

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, January 12, 2023**

**6:00 PM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Thomas F. Powers, Chair  
Michael J. Remy, Vice Chair  
(joined remotely)  
Bettina A. Chadbourne  
Bryan J. Lake  
Andrew M. Madison

**Members Not Present:**

*All Present*

**Staff Present:**

Elizabeth A. Dragon, City Manager  
Amanda Palmeira, Assistant City Attorney  
Duncan Watson, Asst. Public Works  
Director/Solid Waste Manager  
Michael Kopcha Keene Police Captain  
Jesse Rounds, Community Development  
Director  
Aaron Costa, Asst. Public Works  
Direct/Operations Manager  
Christopher Pelletier, Water/Sewer  
Operations Manager  
Christian Tarr, Utilities Maintenance Manager  
Kurt Blomquist, ACM/Public Works Director

Chair Powers called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Councilor Remy joined the meeting remotely as he was traveling for work.

**1) Spectrum Service Issues Update**

Councilor Filiault addressed the Committee first. The Councilor stated the first time he asked the community to contact him regarding Spectrum issues he received an overwhelming response but this last time he solicited comments, many responders indicated their issues seemed to have been addressed.

Mr. Michael Liccione, Area Vice-President for Charter Communications Field Operations and Engineering for Southern New England addressed the Committee. Mr. Liccione stated they have stuck to the plan indicated to Council about having additional resources and enhancements. He stated customer feedback has been good and they are planning to continue with the same effort. Going forward he asked that future updates be provided by email but they are willing to come back before the Council if they should require it. Chair Powers requested Spectrum have continued dialog with ACM/Communications and Marketing Director Rebecca Landry who is the City's point of contact.

Councilor Jones stated he was the Chair of the Committee that negotiated with Spectrum 20 years ago and one thing they offered was Channel 8 (Peg Access Channel). Since then when programming went down with Cheshire TV that channel has been moved to Channel 1302. He asked with the new channel coming back whether Channel 8 could be brought back. Mr. Liccione stated if this is something the City is interested it can be added to the topics of discussion.

Councilor Lake made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Madison.

On a 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends accepting the Spectrum Update as informational.

2) **Mission Statement, Coalition Priorities and Funding Sources - Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Coalition - Dr. Pierre Morton**

Dr. Pierre Morton Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Coalition and Mark Bodin representing the Savings Bank of Walpole were the next two speakers.

The Manager addressed this item first. She indicated during the budget process \$10,000 was requested to support the Coalition's effort. However, during that time the Coalitions was still forming itself. Hence, the Council placed the \$10,000 in the budget with the caveat that they come back and talk about their organization and the efforts they have made to establish themselves. Today the Coalition is looking for the release of those funds.

Dr. Morton stated they have put together a Coalition with different stakeholders throughout the community and beyond to implement the recommendations from the ad hoc Racial Justice Committee. One of the items they are working on right now is to raise funds for different events and to hire a Director (Chief Diversity Officer) to pull together different individuals and groups to implement some of the recommendations.

Dr. Morton stated he has deep roots in this community and would like his children and grandchildren to reach their highest potential in the City. He stated the goal of the Coalition is that every citizen has a voice and value and that value is codified. Mr. Bodin stated the Racial Justice Report was structured by segments of the community. One segments relates to law enforcement which is led by Sheriff Rivera. The Education Committee is led by Dr. Dottie Morris. Mr. Bodin is leading the Business Advisory Committee and Sub Committee that deals with regional engagement. They are working on a survey on the region's employers to see what they are looking for, where are they in their journey with specific focus on small businesses. Mark Rebillard is involved with the downtown group.

Mr. Bodin stated they are moving forward with a band of volunteers, which has been challenging without a Director. With respect to fund raising they received a \$16,000 grant from the NH Endowment for Health for social media activities and a minority owned business has been hired to lead that effort. Savings Bank of Walpole has given \$15,000 plus an intern. The City has provided \$10,000.

Mr. Bodin stated they have been advised to bring in a consultant to help with the strategic

planning process before a Director is hired. The money from the City will be used for direct programming in Keene. The Committee asked how the YMCA is involved with the Coalition. Dr. Morton stated they are a sponsoring organization and having them be a sponsor gives the Coalition more freedom to do more of the programming recommended in the Racial Justice report.

The Manager stated she is very excited about the work of the Coalition. She indicated Dr. Morton was involved with the recent promotion process for the Police Chief's position and he has been helpful with training opportunities for staff and Council.

Councilor Madison made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On a 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the release of \$10,000 included in the budget for the Monadnock Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Coalition.

**3) Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program- 2022 - Police Captain**

Keene Police Captain Michael Kopcha addressed the Committee next and stated the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant from the US Department of Justice is an annual grant. This grant enables police departments to purchase bullet proof vests which are recommended to be replaced every five years. This money will be spent for any new officers that are hired and any officers that have vests that need replaced.

