

Minutes of the Montpelier City Council Special Meeting
January 23, 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.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.

- 14-030. Councilor Weiss moved approval of the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilor Watson. The motion carried unanimously at 6:31.
- 14-031. Councilor Hooper moved appointment of Diane Richardson to the Americans with Disabilities Act compliance (ADA) committee, and was seconded by Councilor Guerlain. The motion passed unanimously at 6:32.
- 14-032. Kevin Casey (of the city Planning Department), Jesse Jacobs of the Downtown Improvement District (DID) committee were joined by Meg Schultz to review the committee's recommendation for funding of the Megan Schultz Events and Design (MSED) proposal for a Montpelier "Park in the Street" (working title) event for June 21st 2014, with a project cost not to exceed \$14,000. Mr. Casey introduced the agenda item, before turning it over to Ms. Schultz.

Mayor Hollar expressed concerns about the DID process, and invited Jon Anderson to the microphone to share his analysis and concerns about how the DID project was proceeding. He also expressed concerns about the "Park in the Street" proposal's price tag, voicing preference for a bike-themed weekend festival.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh expressed concerns about the DID process as well, but noted that Ms. Schultz did move through the current process as it is set up.

Councilor Weiss asked about the decision-making hierarchy on proposals relating to the DID committee, Montpelier Alive, and the Merchants Association. Councilor Guerlain echoed the concerns about coordination, adding that he viewed an event proposal from the DID committee with skepticism.

Jesse Jacobs responded to the concerns on the merits of the festival, while Ms. Schultz responded to concerns about coordination between the DID committee and Montpelier Alive. Councilor Guerlain repeated his concern that the conflict playing out suggested a conflict between two organizations with similar mandates.

Councilor Golonka expressed concern that a festival was not consistent with the initial DID organizational proposal, and was also concerned about vendors competing with local businesses.

Mayor Hollar echoed concerns about the DID process. Councilor Edgerly Walsh reviewed the particulars of what the council asked of the committee and urged the council to

respect that process. Councilors Guerlain and Watson spoke positively of the concept of the proposed festival, but repeated process concerns.

Mayor Hollar suggested the council step back from the proposal on the table and reconsider the DID process.

Councilor Weiss moved that the Mayor appoint a council committee to consider an alternative mechanism by which we allocate the DID funds, to bring that proposal before the council, and to consider how the proposal before us now could be considered in that context. Councilor Watson seconded.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh suggested the second part of the motion (dealing with the specific festival before the council) be separated and presented as a standalone vote, as the proposal on the table has been vetted. A discussion followed.

Councilors Watson and Weiss agreed to remove the clause dealing with the festival from their motion. Councilor Guerlain then moved the council approve the "Park in the Street" proposal. Councilor Hooper seconded. Councilor Golonka spoke against the proposal. This motion carried 5-1 (Councilor Golonka voted nay) at 7:15.

The previous Weiss-Watson motion was then called (as modified), and passed unanimously at 7:16.

Mr. Anderson indicated he would work to bring Montpelier Alive into support of the event.

- 14-033. Finance Director Sandra Gallup, Teresa Kajenski of Fothergill Segal & Valley, CPAs, and Ruth Doktor (of the city Finance Department) came forward to present the FY '13 Audit Report. Ms. Kajenski reviewed the audit's findings. Councilor Golonka had questions about the fund balance goal.

Ms. Gallup acknowledged her Finance staff in attendance.

- 14-038. Before conducting the second public hearing on the warning for March 4, 2014 Annual City Meeting, the Mayor invited Arne McMullen (Recreation Department Director) to review the proposed Rec Department budget (listed as Article 4 on the warning). Councilor Watson stepped down for the discussion, due to conflicts of interest.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh had questions on how capital improvements were reflected in the proposed budget, and about the department's fund balance. Councilor Golonka asked about the relationship between the two in the context of previous conversations, and was concerned that the proposal masked an unsustainable level of spending which could create problems when the fund balance becomes depleted over time. He also expressed concern that he had not been made aware of this dynamic as a Recreation Department board member.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh asked about the fund balance target percentage. Mayor Hollar asked about the condition of the Recreation Center. He also asked about communication between the department and Community Connections.

