



FINANCE, ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
Council Chambers, Keene City Hall
May 14, 2026
5:30 PM

A. AGENDA ITEMS

1. Councilor Jones - Draft Resolution for Consideration Addressing the Burden on Local Property Taxpayers
2. NH Humanities Council Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) Grant - Library Director
3. Acceptance of 2026 AARP Community Challenge Capacity-Building Microgrant - City Planner
4. Technical Services Agreement - Southwest Region Planning Commission - Deputy City Manager
5. Recreational Trails Program Grant - Keene State College Pedestrian Bridge - Deputy City Manager
6. Acceptance of HealthTrust Wellness Grant - Human Resources Director
7. 2025 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Grant Award - Fire Chief
8. Relating to Delinquent Accounts
Ordinance O-2026-05
9. Proposed Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget Review

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B. MORE TIME ITEMS

NON PUBLIC SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

April 22, 2026

FROM: Councilor Philip M. Jones 

TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council

SUBJECT: Adoption of a Resolution Addressing Burden on Local Property Taxpayers

Recommendation:

That the Keene City Council adopt the attached resolution requesting termination of state of NH policies that burden local property taxpayers. And further, if adopted, that hard copies of the resolution be transmitted to the Governor and local state legislators, and digital copies be transmitted to all members of the New Hampshire State Senate, House of Representatives, and Executive Council.

BACKGROUND:

During the 2026 town meeting cycle, several New Hampshire municipalities included petitioned warrant articles asking voters to urge the state legislature to stop shifting costs onto local taxpayers. While each municipality used slightly different wording, the message remained consistent: opposition to “downshifting” and concern about the growing burden on local property taxpayers. Together, these locally submitted articles signal a growing, organized concern about state decisions that are pushing more of the cost of basic services onto cities and towns.

Given the widespread and consistent message from municipalities across the state, I am asking for consideration of a similar resolution to ensure the City’s position is clearly communicated to the legislature. A draft has been provided for your consideration.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING TERMINATION OF STATE OF NH POLICIES AND DOWNSHIFTS THAT BURDEN LOCAL PROPERTY TAXPAYERS

WHEREAS, Recent New Hampshire state budgets have reduced or eliminated key revenue sources, forcing the City of Keene along with other municipalities, school districts, and counties to raise property taxes to maintain education, healthcare, county nursing homes, public safety, and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the erosion and unpredictability of state grant funding to municipalities has further shifted financial responsibility to local governments, increasing reliance on property taxes to sustain essential programs and services; and

WHEREAS, these downshifts burden working families, strain local budgets, limit flexibility, and undermine long-term community prosperity; and

WHEREAS, a state budget that prevents cost-shifting and restores municipal revenue-sharing eases the tax burden on local property taxpayers and strengthens communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KEENE AS FOLLOWS: We the governing body of the City of Keene call upon Governor Kelly Ayotte, the State of New Hampshire Executive Council, and the New Hampshire State Senate and House of Representatives to protect local taxpayers by ensuring adequate state revenues for essential services, and by avoiding policies that downshift costs onto local property taxpayers.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #A.2.

Meeting Date: May 14, 2026
To: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee
From: Martine Fiske, Library Director
Through: Kari Chamberlain, Finance Director/Treasurer
Elizabeth Ferland, City Manager
Subject: **NH Humanities Council Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) Grant - Library Director**

Recommendation:

Move that the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and expend a grant of up to \$3,800 in support of two programs that facilitate community building.

Attachments:

None

Background:

New Hampshire Humanities and the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority have awarded Keene Public Library a grant of up \$3,800 in federal pass-through funds to host two community building events.

The first event would be a Community Conversation that would occur no later than September 2026. The facilitated event will create conversation and dialog on the changing nature of the community, record the big issues and ideas of community members, and encourage continuing communal action. The goal is for people to share their perspectives, learn about their neighbors and think about new ways to strengthen their ties in the community. New Hampshire Humanities (NHH) will provide all programmatic and administrative support for the Community Conversation, including a facilitator and an artist who will capture a visual and textual record of the event. Up to \$800 will be provided to reimburse the Library for associated costs, such as food, childcare, advertising, and supplies.

The results of the Community Conversation will inform the primary topics of a follow-up Community Response Project that would take place between August and October 2026. Up to \$3,000 is available for all related costs of the second event.

