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A site visit was held Thursday, August 17, 2023, at 5:45 PM relative to a petition from Whitcomb's Mill Estates to accept a warranty deed and return of layout for a public way known as Brookfield Lane. Mayor Hansel was in attendance. Councilors in attendance included: Bryan Lake, Michael Remy, Gladys Johnsen, Michael Giacomo, Randy L. Filiault, Robert Williams, Philip M. Jones, Andrew Madison, Raleigh Ormerod, Catherine Workman, Mitchell H. Greenwald, Kate Bosely, and Thomas F. Powers. Kris Roberts and Bettina A. Chadbourne were absent. Staff in attendance included the City Attorney, Asst. City Attorney, City Engineer, and the Public Works Director. Jim Phippard represented the Petitioner. The site visit was called to order by the Deputy City Clerk at 5:45 PM.

The City Engineer opened the site visit by stating that the petitioner is proposing a small conservation residential development in the LD1 zone consisting of 9 lots of mixed single-family and duplex residences. The project will contain approximately 6.87 acres of open space. With the aid of a drawing, the City Engineer described the layout of the proposed new road called Brookfield Lane, which included: dimensions, pavement, culverts, other stormwater drainage features and a holding pond to be located off adjacent Whitcomb Mill Rd. The City Engineer continued that the homeowner's association will be responsible for managing stormwater runoff. The City Engineer indicated that the petitioner had requested waivers of City Code Sec. 22:37 relating to sidewalks, streetlights, underground utilities, and street trees.

The City Engineer and Public Works Director answered several questions regarding the future of the White Brook bridge on Whitcomb Mill Rd., pedestrian access, and vehicle traffic concerns from the City Councilors who were in attendance.

As there were no further comments, the Mayor declared the visit closed at 5:59 PM.



A true record, attest:

Deputy City Clerk

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, August 17, 2023. The Honorable Mayor George S. Hansel called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Roll called: Bryan J. Lake, Michael J. Remy, Gladys Johnsen, Michael Giacomo, Randy L. Filiault, Robert C. Williams, Philip M. Jones, Andrew M. Madison, Andrew M. Madison, Kris E. Roberts, Raleigh C. Ormerod, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Catherine I. Workman, Mitchell H. Greenwald, Kate M. Bosley, and Thomas F. Powers were present. Councilor Jones led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING

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A motion by Councilor Powers to adopt the July 20, 2023 meeting minutes as presented was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Hansel and the Council wished a Happy Birthday to Councilors Roberts (August 9), Powers (August 12), and Lake (August 19). Mayor Hansel and the Council also acknowledged Councilor Madison and Lieutenant of Fire Alarm, Ray Phillips, for the emergency life-saving moment with a recent Route 9 motor vehicle accident.

Mayor Hansel also reminded Councilors and the public that the filing period has begun for the fall Municipal Elections. Candidates may either pay a filing fee and complete a declaration of candidacy or they may also file by petition by collecting the signatures of 50 registered voters to get their name on the ballot. The filing period for declarations ends on September 5 at 5:00 PM. The filing period for petitions runs until September 8 at 5:00 PM. Anyone wishing to run for office must be a duly qualified registered voter in the ward or district they represent. Filings will be accepted at the City Clerk's Office for Mayor, Ward Councilor, Councilor-at-large, and the various Election Official positions. Mayor Hansel asked the Councilors to encourage members of the community to run for office.

Mayor Hansel announced 3 Council workshops: September 18 (goals), October 16 (goals, if needed), and Sept. 26 (fiscal policies). These workshops will be at Heberton Hall at 6:00 PM. The setup for these meetings will not accommodate remote access, so Councilors should make every effort to attend. Light refreshments will be served in advance of the workshops.

PROCLAMATION – INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

Mayor Hansel welcomed Councilor Bobby Williams, Anita Hansen, and Jodie Newell forward to receive a proclamation declaring August 31, 2023, as International Overdose Awareness Day in Keene. The Mayor encouraged all residents to join in remembering those lost to overdose in the upcoming candlelight vigil at Central Square on August 31 from 7:00 PM–8:00 PM. Ms. Hansen said candles would be provided and there would be speakers. It is a time to remember those lost, those struggling now, and the families that love them. This is a huge issue personally and economically in Keene and NH.

PUBLIC HEARING – ACCEPTANCE OF DEED AND RETURN OF LAYOUT – BROOKFIELD LANE – RESOLUTIONS R-2023-28 AND R-2023-20

Mayor Hansel opened the public hearing at 7:08 PM and the Deputy City Clerk read the public hearing notice. The Mayor welcomed Jim Phippard of Brickstone Land Consulting on behalf of Whitcomb's Mill Estates for a description of the proposed layout. The City Engineer presented on behalf of the City.

