

A regular meeting of the Keene City Council was held on Thursday, February 15, 2024. The Honorable Mayor Jay V. Kahn called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Roll called: Kate M. Bosley, Laura E. Tobin, Michael J. Remy, Randy L. Filiault, Robert C. Williams, Edward J. Haas, Philip M. Jones (arrived at 7:26 PM), Andrew M. Madison, Kris E. Roberts, Raleigh C. Ormerod, Bryan J. Lake, Catherine I. Workman, Bettina A. Chadbourne, Thomas F. Powers, & Mitchell H. Greenwald were present. Councilor Tobin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING

A motion by Councilor Greenwald to adopt the February 1, 2024, minutes as presented was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Kahn made several announcements, which included 2nd Council workshop on the Rules of Order was scheduled for Tuesday, February 20 at 6:00 PM. The February 22 Finance, Organization, & Personnel Committee meeting was canceled. The public hearing on the Capital Improvement Program was scheduled for March 7 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chamber. Special meetings of the Municipal Services, Facilities, & Infrastructure Committee meetings on the downtown infrastructure project were scheduled for March, 13, April 10, and May 8 all starting at 5:30 PM with 7:00 PM starts of the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee; the Legislative Delegation meeting was scheduled for March 26 at 6:30 PM in Heberton Hall, a Council workshop was scheduled about the downtown project on June 11 at 6:00 PM in the Council Chamber that will follow the special MSFI hearings and public participation sessions. In addition, the Mayor scheduled the Council's summer vacation schedule with the August 15 and September 5 City Council meetings canceled as well as the Standing Committees on August 7–8, 21–22, and 28–29. The Standing Committees will resume their schedule on September 11–12 and the City Council will resume meetings on September 19.

RETIREMENT RESOLUTION – KÜRT BLOMQUIST

Mayor Kahn welcomed the former Public Works Director, Kürt Blomquist, to be honored upon his retirement. The Mayor read a Resolution honoring Mr. Blomquist's 30 years of service to the City, and the City Council and City Staff applauded.

Mr. Blomquist said that when he came to Keene in 1993, he only planned to stay for five years before moving on to another career. He wound up staying for 30 years, which went by very quickly. He shared reasons he stayed, including that Keene's community and City Council had always been committed to a vision. During his tenure, he helped to open 560 acres for development, build a parking garage, build roundabouts before they were "cool," reconstruct neighborhoods, and work with citizens on various issues, from potholes to drainage. As a leader, he said he could not have done any of that without the support from senior leaders—the Council, City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk—as well as all the various Department heads, and Public Works Staff. The Council, as senior leaders, help to fulfill the vision for the City by

providing the resources to help the community. He has never worried that someone would not have his back, which is one of the reasons he stayed. Mr. Blomquist said that words matter, and that the Council—as senior leaders—should keep that in mind when setting the City’s vision that City Staff will implement. Staff are experts in their areas and come to work every day because of the shared vision. He thanked everyone for supporting him during these 30 years.

The City Manager announced that Mr. Blomquist was named the Engineer of the Year by the NH Joint Engineering Societies. This prestigious award was based on Mr. Blomquist’s impressive contributions to the engineering and public works profession, dedication to public welfare, and service to the community through numerous volunteer activities. The Council congratulated Mr. Blomquist.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION – MELINDA ASBURY, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER AT MFS AND DIRECTOR OF PSYCHIATRY AT CMC

In keeping with this effort to recognize individuals making incredible contributions to Keene, the region, and beyond, Mayor Kahn welcomed Dr. Melinda Asbury to be honored. The Mayor said that Monadnock Family Services’ (MFS) new facility is outstanding, which will allow MFS to continue delivering outstanding mental health and counselling services to the community. He credited the MFS staff for reimagining mental healthcare delivery in Keene, which those outside the region have looked upon with envy. The expansion will allow MFS to expand services offered such as telecommunications counselling, child psychiatry, and medically assisted treatment. This reinvention of mental healthcare for the Monadnock Region has attracted new professional talent to Keene as well.