The Library is grateful to the Hannah Grimes Center for Entrepreneurship, Human Rights Committee, Monadnock Diversity Equity and Inclusion Board, YMCA and Monadnock Interfaith Project for their commitment to assist the Library. They will assist in design, advertising, and the implementation of both events. More organizations will be asked to join the project when a date has been set for the Community Conversation.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

Meeting Date: May 14, 2026

To: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee

From: Megan Fortson, Planner

Through: Paul Andrus, Community Development Director
Elizabeth Ferland, City Manager

Subject: **Acceptance of 2026 AARP Community Challenge Capacity-Building Microgrant - City Planner**

Recommendation:

That the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and expend the 2026 AARP Community Challenge Capacity-Building Microgrant in the amount of \$2,500.

Attachments:

None

Background:

The 2026 AARP Community Challenge offers \$2,500 Capacity-Building Microgrants for quick-action projects improving community livability, walkability, and disaster preparedness for people aged 50+. These grants include additional resources such as coaching and webinars to help build capacity of awardees to continue the work into the future.

The Community Development Department applied for this micro-grant to perform a series of bike and walk audits to support the update to the City's Bicycle Pedestrian Plan, which was last updated in 1999. Specifically, this grant will cover the cost of the below materials and activities. The grant activities will take place from late June through September.

- Clipboards
- Portable chairs to be used during audits
- Outreach & marketing (boosted social media posts, tabling materials, etc.)
- Printed materials (audit checklists, name tags, final reports, etc.)
- Water & snacks for audit events
- Wifi HotSpot for tablets to be used during audits
- Handheld speed radar device
- Portable folding wheelchair to check for accessibility barriers
- Sunscreen for volunteers
- Insect repellent for volunteers

2026-229

- Yard signs advertising events
- Room fees for planning meetings
- Reflective safety vests for volunteers



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #A.4.

Meeting Date: May 14, 2026
To: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee
From: Andrew Bohannon, Deputy City Manager
Through: Elizabeth Ferland, City Manager
Subject: **Technical Services Agreement - Southwest Region Planning Commission - Deputy City Manager**

Recommendation:

Move that the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to execute a Technical Assistance Agreement with Southwest Regional Planning Commission for the Ashuelot Greenspace Project.

Attachments:

None

Background:

Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC) was awarded Northern Border Regional Commission Timber for Transit (TFT) funding for local projects that improve transit or support adjacent transit-related infrastructure. The Ashuelot Greenspace project qualifies under this program because it enhances adjacent transit facilities connected to the Jonathan Daniels Trail and the Ashuelot River.

The City has pledged a 20% match for this project, supported through a \$35,000 donation for the conceptual design of a natural playground. Using this match, SWRPC will provide an 80% funding contribution valued at up to \$105,000 for engineering design services (pre-development activities only) for the entire park concept. The City had originally allocated \$200,000 in FY27 for design work, as outlined on page 39 of the FY27–33 CIP budget book.

Potential elements of the project may incorporate timber-based materials and could include a natural materials play structure, bathroom facility, outdoor classroom, park furniture, kiosks or signage, and boat launch facilities.

Executing this Agreement will allow City staff to work with community partners including SWRPC, Antioch University, and the Monadnock Conservancy, to develop design and construction-ready documents to the extent funding allows. These documents will support future grant applications. Design concepts will be reviewed through the Ashuelot River Park Advisory Board and the MSFI Committee.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #A.5.

Meeting Date: May 14, 2026
To: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee
From: Andrew Bohannon, Deputy City Manager
Through: Elizabeth Ferland, City Manager
Subject: **Recreational Trails Program Grant - Keene State College Pedestrian Bridge
- Deputy City Manager**

Recommendation:

Move that the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and expend a Recreation Trails Program grant for \$80,000.00 for the trestle bridge on the Ashuelot Rail Trail.

Attachments:

None

Background:

The New Hampshire Bureau of Trails has recommended the City's 2026 Project D application for a full award of \$80,000. The next step for the Bureau is to submit the signed agreement with the City to the Governor and Council and secure Federal Highway Administration approval. Once these actions are completed, the City will receive a formal notice to proceed. The grant period has been extended through September 30, 2027.