The City Engineer said this petition was requesting that the City Council lay out a new public road in the City, for which the petitioner has suggested the name of Brookfield Lane. The new road would be located on the west side of Whitcomb's Mill Road, almost exactly opposite the entrance to Langdon Place. If the Council approves the petition, the City would take over public maintenance and operation of 850 linear feet (750 feet of roadway and 100 feet around the perimeter of the cul-de-sac) of new roadway from Whitcomb's Mill Road to the back of the cul-de-sac, in addition to the 1,350 feet of public sewers (and manholes, etc.) and 2 existing culverts. The petitioner proposes a stormwater management pond as a part of the development, which the City would not be responsible for. That pond will collect water from the roadway, filtering out the sediment before it enters the wetlands complex. The pond would be a part of the open space parcel that the homeowner's association would be responsible for.

The City Engineer said the petition also includes requests for 4 waivers. Chapter 22 of Keene's Land Development Code addresses how to grant waivers for public infrastructure (except for driveway street access permits). It is up to the City Council to approve these waivers. The petitioner requested waivers from 4 specific sections of the Land Development Code:

- Section 22.3.7 addresses sidewalks:
 - Sidewalks are required on at least one side of any proposed street in any residential Zoning District, which applies in this case.
 - There are provisions in the Code for developers that provide an alternative system of pedestrian accommodations that do not run parallel to the road.
 - In this case, the developer proposes constructing a gravel pathway from Brookfield Lane to the Cheshire Rail Trail to provide safe pedestrian access. The path would traverse the open space reserved for conservation.
 - While the City Engineer felt the petitioner met the requirements of open space for conservation, he said it would be very hard for the Public Works Department to maintain sidewalks or plow snow at this site because there is no sidewalk network anywhere in the vicinity of this development. Still, the City Engineer thought the petitioner proposed a reasonable compromise, and so he recommended granting this waiver request.

- Section 22.3.8.B addresses streetlights:
 - Streetlights are required at intersections in all Zoning districts and along the length of public streets in all residential Zoning districts. This section clearly applies to this proposed development.
 - The applicant has requested to provide no streetlights.
 - There are currently no streetlights on Whitcomb's Mill Road, so at the very least, the City Engineer thought that lighting that intersection would be a prudent safety measure for those turning. Still, he felt that this standard should apply in this case, with streetlights every 400 feet. This would mean 3 lights for this development: 1 at Whitcomb's Mill Road, 1 in the middle of the roadway, and 1 at the end of the cul-de-sac.

- Thus, the City Engineer recommended *against* granting this waiver.
- Section 23.3.8.D addresses underground utilities:
 - When underground streetlighting feed is required, then the telephone, electric, and cable TV utilities should also be placed underground. This is the case in many Zoning districts, including the Low Density Zone. This requirement applies to this proposed development.
 - The City Engineer found no basis for why the applicant should not put those utilities underground because it is a City Council standard.
 - Thus, the City Engineer recommended *against* granting this waiver.
- Section 22.3.16 addresses street trees:
 - There shall be at least 1 deciduous tree (2-inch caliper minimum at planting) of a species approved by the Public Works Director for every 50-foot interval of each side of any new street or extension of an existing street.
 - The applicant believes there are already a lot of trees on site, which the City Engineer said is essentially true because it is a wooded lot. However, once these properties are sold to individual homeowners, the City will have no control over whether those existing trees remain or are removed.
 - Street tree requirements allow the City to set an aesthetic standard for how streets should be developed and allow for environmental benefits like addressing heat islands and stormwater management.
 - The City Engineer said that City Staff saw no compelling reason to grant this waiver and recommended *against* granting it.

Mr. Phippard explained the petition. Last year, he said the City rezoned this property from Rural to Low Density 1, which made it possible to propose a small development like the one he showed on the plans. This would be a Conservation Residential Development (CRD) that would consist of 9 separate lots, 8 of which would be accessed by a proposed new City street that ends at the cul-de-sac. One of those 8 lots is a large, 6.8-acre tract, which is where part of the permanent open space required by the CRD would be located. There is also a lot with direct frontage on Whitcomb's Mill Road that would not have access from the proposed new road. This CRD is intended to be a mix of single-family homes on the smaller lots and duplexes on the 4 larger lots. However, buyers of those 4 lots could choose to not construct duplexes. He noted that costs were one reason he requested these waivers. He thought the sidewalk made sense because there are no sidewalks near the development, and it would be a burden for the Public Works Department to plow a sidewalk that is so far from the regular sidewalk network in the City. Mr. Phippard knew that concrete sidewalks built to the City's specifications would cost over \$100 per linear foot for a total of approximately \$75,000.