Mayor Kahn introduced and welcomed Dr. Asbury to Keene. Since August 15, 2023, Dr. Asbury had served as the first Chief Medical Officer of MFS, while simultaneously serving as Cheshire Medical Center’s Chair of Psychiatry. Dr. Asbury served five years in the U.S. Navy during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Subsequently, she earned her M.D. from Marshall University School of Medicine in Huntington, WV, and a Ph.D. in neurotoxicology and neuropharmacology from the University of Kentucky and Marshall University. Dr. Asbury thanked Mayor Kahn and the City Council for this recognition and prestigious honor. She said that this was sincerely one of the most treasured honors she had received in her personal or professional career, and the reason is the people, community, and culture of Keene.

NOMINATIONS – AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING COMMITTEE, ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE, HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

Mayor Kahn nominated the following individuals to serve on City Boards and Committees: To the Airport Development and Marketing Committee, Councilor Greenwald as a regular member, with a term to expire December 31, 2025, and Colin (Bob) Lyle as a regular member, with a term to expire December 31, 2026. To the Energy and Climate Committee, Paul Roth as a regular member, with a term to expire December 31, 2026; Kenneth Swymer, Jr. as a regular member, with a term to expire December 31, 2026, and Jake Pipp as an alternate member, with a term to expire December 31, 2026. To the Human Rights Committee, Aja Davis as a regular member, with a term to expire December 31, 2024, and Debra Bowie as an alternate member, with a term

to expire December 31, 2026. The Clerk noted that Richard Baker withdrew his candidacy from the Congregate Living and Social Services Licensing Board. Mayor Kahn tabled the nominations until the next regular meeting of the City Council.

COMMUNICATION – PETITION – EAST-SIDE RESIDENTS – TRAFFIC CALMING ON EAST-SIDE KEENE STREETS

A communication was received from several residents of Keene’s eastside, with a signed petition expressing their great concern about vehicle speed on several Keene streets. They are requesting that quantitative data be collected and that the City then look for traffic-calming features to be installed. Mayor Kahn referred the communication to the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee.

COMMUNICATION – LUCA PARIS/GREATER MONADNOCK COLLABORATIVE – REQUEST TO USE PARKING SPACES – CLASSIC CARS – MAY 5, 2024

A communication was received from Luca Paris, requesting permission to host an event “Cruisin’ Main Street” on May 5, 2024, from 8:00 AM to 1:30 PM. Classic cars will be on display in parking spaces along Main Street and Central Square. Mayor Kahn referred the communication to the Municipal Services, Facilities, and Infrastructure Committee.

COMMUNICATION – COUNCILOR WILLIAMS – CONSIDERATION FOR ORDINANCE AMENDMENT – REQUIRING DOGS WITH A RECORD OF VICIOUS DOG OFFENSES TO BE MUZZLED WHEN IN PUBLIC

A communication was received from Councilor Bobby Williams, requesting that the City Council consider an ordinance amendment that would require dogs with a record of attacking other dogs to wear a muzzle when in public. He referenced an incident that occurred on North Street, where a resident and her dog were attacked. Mayor Kahn referred the communication to the Planning, Licenses and Development Committee.

PLD REPORT – RELATING TO AMENDMENTS TO THE PERMITTED USES IN THE DOWNTOWN CORE, DOWNTOWN GROWTH, AND COMMERCE DISTRICTS – ORDINANCE O-2023-16- A; AND COMMUNICATIONS IN SUPPORT OF O-2023-16-A FROM BRIDGET HANSEL, JOSLIN KIMBALL FRANK, CAMILLE HELMINSKI, AND JUDY & JIM PUTNAM

A Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee report read, unanimously recommending accepting communications in support of Ordinance O-2023-16-A from Bridget Hansel, Joslin Kimball Frank, Camille Helminski, and Judy & Jim Putnam as informational. Mayor Kahn filed the communications as informational.

A Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee report read, unanimously recommending referring Ordinance O-2023-16-A back to the Joint Planning Board-Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee for further consideration. A motion by Councilor Bosley to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Jones. The motion carried with 14 Councilors present and voting in favor. Councilor Greenwald abstained.

