

**CITY OF KEENE
PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

5:00 pm to 6:00 pm

2nd Floor Conference Room, City Hall



1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call – Appoint Alternates (if required)**
3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** February 8, 2022
4. **Board Business:**
 - a) Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities/Taste of Keene
 - b) PCC Exchange Survey/Facebook updates
 - c) Planning for possible Keene Delegation to Einbeck – 2nd week of October of 2022 – head count of those planning to go.
 - d) Future Exchange Ideas – YMCA, dance, rugby
 - e) Discuss Promotional Activities/Media Opportunities to help promote PCC events and exchanges.
5. **Communications:**
6. **Reports:**
 - a) Treasurer Report
7. **New Business:**

Ability to move the May meeting from 5/10/2022 to 5/17/2022.
8. **Next Meeting:** Next meeting is April 12, 2022
9. **More Time:**
 - a) Student pen-pal ideas – High School 16 -18 year olds.
10. **Adjournment**

1 City of Keene
2 New Hampshire

3
4
5 PARTNER CITY COMMITTEE
6 MEETING MINUTES
7

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

5:00 PM

2nd Floor Conference Room
City Hall

Members Present:

John Mitchell, Chair
Mayor George Hansel
Dawn Thomas-Smith
Mari Brunner
Gregg Kleiner
Kürt Blomquist, Ex-Officio

Staff Present:

Helen Mattson, Executive Assistant

Members Not Present:

William Schoefmann, Vice Chair
Lena Kridlo
Councilor Michael Giacomo
Dr. Delene White

8
9
10 1) Call to Order

11
12 Chair Mitchell called the meeting to order at 5:09 PM.

13
14 2) Roll Call

15
16 3) Minutes of the Previous Meeting: December 14, 2021

17
18 Mayor Hansel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of December 14, 2021. Mr.
19 Blomquist seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

20
21 4) Board Business

22 a) Fundraising Ideas/Opportunities

23
24 Ms. Brunner stated that the “donate” button on the webpage is all they have right now. Ms.
25 Mattson replied yes, that is all that is on there that’s new, other than the survey. PCC historical
26 background and committee members are there as well.
27

28 Ms. Brunner asked if the Taste of Keene is happening this year. Mr. Kleiner replied yes, June
29 4th. He continued that he already said the PCC would be interested. He spoke briefly of the
30 work the [Keene Young Professionals Network] is doing in preparation for the event. Chair
31 Mitchell stated that that there is no question that the PCC is interested in participating.
32

33 **b) PCC Exchange Survey – review survey responses – Gmail account has been created**
34

35 Ms. Brunner stated that they have had five responses to the survey so far, and she forwarded
36 them to Chair Mitchell and Ms. Mattson. She continued that most of the response to the survey
37 is coming from people connected to the chorale group from Keene State College (KSC). Chair
38 Mitchell stated that he contacted Sandra Howard at KSC.
39

40 Chair Mitchell stated that he has had several calls from people looking for photos on the
41 webpage. Mayor Hansel stated that he tried sharing some photos on the PCC's Facebook page
42 and tried to tag people, but does not know if it worked. Ms. Thomas-Smith replied yes, there
43 were some likes and comments. Discussion continued about activity on the Facebook page.
44

45 Chair Mitchell stated that he has quite a few photos from student exchanges. He asked if it is
46 appropriate to share them (online). Ms. Mattson replied that he would have to get permission.
47 Chair Mitchell replied that he would only post photos if he had permission. Ms. Thomas-Smith
48 asked if consent forms for use of photos were signed in the past, when parents registered their
49 children for traveling to Einbeck. Chair Mitchell replied yes, for school use, but there was
50 nothing about the City's use. He continued that he will have to check into this. Discussion
51 continued about consent for photos.
52

53 **c) Planning for possible Keene Delegation to Einbeck – 2nd week of October 2022**
54

55 Chair Mitchell stated that he heard from Jürgen Herbst that people from Keene are invited to
56 Einbeck in October and Einbeck plans on hosting them, but Einbeck is not sure it will occur. He
57 will inform the PCC if he hears anything. Einbeck is planning and they just need to wait for the
58 okay that the festival is even going to occur.
59

