

**Minutes of the Montpelier City Council Meeting  
November 14, 2012  
City Council Chambers, Montpelier City Hall**

In attendance: Mayor John Hollar (presiding), City Manager Bill Fraser, City Councilors Andy Hooper, Thierry Guerlain, Alan Weiss, Anne Watson, and Tom Golonka. Assistant City Clerk Crystal Chase acted as Secretary of the Meeting. Councilor Angela Timpone was not in attendance.

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

12-276. Resident Barney Bloom offered an analogy in response to the article in the newspaper regarding the Planning & Development office. He stated that the Planning & Development offices are like the Engine and the Steering Wheel, and it is necessary for them to work together to produce movement in the right direction.

12-277. Councilor Guerlain moved approval of the consent agenda, seconded by Councilor Watson. Councilor Weiss asked to remove item (F) for special consideration. Consent Agenda was passed with the removal of item (f) on a unanimous vote at 6:35PM.

12-278. Mayor Hollar clarified (in response to an article in the newspaper) that he was not opposed to the proposed medical marijuana dispensary in the city.

As a supplement to his memo attached to the agenda, Chief Facos indicated he had called the US Attorney's office to address some general concerns on the matter (e.g. security, burglary, and the safety of staff, patients and caregivers). He said all of his concerns were satisfied and he feels this is the right approach for medical marijuana dispensary.

In response to Councilor Hooper's question, Chief Facos indicated that the plants would be grown inside a secured facility, but the location was not for public disclosure.

Councilor Guerlain noted his disappointment that, because it was for medical purposes, that it could not be dispensed through pharmacies.

12-279. Public Works Director Todd Law went over his memo (a departmental report) included with the agenda.

12-280. The Council began a discussion of the goal to maintain all city streets, bridges, sidewalks and other infrastructure (tennis courts, parks, rec paths, etc.) in (at minimum) fair or good condition as per appropriate rating indices.

Councilor Guerlain noted that the committee consisted of himself, Councilors Hooper and Timpone. They also received help from finance director Sandy Gallup, Public Works Department representatives Todd Law and Tom McArdle, and City Manager

Fraser.

Councilor Guerlain read through his memo “Capital Improvements Projects” (included with agenda). He noted that looking at the two scenarios listed it was unlikely for us to add 1 million dollars to our budget. He characterized the plans presented as worthy ones, and projects it all comes down to how quickly we want to implement them and how to fund them.

City Manager Fraser said using the second scenario, they were looking at a 10 year cycle, using the first five years to really ramp up the funds of \$800,000 (noting that we could at 166,000 to the budget for five years which would cause a 2 cent increase on the tax rate).

Councilor Golonka questioned Todd Law about the current staff capacity. Law indicated that they plan to stay at their current staff levels, stating that project management is a big part and proactive planning is key. The City Manager added that they would be spacing the improvements out in 3 year increments and that we would not be adding projects just lengthening them.

Councilor Guerlain agreed, stating that the point is - whether you pave 500 feet or 1,000 feet, it would be the same efforts to get the project going - it would just be an extended time for completion.

Councilor Weiss wanted to point out page 29 title 13 sections 3 of the City’s Charter, noting the provision reserving the city’s power to *“upon notice to the owners of adjoining lands assess the owners of such lands so much of the expense of making such new street or sidewalk or street improvements, or heat improvements, including land damage for new streets, as the city council shall adjudge such lands to be benefited thereby.”* City Manager Fraser said that he had also read that recently but as a matter of policy would not recommend it.

Councilor Guerlain added that he understands these are big numbers (that we are currently not funding), which is why we are seeing the need for all these improvements.

Mayor Hollar asked Todd Law what the cost of the repairs we are making to broken or old lines are in comparison to replacing them with new ones. Law replied that with the computer software they are using they can get an exact amount on what each specific break, leak, or repair cost. He indicated he would provide that data.

Mayor Hollar further asked Mr. Law about one of the suggestions made in the Matrix Report, which would entail moving Law’s office down to the DPW garage on Dog River Rd. Law replied that moving his office to directly supervise the employees at the Dog River facility would not be effective due to the fact that all but 4 employees are on the roads on a daily basis. He also noted that City Hall was a much more accessible location for other department heads as well as citizens.

City Manager Fraser also backed Law’s response, stating that this was an issue discussed about 18 years ago (when he was first hired), and City Hall was thought to be the better

location for the director's office at that time.

Mayor Hollar asked about creating a citizens committee to look at the sidewalks and public walk ways. Mr. Law indicated that they already have a volunteer group going out to assess sidewalks and looking for trip hazards.

The Mayor asked about the status of the removal process for the dual utility poles. Law responded that Tom McArdle was in contact with Fairpoint and that Fairpoint had been very responsive. A schedule and plan for removal was in development.

Councilor Guerlain questioned the need for the fire alarm pull boxes that are situated around town and the possibility of getting rid of those to save money. City Manager Fraser said that they were already in the process but the maintenance expense was minimal.

12-281. Councilor Golonka reminded people of the four-town regional public safety committee meeting taking place tomorrow night at 7pm.

Councilor Watson reminded the council that the Vermont Comprehensive Energy meeting is also taking place tomorrow night and that the committee voted to participate in the efficient Vermont weatherization challenge.

Councilor Guerlain reported that the Union School annual Thanksgiving luncheon was today and was a great event!

Councilor Hooper noted that he thought the CIP committee had a great fresh approach and was satisfied.

12-282. Mayor Hollar reported that the Bike Summit event was a great success with around 70 people attending with lots of enthusiasm.

12-283. Assistant City Clerk Chase reminded people that the Property Tax payments were due on the following day (November 15).

12-284. City Manager Fraser reminded the council that the status of item (F) of the consent agenda was still unresolved. Councilor Weiss asked that the council table the item until the next meeting. Councilor Hooper seconded the motion, which passed unanimously at 8:02PM.

Councilor Hooper moved for adjournment. Councilor Guerlain seconded. The motion passed unanimously at 8:07PM.