

**CITY OF MONTPELIER
CAPITAL CITY OF VERMONT**

City Manager's Weekly Report – 10/23/2015

UPCOMING MEETINGS ...

- Monday, October 26th Planning Commission Meeting, 5:30 P.M. in the City Council Chambers
- Tuesday, October 27th Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting, 5:30 – 6:30 P.M. in the Police Department Community Room.
- Wednesday, October 28th Regular City Council Meeting, 6:30 P.M. in the City Council Chambers
- Thursday, October 29th Bicycle Advisory Committee Workplan Retreat, 5:30 – 7:30 P.M. at the North Branch Nature Center (not a regularly scheduled committee meeting)

FOR YOUR CALENDARS ...

- ✓ Monday, November 2nd Public Meeting for Montpelier's Economic Development Strategy, 7:00 P.M. at the Montpelier Senior Activities Center (MSAC), 58 Barre Street

NOTE: The Capital Improvements **(CIP) Committee Meeting** shown on the FY 17 Budget Schedule as taking place on Monday, November 2nd, has been **changed to Monday, November 16th**, at 9:00 A.M. in the City Manager's Conference Room

- ✓ Thursday, January 28, 2016 Welcome Legislators Reception, Capitol Plaza (Governor's Ballroom), 5:00 – 7:00 P.M.

ATTACHMENTS ...

- ✚ Finance Director's Memo re: City Employee Health Insurance Program – Task Force Recommendation for 2016
- ✚ Montpelier Community Justice Center Victim Outreach Program Progress Report: April – October, 2015

CITY MANAGER'S WEEKLY REPORT

October 23, 2015

Page 2

✚ Press Release: Public Meeting for Montpelier's Economic Development Strategy

✚ VTrans Press Release: Closure of I-89 Southbound Ramps (On and Off)

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT ...

Budget Forums:

Compilation of data from the budget forums and surveys will be completed today or over the weekend. It will be sent out to you on Monday for a brief review on Wednesday night.

One Taylor:

Key issues continue to be budget and rights-of-way. We are actively pursuing grant opportunities for funding. For rights-of-way, we expect to receive State-cleared appraisals by the end of November from which we can make formal offers to land owners. The Mowatt right-of-way, of course, will be addressed at the hearing on Wednesday night.

Zoning Update:

Please see attached memo from Planning Director Mike Miller. He will be providing you an update at the meeting next week. This is an important time for Council feedback as the Planning Commission is getting ready to finalize their zoning draft.

Bike Path (Granite Street to Gallison Hill Road):

DuBois & King is redesigning the alignment to go around VCFA property and move to the other side of Barre Street. We expect that most of the path is in the City/State's right-of-way as the track is close to that edge of the property. However, we suspect that with the redesign, new stormwater mitigation work will need to be done on Ribolini's property to counteract mitigation that now cannot be done on the VCFA side. This is further complicated as this site is a former junkyard and, therefore, soil work may be expensive. D&K coordinated this testing. Borings were staked out on September 30th, surface soil samples were taken on October 1st and 2nd. Results are not final yet.

This alignment change will use time and resources including additional engineering time, field study, contamination study, and depending on the results of that work, potentially additional construction money. Thus far, the field survey and contamination work alone will cost an additional \$14k. We estimate that it will add between 2 to 3 months onto the project. We have not yet determined the impact to the existing stormwater permit or Act 250 permit.

CITY MANAGER'S WEEKLY REPORT

October 23, 2015

Page 3

Berlin Pond:

As you know, we have received the land survey. Discussion of a possible charter change related to regulation of the Pond is scheduled for the November 18th agenda.

Economic Development Strategic Plan:

The process has kicked off with consultant Peter Fairweather. Meetings with key stakeholder groups will be taking place in November including a public session at the Senior Center on the evening of November 2nd.

Legal

VCFA vs. City, Tax Appeal. – Motions for Summary Judgment were filed by both parties on June 15. Represented by Robert Fletcher.