60 Chair Mitchell continued that Ms. Mattson made a nice list of what has happened with previous
61 exchanges. It would be helpful for PCC members to go through those and look at what their
62 days would look like [if they traveled to Einbeck]. PCC members would enjoy doing this, but
63 would be expected to do the hosting as well [when people from Einbeck come to Keene]. They
64 can look at what hosts have done in Keene before and hope to do again. It is a lot of fun but also
65 work.
66

67 Mr. Blomquist stated that the PCC started to identify those who are interested in going to
68 Einbeck. He continued that it is now February, and they probably need to formalize that so they
69 can start filling out the delegation. It has been about 10 or 12 people, without spouses. Between

70 now and March they should formalize the list of who from the PCC is going, and then see if
71 there are other people they want to reach out to to see if they are interested.

72
73 Mr. Blomquist stated that they also need to think about what the theme of the visit will be. He
74 continued that it could be as simple as reconnecting. He himself has been to Einbeck twice,
75 whereas others would be going for the first time. They might want to let Mr. Herbst know that
76 maybe a portion of the delegation would participate in the “standard” activities that Einbeck
77 hosts share with participants from Keene, while others who have already participated might be
78 interested in something more specific. The PCC members need to put their thoughts together
79 and let Einbeck know what they are thinking. Other times they have waited until August to
80 finalize the list of who is traveling, and it is frustrating to people in Einbeck. They should give
81 feedback to Einbeck in March regarding the topic or theme. Last time they visited with youth
82 programs, and they have also talked about small businesses and other topics; they can look back
83 at their notes. As you can see from the schedules of previous visits, Einbeck hosts will keep
84 people from Keene quite busy. If they want to be not quite as busy, they need to let the people in
85 Einbeck know.

86
87 Chair Mitchell stated that they will receive a preliminary itinerary from Einbeck, which will give
88 them some ideas. He continued that if they have new people going, as well as people who have
89 been before, they need to figure out what the balance is (for activities). Discussion continued.

90
91 Chair Mitchell asked if the Mayor has a number of how many committee members he wants.
92 Mayor Hansel replied no, but he would like the focus to be on bringing people who will help
93 sustain this relationship with Einbeck for the next 5 to 6 years. He continued that that is what it
94 takes. If they do not find a “class” of people who will take this on and own it for the next 5 or 6
95 years, it will not thrive. He would not just pick someone with a special topic interest who would
96 go on the trip once and then never participate again.

97
98 Mr. Blomquist stated that he is not connected to youth sports. He continued that with Wally
99 Secord stepping back and no one else having stepped forward, maybe the PCC can talk about
100 whether anyone knows a person connected to youth sports who could make the introductions in
101 Einbeck and carry this on. Discussion ensued. Chair Mitchell stated that they have no one now;
102 they were very fortunate with Mr. Secord. Mr. Secord did what the Mayor said; he was very
103 invested [in the youth soccer partnership] and made a lot of personal sacrifices to be involved in
104 it. He does not know where they could find another person like Mr. Secord, and he has already
105 looked at the school system as a possibility.

106
107 Mr. Blomquist stated that they could maybe find a different youth activity. He continued that
108 there is a lot for them to figure out and they need to be reaching out. He is concerned about the
109 continuation of this partnership. For example, is Chair Mitchell thinking about who will be the
110 next “John Mitchell” from the school district? Maybe that is a person they want to ask to go to
111 Einbeck.

112

113 Chair Mitchell stated that they had also talked about reaching out to someone from the Keene
114 YMCA, who would also be a strong candidate. Mayor Hansel replied yes, Dan Smith from the
115 Y would be great. He continued that he, too, is sort of thinking about how he would replace
116 himself [when the time comes]. That is how [former Mayor] Kendall Lane had thought about it,
117 too, and it seemed to be successful.

