

**Minutes of the Montpelier City Council Meeting
July 10, 2013
Montpelier City Hall Council Chambers**

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

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

13-177 Councilor Alan Weiss moved approval of the consent agenda, seconded by Councilor Guerlain. The motion carried unanimously at 6:32PM.

13-178. Councilor Weiss asked that the votes to set the Fiscal Year 2014 Municipal Tax Rate of \$.9634 and the Downtown Improvement District Tax Rate of \$.0515 be taken separately. The mayor noted that the proposed municipal tax rate was significantly lower than anticipated.

Councilor Watson moved that the Council set a Fiscal Year 2014 Municipal Tax Rate of \$.9634. The motion was seconded by Councilor Guerlain, and passed unanimously at 6:34.

Councilor Weiss asked that the Downtown Improvement District (DID) committee be required to submit their work plan. The mayor indicated the plan has to be approved under the active plan. Councilor Guerlain asked for some clarifications.

Councilor Guerlain moved the Council set a Fiscal Year 2014 Downtown Improvement District Tax Rate of \$.0515. Councilor Golonka seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 6:36.

13-179. Councilor Guerlain moved the appointment to the Development Review Board of Joshua O' Hara and Daniel Richardson. Councilor Edgerly Walsh seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 6:38.

13-180. Tim Shea of National Life indicated he would like the city's support as they begin the Act 248 approval process to install a 500kW ground mount photovoltaic system. He passed out a document which detailed the layout.

In response to Councilor Weiss's question, Councilor Watson indicated that the project had not been reviewed by the energy committee. Councilor Watson felt that a private solar installation was probably not within the energy committee's purview.

Councilor Guerlain commended National Life for the project.

Councilor Jessica Edgerly Walsh made a motion to authorize the Mayor to send a letter of support for the project on behalf of the council. Councilor Guerlain seconded the motion, which carried unanimously at 6:49PM.

- 13-181. The mayor opened the second public hearing for the consideration of amendments to the City's Code of Ordinances, Chapter 10, Motor Vehicles and Traffic, Article VII. Parking and Parking Meter Zones, Section 10-716. PARKING PROHIBITED, as it relates to certain parking restrictions on East State Street at 6:49.
- The public hearing was closed at 6:50.
- Councilor Guerlain, seconded by Councilor Edgerly Walsh moved approval of the proposed amendments to the City's Code of Ordinances, Chapter 10, Motor Vehicles and Traffic, Article VII. Parking and Parking Meter Zones, Section 10-716. PARKING PROHIBITED, as it relates to certain parking restrictions on East State Street. The motion carried unanimously at 6:51.
- 13-182. The mayor opened the second public hearing to consider proposed amendments to the City's Code of Ordinances as they relate to various licenses issued by the City at 6:51. The Clerk noted syntax corrections made at the mayor's request during the previous public hearing on the issue.
- The public hearing was closed at 6:52.
- Councilor Golonka moved approval of the proposed amendments to the City's Code of Ordinances as they relate to various licenses issued by the City, with an understanding that the clerk would present the current license fee schedule to the Council at the next meeting, for the purpose of considering further revisions. Councilor Guerlain seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 7:03.
- 13-183. The mayor opened the second public hearing to consider a proposed amendment to the City's Code of Ordinances, Chapter 4, Building Regulations, Article 11, Codes - §201-4. AMENDMENTS at 7:03. Fire Chief Robert Gowans addressed the council detailing the proposed changes to the city's sprinkler ordinance.
- The Mayor noted needed the proposal grammatical adjustments (strike the word "do" and "however" from the first sentence. Second section - change "can" to "may") and closed the public hearing at 7:07.
- Councilor Alan Weiss made a motion to approve the proposed amendment to the City's Code of Ordinances, Chapter 4, Building Regulations, Article 11, Codes - §201-4. AMENDMENTS with the grammatical changes. The motion was seconded by Councilor Edgerly Walsh and passed unanimously at 7:08.
- 13-185. The Council opened a discussion regarding Fire Department pull-boxes, placed on the agenda at Councilor Guerlain's request.
- Chief Gowans gave a report on status of the boxes. He indicated the city was spending less than \$1000 a year on maintenance, but noted that it was starting to creep up. He indicated he had no objection to their removal, but that he has heard from citizens that have concerns about doing so. He noted that it had been over 20 years since a fire had been reported from a pull box. He also indicated that representatives of the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL) had no objections to their removal - and that the boxes, in fact, were not handicapped accessible.

Councilor Weiss asked about the routing of 911 calls.

Councilors had questions about the boxes' disposal if removed. Gowans reported they were popular items for sale on eBay.

In response to a question from Councilor Weiss, the Chief suggested a public notification of the removal of the boxes, if such action is settled upon by the council. He also noted that Barre City has shown interest in purchasing some of the boxes for their system

Councilor Golonka moved that the Council authorize the Fire Department to remove the pull-boxes, instruct Chief Gowans to determine their appropriate disposal method and set September 1st as the removal date for purposes of public notification. Councilor Weiss seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 7:20.

13-184. The Council discussed the proposed consolidation of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission and the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation. Assistant City Manager Jessie Baker reported that the board received feedback from municipalities that was against merger, so the board was backing away from the proposal for the time being.

13-186. The status of the City Council's Goal to "provide and receive comprehensive, accessible and useful information to and from constituent groups about the City government and the community" was discussed. Assistant City Manager Baker gave an overview of the goal status.

Councilor Weiss asked if there was a specific plan for collecting feedback from the public. Baker referenced the decision to step back from the citizen survey, as well as expected enhancements to existing technological platforms in developing a plan. Weiss spoke supportively about the survey.

A brief discussion of the cost and structure of Front Porch Forum system followed.

13-187. Councilor Guerlain shared his delight in seeing fewer utility poles. He suggested bartering space to Fairpoint for more pole removal. He further reported that, in regards to last meeting's discussion on the north branch dam, that he was told that the emergency planning exemption the dam had received was not significantly impactful on the overall permitting process.

Councilor Weiss reported that he attended the recent Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) meeting that concerned state funding for service consolidation. He also reported that the charter committee was nearly done with its work, and that the council should provide guidance on the format with which it wants to receive the recommended changes.

Councilor Watson expressed her gratitude for the USS Montpelier glasses.

13-188. The Mayor reported on his lunch with the USS Montpelier crew, where he gave them a key to the city and received a plaque. The City Manager noted that there was a basket of other gifts from the crew.

The mayor addressed the content of a letter that appeared in the paper regarding fire department staffing.

The mayor also reported that the City Manager has retained another attorney to review questions over the Vermont College of Fine Arts' tax assessment. He also commended Montpelier Alive for the Independence Day celebration.

13-190. City Manager Fraser reported on the challenges presented by the rain, particularly in regards to district heat construction. He noted that members of the staff were planning to visit the St. Paul district heat system. Finally, he commended staff - particularly the Assistant City Manager - for their work during his vacation absence.

The Council discussed the remaining summer meeting schedule. The decision was made to drop the July 24th meeting.

Councilor Guerlain moved to adjourn, and was seconded by Councilor Watson. The motion carried unanimously at 8:03PM.