Illuzzi vs. City, Law, Motyka, Renaud Bros. – Motions have been filed. Going into mediation. Represented by Constance Tryon Bell through VLCT.

Hallsmith Grievance Hearing is set for November 9, 2015. Michael Marks will serve as the neutral hearing officer.

WEEKLY UPDATES FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS ...

Assessor's Office

- Completed easement valuations based on Final Plans for the Shared Use Path (Bike Path) from Barre Street to Gallison Hill Road.
- Completed a tally of housing units in Montpelier. Our count indicates that there are 4,073 housing units in the city, of which 1,653 are apartments and 400 are condominiums.
- The U.S Census estimate of 3,767 housing units in 2013 is clearly below the actual number of units. Census data that indicates a loss of 250 housing units from 2010 to 2013 appears to be incorrect.

CITY MANAGER'S WEEKLY REPORT

October 23, 2015

Page 4

TOPICS FOR UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS ...

November 4	Budget Direction Parking Study Update Rec Transition Update Vt Mountaineers Lease discussion Montpelier Foundation Clean Water Act Executive Session: Manager's 6-month Review
November 18	Goal Discussion Berlin Pond Charter Change
December 9	Mowatt – Damages Hearing Budget
December 16	Budget



William J. Fraser
City Manager



America's Small Town Capital

TO: William Fraser, City Manager

FROM: Sandy Gallup, Finance Director

DATE: October 20, 2015

SUBJECT: City Employee Health Insurance Program - Task Force Recommendation for 2016

Our City Employee Health Insurance Task Force met twice this fall with VLCT and Hickok & Boardman to consider options for the 2016 employees' health insurance program. Our claims history is very high (again) in 2015 and this affected our renewal rates.

At our first meeting Blue Cross Blue Shield announced a 19.3% premium increase for 2016. This is on top of the 11.5% increase for 2015. The committee looked at options to reduce this substantial increase in insurance costs. Our Hickok and Boardman broker, Michael Kilfoyle, suggested going out to bid to Cigna and MVP. He also agreed to consider increasing the deductible and/or introducing a 10-20% co-insurance. Cigna declined to bid. MVP's price was not competitive and they did not have a plan with equal coverage. Increasing the deductible to \$5000/\$10000 did not show reliable savings. Also, co-insurance options did not substantially reduce costs and this change in the plan would have to be negotiated with employee unions.

Michael explained that BCBS's renewal rate is fair based on claims experience and underwriting methodology. He was able to negotiate BCBS's premium increase down to 16.1%. When combined with the HRA increase (medical trend 7.3%) the total health care costs will be up 14.7% which is \$185,712. Both the city and the employees will share in paying these increased costs. The committee discussed ideas on reducing our health care costs. We should encourage employees to shop around for the medical services that they use. Wellness programs need to continue and expand. The committee would like to see these ideas discussed at the December open enrollment meetings. We would like to reduce medical claims in 2016 which would produce lower premium increases for 2017 (which is the last year before the City is scheduled to go into the Health Exchange).

Recommendation: After meeting with our insurance VLCT and Hickok and Boardman, the City Employee Health Task Force recommends accepting BlueCross BlueShield's proposed premium increase of 16.1% for our current CDHP Blue Consumer Directed Health Plan \$4000/\$8000. When combined with our HRA spending the increase is projected to be 14.7%.

Rate History:

Year	Percentage Increase	Notes
2012	-5.9%	changed to a 4000/8000 deductible
2013	15.0%	
2014	6.2%	
2015	11.5%	
2016	16.2%	

5 Year Average is 8.6% Compared to an 8% average in Vermont (but we did add some risk with the higher deductible in 2012) Note: current medical trend in Vermont is 7.3%

Montpelier Community Justice Center
Victim Outreach Program
Progress Report / April - October 2015

Method

Beginning April 26, 2015 the Montpelier Community Justice Center (MCJC) began operation of its Victim Outreach Program and has continued since that time to reach out to people who fit the program criteria who have called the Montpelier Police Department.