118
119 Chair Mitchell asked who here is interested in going to Einbeck and can commit to it.
120 Discussion ensued. Ms. Brunner, Chair Mitchell, and the Mayor stated that they will go. Ms.
121 Thomas-Smith stated that she is not sure. Mr. Kleiner stated that he cannot go this year. Mr.
122 Blomquist stated that he is a potential yes but would not want to take a spot from someone who
123 wants to go for the first time. The Mayor stated that he would like to get another Councilor
124 Councilor to go.

125
126 Mr. Blomquist stated that the question of who is committed to the Einbeck trip should go out in
127 an email to the whole PCC so they can think about it and give an answer by March. Chair
128 Mitchell and Ms. Mattson agreed.

129
130 Ms. Thomas-Smith spoke of the benefits of youth participating, through schools and/or the
131 YMCA, and thus establishing connections with people in Einbeck early, and sort of “growing up
132 together” with the youth in Einbeck. This would help sustain the partnership. Discussion
133 continued about possible participants. PCC members brainstormed people to reach out to, such
134 as Sandra Howard (chorale groups, KSC), or Elizabeth Cardine (MC2 school). Mayor Hansel
135 stated that he suggests findings those individuals whom they think could carry the torch.

136
137 Chair Mitchell asked how many people should be in a Keene delegation. Mr. Blomquist replied
138 that 10 or 12 is what they have done in the past, which ends up being about 15 to 17 people if
139 some spouses come.

140
141 Chair Mitchell asked how they can reduce the likelihood of people backing out at the last minute.
142 Mr. Blomquist replied that there is no money commitment [to secure a spot], which means that
143 people have been able to back out at the last minute. He continued that August has been the
144 latest that people could possibly back out, because of transportation arrangements. When people
145 have backed out, they have all given legitimate reasons, and he is not sure what to say about this,
146 because it is not like anyone has paid a down deposit. All they can do is emphasize to folks that
147 this is a commitment. People in Einbeck get frustrated, because they need to know who is
148 coming as they set up the arrangements for hosting. By May or June, they need to have a good
149 feel for who the group is.

150
151 Chair Mitchell asked if Mayor Hansel is approaching these other people [they spoke about]. The
152 Mayor replied that he will find a Councilor, ask Elizabeth Cardine, and ask Dan Smith from the
153 YMCA.

154
155 **d) Future Exchange Ideas – YMCA, dance, rugby**

156
157 Chair Mitchell stated that they just talked about Dan Smith. He continued that Mr. Schoefmann
158 was talking about rugby, but he is not here tonight.

159
160 **e) Discuss Promotional Activities/Media Opportunities to help Promote PCC Events**
161 **and Exchanges**

162
163 Mr. Kleiner stated that the PCC will be involved with the Taste of Keene event. Ms. Thomas-
164 Smith asked what the PCC's responsibilities are for that. Mr. Kleiner replied that the
165 responsibilities of participants will be the same as last year. He continued that the KYPN has not
166 yet finalized the details of the event; they are waiting to see what the City can give them. Ms.
167 Thomas-Smith asked for more information about the event, and Mr. Kleiner confirmed that it
168 will be an outside event, a Beer Garden, the same as last year. Discussion continued about how
169 it went last year. Chair Mitchell asked Mr. Kleiner to keep them posted on the details of this
170 year's event and what the expectations are of the PCC.

171
172 Ms. Brunner asked if that is the only fundraising activity this group normally does, or if there is
173 no normal. Mr. Blomquist replied that there has not been a 'normal' in four years. He continued
174 that they used to do fundraising at the Pumpkin Festival. One year they did a fundraising night
175 at Fireworks restaurant – the PCC held a raffle, and Fireworks donated a portion of its profits
176 from that night to the PCC. There has not been a specific fundraising event other than Pumpkin
177 Festival.