Mr. Phippard said that while this area was rezoned as Low Density 1, it is still a rural area, and he wants to respect that by not cutting all the trees on the lots; the owners' intent is to preserve as many trees as possible to maintain the character of that neighborhood. There are already many

interested buyers as the project has been in progress for 3 years, and the interested parties want to preserve the large open space. The applicant proposed to construct a gravel pathway within the open space land, all of which would be maintained by the homeowners' association.

Constructing that path will require a license from the Trails Bureau of NH Department of Transportation (DOT) so it can be connected to the Rail Trail; Mr. Phippard was assured this would be granted. The applicant is willing to preserve trees within 20 feet of the right-of-way and give the City an easement to maintain those trees; this site would have 100s of trees within 20 feet of the right-of-way. He thinks a requirement to plant street trees would be redundant and a wasted expense; 30 street trees in the City's right-of-way would cost an additional \$75,000.

Next, Mr. Phippard talked about the waiver request for underground utilities. He met with Eversource at the site to get their approval to locate the underground utilities. Eversource informed him that they could not promise the transformers within the next year. Because of this, the petitioner immediately switched from underground to overhead electricity on site. Mr. Phippard mentioned that there were 4 contractors bidding for this site with the hope of starting this fall, but 2 dropped out because of all the wash outs and damages that had occurred this summer; NH DOT has been hiring all available contractors to help them rebuild roadways. If the developer cannot get the necessary permits and approvals, then they cannot start this fall. Mr. Phippard said costs for everything had been skyrocketing, which would only increase costs for future homeowners. For example, if forced to have underground utilities, the 5-inch conduits cost \$90 per linear foot compared to \$15 two years ago. That is just one part of the cost of the underground utilities. Not receiving this waiver could add \$100,000 to the cost of developing these 12 units.

Mr. Phippard said the goal for this development is to keep the homes under \$500,000 but said that all of these extra construction costs would make that harder. He is currently in negotiations with 2 suppliers to try to bring down the cost of these stick-built homes. He asked the Council to respect the fact that these waivers were not requested on a whim, but because he feels they are absolutely necessary to retain the budget.

Next, Mr. Phippard addressed City sewer access at the site. The sewer would originate across from Whitcomb's Mill Road at Langdon Place of Keene. In the 1980s, the sewer was extended from Arch Street, under White Brook, and all the way to the last wing of the Langdon Place building. The easement was extended to Whitcomb's Mill Road.

In addition to these waivers helping to keep the project on budget, Mr. Phippard said this development would contribute to the critical need for housing in Keene; more housing could bring more businesses to Keene.

Mayor Hansel opened the hearing to public comments.

Walter Lacey of 230 Daniels Hill Road said that the intersection of NH Rt-9 and Whitcomb's Mill Road has become more perilous over the years, with frequent accidents. It has become a

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shortcut to destinations in north and west Keene. He thinks this development will only make it more perilous. Langdon Place was built 25 years ago and recently a Rail Trail parking lot was added. Since this intersection was created, there have been 20 new homes built on Daniels Hill Road and Langley Road, which has increased traffic dramatically. Mr. W. Lacey said that residents who use this intersection have been appealing to NH DOT for 25 years. He said his requests to the City Council had also been overlooked. He thought that this development would subject 12 households, their visitors, and vendors to unnecessary hazards; this would also be the case for long-time residents using the intersection. He shared examples of how scary the intersection can be, including near misses. Mr. W. Lacey thought it was sad that a fatal car accident was needed to affect change. He urged the City Council to not approve this development without a commitment from NH DOT for safety improvements to this intersection. He quoted from the 1994 mission statement of the Keene City government: *“The mission of the Keene City government is to provide the best possible public order, safety, justice, infrastructure and services expected by its citizenry; and to provide the forum for community planning and development.”*

Thomas Lacey of 241 Daniels Hill Road agreed with Mr. W. Lacey about this intersection becoming less safe over time as the number of users has increased. Speeds are incredibly high, and he often sees signs of accidents (e.g., broken glass or guardrail damage). Drivers do not slow down when approaching this intersection. While it might appear as though nothing is wrong with this intersection, he said it suddenly becomes really complicated. When he cannot avoid using the intersection, he mentioned that he had to develop a strategy of stopping short to avoid other vehicles. Mr. T. Lacey said the City Council had fair warning about this. Otherwise, he supported this development. Still, he thought that any acceptance of this new right-of-way should be suspended until there is a solution for safety at the intersection of Rt-9 and Whitcomb’s Mill Road; he did not think the developer should be responsible for paying for this solution.

Mayor Hansel shared that he sent a letter to the NH DOT Commissioner requesting a response about this but had not received one yet. He encouraged City Staff to bring this up with DOT as well.

Hearing nothing further, Mayor Hansel closed the public hearing at 7:43 PM, except for written comments, which would be accepted until 1:00 PM on Tuesday, August 22. Written comments must be signed and submitted to the City Clerk by that date and time to be included in the record. Mayor Hansel referred Resolutions R-2023-28 and R-2023-29 to the Municipal Services, Facilities, & Infrastructure Committee for their August 24 meeting.