This project requires a 20% match. The City's match will be supported through contributions from Pathways for Keene (\$6,000) and Keene State College (\$20,000), with the City providing the remaining \$50,000. The total project cost is \$130,000. The project is further described on page 48 of the CIP FY 27-33 budget book.

The City Council supported the original grant application at its November 20, 2025, meeting. However, due to pending reviews, the City must resubmit the grant for Council acceptance within 30 days of submitting the State approval documentation.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #A.6.

Meeting Date: May 14, 2026
To: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee
From: Darcy Newport, Human Resources Director
Through: Elizabeth Ferland, City Manager
Subject: **Acceptance of HealthTrust Wellness Grant - Human Resources Director**

Recommendation:

That the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and expend the 2026 wellness grant from HealthTrust in the amount of \$2,500 to be used for employee wellness activities.

Attachments:

None

Background:

Our health insurance vendor, HealthTrust, rewards member groups that train employees to act as Wellness Coordinators. Each Coordinator, up to a maximum of four per organization, may be rewarded with \$500 each in wellness grant funds to be used as incentives for the group. Wellness Coordinators returned and were retrained at HealthTrust's Wellness Coordinator Academy this year, making us eligible for a \$2,000 grant, which was received by the City this month. Our continuing Wellness Coordinators for this calendar year are Chelsea North of Parking Services, Megan Young of Human Resources, Asah Cramer of Communications, and Tim Garland of Parks and Recreation.

The Wellness Coordinators are involved in promoting HealthTrust wellness activities and education, blood drives, financial wellness efforts, monthly health observances, understanding aspects of the health plan, etc. Much of the money is spent on departmental challenges that encourage employees to focus on self-care, hobbies, getting their steps in, and drinking water. Those who completed the tasks were entered into a drawing and the winners each receive a gift card and recognition.

The coordinators will launch different monthly challenges in 2026 consisting of a water drinking challenge, a step challenge, a mental health challenge, healthy smoothies for employees, and more.

The Fire Department also received a \$500 HealthTrust grant for wellness activities in their department.

If the grant money is not fully expended during the calendar year 2026, carryover into the next

calendar year is supported by HealthTrust. We are very appreciative of this grant opportunity for our employees, retirees, and their family members who are part of the HealthTrust group.



CITY OF KEENE NEW HAMPSHIRE

ITEM #A.7.

Meeting Date: May 14, 2026
To: Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee
From: Jason Martin, Fire Chief
Through: Elizabeth Ferland, City Manager
Subject: **2025 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Grant Award - Fire Chief**

Recommendation:

That the Finance, Organization and Personnel Committee recommend that the City Manager be authorized to do all things necessary to accept and expend the 2025 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness Grant award.

Attachments:

None

Background:

The City of Keene Fire Department has been awarded \$7,197 as part of the FY 2025 Hazardous Materials Emergency Preparedness (HMEP) Program. This funding will be utilized for the acquisition of a bulk liquid cargo tank emergency control & leak mitigation training simulator.

The next step in the review process is to execute the grant agreement. Once completed and returned, the application will move forward to the Department of Safety's Business Office for Governor and Executive Council Approval.

There is a required 20% non-federal match, totaling \$1,439.40, that will be satisfied through in-kind activities (soft match).



CITY OF KEENE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand and Twenty Six

AN ORDINANCE Relating to Delinquent Accounts

Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Keene, as follows:

That the City Code of the City of Keene, New Hampshire, as amended, are hereby further amended by deleting the stricken text and inserting the bolded text* in Section 2-1186, "Delinquent Accounts" of Chapter 2 entitled "Administration" as follows:

Sec. 2-1186. Delinquent accounts.

Except where procedures are established by state law or the district court, all items billed by the city are payable by the debtor upon receipt of a bill; net payment of such bills shall be allowed within 30 days. The interest on accounts due and owing after 30 days shall be computed at a rate of ~~1½~~ **12 percent per month year (1 percent per month, nominal) but not less than \$2.00 on the unpaid amounts. The interest computation shall be rounded to the nearest penny. Interest shall be payable daily; compounded and posted monthly. The finance department, at the discretion of the finance director, shall determine the necessity for special arrangements. When a delinquency exists, the debtor shall incur no further obligations with the city.**

Jay V. Kahn, Mayor

In City Council April 16, 2026.
Referred to the Finance, Organization
and Personnel Committee.


Cassi Wood
City Clerk