178
179 Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that one year they did fundraising at the Keene Music Festival. Mr.
180 Blomquist replied yes, but the Music Festival stopped having food vendors to focus on
181 coordinating the music. He continued that the challenge for the PCC is finding people who want
182 to lead/coordinate a fundraising event. Also, there have not been other events in the past couple
183 years to tag on with. Ms. Brunner had talked about a winter market, but someone has to take
184 charge of that and go through the process of doing it. If the Pumpkin Festival comes back, the
185 PCC could reestablish that activity. He does not see the Music Festival going back to including
186 food vendors. A number of businesses were doing "pick a night for a nonprofit" events, but
187 those were set aside and he is not sure businesses will return to that.

188
189 Mr. Blomquist stated that they were successful with raffling off different Einbeck items (at
190 Fireworks that night). Chair Mitchell replied yes, they made more money through the raffles
191 than through the portion of profits from the restaurant. He asked if they can sell or raffle off
192 Einbeck hats, shirts, or other items, along with beer (at the Taste of Keene). Others spoke
193 positively of the idea, and discussion continued about what to have in a raffle. Discussion
194 continued about the success of fundraising at the Pumpkin Festival and the possibility of the
195 Pumpkin Festival returning. Chair Mitchell stated that he thinks there is a good group of people
196 in town who will help the PCC; that is a strength.

197

198 The Mayor stated that when it does come time to host [people from Einbeck], the PCC should
199 make an appeal to former people who were involved. Others agreed. Ms. Thomas-Smith stated
200 that some have said they would be happy to host again. The Mayor stated that there are some
201 people he would feel comfortable asking for financial support from. It is tough to do that right
202 now, but maybe when the exchanges start happening again.

203
204 Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she has a task for herself – to add the photos she received from
205 Mr. Secord to the PCC’s Facebook page. Mr. Blomquist replied that while they are on the topic
206 of Facebook, it would be great if she could periodically post something that encourages
207 interested people to get involved, and to contact Ms. Mattson for more information. He
208 continued that they can have people who are not on the PCC helping out. They need people to
209 run things down. For example, it would be great if someone from Dan Smith’s community
210 wanted to be doing something and reporting back to [the YMCA]. The PCC should schedule a
211 post for every couple of months to say that the PCC is looking for volunteers for subcommittees,
212 such as program development, exchange development, or fundraising. They could potentially
213 have more people than just the people in this room.

214
215 Ms. Thomas-Smith replied yes, as long as they are clear what the ask is. For example, there was
216 someone who was interested in wanting to help and had lots of ideas, but was not able to
217 implement the ideas. Mr. Blomquist replied yes, they need people with ideas and people who
218 can coordinate and implement ideas. They need to let people know that they are looking for
219 people to participate and to come talk with the PCC. For example, people who could develop a
220 dance exchange, or youth sports, youth soccer, or something else. The PCC should try to create
221 some buzz.

222
223 Ms. Thomas-Smith stated that she absolutely agrees with all of that but just wants to be careful.
224 She asked what exactly the ask would be. To come to the next meeting? Mr. Blomquist replied
225 that the ask would be to contact Ms. Mattson or send a message on the Facebook page. Ms.
226 Brunner replied that the PCC has a new email address that people could contact. Discussion
227 continued.

228
229 **5) Communications**
230 **a) Christmas Card from Einbeck – (Needs Translation)**

231
232 Ms. Mattson stated that she has the card that Einbeck sent to Keene. She continued that it is in
233 German, and she emailed it out to see if anyone could translate it, but did not hear back.
234 Discussion ensued about how to get it translated and the various technologies. Chair Mitchell
235 stated that he has a translation at home, but did not bring it in today because he thought Lena
236 Kridlo had translated it.

237
238 **6) Reports**
239 **a) Treasurer Report**

240

241 Mr. Kleiner stated that there are no changes. Chair Mitchell stated that the PCC accepts the
242 Treasurer's Report as unchanged.

243

244 **7) New Business**

245 **a) Request for Funding Letter to City Manager – For New Fiscal Year 2022/23**

246

247 Ms. Mattson stated that she is prepared to bring the PCC's request for funding letter to the City
248 Manager to pass to the Finance Department. She continued that it is a place mark for them. It
249 explains their interest. The City Manager will make a copy and send the original to Finance
250 Director Merri Howe.