FOP REPORT – 2024 ENERGY EXPO EVENT SPONSORSHIP – ENERGY AND CLIMATE COMMITTEE

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to work with the Energy and Climate Committee with respect to the potential of any facility fees and to authorize access to city facilities and support of the 2024 Energy Expo event to be scheduled in the fall of 2024. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. The motion passed unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – ACCEPT FEDERAL FUNDING FOR AIRPORT CAPITAL PROJECT

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept, execute and expend a grant for up to the amount of \$2,767,767 from the Federal Aviation Administration Airport Improvement Program. A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

FOP REPORT – MARLBORO STREET CORRIDOR PROJECT – DESIGN CHANGE ORDER #3

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, recommending that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to negotiate and execute an engineering services Change Order with DuBois & King for additional services required for the design of the Marlboro Street Corridor Project for an amount not to exceed \$20,000. Funding to come from the Marlboro Street Corridor Project (75J0018B). A motion by Councilor Powers to carry out the intent of the Committee report was duly seconded by Councilor Remy. The motion carried unanimously with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

The City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon, reported that a new Animal Control Officer was hired: Michelle Grimes. She comes to us with a wealth of knowledge and experience with animals. She owns and operates a local canine training business where she specializes in behavior modification. She has extensive experience as a licensed veterinary technician, with a focus in emergency critical care and field service response and rescue.

Next, the City Manager recalled that at the last meeting, she mentioned the installation of a Nalaxone at City Hall. The Mayor requested some training on the use of Narcan. So, the Fire Chief volunteered to provide that training at 6:45 PM, before the next Council meeting.

The City Manager reported on the new Deputy City Manager press release. This was a formal public announcement that the retirement and pending retirement of individuals filling the three

current Assistant City Manager roles presented an opportunity to reorganize, adjust job duties, and consolidate into two Deputy City Manager positions. The City Manager went through a process to select these individuals with the help of two town managers from surrounding communities. She announced that effective April 1, 2024, Andy Bohannon (current Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Director) and Rebecca Landry (current Marketing & Communications Director and Assistant City Manager) will assume their new roles as Deputy City Managers. The City Manager offered her congratulations and excitement to work with both in their new roles.

Rebecca Landry has served the City in a variety of roles over the past 25 years, including holding the title of Assistant City Manager. Ms. Landry has served the City as both the IT Director and currently as the Communications and Marketing Director. She has successfully led many difficult projects, took on additional responsibilities in the Manager's absence, and built relationships in the community, all of which will be very helpful in her new role. As Deputy City Manager, Ms. Landry will maintain her responsibilities as the primary Information Officer for the City and will be responsible for overseeing parking, economic development, and special project assignments.

Andy Bohannon has served the City for the past 20 years as Recreation Programmer and currently as Parks, Recreation, and Facilities Director. Mr. Bohannon grew up in Keene and has been passionate about serving the community for the past two decades as he rose through the ranks. In his department head role, he has overseen several large community impact projects, been engaged in many committees, and built a strong service culture across his divisions. As Deputy City Manager, Mr. Bohannon will be responsible for working with department heads across the organization to provide mentorship, strengthen teams, and prepare for the continued wave of retirements across our organization. In addition, Mr. Bohannon will maintain oversight of City facilities.

In the near future, the Parks and Recreation Director's job description would be revised, removing the facilities oversight from this role. This will necessitate the need to regrade the position on the City's salary scale before beginning our recruitment process.

REPORT – ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS – FINANCE DIRECTOR

A memorandum read from the Finance Director/Treasurer, Merri Howe, recommending that the City Council accept donations in the amount of \$15,632.65 and the City Manager be authorized to use each donation in the manner specified by the donor. A motion by Councilor Powers to accept \$15,000 towards the construction of a dog park \$632.65 that had been raised at a recent event hosted by the Human Rights Committee from book sales. The funds will be donated by the Human Rights Committee to the Homeboy Industries. Homeboy Industries became the largest gang intervention, rehabilitation, and re-entry program in the world.

REPORTS – MORE TIME – RELATING TO AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY OF KEENE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, DEFINITION OF CHARITABLE GAMING FACILITY – ORDINANCE O-2023-17-A; AND KEENE PRIDE – REQUEST FOR COMMUNITY FUNDED EVENT STATUS – 2024 PRIDE FESTIVAL

A Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee report read, unanimously recommending placing Ordinance O-2023-17-A on more time. Mayor Kahn granted more time.

A Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee report read, unanimously recommending placing the request from Keene Pride for community event funding for their 2025 Pride event on more time to be further discussed during fiscal year 2025 budget deliberations. Mayor Kahn granted more time.