MCJC staff searched through Valcour to identify people who called the police about incidences where they were victims of crime or reported harm or threats to their safety or well-being in the community. ¹

Some cases were reviewed and considered but excluded from outreach when there was something in the police log that caused the MCJC staff or Victim Outreach Specialist to wonder whether a call could be disruptive rather than helpful.

The MCJC's Victim Outreach Specialist contacted people by telephone, where possible and followed up with a letter. Calls were made two days a week, from 3-5 PM. The officers involved were sent emails in each case and were updated wherever new information was provided.

Results

Cases reviewed and considered by staff	198
Cases still pending police approval	17
Cases reviewed and considered by VOS	171
Cases approved for outreach	168
Staff hours	110
Volunteer VOS hours	110

¹ As decided beforehand some cases were excluded. Cases of retail theft from major retailers were excluded, though calls were made in cases where individuals who owned or worked at Montpelier's small locally owned businesses appeared personally affected by someone stealing from their stores. People were not contacted in cases of sexual assault or in those cases reported as domestic disturbance or threats/harassment where the description of the incident hinted at prior or existing domestic violence between the parties.

One hundred victims were unavailable and were left phone messages and sent letters. Some took the time to call back or email the MCJC. A survey might determine how the rest responded to being contacted.

The MCJC had conversations with 57 of the people who were contacted. Other responses were received by email or return calls. Responses were overwhelmingly positive. There were no negative reactions, although in one case the victim was upset not to get a call sooner.

In some cases, victims who were contacted described steps they were inspired to take, e.g. training for employees dealing with shoplifting or disorderly conduct, homeowners taking safety measures to prevent thefts, and victims' desire to develop restorative practices to address crime.

Some comments from community members:

"Thanks for your letter about my recent id theft. I think I have it contained now, with some more safeguards put in place. But thanks for reaching out. I appreciate it! "

"It's nice to know there are people like you out there following up on calls to the police. The responding officer was very polite, helpful and thorough. We never called the police before and we were surprised and very pleased with the response and followup. Thank you!"

"Doing lots of paperwork. No help from the FBI; their involvement requires an invitation by the local police...But thank you for reaching out."

"Response from police has been great and reassuring...In years past, police would respond, but without follow up. That seems to have changed. [MPD] has pursued and charged people and gave us a chance to ask for restitution." "Our mission and concern as a coop is less to do with recouping losses and more with getting at causes, helping people in the community so it doesn't come to this."

"I know you do a lot of good stuff at the Justice Center." ... "He didn't look like a bad kid. I hate to see him become a criminal. Maybe he should be at the Teen Center getting some help."

"I'm doing great now. The police were helpful and the DMV took very good care of me. Thanks for calling!"

"I was worried that the person [who entered her car and moved it and left a mean note] knew me. It was shocking. I feel better now. Thanks for calling."

"Wow, thanks for calling. Really appreciate it. Had to wait until I got back home to deal with it, but I'm fine."

"I have a lot to do, but I'm ok. I appreciate the call."

"It's a good thing you're doing, checking up on people. I really appreciate it. Thank you."

"Extremely efficient and nice; extremely pleased with the quick and effective police response."

"I really appreciate the call. I was frightened. I love the police."

"I'm so very pleased you have this relationship with the police department. I really appreciate the call."

"Thank you so much. It's so helpful to know somebody cares. I really, really appreciate it. It's great that you're doing this."

"The police were very generous with their time and very cooperative with my concerns."

"It's good to know people are keeping tabs on these things. Thank you so much for calling."

"I got your letter. We've reached out to the person who gave us the bad check. They are making weekly payments, which we think is better than involving the courts. Thanks for reaching out to us."

"We caught the theft in time, so there were no charges on our debit card. We're fine and really appreciate the call back. Very nice."

"Thank you for your tenderness regarding the vandalism at our home. I told the other residents about you and your organization...It's wonderful that you care. Keep doing what you do."

The police officer] was "such a sweetheart. Made me feel much better about this situation. He's been so polite and nice. He gets a big compliment from me. He was very timely, but I was away a lot, so I missed his call."

