

## **Bi-Monthly Town of Keene Board Meeting**

**January 13, 2026**

**5:30 P.M. – Town Hall / Zoom**

**Meeting # 1-26**

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### **Board Members Present:**

Joe Pete Wilson, Supervisor; Teresa Cheetham-Palen; Christopher Daly; Ann Hough; Robert Biesemeyer

### **Absent:**

### **Town Officials Present:**

Robyn Shumer (Town Clerk); Ryan Hall (Highway Superintendent); Savana Li (Water Superintendent)

**Town Counsel Present:** Bryan Liam Kennelly, Esq.

### **Members of the Public /Guests:**

Mark Bennett (New School Superintendent)

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## **Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at **5:30 P.M.** by Supervisor Joe Pete Wilson.

## **Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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## **Approval of Minutes**

### **Approval of December 23, 2025 Town Board Meeting Minutes**

Motion made to approve the December 23, 2025 Town Board Meeting minutes as presented.

All in favor: Aye

Opposed: None

Abstentions: As noted

Motion carried.

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## Privilege of the Floor

### **Introduction of New School Superintendent**

Mark, the newly appointed School Superintendent, introduced himself to the Board. He expressed appreciation for the strong community support, partnerships with the Town, Youth Commission, and local agencies. He noted visits to the library and school programs and emphasized interest in continued collaboration with the Town of Keene.

Supervisor Wilson thanked the school for its continued partnership, particularly with the Youth Commission, noting cost savings and program expansion since relocating activities to the school.

Supervisor Wilson also provided a brief update on planned sidewalk improvements near the school, including an upcoming DOT-funded engineering study and future construction planning to improve safety, accessibility, and long-term maintenance.

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## Town Operations

### **Youth Commission / Recreation Update**

Updates were provided on: - Successful grant funding for an afterschool/outdoor program with approximately 50–60 students enrolled. - A new youth hockey program beginning Friday at the Town skating rink. - Improvements to the warming hut at the rink, including installation of a rubber mat and interior finishing.

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## Town Clerk Report

The Deputy Clerk reported: - Receipt of a tax payment submitted entirely in cash. - Ongoing issues related to exact-change requirements due to coin shortages. - Concerns regarding postal service delays in postmarking mail, potentially impacting tax payments and deadlines.

The Board discussed the importance of informing the public to mail payments early or request hand-canceling at the post office, as the Town does not have authority to waive penalties.

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## Highway Department Report

Highway Superintendent Ryan reported: - Installation of new live-edge plows on all large trucks. - Plans to declare surplus equipment, including a single-axle International truck, an older wood chipper, and a van, with pricing information to be presented at a future meeting. - Receipt of recall notices for two Town trucks. - Upcoming meeting with a dealer regarding pricing for a new truck, with updated estimates potentially lower than prior quotes due to tariff changes.

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## Water Department

### **Proposed Amendment to Water Law – Fire Hydrant Leases**

Water Superintendent Savana Li presented a proposal not to renew fire hydrant lease agreements with fire departments after December 31, 2025, and instead amend the Water Law so departments would pay usage fees only.

It was noted that adoption would require introduction of the law, a public hearing, and a subsequent vote.

### **Resolution to Schedule Public Hearing on Proposed Water Law Amendment**

Motion made to schedule a public hearing on January 27, 2026 at 5:00 P.M.

All in favor: Aye

Opposed: None

Motion carried.

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### **EFC / NBRC Grant and AES Contract Amendment**

Updates were provided regarding Environmental Facilities Corporation financing and Northern Border Regional Commission grant compliance requirements. Due to extensive federal compliance obligations, an amendment to the AES Engineering contract was recommended.

### **Resolution to Amend Contract with AES Engineering**

Motion made to amend the AES Engineering contract for an additional **\$33,000** to cover environmental review and federal compliance services.

All in favor: Aye

Opposed: None

Motion carried.

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## Old Business

Board members were asked to carefully review the minutes from the Organizational Meeting upon receipt and note any corrections or items requiring follow-up, including titles, compensation levels, clothing allowances, and meeting scheduling.

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## New Business

### **Christmas Tree Lighting Contest Prizes**

Request received to increase prize amounts for the annual Christmas Tree Lighting Contest.

Motion made to increase prizes to **\$50 each** for four residential winners and two business winners.

All in favor: Aye

Opposed: None

Motion carried.

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### **Community Day – Traffic and Safety Support**

A proposal was presented to hire Donnelly Construction to provide certified flaggers, signage, and traffic control equipment for Community Day and fireworks.

### **Resolution to Approve Traffic Control Services for Community Day**

Motion made to approve Donnelly Construction services in the amount of **\$2,335**.

All in favor: Aye

Opposed: None

Motion carried.

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## Supervisor's Report

No Supervisor's report was presented due to the Supervisor's temporary injury. It was noted that accounts were adequately funded to cover upcoming obligations.

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## Audit Bills

### **Resolution to Pay Online Bills**

Motion made to approve payment of online bills.

All in favor: Aye

Opposed / Abstained: None noted

Motion carried.

### **Resolution to Audit and Pay Monthly Vouchers**

Motion made to audit and pay monthly vouchers.

All in favor: Aye  
Opposed / Abstained: None noted  
Motion carried.

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## Adjournment

### Resolution to Adjourn

Motion made to adjourn the meeting at **6:15 P.M.**

All in favor: Aye  
Opposed: None

Motion carried.

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Respectfully submitted,

**Robyn Shumer**  
Town Clerk  
Town of Keene