

**Minutes of the Montpelier City Council Special Meeting
January 15, 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 6:30pm.

14-014. Councilor Weiss moved approval of the consent agenda. Councilor Watson seconded the motion, which carried unanimously at 6:31.

14-015. Tom McKone, Rachel Muse and Lorraine Pilon of the Kellogg Hubbard Library gave a presentation on the Library services, status, and associated 2014 budget request, in support of their appeal to be placed on the city meeting ballot directly, rather than by petition. Councilor Golonka expressed concerns about library programs serving residents of nearby towns in the absence of proportionate financial support from those towns.

Councilor Watson moved that the Council place the \$308,673 library budget request onto the annual city meeting budget, consistent last year's language. Councilor Edgerly Walsh seconded the motion. Councilor Golonka asked that bond information be included in the wording, as per last year's ballot. Councilor Weiss stressed that his approval of the motion was based on the item's direct application to Montpelier citizens. The motion carried at 6:47 by a vote of 5-0 with one abstention (Councilor Guerlain, who was announced as the library board chair).

14-018. At 6:48, the Mayor opened the first public hearing on proposed amendments to the city's charter. Nancy Sherman and Page Guertin of the Charter Change Committee briefly addressed the Council on the matter, and the City Manager reviewed the charge of the committee.

The Mayor closed the public hearing at 6:53, and called for a five minute recess.

14-016. At 7:00, the Mayor resumed the meeting, and opened the first public hearing (jointly with Barre City and Barre Town) of the final charter for the Public Safety Authority. The meeting included Mayor Thomas Lauzon, Michael Boutin, Charles Dindo and Michael Smith, of Barre City, and Robert LaClair and Jay Perkins of Barre Town (all of whom sat at the front table). They were joined at the front by Brad Towne of the Berlin select board. Mayor Hollar also acknowledged the presence of Pat McDonald and Patti Lewis.

A quorum being in attendance, Mayor Lauzon of Barre City called a meeting of the Barre City Council to order.

Councilor Golonka opened the discussion with a review of the matter before the Council and its guests. Mayor Lauzon asked for clarification on the details of the document before the group.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh suggested the language be changed to make it easier to bring in other participating towns, without having to amend the document through the legislature.

Representatives from Barre City (led by Mayor Lauzon) broached the dynamics and concerns around the potential for one city dominating the board through the allowance for at-large membership on the board. A brief discussion of the dynamics of electing the at-large members ensued, followed by some discussion of how a municipality could withdraw from the compact. There was also a discussion of the eminent domain provisions, and whether to add a clause allowing veto power over any condemnation by the native municipality of the target parcel. Mr. Boutin echoed Councilor Watson's concerns on the matter.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh had questions about potential protections for municipal staff. Mayor Lauzon described the process of consolidating dispatch services as an illustration of how the charter envisions how such a process would impact staff.

Mr. Perkins had questions about the potential for a municipality (in a four member-town) to be outvoted on a question of service consolidation, and what the implications would be. George Malek of the Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce rose to add to the discussion of the dynamics of the question. Mayor Lauzon stressed the need for flexibility under the charter, identifying possible points of conflict.

Councilor Watson suggested adding a non-voting representative on the governing body who was a public safety professional. Councilor Golonka felt the concerns were addressed through the organizational structure.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh had questions about proposed allowances for ambulance services.

Mayor Lauzon recommended removing the cost-sharing language from the charter to allow more flexibility. There was general acceptance of the idea, and a discussion of how to do so followed. Councilor Golonka offered alternative language.

Councilor Weiss expressed concern about the reception of the document by the legislature, should it contain attachments.

Councilor Guerlain praised the work that had been done and supported the effort.

Councilor Weiss wondered if there may be a continuing role for the current regionalization committee should the project go forward. He also recommended agreed-to language be submitted to the legislature prior to the enabling vote, in order to expedite the process. Mayor Lauzon was dubious about the suggestion.

Ben Eastwood expressed concerns about the amount of input on the proposal from current public safety staff. He suggested that the at-large board members could be chosen from that population. Councilor Watson echoed the concerns.

Mayor Hollar thanked the attendees and closed the public hearing at 8:11. The Barre City Council adjourned their meeting at that time, and the Montpelier Council went into a brief informal recess before resuming the meeting at 8:16.