A true record, attest:

Deputy City Clerk

PRESENTATION – SLUDGE DRYER FEASIBILITY STUDY – BROWN AND CALDWELL
AN ENGINEERING CONSULTING FIRM

Mayor Hansel welcomed Aaron Costa, Assistant Public Works Director, and Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Manager to introduce the sludge dryer feasibility study. He introduced consultants from Brown & Caldwell: Colin O'Brien and Bill Browder. Mr. Costa thanked the partners on this project, which was funded by a \$100,000 grant through the American Rescue Plan Act administered by the NH Department of Environmental Services (DES). The City owns and operates the WWTP, which treats approximately 3 million gallons of wastewater daily (24/7/365). A discharge permit allows the City to discharge that treated wastewater into the Ashuelot River. Less commonly discussed are the biosolids—or sludge—disposed of at the WWTP. There are 3 ways to get rid of biosolids: 1) incineration (only 1 in NH), 2) landfilling at the Turnkey Landfill in Rochester, NH (current method; limited landfill capacity in New England and not a desirable landfill material because of high water content), and 3) reuse and land application (a company turns it into a compostable product that can be used as fertilizer and more). However, recent PFAS regulations have changed the ability for land application and beneficial reuse. The City of Keene has sludge dewatering equipment that produces a product that is approximately 30% solids and 70% water. The WWTP produces 4,500 tons of that material every year; if more water could be removed, it would reduce the tonnage that must be hauled and disposed of. The current rate for hauling is \$125 per ton in the City of Keene and there is an annual operating budget for this of \$600,000. This study assessed the feasibility of adding a sludge dryer to the City's current dewatering process to reduce the overall water content. The study also created a roadmap of how to best manage biosolids in the 21st century and what that could look like in Keene over the next 30 years. This study considered the City Council's goals regarding fossil fuels. This drying process could generate some energy that could be used at the WWTP. Mr. O'Brien said his team is working with many towns in NH facing this challenge. This study created a roadmap for the City to follow as sludge crises arise.

Mr. Browder said the consultants' task for this project was to assess the feasibility of a sludge dryer at the WWTP. He echoed that Keene has laudable energy goals: 100% renewable electricity by 2023 and 100% renewable thermal by 2050. Those goals gave this study a unique context. Like for other products, the costs of addressing biosolids are increasing, with pressures on landfills, driver shortages, higher costs, and other regulatory challenges. Since the City first opened a biosolids management contract, the unit costs have gone up 47% from \$85 per wet ton to \$125 per wet ton; that contract is through the end of 2025. So, the next time the City rebids for this, prices could be as high as \$1 million per year for the wastewater treatment plant. If the prices reached \$250 per wet ton—which is reasonable to expect—it would become over 50% of the overall WWTP budget for biosolids management. To avoid that, there are some things the City can do.

Mr. Browder explained the context of biosolids in NH, much of which are placed in landfills or burned. However, there are opportunities to beneficially reuse that material (e.g., inorganic fertilizer), which could be a cost-effective alternative. There is limited landfill capacity,

especially for this wet waste, which can cause stability issues in landfills. As Mr. Costa mentioned, there has been a lot of regulatory action across the country on PFAS (forever chemicals), particularly in NH. So, there are strict drinking and groundwater standards. NH DES is obligated to have soil screening standards by November 2023 that will push for a biosolid limit in NH. Most of the biosolid management companies the consultants contacted said they wanted dry material. The dewatered material (70% water) produced currently by the WWTP could be improved with a sludge dryer, which would leave a product that is only 10% water and much easier to handle in a landfill or as fertilizer. Keene's current method of dewatering and transporting to a landfill is not sustainable.

The recommendations that came from this feasibility study are to improve this situation in phases, with the first phase being the purchase of a thermal sludge dryer, which would significantly reduce the tonnage. Further, anaerobic digestion could be used to generate renewable energy (electricity or heat) for the dryer, resulting in fewer solids to manage. There is also an opportunity for thermal PFAS treatment technology. The consultants' primary recommendation at this time is to move forward with the thermal dryer. He showed an animation of how this dryer would work. This dryer would cost approximately \$11.3 million and would help the City reach its energy and climate goals. He showed another graphic depicting the carbon associated with all the power used at the WWTP and hauling the dewatered sludge to the landfill. He also noted that putting biosolids and any organic matter in a landfill generates significant amounts of methane, which is a potent greenhouse gas. With a dried product, Keene could continue sending its biosolids to the landfill or reuse the product more easily.