Captain Kopcha continued that the department has budgeted \$3,950 for bulletproof vests; however, in order to take full access to the funds being offered through the grant, the Police Department may spend up to \$6,750.00 since it is a 50/50 match grant.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lake.

On a 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and expend \$6,750 from the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program funds of the US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Programs.

**4) Grant Acceptance - CLG Grant Award 2022 - Recovering Black History – Community Development Director**

Community Development Director Jesse Rounds stated this item is regarding the NH Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR) Certified Local Government Grant. This is the second year Keene is looking to use these grant funds for a project to explore Keene history.

The City will be working with a professor from Northeastern University, Kabria Baumgartner who is a professor of history and Africana studies whose expertise is in analyzing historical

documents and digging into the history of communities. The title of the project is Recovering Black History and they will be looking at black history in Keene. The grant is for \$16,000 and the Heritage Commission will be using \$6,000 of their funds and \$5,000 of in kind support in collaboration with the Cheshire County Historical Society to complete this project.

Dr. Pierre Morton asked whether there was the opportunity to use citizens in the community who would be beneficial for the project. Mr. Rounds stated the Heritage Commission will be looking for local volunteers.

Councilor Lake made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Madison.

On a 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to apply for, accept and expend the grant from the NH Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR) Certified Local Government Grant in the amount of \$16,000 for the Heritage Commission to work with the Historical Society of Cheshire County (HSCC,) as a part of the existing "Recovering Black History" project underway in partnership with the Monadnock Center for History and Culture and the Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire.

**5) Acceptance of Lead Service Line Inventory, Sampling Plan and Replacement Plan Grant - Water/Sewer Operations Manager**

Asst. Public Works Direct/Operations Manager Aaron Costa and Water/Sewer Operations Manager Christopher Pelletier addressed the Committee. Mr. Costa began by introducing Mr. Pelletier. Mr. Pelletier stated this item is in reference to a \$50,000 grant from New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services for the purpose of creating a comprehensive water/sewer service line inventory throughout the City. The State is requiring an inventory of service lines by October 2024 and these funds will help with that. The grant does not require a match and staff time is reimbursable. One of the items they will be checking for is the existence of lead. The money will also be used to update the lead and copper sampling plan to make sure the areas being chosen for sampling are the appropriate sampling sites.

Councilor Madison made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Chadbourne.

On a 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to apply for, accept and execute a grant from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) in the amount of \$50,000 for the Lead Service Line Inventory, Sampling Plan and Replacement Plan Grant.

**6) Reallocation of Funds - Wastewater Treatment Plant Roof Project - Utilities Maintenance Manager**

Utilities Maintenance Manager Christian Tarr was the next to address the Committee. Mr. Tarr stated in November of last year roof replacement work at the Wastewater Treatment Plant began. This is a CIP project and the work is moving along well. The finish work which is the warranty work by the manufacturer is projected to be completed by end of this week into next week. Staff's request today is to reallocate \$18,000 of the remaining fund balance from the Wastewater

Treatment Plant Aeration Line Project to the Wastewater Treatment Plant Roof Project to cover some additional grant funding work and future construction costs for some new safety equipment on the roof.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lake.

On a 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to reallocate \$18,000 of remaining fund balance from the Wastewater Treatment Plant Aeration Line Project (32JW002A) to the Wastewater Treatment Plant Roof Project (32JW010A).

**7) Change Order #1 - Engineering Services for Wastewater Treatment Plant Roof Project - Utilities Maintenance Manager**

Mr. Tarr addressed this item as well and stated the City pursued grant funding which caused some extra work to be done by the Engineering firm, Brown and Caldwell. 16 hours of work by the project manager and 20 hours by the project engineer were performed. The additional \$4,800 is to cover those expenses.

Councilor Lake made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Madison.

On a 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute Change Order #1 with Brown and Caldwell Engineers to perform additional engineering services for an amount not to exceed \$4,880 for Contract 04-22-05.

**8) Relating to an Appropriation of Funds for the Solid Waste Fund Resolution R-2023-06**

Asst. Public Works Director/Solid Waste Manager Duncan Watson addressed the Committee next. Mr. Watson stated the transfer station received greater revenue than expected from its operations. Although the Department routinely projects its revenue and expenditures as part of its operating budget; this time the revenue was greater than the expenses and this Resolution serves as an accounting exercise to balance the revenue with the expenditures. Chair Powers questioned the reason for the extra revenue. Mr. Watson stated this region seems to be doing well with construction and the extra revenue is a reflection of more trash being disposed at the transfer station.

Councilor Chadbourne made the following motion, which was seconded by Councilor Lake.

On a 5-0 roll call vote, the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommends the adoption of Resolution R-2023-06

There being no further business, Chair Powers adjourned the meeting at 6:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Krishni Pahl, Minute Taker

Edits submitted by,  
Patty Little, City Clerk