- 14-017. The mayor convened the first public hearing on the proposed FY '15 municipal budget at 8:17pm. Page Guertin approached with questions about the proposed Montpelier Community Fund allocations. Mayor Hollar indicated that the Council had ceded full authority on the applications to the fund board. In response to a question from Councilor Edgerly Walsh, the Mayor indicated that the board had chosen not to reconsider their recommendations, following questions raised at the previous meeting.
- Councilors Guerlain and Watson engaged in a brief back-and-forth about possible adjustments to the board's procedures.
- Councilor Weiss asked about the status of the proposed citizen survey.
- The Mayor closed the public hearing at 8:27pm.
- 14-019. The Mayor opened the first public hearing on the proposed warning for March 4, 2014 Annual City Meeting at 8:28. Finance Director Sandra Gallup addressed the Council on the warning.
- Councilor Weiss had questions about one of the draft items, and had further concerns about the relationship between Montpelier Alive and the DID district under Article 11. A review of the DID structure (from the City Manager) followed.
- The Mayor closed the public hearing at 8:36pm.
- Councilor Hooper moved that the proposed public safety charter language be included on the annual City Meeting ballot. Councilor Guerlain seconded. The motion passed unanimously at 8:37.
- 14-020. Councilor Edgerly Walsh moved that the Council set the date, time, and location of annual City Meeting as Tuesday, March 4th, 2014, from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. in the City Hall Auditorium. Councilor Hooper seconded the motion, which carried unanimously at 8:38.
- 14-021. The Mayor opened second reading/public hearing regarding a proposed ordinance change that addresses dog waste at 8:38. A discussion among Councilors of some wording followed.
- John Akielaszek rose against the ordinance, testifying that concerns over "off-trail" canine defecation were overstated, and that the proposed provisions were inappropriate. He expressed concern that citizens would be exposed to tick-borne illnesses through the expectation that dogs be followed off defined trails.
- Lyn Munno and Susan Ritz responded to Mr. Akielaszek, noting environmental impacts of dog waste and countering with their opinion that the concerns over the prevalence of off-trail waste were not overstated. Mr. Akielaszek followed up, restating his concern.
- Councilor Guerlain moved the Council change "defecation" to "pet waste" in the ordinance. Councilor Edgerly Walsh seconded. The motion was agreed to unanimously at 8:56. The Mayor immediately closed the hearing.

Councilor Guerlain moved the Council approve the ordinance as amended. Councilor Edgerly Walsh seconded. The motion was agreed to unanimously at 8:57.

Councilor Weiss asked Parks Director Geoff Beyer about the status of strategizing around the expected arrival of the emerald ash borer to the area.

- 14-022. On the continued discussion regarding the "public banking initiative," the Mayor again recused himself and passed the gavel to Councilor Golonka, who acted as president of the meeting for the duration of the agenda item. Ben Eastwood continued his advocacy from the prior meeting, responding to Councilor Weiss's concerns over the immediate relevance of the proposed ballot item to the citizens of the city. He also provided clarity on the language of the ballot measure versus the language of the legislative proposal promoted by Senator Anthony Pollina (P/D – Washington).

Councilor Guerlain moved that the public banking initiative question as proposed be added to the annual city meeting ballot, with the language "call on the state legislature to create a public bank" changed to "call on the state legislature to consider the creation of a public bank." Councilor Hooper seconded. Councilor Weiss repeated his objection, based on inconsistencies between the ballot item language and proposals being discussed in the legislature.

Councilor Guerlain amended his motion to include an allowance for a non-specified parenthetical on the ballot indicating that the article was appearing under a request by some city citizens, rather than the Council. Councilor Hooper (seconder) agreed.

The motion carried 5-1 at 9:14pm, with Councilor Golonka voting in opposition.

- 14-023. The Mayor resumed his duties as meeting chair and opened the first public hearing (at 9:15pm) to consider proposed amendments to the City's Code of Ordinances: Chapter 10, Motor Vehicles and Traffic, Article VII. Parking and Parking Meter Zones, Sec. 10-713. NIGHT PARKING DURING WINTER, as it relates to additional parking during the overnight winter parking ban; and Article 10-717, LIMITED PARKING, which will address the restriction of non-electric vehicles parking in the space adjacent to the (ev) charging station behind City Hall. Public Works Director Todd Law addressed the Council to explain the proposals and respond to several questions on the particulars offered by councilors.

The Mayor closed the public hearing at 9:32.

- 14-024. The Mayor opened the first public hearing to consider proposed amendments to the City's Code of Ordinances: Chapter 10, Motor Vehicles and Traffic, Article VII. Parking and Parking Meter Zones, Sec. 10-716. PARKING PROHIBITED, as it relates to vehicles parking on National Life Drive north of the main entrance to the National Life Complex. Mr. Law remained at the table to explain the proposal and entertain Council questions.

The Mayor closed the public hearing at 9:34pm.

- 14-025. Councilor Guerlain asked that he be replaced as the Council liaison to the Tree Board. Councilor Hooper volunteered to take on the role.

Councilor Watson reported on the Energy Committee's progress on the solar project.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh asked that future Council meetings be scheduled not to conflict with School Board meetings.

14-026. Mayor Hollar reported that the Vermont Mayor's Coalition was holding a press conference tomorrow on mental health services reform, statewide property tax reform, addition and treatment initiatives, downtown support, and stormwater runoff.

14-028. The City Manager reported on the Carr Lot Committee progress. He also noted that a February Council meeting fell on school vacation. The sense of the council was to move the meeting in conflict to February 19th.

Mr. Fraser noted that his professional credentials required a review process that he suggested could proceed concurrent to his contract review process.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh moved for adjournment. Councilor Guerlain seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 9:4.