In consideration of running a thermal dryer with renewable energy, there are 4 options: 1) the solar array next to the WWTP, 2) Froling Energy in Keene has biomass boilers to heat the product and provide energy for the thermal dryer, 3) biogas from anaerobic digesters, and 4) syngas from a pyrolysis unit. A thin film dryer would have the best life cycle cost; he demonstrated how this works. Reusing biosolids beneficially is a common practice nationally. Mr. Browder said there could be additional phases to bring in new technologies, like anaerobic digesters, which are a common technology in use for over 100 years. An anaerobic digester puts organic matter in large tanks to generate biogas, which is essentially a renewable energy gas that can power boilers to create electricity. Federal incentives could help with funding some of these phases, such as accepting food waste in digesters or solids from other treatment plants, and thus generating revenue. There is still more research needed on PFAS treatment, which is why the consultants recommend the dryer as the first phase.

Councilor Johnsen asked if any wastewater is reusable. Mr. Browder said some evaporates as vapor, but most would be condensed and recycled back into the WWTP.

Councilor Madison asked if the thin film dryer was essentially a glorified centrifuge for biosolids. Mr. Browder said it is similar. A centrifuge is widely used for the dewatering step at WWTPs. This involves a heated jacket that is a similar concept and results in a much drier product.

Councilor Jones asked how the throughput of the dryer would be measured. Gallons per hour? Mr. Browder said yes, it is typically measured in wet pounds evaporated per hour. It is related to the amount of water in the material, which fluctuates. The consultants looked at the sludge generated at the WWTP currently (the 2020 standard) and extrapolated out 20 years after purchasing the equipment. Wastewater flow at the WWTP will change with new development and additional flows. Councilor Jones asked if the digester tanks are an old technology and if the organisms in that process are just small bugs. Mr. Browder said a digester is just like the human stomach. There are microorganisms in the digester that break down solids into carbon dioxide and methane, which is captured as biogas and cleaned to use for electricity. Councilor Jones said it is essential to manage the pH and anything else in that system to keep the microorganisms alive. Mr. Browder agreed that it is important to watch the equipment closely, but digesters run successfully across the country. So, while it is older technology, it is proven to work.

Councilor Williams asked about how much methane could be generated using the biodigesters. Mr. Browder replied that digestion at Keene's WWTP could produce enough biogas to meet most of the needs of the thermal dryer. The amount of methane generated is what would be needed to dewater the product to 90% solid for municipal sludge. More digester gas production could better fulfill the obligation of running the thermal dryer full-time.

Councilor Ormerod asked if PFAS would still be in the solid waste going to the landfill after drying? Mr. Browder said some of the PFAS would come out during drying as condensate, some potentially as exhaust, and most would still remain in the solids. Councilor Ormerod asked about the \$11 million capital investment for the dryer. The Councilor wanted to know why not invest in the digester as the first phase, which is a lower capital expense of \$5 million. Mr. Browder thought that investing in the digester first would not leave the WWTP with a material that other companies want to manage. While digestion is a great technology, a dried product is needed for biosolids management in New England. Mr. O'Brien added that Keene's biosolid hauling contract is through 2024, and by that time, a digester would not have the same mass reduction as a dryer would. The hauling costs could go up when that contract is renegotiated.

Councilor Greenwald asked what the dryer would cost and what the payback to the City would be. Mr. Browder said the estimated preliminary capital cost would be \$11 million and the break-even point would be over the lifecycle of the dryer. It is less about return on investment and more so about the City not risking having a material and nowhere to go with it. There would be more management options and the WWTP could continue running. Mr. Browder also recalled that the City is currently paying \$600,000 annually for wet biosolid disposal.

Councilor Remy also asked about the payback period, which Mr. Browder said was listed in the report. Councilor Remy also asked if an anaerobic digester would process the dewatered sludge. Mr. Browder said that sludge would go through the digester, then through screw presses to make the somewhat dewatered product, which would then be put in the dryer.

Councilor Madison asked if the dryer is mainly to reduce volume and thus get past the current contract with Turnkey Landfill. He also asked if the anaerobic digester would eliminate the need for landfilling the biosolids. Mr. Browder said yes, there would be fewer solids going into the dryer and there would be resulting renewable energy. Biogas provides an opportunity to accept food waste, other organic residuals, and solids from other communities. Councilor Madison asked Mr. Costa how long the current contract is with Turnkey. The contract is through 2025 with an option for 1-year renewals.

Councilor Giacomo asked if the City's current dewatering technology is a filter press that removes water. Mr. Costa said in 2016, the WWTP upgraded from belt filter presses to screw presses, which improved the solid output. Councilor Giacomo asked if the limitation on the amount of water that can be removed with the WWTP's current technology is the mechanical and technological restriction versus the cost. Mr. Costa said that was correct. While there have been improvements, there are limits to that technology.

