

**CITY OF MONTPELIER
CAPITAL CITY OF VERMONT**

City Manager's Weekly Report – 2/27/2015

UPCOMING MEETINGS ...

- ***Special City Council Meeting:*** Monday, March 2nd, at 4:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers (via conference call).
- **Town Meeting Day:** Tuesday, March 3rd; polls are open at City Hall from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. Hope everyone exercises their right to VOTE!
- **City Staff's Safety Committee Meeting:** Thursday, March 5th, at 1:30 P.M. in the City Manager's Conference Room.
- **Tree Board Meeting:** Thursday, March 5th, at 5:30 P.M. in the Memorial Room.

ATTACHMENTS ...

-  [Thank You Note re: Public Works](#)
-  [Notice: Montpelier Investment Committee Vacancy](#)
-  [Press Release: Frozen Pipes Advisory for Property Owners](#)
-  [Frozen Pipe Advisory: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT ...

1 Taylor Street

Right-of-Way: We continue to seek responses from appraisers for the VTtrans required appraisals for right-of-way. We have not yet found an appraiser willing to complete this work.

Development Agreement: I met with our attorney and development consultants this week to review Redstone's feedback on the Development Agreement. We anticipate meeting with Redstone to continue negotiations the week of March 9th. As mentioned in last week's memo, we suggest that a committee of the Mayor and two Council Members meet with us to review the draft and meet with Redstone prior to this coming to the full Council. There are a lot of important issues in here and some pre-screening from Council representatives will be helpful.

Cost Estimate: With DEW now engaged in the project as the construction manager at-risk, they have started the cost estimating effort. This is very important work as it gives us real numbers to budget for construction. This week we had two meetings with the City, Redstone, gbA, DuBois & King, and DEW to start the cost estimating work. We anticipate having a full preliminary cost estimate for the building and site work by the end of March.

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Car Share Vermont

Car Share Vermont is interested in starting service in Montpelier in April. They are requesting two designated parking spaces for the shared vehicles. This week Police, Fire, and Public Works reviewed this request and made some suggestions. In this conversation, we learned that Car Share would like these to be "tow zones." This will require an ordinance change. We anticipate bringing a proposal to the Council the first meeting in March. The Parking Committee has been asked to provide guidance as well.

City Phone and Data Plan

This week the City switched to Verizon as the cell and data plan carrier. With this conversion, we will see monthly savings on our plans, as well as improved emergency crisis response and support in the case of a disaster. Verizon representatives were in the city Thursday and Friday transitioning all City cell phones and iPads to Verizon.

Legal

Hallsmith vs. City, Fraser, Baker – Appealed to Supreme Court. Represented by Bernie Lambek. Oral arguments were held on December 18, 2014. Awaiting decision

VCFA vs. City, Tax Appeal. –discovery from VCFA received. Represented by Robert Fletcher.

Steuerwald vs. Fraser, Cleveland, City –Motions being filed. Represented by Nancy Sheahan through VLCT.

Bettis/Powers vs. Bean – Motions being filed. Represented by Nancy Sheahan through VLCT.

Illuzzi vs. City, Law, Motyka, Renaud Bros. – Represented by Jim Carroll through VLCT.

WEEKLY UPDATES FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS ...

Public Works Department

- The DPW Water and Waste Water Division has been busy this week with three broken water mains (Blackwell Street, State Street, and Dog River Road) as well as 28 frozen water services as of the 27th. With the exception of a couple of unoccupied homes, DPW and their plumbing and arc welding partners, expect to have all water services restored by the weekend. The public advisory notices issued about the ongoing potential for frozen water services appear to be having some impact if the reduction of new service requests is any indication. It is possible that several more may be received after people who have recently been away on vacation begin to return home.

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- The Street Division has been assisting the short-staffed Water and Waste Water Division this week. Two long-time employees recently retired: Nathan “Putt” Cowens and Mike Papineau. Consequently, snow bank removal production has decreased with the reallocation of resources. The Street Division did resume snow bank removal later in the week and has addressed many of the more critical areas impacting drainage, sight lines at intersections, and parking.

City Clerk's Office

- Early voting hours at the City Clerk's Office: Saturday, February 28th, from 10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.
- The Clerk/Treasurer's Office will not be open for clerk functions (dog licenses; marriage licenses; birth, marriage, and death certificates; land record access; etc.) on Town Meeting Day (March 3rd). Treasurer business (paying city bills, parking tickets, etc.) will be open.
- At Senator Doyle's request, the annual Doyle Poll is available for download at the Clerk's page of the City's website. The link is <http://www.montpelier-vt.org/upload/groups/3/files/doylepoll2015.pdf> . Completed copies can be left for Senator Doyle at the Clerk's Office.