"So nice of you to make a follow up call. I really appreciate that." [After long conversation, she resolved to reach out to the person she suspects of hitting her car.]

"Honestly, I was shocked when I noticed that my card was used. Luckily, your colleagues [MPD] were very helpful, and they sent me the police report by email....Thank you so much for following up on this."

"Surprised and delighted. Thanks, so nice of you to call. It's nice to know people out there do care."

"MPD was very helpful, offering to assist with deposits, advice on being mindful of surroundings and other safety measures."

"Thank you very much for calling. I feel very insecure [because of this incident]"

"I was surprised and amazed to get a call and a letter...I'm reconciled to the fact that this was probably kids, but if it had happened again, I would have felt 'marked' and not as safe....I think the police do a good job and I want to help and thought it was important to report...Most importantly, I was very touched to get the call and letter. It helps to put the matter to rest. I really appreciate a response that's 'human' and not just official."

The cases reviewed by the MCJC were categorized as follows:

27 Larceny- from Motor Vehicle

25 Larceny -from Building

19 Larceny –Other
15 Vandalism- Property
15 Threats/Harassment
7 Accident, Leaving the Scene
7 Fraud
6 Larceny- Retail Theft
6 Identity Theft
5 Disorderly Conduct
5 Suspicious Event
4 Motor Vehicle Complaint
4 Bad Check
3 Domestic Disturbance
3 Burglary
2 Stolen MV Plates
2 Suspicious Person
2 Theft of Service
2 Dog Complaint
2 Police Intell (though these appeared mis-categorized as they involved people reporting something that happened to them, not information given as part of an investigation)
1 Aggravate Assault
1 Armed Robbery
1 Assault, simple
1 Counterfeiting
1 Illegal Dump
1 Lost/Found Property
1 Property Damage
1 Robbery
1 Trespass- Other
1 Vandalism- Graffiti



America's Small Town Capital

**Public Meeting for Montpelier's
Economic Development Strategy to be Held Monday, November 2
October 21, 2015**

MONTPELIER, VT - Montpelier residents will get a chance to help launch the City's economic development planning process at a public meeting to be held at the Montpelier Senior Activities Center (MSAC) located at 58 Barre Street at 7:00 PM on Monday, November 2.

In support of City Council's 2015-2016 Goal to "create a hospitable environment for economic development and grand list growth," the City's Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) will create an action plan for preserving and strengthening the vitality of the City's economy. Using the City's community character and quality of life as its foundation, the EDSP will assess the existing economic conditions in the City and involve local businesses and key stakeholders in the development of an action plan that sets clear priorities for staffing, investment and community activities to promote economic health and vitality in the City.

"The thrust of this work is to build strategic partnerships for economic development based on a shared vision of what economic development means for Montpelier," said City Planning Director Michael Miller. "Our approach will involve intensive dialogue with stakeholders in the City's economy about the issues and opportunities facing Montpelier."

In September, the steering committee selected Fairweather Consulting of New Paltz, NY to support the strategic planning effort. The steering committee consists of City Manager William Fraser, Planning Director Michael Miller, Community Development Specialist Kevin Casey, City Council member Jean Olson, Assistant City Manager Jessie Baker, Timothy Beavin of Beavin & Sons Printing, Sam Andersen of the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation, Andrew Brewer of Onion River Sports and Ashley Witzenberger of Montpelier Alive.

Montpelier Mayor John Hollar is encouraging business owners and residents to participate in the planning process. “The economic development strategic plan will provide a roadmap for our future development. The voices of residents, property owners, and local businesses will be critical to ensure that we develop a shared vision that will be embraced by the entire community.”

The meeting on November 2nd is intended to introduce the planning process to the public and begin a community-wide discussion on what is important for Montpelier’s economy. For further information, please contact the Department of Planning and Community Development at 802-223-9506.

