louis Roberge (\$100). The Fire Department received an additional donation from Michael Christiansen (\$100) in thanks for our members' service and professionalism demonstrated recently during an incident. These donations total \$345.

The Keene Parks and Recreation Department received a donation of a bench from Faith Sargent, in honor of her father Bruce Filiault, who was an avid horseshoe player at the courts in Wheelock Park. The family purchased a bench to donate to the City through the Adopt-A-Bench Program and asked that the bench be located to overlook the courts. The Adopt-A-Bench Program provides the installation of the bench and a plaque for \$1,350.

Councilor Filiault said this bench was purchased by his niece in honor of his brother who died of cancer a few weeks prior. There would be a celebration of his brother's life in April or May that the Council would be invited to attend.

#### MEMORANDUM – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY COUNCIL RULES OF ORDER – CITY CLERK

A memorandum was received from the City Clerk recommending that the proposed amendments regarding the City Council's Rules of Order be referred to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee.

The City Clerk said that these were the sections that were originally identified. She said this project began in 2019 with the input from former Mayor Kendall Lane and Mayor Hansel. Although many of the changes were housekeeping, some of them are fairly substantive. She requested referral to PLD to start the discussion and added that these amendments do not talk about remote access or conflict of interest. She asked that those conversations be held separately so the other substantive changes are not overshadowed.

Mayor Hansel referred the Rules of Order to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee.

#### MEMORANDUM – RESIGNATION OF SUZANNE BUTCHER FROM THE ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE – SENIOR PLANNER

A memorandum was received from Senior Planner, Mari Brunner, recommending that the City Council accept the resignation of Suzanne Butcher from the Energy & Climate Committee.

A motion by Councilor Powers to accept the resignation with regret and appreciation of service was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley and the motion passed unanimously with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor.

**MORE TIME – KEENE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK – KEENE FOOD FESTIVAL – REQUEST TO USE CITY PROPERTY**

Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report read recommending that the request for the Keene Young Professionals Network to use City property be placed on more time to allow protocol meetings to occur. Mayor Hansel granted more time.

**ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING – ZONE CHANGE – 19 WHITCOMB’S MILL ROAD – RURAL TO LOW DENSITY-1 – ORDINANCE O-2022-02**

A petition for zoning map change was submitted by Jim Phippard on behalf of the Sandra Henry Trust, seeking a zone change from Rural to Low Density on a 12.2-acre parcel of land on the west side of Whitcomb’s Mill Road. With this request was Ordinance O-2022-02, relating to amending the zoning map to change the zoning designation at 19 Whitcomb’s Mill Road to Low Density 1.

Mayor Hansel referred Ordinance O-2022-02 to the Joint Planning Board/Planning, Licenses and Development Committee.

**ORDINANCE FOR SECOND READING – RELATING TO CLASS ALLOCATION AND SALARY SCHEDULE – ORDINANCE O-2022-01**

Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee report read recommending the adoption of Ordinance O-2022-01. Mayor Hansel filed the report. Ordinance O-2022-01 Relating to Class Allocation and Salary Schedule was read for the second time. A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt Ordinance O-2022-01 was duly seconded by Councilor Chadbourne and the motion passed on a unanimous roll call vote with 12 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilors Remy, Giacomo and Workman were absent.

**RESOLUTION R-2021-46-A – IN SUPPORT OF A MEDICARE FOR ALL PLAN**

Planning, Licenses and Development Committee report read recommending the adoption of Resolution R-2021-46-A as amended. The Mayor noted that this vote will require a 2/3 of the elected Councilors or ten votes to pass. Mayor Hansel filed the report.

A motion by Councilor Bosley to adopt Resolution R-2021-46-A was duly seconded by Councilor Ormerod.

Councilor Jones said he was not opposed to the concept but the process within the City.

Councilor Roberts said he was opposed because it was a “feel good” thing. He said that Medicare Part A would run out of money in 2026. Right now, Medicare Part B is having revenues a little more than \$400 billion annually; while they have expenses of almost \$1 trillion annually, revenues are going down because less people are working. In going through the various plans, he found that the cheapest plan meant that it would cost \$30 trillion over the next 10 years,

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which could go up to \$47–50 trillion if people who have plan are forced off their plans right now. Councilor Roberts said a lot of Americans like the plans they are on. He said a lot of research shows that putting everyone on a plan does not mean there is access or supplier capacity. It is projected that if everyone were on the plan, there would be 50% unmet demand. If they cannot solve the current problem in the next four years, he said that adding something nationwide onto a system that is failing now does not make logical sense to him.

Councilor Madison spoke in support of Medicare for All, stating that he thinks it will help the City's bottom line and help the population. He went five years without health insurance, and yet he is growing more concerned with national issues being brought before the City Council for comment. He said those same national issues are not being brought to other communities, counties, or federal representatives; it seems some groups are only bringing them to the City Council expecting them to take those on. He is concerned that the City Council is doing more and more advocacy for the area, and for groups and individuals who are unwilling to bring these issues to their own town councils, counties, and the federal delegation. He thinks it is time to develop guidelines for when the Council votes and comments on national issues. That said, he would vote yes on this motion.

Councilor Williams shared one reason voting yes would be important for the City. He said that frequently when taxes go up it is due to School Board spending and not the City's. He continued that the recent School Board budget would raise taxes "a bit," but the biggest reason for that is the increase in healthcare costs. With a few very sick employees in the last year, the cost of healthcare for the schoolboard increased by \$1 million, which he said everyone would be paying for. He said that although it is the School Board, Councilors would hear from their constituents about it. He thinks this is an important issue and urged everyone to vote yes.

On a vote of 10–2, the motion to adopt Resolution R-2021-46-A passed. Councilors Jones and Roberts voted in opposition.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Mayor Hansel adjourned the meeting at 8:30 PM.

A true record, attest:



City Clerk