Councilor Roberts cited challenges in New England with toxic materials leaching into the ground. Right now, the landfill contract is through 2025, but there is no guarantee that a company will take a new contract because of the risk. The City could be in 2025 with nowhere to put this waste material. Mr. Costa said that was why this study was needed; to know the future options with the understanding that high water content biosolids are not welcome at landfills. Mr. O'Brien thought this was a very accurate assessment of potential risks based on trends and potential crises in NH and New England.

The presentation concluded. Councilor Greenwald asked the next steps. The City Manager said that this potential purchase would be a part of the Capital Improvement Program conversation when that process begins in January 2024.

NOMINATIONS – HERITAGE COMMISSION

Mayor Hansel nominated the following individuals to serve on the Heritage Commission: Julie Emineth as a regular member with a term to expire December 31, 2026, Susan DeGidio to change from a regular to an alternate member with a term to expire December 31, 2026, and Rose Carey to change from a regular to an alternate member with a term to expire December 31, 2026. Mayor Hansel tabled the nominations until the next regular meeting.

COMMUNICATION – ATTORNEY MICHAEL BENTLEY – MONADNOCK T HANGAR CORPORATION – REQUEST TO RENEW EXISTING LEASE

A communication was received from Attorney Michael Bentley, on behalf of all unit owners of the Monadnock T Hangar Corporation. Mr. Bentley is requesting that the City of Keene grant Monadnock T Hangar Corporation an option to renew their existing lease for an additional 20-year term at the expiration of the current lease. They request terms consistent with the current lease or terms that may be in effect in 5 years for land at the Airport that is being leased to other

tenants. By granting the option to renew the lease agreement for an additional 20 years, any concern over how long a new unit owner can stay and any maintenance issues would be resolved. They are also interested in discussing the possibility that the new lease could also contain an option to extend the lease for a further 20-year term, consistent with the initial July 22, 1988 Lease Agreement. Mayor Hansel referred the communication to the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

First, the City Manager discussed body-worn cameras. The Police Department went through installation and training during the week of July 10 and went live with implementation on Friday, July 14. So far, there had been no major issues and everything was going well. The cameras had already proven useful in resolving what would have been citizen complaints in a couple of instances; the supervisor was able to easily review the video and see that what was being alleged simply did not happen. In addition to being activated manually, cameras include several safety features that automatically activate cameras, including: if an officer draws their handgun from its holster, begins to run, engages in jostled movement (i.e., during a fight), activates lights and/or sirens in the car, or lies flat for 10 seconds—this feature, known as Officer Down, notifies all cars in the district that an officer is in need of immediate assistance.

Next, the City Manager provided an update on the Martell Court pump station emergency repair. The wastewater treatment plant treats 6 million gallons of wastewater per day and operates 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. All wastewater from Keene and the Town of Marlborough is pumped to the treatment facility via the Martell Court pump station. There is no bypass of this pumping system that allows the station to be taken offline for repairs. On July 10, the station experienced a seal failure on a gate valve on the discharge side of the pumps. Raw sewage began to fill the pump room. Fortunately, this room is equipped with sump pumps that Staff quickly brought in. The City Manager declared this event as an emergency and notified the Council that it would be necessary to make emergency repairs outside of the normal process. With the assistance of a contractor, Staff were able to make some temporary repairs. To make a more permanent repair, the station will need to be offline, and a bypass pumping system will need to be in place prior to shutting down the flow. This will be done in 2 phases. Phase 1 will be a temporary bypass that will allow Staff to make necessary repairs. Phase 2 will be a permanent bypass pumping system that will remain in place and will allow staff to isolate the station for repairs. Phase 2 will be incorporated into the upcoming Capital Improvement Plan.

The City Manager shared that on August 23, she discussed with the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee an opportunity to partner with Keene State College (KSC) to invest in the infrastructure/building at the Keene Ice facility to support a KSC varsity program. This program would be built around the ice team that is currently not being used and no existing programs will be displaced.

Next, the City Manager explained that at the last legislative session, Senator Donovan Fenton put forward SB 110 on Keene's behalf. This bill was recently signed into law and was the first substantial change in welfare legislation in approximately 20 years. Staff met with Senator Fenton last week and began discussing potential legislation for the upcoming session. They brainstormed a few ideas but will be working on drafting something to pass on to him in the upcoming weeks. The City Manager will keep the City Council apprised. Keene became one of the first municipalities in the state to use the state's homeless management information system. We have now requested access to the state's coordinated entry system—a module in this program that will allow us to enter homeless individuals who have been homeless for at least 14 days. These individuals are prioritized for rehousing and joint case conferencing with agencies in our region. The City Manager attended the first session on establishing joint case conferencing for our region a couple of weeks ago.