TOPICS FOR UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETINGS ...

March 3	City Meeting Election
March 10	Organizational Meeting Rules of Procedure Ethics Policy Dog Owners Greening America's Capitals? Hazard Mitigation Plan? Energy Committee Structure Planning Commission Appointment Investment Committee Appointment Design Review Committee Appointment Car Share Vermont – first public hearing

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March 24

Goals and Priorities

Car Share Vermont – second public hearing

One Taylor Development Agreement

April 8

Montpelier in Motion

Winter Parking Ban Review



Jessie C. Baker

Assistant City Manager

- Feb-19-15 -

John and Donna Stead
28 MARVIN ST
MONTPELIER
VT 05602

Bill,

Just a note to let you
know how satisfied we have
been this winter, regarding
our Road Snow Maintenance.
MR Lee has done a very
PROFESSIONAL job.

Always Courteous and
Helpful.

Regards John Donna
Stead



America's Small Town Capital

Mayor John Hollar

William Fraser
City Manager

City Council Members:

Dona Bate
Jessica Edgerly Walsh
Tom Golonka
Thierry Guerlain
Justin Turcotte
Anne Watson

Jessie Baker
Assistant City Manager

CITY OF MONTPELIER
Montpelier Investment Committee Vacancy

The Montpelier City Council is establishing a new Investment Committee to review and provide guidance to the Council on how best to invest and manage funds that are donated or bequeathed to the City of Montpelier. Currently, the Council seeks one more individual interested in serving on this Committee. Qualified individuals will have experience in investing, managing funds, or working with donated dollars. Letters of interest and/or resumes should be submitted to the Office of the City Manager, City Hall – 39 Main Street, Montpelier (or sent by e-mail to spitonyak@montpelier-vt.org) on or before Thursday, March 5th, 2015. The City Council will make this appointment at their March 11, 2015 meeting. Applicants are encouraged to attend; all municipal meetings are accessible to people with disabilities and are held in accordance with the public meeting and public records laws. Further information may also be obtained by contacting the City Manager's Office at 223-9502.

William J. Fraser
City Manager



America's Small Town Capital

Mayor John Hollar

William Fraser
City Manager

City Council Members:

Dona Bate
Jessica Edgerly Walsh
Tom Golonka
Thierry Guerlain
Justin Turcotte
Anne Watson

Jessie Baker
Assistant City Manager

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 24, 2015

Frozen Pipes Advisory for Property Owners

The City of Montpelier is advising property owners that incidents of frozen water pipes are on the rise and that some owners should consider taking precautionary efforts. Many consecutive days of below zero temperatures continues to drive the frost deeper and deeper into the soil, creating issues for homeowners and commercial property owners who rely on their water pipes withstanding the deep freeze. Currently, the Department of Public Works has found that frost is close to 60 inches deep and therefore reaching buried water lines. In typical years, the department receives very few frozen pipe calls. However, so far this year 18 properties have experienced frozen exterior pipes in the last two weeks. The City is suggesting that some owners take preventative action now in an attempt to avoid increasing this problem city-wide.

Owners who meet the following criteria are advised that preventative action may be needed:

- Residents who live in homes that have experienced frozen pipes before.
- Anyone living in a home that is 50 years old or older
- Households with one or two occupants or those who do not generally use a lot of water on a daily basis
- Anyone who is going away, or who is not at home on a regular basis

If you fall into one or more of these categories, an effective measure to prevent outside water pipes from freezing is to let the water run in your house. A pencil-width stream of water should be left on at all times, preferably in a faucet at the highest point in your house, until the end of March, or until the ground frost has thawed. Letting water drip is insufficient in these circumstances.

Not all residents need to follow this procedure. While running water is one of the most effective measures that can be taken to avoid frozen pipes, all homes are not at risk.

Residents who fall into one or more of the categories above for taking preventative measures should not turn their water off when daytime temperatures go above freezing. Pipes can freeze in a short span of time because of the ground frost level. A sunny day does not affect the frost line, which has reached depths of over 5 feet and is expected to deepen before the winter ends.

Frozen pipes can be costly and very inconvenient to deal with. They can freeze at the house or in the street. Residents who lose their water should call their own plumber and the Department of Public Works at 223-9510 so that a team can determine where the problem lies and appropriate action can be taken to clear the lines and return service.