ORDINANCE FOR FIRST READING – RELATING TO AMENDMENTS TO THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE TO CREATE A COTTAGE COURT OVERLAY DISTRICT – ORDINANCE O-2024-01

A memorandum was received from the Community Development Director, Jesse Rounds, recommending that the Mayor refer the proposed Ordinance O-2024-01 to the Joint Committee of the Planning Board and Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee for a Public Workshop. Mayor Kahn referred Ordinance O-2024-01 to the Joint Committee of the Planning Board and Planning, Licenses, and Development Committee.

RESOLUTION – RELATING TO THE APPROPRIATION AND USE OF FUND BALANCE FOR THE FY2024 FINANCE DEPARTMENT BUDGET SHORTFALL – RESOLUTION R-2024-05

A memorandum read from Natalie Darcy, Human Services Manager, recommending that Resolution R-2024-05—relating to an appropriation of funds and use of unassigned fund balance for the FY 2024 Finance Department Human Services Division operating budget—be referred to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee. Mayor Kahn referred Resolution R-2024-05 to the Finance, Organization, and Personnel Committee.

The City Manager reported that this Resolution was related to additional funds to be allocated for Human Services, under the oversight of the Finance Department’s budget. In the past, when we have experienced overages in Human Services, the City was able to absorb them in other areas of the budget due to vacancies or other changes during the year, but they had never been this substantial. Human Services was experiencing a great need for shelter services, whether at a hotel or paying rent to prevent an eviction. It is extremely difficult. When the City Manager asked if these expenses are expected stay the same over the next several months, Ms. Darcy—the Welfare Director—said yes, because these expenses are primarily being driven by families and individuals that Keene is housing right now in various hotels. The only way to move them out of those hotels is to find them permanent housing, which is a challenge for several reasons. So, Staff was asking for \$900,000 to be appropriated to the Human Services budget via Resolution R-2024-05. The City Manager added that Staff are constantly brainstorming creative ways to provide housing and ways to meet the needs of people, but nothing is going to dramatically reduce this expense soon. However, Senate Bill 406 was submitted, and Senator Fenton was involved. This Bill is an opportunity to bring additional funds to communities like Keene that are housing greater than their share of homeless people on behalf of the State of New Hampshire. Unfortunately, the Bill had some resistance. The City Manager wanted to comment at this

02/15/2024

meeting so the public is aware of the challenges Keene is facing, and to help build momentum for SB 406.

Mayor Kahn thanked the City Manager and said this was timely, as he talked about this on a conference call with 13 other NH cities' mayors. They are collecting data about budgeted and actual expenses, so that the costs are more transparent to the Legislature.

PRESENTATION OF GIFT TO TOM MULLINS, CITY ATTORNEY

On behalf of the City Council, Mayor Kahn expressed the City's great appreciation for the City Attorney, Tom Mullins', 15 years of service to the City of Keene. His knowledge of the law, proactivity interpreting judicial decisions, and ability to help the Council understand court decisions was excellent. While the City Attorney will still be with the City part-time until the end of 2024, it was the Mayor's and Council's pleasure to offer Mr. Mullins a gift upon his retirement.

Mr. Mullins was grateful for this surprise. He looked forward to helping in the transition for his replacement. It had been a wonderful 15 years, and he said he could not have done it without the trust and support of the Charter Officers, Department heads, other Staff, and the City Council.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

At 8:00 PM a motion by Councilor Greenwald to enter a non-public session to discuss a land matter under RSA 91-A:3, II (d) was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor. Attorney Thomas Quarles and J.B. Mack from the Southwest Regional Planning Commission were invited to attend. A brief recess was called, and the Council entered non-public session at 8:02 PM. Discussion was limited to the subject matter.

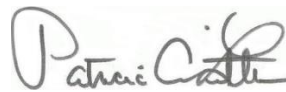
The regular meeting resumed at 9:18 PM.

A motion by Councilor Greenwald to keep the minutes of the non-public session non-public until the conclusion of the review period required to reach a final decision was duly seconded by Councilor Bosley. The motion carried unanimously on a roll call vote with 15 Councilors present and voting in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Kahn adjourned the meeting at 9:19 PM.

A true record, attest:



City Clerk