The City Manager also recently executed a memorandum of understanding with the state to install multi-use trail signs identifying the Ashuelot Rail Trail that crosses over NH Rt-101 on the South Bridge owned by the State, and the Cheshire Trail that crosses Rt-9/10/12 on the City-owned North Bridge. These signs will be within the state right-of-way. This was originally a request brought forward by Chuck Redfern.

Next, the City Manager provided an update on the 21 in 21 Program. Six properties representing 11 homes have or will soon receive weatherization measures as well as HUD housing quality housing standards upgrades or repairs. Staff had a meeting a couple of weeks ago regarding a P.R. effort around this progress to date. The City Council will be seeing some social media in the upcoming months highlighting specific projects and all of our partners. Southwestern Community Services has been vital to success to date.

The City Manager shared that in response to some Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee conversations on small cell wireless facilities, the City purchased an electromagnetic (EMF) reader that residents can loan from the Library. The City Manager split the cost with the Library. Councilor Jones expressed gratitude for the City Manager responding to this request.

Lastly, the City Manager discussed the CIP and Council goals. The capital planning process has begun. The document will go to the Council in January. Since this document plans out the next 7 years of capital expenses, it is important that investments are tied with to Master Plan and more specifically the Council goals. As the Mayor stated, there will be 2 goals workshops at the Library. Staff are planning to organize in the same informal format used in the past, utilizing tables for topic areas and providing updates on progress. If there is a need to change the format, please let the City Manager know.

REPORT – AMBULANCE BACK UP AGREEMENT – FIRE DEPARTMENT – RESCUE INC.

A motion by Councilor Powers to suspend Section 26 of the Rules of Order to act upon the next three items, which were time-sensitive because of the programming and financing, was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

A memorandum read from the Fire Chief, Donald Farquhar, recommending the following motion. A motion by Councilor Powers to recommend the City Manager be authorized to negotiate and execute an agreement with Rescue Inc. for a period of 90 days and an amount not to exceed \$45,000 for EMS emergency backup services was duly seconded by Councilor Remy.

The Fire Chief, Don Farquhar, said that Rescue Inc. was the City's partner after Diluzio closed. An agreement is needed for important backup services. It is not just about call volume, but also having enough firefighters on site in an emergency. After exploring many options, Staff believes that the best option is to keep Rescue Inc., which is a non-profit company that is requesting 90 days of employee salary, and to keep an ambulance in Keene (has been at the Central Station since August 1). This has vastly improved staffing and resources. The fee structure is a maximum of \$15,000 per month for 90 days. That calculation was based on how many calls they were expected to take; how much money the ambulance would make weighed against the fixed costs, with a margin for safety. Staff were comfortable with the fee structure. This will provide incredibly important safety and redundancy in these 90 days as we continue to look at all the other options and see what else is going on in the County. The goal is a larger, more global system that will be supported Countywide by individual agencies helping each other out.

The City Manager said this agreement is also important because Keene has 1,000 calls annually from skilled nursing facilities and the City does not have the capacity to fulfill those. There is a regional conversation about ambulance services and establishing a County ambulance service would help partner communities. There needs to be a financial model for service calls that will sustain in the future. The City is subsidizing, and every call responded to costs money, which is why the City needs to pay Rescue Inc. for this partnership. A contract cannot move forward with the County until they decide on their number of contracts. Also, Rescue Inc. is dependable. The City Manager continues asking for meetings with the County about how many towns they want to serve, their capacity, and their estimated future costs.

Mayor Hansel said that, bluntly, what the County had done—justified or not—caused a disruption in ambulance service that is now costing Keene taxpayers. A backup ambulance service is essential.

Councilor Roberts spoke about how he felt what the County was doing was unethical and would cost people's lives because of power controls over money. He said this was not about money but about the welfare of Keene and Cheshire County residents.

Councilor Greenwald wanted to hear from the County directly and he did not think this was the forum for bashing the County.

Councilor Madison remarked—based on a recent experience with emergency services—that what Keene Fire and Rescue Inc. can do together is amazing and often saves lives. He agreed with Councilor Roberts that how the County had conducted itself, negotiated with the City, and used American Rescue Program funds was disappointing.

Councilor Jones recalled that this was only about a 90-day contract and not as long-term as some Councilors were discussing. He thought the long-term discussion was best left to the Council Committee. The City Manager said this was a 90-day contract and during that time, she hopes to have continued conversations with the County to have a plan for when this period ends and what the future of ambulance service will look like. She had great conversations with County Manager, Chris Coates, and they agreed that the City has reasonable questions to pursue.

Councilor Workman said that as someone who coordinates ambulance transportation and wheelchair transportation, she felt Rescue Inc. had been very reliable. She said they demonstrated that they can meet the City’s current needs and the capacity of calls. She thought the City should be grateful for Rescue Inc.

A motion to amend the motion to say “*execute a sole source agreement*” was duly seconded by Councilor Remy and the motion carried unanimously.