251

252 Mr. Blomquist stated that they need to look at the calendar and see when the public hearing is.
253 He continued that Chair Mitchell or someone he appoints should come to the public hearing and
254 speak to the request. Chair Mitchell asked him to give him that date. Mr. Blomquist replied yes,
255 he will do that.

256

257 **b) PCC's History for When Exchanges Have Happened**

258

259 Chair Mitchell stated that Ms. Mattson has handouts tonight so the PCC can look at some of the
260 past exchanges. Ms. Mattson replied that she also emailed it to the committee. She continued
261 that it includes Albert Thormann's wish list. Chair Mitchell stated that it gives a sense of what
262 happens in a normal cycle and what the exchanges are like. It was a busy exchange cycle
263 [recently]. Right when the school closed down [due to COVID-19], there were about 15 students
264 coming from Einbeck and they had to cancel it about three days before they got on the plane. He
265 is sure that will pick right up again. He is hopeful that they will have strong support, with people
266 wanting to get back to traveling. Ms. Mattson stated that in 2019 they had the mixed group
267 exchange from Einbeck to Keene; youth soccer, which was the last one; and the KSC music
268 exchange. Potentially, that could happen again.

269

270 Ms. Brunner asked if the youth exchange has to be topical – like soccer or dance - or could it just
271 be a specific age group of students who are interested? Chair Mitchell replied that they had an
272 exchange from the Cheshire Career Center, because Einbeck has a school that is kind of a
273 technical school like that, but the difficulty they have run into now at the high school is that the
274 other exchanges were always a function of a commercial travel group. The teacher went for free,
275 and the students could sign up from a travel organization. That took the burden off the teacher
276 and school, regarding liability and responsibility. He is just speculating, but he thinks that is one
277 reason people do not want to pick up the soccer exchange or student exchange. The school does
278 not want to be the umbrella covering the students and the teacher. It is the same with Mr.
279 Secord. Any person would be putting themselves at a risk when they do that type of exchange. He
280 is not sure how it would work if the City would somehow be the umbrella. Mr. Blomquist
281 replied that part of the challenge with the City doing youth exchanges would be the background
282 checks and things that go with dealing with children. The pressures of that is part of what was
283 starting to get Mr. Secord down. They need an organization to sponsor that component of it.

284 When he went to Einbeck, he went as a person, not a City employee, and used vacation time.
285 This is something the City Manager can look at for the future. Discussion continued.

286
287 Ms. Brunner asked if, logistics aside, it would be okay to just have a youth exchange without a
288 topic. Mr. Blomquist replied yes, but usually someone wants to know what the theme is. What
289 are the youth coming to do? For example, if it is the YMCA, they have certain programs, like
290 backpacking or whatever. They are not showing up to just hang out. Chair Mitchell stated that
291 he does not think this would be an impediment. He continued that the theme could be anything.
292 Ms. Mattson stated that when Chair Mitchell did exchanges with students from the high school,
293 there was not a particular theme. Chair Mitchell replied that school was the theme; they went to
294 each other's classes. Mr. Blomquist replied that it was centered around the school in Einbeck
295 that is sort of like the Cheshire Career Center in Keene.

296
297 Mayor Hansel stated that almost anything is insurable. It just comes at a cost. He continued that
298 he would hate to see that as an impediment. Mr. Blomquist replied that they have talked about
299 this in the past. Could they assist groups somehow? For example, maybe the PCC could help
300 fund groups' insurance, but not their travel. They have stayed away from funding individuals'
301 travel, because the conversation becomes why fund one person and not another.

302
303 **8) Next Meeting – Next Meeting is March 8, 2022**

304
305 **9) More Time**

306 **a) Student Pen-Pal Ideas – High School 16-18 Year Olds**

307
308 **10) Adjournment**

309
310 There being no further business, Chair Mitchell adjourned the meeting at 5:58 PM.

311
312 Respectfully submitted by,
313 Britta Reida, Minute Taker

314
315 Reviewed and edited by,
316 Helen Mattson, Staff Liaison