Councilor Golonka initiated a brief discussion of pool use (and whether non-residents were paying a fair share to access it), and whether the Mountaineers' lease (which is coming up for review in the next couple years) is sufficient, given the costs incurred by the city.

Councilor Guerlain asked about the Recreation Department's snow plowing duties. He also asked if there was any reason the Rec Department couldn't be merged with the Senior Center.

Councilor Weiss indicated that he could facilitate a presentation from the Mountaineers, if it were so desired.

Superintendent Brian Ricca and School Board Chair Sue Aldrich came before the council to discuss the school budget proposal (listed as article 3 on the proposed warning). Council Watson remained seated for this discussion as well.

Mayor Hollar asked about plans to manage the increasing per pupil spending value.

Councilor Guerlain asked about the sustainability of continued increases. Mr. Ricca indicated staff would have to be reduced to make substantial cuts in the future.

Councilor Weiss asked about the use of the fund balance in the proposed budget. He also asked about how well the tax bill increases under the proposed budget were fully understood, as he did not see them to be as catastrophic as they have been discussed.

Councilor Golonka asked about the potential for bringing in students from other districts.

Page Guertin asked about the degree of involvement by the school in legislative discussions on school funding that are underway.

Vicki Lane rose to speak against the school budget increases, citing the personal impact and calling for staff cuts.

- 14-039. Mr. Ricca and Ms. Aldrich stayed before the council to discuss consideration of a proposed State Parking Lot on the grounds of Montpelier High School. Mr. Ricca indicated there was little support from their previous discussions, but that they were willing to discuss it. Mayor Hollar indicated he was disinclined to enter such a discussion if it was unlikely to be approved.
- 14-034. The mayor opened the second public hearing on the final charter for the public safety Authority. Councilor Golonka explained the changes since the last iteration. Councilor Edgerly moved to approve the language in the current document and move it for the Annual Meeting ballot. Councilor Guerlain seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 8:45.
- 14-035. The mayor began the second public hearing on proposed amendments to the city's charter (8:45) with proposed additional language that would provide for parklets. A discussion followed.

Councilor Watson moved approval of the charter amendments with the changes, seconded by Councilor Guerlain. The motion carried unanimously.

14-034. Councilor Guerlain moved (at Councilor Golonka's request) a change to language in the beginning of Section 1 of the public safety charter, altering the phrase "two towns" to "member towns." Councilor Hooper seconded and the motion carried unanimously at 8:50.

14-037. The mayor opened the second public hearing on the proposed FY '15 municipal budget at 8:50. Councilor Guerlain moved approval of the budget, and was seconded by Councilor Hooper. The motion passed unanimously at 8:52.

14-038. The mayor opened the second public hearing on the warning for the March 4, 2014 Annual City Meeting. Finance Director Sandra Gallup came to the front to answer questions.

City Manager Fraser suggested the phrase "shall be administered by a Downtown Improvement District Committee, appointed by the City Council" be removed.

Councilor Guerlain moved that the council approve article 11, amended as suggested by the City Manager, and removing "by Montpelier Alive" from the "requested by" credit. Councilor Watson seconded. The motion carried 4-2 at 8:57, with Councilors Weiss & Golonka opposed.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh made a motion to reconsider the vote just taken. She then withdrew the motion.

Councilor Hooper moved approval of the full warning as amended. Councilor Watson seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 9:00.

14-040. At 9:01, the Mayor opened the second 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. 10-713. 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. A discussion of time limitations on the ev charging station followed.

Councilor Hooper moved passage of the proposed ordinance, Councilor Guerlain seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 9:04.

14-041. The Mayor opened the second 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. Councilor Edgerly Walsh moved passage of the ordinance. Councilor Watson seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 9:04.

14-042. Councilor Guerlain praised Sarducci's following their anniversary party. He also noted an upcoming February 20th citizen meeting before the Annual Meeting.

- 14-043. Mayor Hollar reported on the discussion with the Governor on education financing
- 14-045. City Manager Fraser reported on the recent "Tabletop Training" on emergency procedures held with city staff. He also reported on the progress of the 1 Taylor Street (formerly Carr Lot) committee.
- 14-044. The City Clerk noted the upcoming filing deadline, and BCA meetings.

Councilor Guerlain moved adjournment. Councilor Hooper seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 9:12pm.