Councilor Ormerod asked if it is more worthwhile for Rescue Inc. to have a sole source agreement. The City Manager said that the language in the motion is to waive the process the City must go through for Requests for Proposals.

The amended motion carried unanimously.

REPORT – CONTRACT AWARD – FIRE DEPARTMENT – SPEC RESCUE INTERNATIONAL

A memorandum read from the Fire Chief, Don Farquhar, recommended the following motion. A motion by Councilor Powers to recommend that the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with SpecRescue International to provide specialty rope rescue training was duly seconded by Councilor Remy.

The Fire Chief said this was for the company that would hopefully be hired to lead rope technician training. This is for the instructional portion of that. This was put to bid and Spec Rescue International was the sole bidder. He said they are an excellent company that Keene has worked with in the past. These funds are from a federal grant that will allow the City to hire Spec Rescue International as a contractor.

The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

REPORT – CONTRACT AWARD – FIRE DEPARTMENT – SITEMED

A memorandum read from the Fire Chief, Don Farquhar, recommending the following motion. A motion by Councilor Powers to authorize the City Manager to execute a contract with SiteMed to provide NFPA 1582 occupational medical physicals was duly seconded by Councilor Remy.

The Fire Chief said this was about firefighters' essential annual physicals. Every fire attended has an impact on health. Very few organizations will come to Keene and do this training for a reasonable fee and this company responded to the Request for Proposals; they are working with Cheshire Medical Center on some advanced health screenings, like for early cancer. Working with this contractor had brought the costs down.

Councilor Remy asked about the cost. The City Manager said it was captured as a budget line increase. She would follow-up and send the total cost to the City Council.

The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

REPORT – ACCEPTANCE OF DONATION – FINANCE DIRECTOR

A memorandum read from the Finance Director, Merri Howe, recommending that the City Council accept the donations in the amount of \$5,075 listed below and the City Manager be authorized to use each donation in the manner specified by the donor.

- The New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) – Keene/Brattleboro chapter donated the bike park in 2020 and it has been a great addition to the recreational offerings within the City. The vision was greater than just the park. It was to introduce children to how to ride in the park and provide an opportunity to those children who might not have a bike to ride. With the assistance of the Keene Kiwanis Foundation, this vision has become a reality. The \$5,000 donation from the Keene Kiwanis Foundation will purchase 10 bicycles and helmets for children to use when registered through the Parks and Recreation Department programming. Through the memorandum of understanding with NEMBA-KB, the City will work collaboratively to provide programs at the bike park and they (NEMBA-KB) will provide instructors and will also train City staff so more opportunities can be programmed.
- The Fire Department received a donation in the amount of \$75.00 from Lesley Peterson in appreciation for their assistance in a recent visit to the City of Keene.

A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

08/17/2023

This being Councilor Johnsen's last meeting, Mayor Hansel and the Council honored her diligence, hard work, and commitment, expressing their appreciation for her service. Everyone agreed that she had been an asset to the City and City Council, always striving to honor and fight for her constituents. Mayor Hansel presented Councilor Johnsen with a key to the City and Councilor Bosley presented her with a gift on behalf of the Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee. Councilor Johnsen said it had been her pleasure serving the City of Keene.

A motion by Councilor Powers to suspend Section 26 of the Rules of Order to act upon the resignation was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley and the motion carried unanimously. A motion by Councilor Powers to accept Councilor Johnsen's resignation with regret and tremendous appreciation for her service was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

Because the resignation is within 120 days of the election, the seat will remain vacant until the start of the new term of office starting January 1, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

There being no further business, Mayor Hansel adjourned the meeting for collective bargaining at 9:02 PM.



A true record, attest:

Deputy City Clerk

KEENE POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION, AFT-NH, AFT LOCAL #6246 AND KEENE POLICE SUPERVISORS, TEAMSTERS LOCAL 603 - TWO MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING – MODIFYING EXECUTED COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS

Voted unanimously that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute a Memorandum of Understanding modifying the executed collective bargaining agreement with Keene Police Officers Association, AFT-NH, AFT Local #6246 to be effective October 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding modifying the executed collective bargaining agreement with the Keene Police Supervisors, Teamsters Local 603 to be effective October 1, 2023 through June 30, 2026.



A true record, attest:

Deputy City Clerk

08/17/2023

At 9:30 p.m., there was a motion made by Councilor Powers, seconded by Councilor Bosley, to enter a non-public session in accordance with the exemption provided under RSA 91-A:3, II (c). A roll call vote was taken, which was unanimous.

At 9:43 p.m., there was a motion made by Councilor Powers, seconded by Councilor Bosley, to keep the minutes of non-public session non-public A roll call vote was taken, which was unanimous.

A true record, attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William S. Dow".

Deputy City Clerk