

Minutes of the Montpelier City Council Meeting
January 8, 2014
Montpelier City Hall Council Chambers

In attendance: Mayor John Hollar (presiding), City Councilors Thierry Guerlain, Jessica Edgerly Walsh, Alan Weiss, Andy Hooper, Tom Golonka, Anne Watson and City Manager Bill Fraser. City Clerk John Odum acted as Secretary of the meeting.

Mayor Hollar called the meeting call to order at 6:30.

14-002. Councilor Watson moved the consent agenda, Councilor Hooper seconded. Councilor Weiss asked that the minutes for November 20th and December 4th be pulled, stating his feeling that they had arrived too close to the meeting, and challenging the City Clerk's compliance with the law. The Clerk indicated that the office was, and has always been, in complete compliance with the open records law, as instructed by the Secretary of State's office. The remaining consent agenda passed unanimously at 6:35.

14-003. Julie Hendrickson and Eliza Dodd of the Montpelier Community Fund board presented the proposed spending for the Montpelier Community Fund. Following the presentation, Councilor Edgerly Walsh moved acceptance of the proposal. Councilor Watson seconded. The motion passed unanimously at 6:46.

14-004. The Council engaged in a brief, general discussion of the proposed FY '15 Budget. Councilor Weiss promoted additional expenditures on a citizen survey, offset by removing funding entirely from Montpelier Alive. Councilor Edgerly Walsh suggested a less expensive, online survey. A discussion followed.

Carolyn Silsby, manager of the Capitol City Band, addressed the council in regards to the Montpelier Community Fund's proposed decrease in their funding from the previous year. Ms. Hendrickson and Ms. Dodd returned to the front to respond. Erica Mitchell joined Ms. Silsby to present the Band's case. Eve Mendelsohn also joined the discussion on behalf of the Band.

Bev Hill spoke in support of a new request from the civic center that went before the fund committee, explaining how the different feeder communities are supporting it financially.

Councilor Weiss moved that the Montpelier Community Fund committee take the Capital City Band and the Civic Center requests under further advisement. Councilor Hooper seconded, while commenting that the motion may be inappropriate. A discussion of the structure, priorities and procedures of the committee followed. The motion was withdrawn.

Councilor Golonka moved the council approve the budget as presented by the city manager and set a public hearing for next week. Councilor Hooper seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 7:34.

- 14-005. The Council recognized Ben Eastwood regarding the "public banking initiative." The Mayor recused himself from the discussion due to potential conflicts of interest, and Councilor Golonka acted as President of the meeting for the duration of the discussion.
- The consensus of the council was that the large volume of information on the topic precluded immediate, informed action by the council.
- Erik Esselstyn of East Montpelier addressed the council, noting that the East Montpelier selectboard voted to place the proposed question language on their March ballot.
- Jane Kast asked how voters would be educated about the ballot item.
- Councilor Weiss challenged Mr. Eastwood's characterization of the proposal.
- Page Guertin asked about informational resources on the topic.
- A discussion among councilors about the appropriateness of placing an item on the ballot under the circumstances followed.
- 14-006. Mayor Hollar retook the gavel for the discussion with Fire Chief Robert Gowans and Police Chief Anthony Facos regarding a proposed fireworks ordinance. Chief Gowans explained the proposal governing "class C" fireworks, and was joined by Chief Facos in describing the concerns. Councilors had questions about current law and enforcement.
- Chief Gowans indicated that recommendations were being developed by other, statewide entities. He recommended crafting an ordinance that would prohibit the use of class C fireworks entirely. A wide ranging discussion followed.
- Lyn Munno addressed the council in support of a blanket ban on class C fireworks.
- Ben Eastwood expressed concerns about the potential ban on model rocketry.
- 14-007. Sharon Easy, Elizabeth Grupp and Lyn Munno joined the council for the first reading/public hearing regarding an ordinance that addresses dog waste, which opened at 8:35. After a brief discussion, the public hearing was closed at 8:38. Councilor Weiss moved to adopt the consistent "domestic pet" language for the second hearing next week. Councilor Hooper seconded, and the motion carried unanimously at 8:38.
- 14-008. Councilor Golonka noted, and briefly discussed, the upcoming regionalization meeting.
- Councilor Watson recalled her tour of the Green Mount Cemetery, and noted next month's planned presentation from the energy committee.
- Councilor Edgerly Walsh asked that an update on plowing and salting be included on an upcoming agenda.
- Councilor Hooper indicated he intended to run for re-election.
- Councilor Guerlain also announced his intent to run for re-election.
- Councilor Weiss indicated he would vote for the incumbent city councilors.

- 14-009. Mayor Hollar read a statement expressing his feelings on serving as mayor and on the city itself in announcing his own intent to stand for re-election.
- 14-010. The City Clerk reviewed the deadlines and requirements for the upcoming annual city meeting ballot.
- 14-011. City Manager Fraser reviewed the RFPs for the bike path and for 1 Taylor Street that were out. He noted the upcoming process for hiring a new Planning Director, as well as his own upcoming contract renewal.

Councilor Guerlain moved to adjourn at 8:51 PM. Councilor Hooper seconded. The motion carried unanimously.