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Frozen Pipe Advisory

Frequently Asked Questions

On Tuesday, February 24, 2015 the City issued a Frozen Pipe Advisory. As a follow-up to that notice, below are responses to frequently asked questions we have received. The notice and this document are advisory only.

Q: What is a water service?

A: A water service is the water line from the City's water main in the street to each property. On this line, and in between the house and the City's water main, there is a valve that lets the City turn water on and off to a house. With the extreme and prolonged cold weather this winter there is deeper than usual frost that is causing some of these water services to freeze. In other words, pipes are freezing between the house and the City's water main.

Q: How deep is the frost in my location? Is there any way to know whether my service might freeze?

A: The Public Works Department can only approximate based on repair work involving excavations we have done recently. The frost depth can vary significantly depending on many factors including exposure to sun light, soil type and moisture content, and whether the area has been cleared of snow on a regular basis.

Q: Can Public Works tell me how deep my water service is?

A: Reliable records are available only for some areas of town and most of our records only indicate the municipal and not the individual service lines. Unless the neighborhood is a more recent or modern sub-division, the service lines and older water mains could be very shallow and many are only about 4' deep. One way to obtain an approximate depth is to look in the basement to find where the water service enters the building and make a measurement to the ground level outside.

Q: What can I do to prevent my water service from freezing?

A: The City is advising owners who meet the following criteria to take preventative action:

- Residents who live in homes that have experienced frozen pipes before.
- Anyone living in a home that is 50 years old or older
- Households with one or two occupants or those who do not generally use a lot of water on a daily basis

- Anyone who is going away, or who is not at home on a regular basis

If you fall into one or more of these categories, an effective measure to prevent outside water pipes from freezing is to let the water run in your house. The stream of water from your faucet only needs to be about 3/16" or about 1/2 the diameter of a pencil (not a full pencil size as previously noted). Ideally, this should be run at the highest elevation faucet in your house.

Q: Is there anything I can do myself to check if I need to run water preventatively?

A: Yes. You can check the temperature of the water in your service line. To do this, use the faucet closest to the water intake coming through the wall or floor of your basement and use a digital thermometer. Do the test first thing in the morning or immediately when you return home from work. This will let the water rest in your service line and give you a more accurate measure. Turn on the faucet and hold the thermometer in the stream of water. First you will be measuring the water temperature of your in-building line. Then you will be measuring the temperature of the water in your service line. Finally you will be measuring the temperature of the water in the water main at the street. Note the temperatures every 30 seconds or so for about five to ten minutes. You will need to note the lowest temperature detected. The temperature of the water main in the street is typically between 41°F and 44°F. If you find the temperature to be 38°F or less at any point during the measurement that means that the water in your service line is at a lower temperature than that in the water main and the line may be close to freezing. If you get a reading of 38°F or less, we advise you to run water preventatively.

Q: If my service line is not frozen but I run my water preventatively, who pays for the water?

A: It will depend on actual usage. With this quarter's water bills the City will compare usage this year to usage last year. If there are significant differences this year, reductions will be made on a case by case basis before the bills are sent out.

Q: I don't have water at my house and my in-building pipes are not frozen. What do I do?

A: During the regular business day (8:00 am to 4:30 pm) please call the DPW administrative offices at 223-9508. All other times please call Police Dispatch at 223-3445. The on-call water and sewer mechanic will make a note of the problem and the water service will be checked first thing in the morning.

Q: If my water service freezes, who pays for the repairs? Who pays for the water use?

A: If a property experiences a frozen service the costs to repair will be borne by the property owner or city based on the location of the obstruction found in the line if it can be determined. If the obstruction is on the house side of the valve, the homeowner pays. If the obstruction is on the street side of the valve or at the valve, the City pays. If a line freezes at the valve or on the street side of the service line and a homeowner is directed to run water to avoid a refreeze, the City will negotiate an adjustment of the water billing based on a comparison of the metered usage with the same period last year.

Q: If the air temperature warms up for one or more days before the full arrival of spring, is it Ok to turn my water off?

A: No. Until the ground is thawed to the depth of the water service line, there will be a continued threat for freezing. Typically, the ground will not thaw to a safe level until late March and sometimes well into in April. It is best to check with the Public Works Department or other persons who may have firsthand knowledge about frost levels before turning your water off if you have been advised to let it run. As we get into the spring, the City will send out a notice when it is safe to turn your water off.

Q: Have there been other frozen services in my neighborhood?

A: Public Works is keeping a list of all the frozen services. Please call them at 223-9510 to check the status of your neighborhood. As of February 25th, there have been over 20 frozen services reported since January of this year.