Contacts:

Michael Miller, Director of Planning & Community Development, 802-223-9506

Peter Fairweather, Fairweather Consulting, 845-255-0611 x1



Vermont Agency of Transportation
State of Vermont

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189 Exit 8

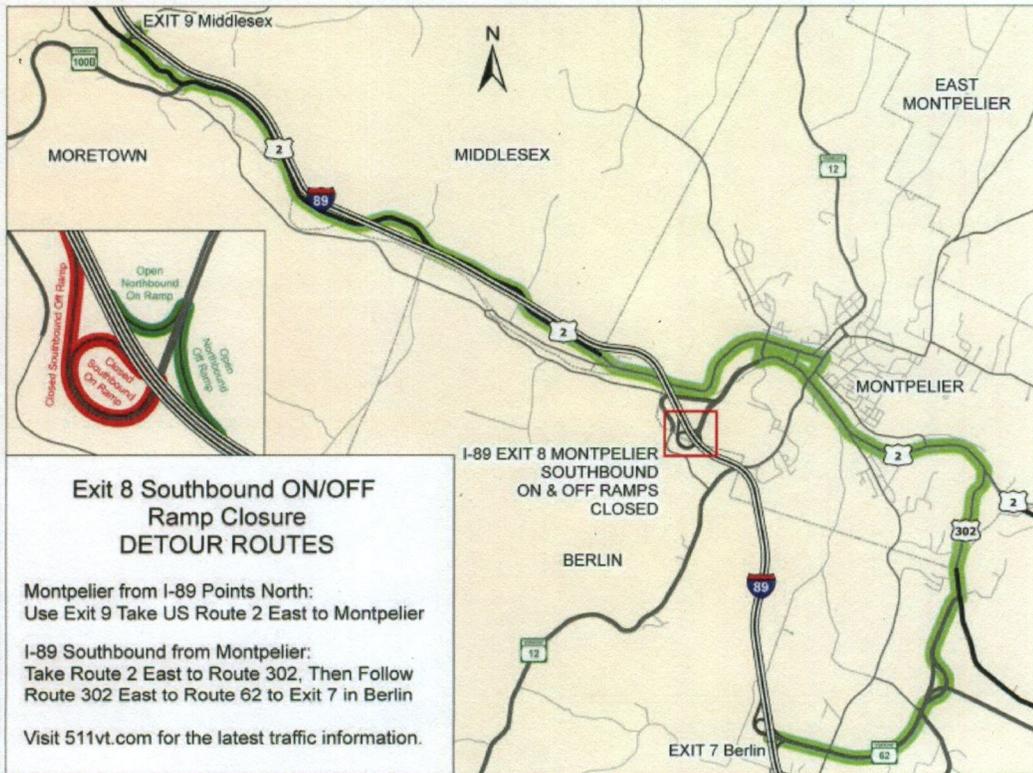
VTrans to close southbound on and off ramps on I-89 in Montpelier

The Vermont Agency of Transportation will close the I-89 southbound on and off ramps at Exit 8 in Montpelier to repair bridge by a crash in September. Starting on Thursday November 5th, the Exit 8 southbound on and off ramps will be closed to traffic to be reopened to traffic by Friday November 13th. During this time, all I-89 southbound through traffic will be restricted to on Northbound travel lanes and on and off ramps at Exit 8 will be unaffected.

Specialized work crews will repair damage to the bridge that occurred when a tractor trailer truck loaded with an excavator si on the underside of the bridge while attempting to access I-89 on the southbound entrance ramp. The impact of the crash be beams requiring corrective measures. The short term project will include lead paint removal, heat straightening of the damag reattachment of steel diaphragms. After the damage has been repaired, a protective coating will be applied to the repaired b

Due to the special circumstances involved in the heat straightening process, the contractor requested that the work be comp daylight hours. Drivers should expect delays in this area, especially during morning and afternoon commuting hours. A detou Exit 9 in Middlesex and Exit 7 in Berlin.

Detour Routes



Project Contact: J.B. McCarthy, 802-505-1451, jb.mccarthy@vermont.gov (<mailto:jb.mccarthy@vermont.gov>)