

**Minutes of the Montpelier City Council Meeting
November 20, 2013
Montpelier City Hall Council Chambers**

In attendance: Mayor John Hollar (presiding), City Councilors Thierry Guerlain, Jessica Edgerly Walsh, Alan Weiss, Andy Hooper, Tom Golonka and 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.

13-279. Councilor Weiss moved approval of the consent agenda. Councilor Edgerly Walsh seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

13-282. Nolan Langwell, Michael Clausen and Brian Cain of the Parking Committee presented the results of their recent online survey, and discussed its implications. In particular, they discussed their concerns around winter parking policy, and some of the work they had done to address it. The Mayor asked about the committee's discussions on the forthcoming impact of the Carr Lot development. Councilor Watson asked about what other specific points had drawn the committee's attention.

Councilor Weiss moved the council receive the report. Councilor Hooper seconded. The motion carried unanimously at 6:48.

13-281. Nancy Sherman and Page Guertin of the Charter Change Committee addressed the council on the charter change proposals, taking up where the previous meeting's discussion left off. There was discussion of wording on the section referring to the city manager's employment. The committee agreed to reconsider the language. The council went on to ask questions relating to city indebtedness policy, takings (in particular as relating to non-profits), special assessments, oaths of office, with committee members taking note of the council sentiments informally.

13-280. Finance Director Sandra Gallup and Public Works Director Todd Law reviewed the proposed changes to the water/sewer billing paradigm, explaining the challenges that led to the proposal and its projected impacts on customers.

Councilors had questions on the rationale behind billing condominiums and apartments differently.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh was concerned about the impact on those outlying ratepayers whose costs will increase significantly under the proposal.

Councilor Weiss asked for clarification on the impact of the new proposal on water/sewer fund deficits.

The mayor called for a five minute recess at 8:16.

13-283.

Todd Law and Street Supervisor Brian Tuttle addressed the council on the work of the Public Works department and their budgetary priorities. Mr. Law discussed the proposed changes in personnel resources envisioned in the department's budget priorities. He also reviewed the potential impact of sewer flow ratings and new regulations on the budget. Mr. Tuttle discussed winter maintenance staffing priorities.

Councilor Weiss asked about winter coordination with cemetery staff. He further asked Mr. Law for feedback on some of the proposals presented by the parking committee earlier in the meeting.

Councilor Hooper asked about winter plowing procedures during evening storms.

At the City Manager's prompting, Mr. Law noted that salt spreader calibration was now electronic and more finely controllable, enabling the treatments to be done more efficiently and conservatively. He also noted the current lower salt prices. The mayor asked about salt use on sidewalks, and Mr. Law indicated that sidewalk salting options were cruder, but that the city's new spreader was actually superior to most which may help. Address the concerns. Councilor Edgerly Walsh asked about salt alternatives.

Police Chief Tony Facos briefed the council on the proposed police department budgetary priorities. He started by reviewing systems changes in the department over the previous year. He then reviewed the year ending's crime rates.

Councilor Weiss suggested the chief address the council after the legislative session to discuss the impacts of legislation.

Fire Chief Robert Gowans reviewed the fire department activities over the year and discussed his budget priorities, focusing on health, public safety/emergency management systems, and fire operations.

Councilor Weiss asked about the impacts of changing emergency medicine protocols.

The mayor asked for a report on the impact of this fiscal year's staffing changes. Chief Gowans indicated it had been negligible.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh wondered if more weather-related events were anticipated this year, and asked Chief Gowans to comment on the potential impacts.

Chief Gowans indicated the department would focus on ambulance revenue, performance-based employee evaluations, meeting the new ems standards, and awareness training.

Councilor Guerlain suggested the fire and police chiefs be invited back to discuss the regionalization initiative.

13-284. Councilor Hooper asked about liquidated damages in the contract.

Assistant City Manager Jessie Baker briefed the council on district heat progress, making note of coming weather-driven pressures.

Councilor Guerlain asked for an update on district heat. Councilor Hooper added that a Barre Street update would also be good. Mr. Law indicated that there had been delays on the Barre Street work, and that the project was still 3-4 weeks out from completion. The delays related to problems around the relocation of a water line.

Councilor Guerlain asked about the previously referenced October 17th completion deadline. City Manager Fraser took responsibility for communications challenges that confused the perception of the October 17 system deadline versus the final street work deadlines that are, overall, close to the schedule that was laid out.

Councilor Guerlain expressed concerns about the impact on downtown businesses over the construction, particularly in light of confusion over the construction schedule.

Councilor Watson asked about the sculpture on Stonecutter's Way, wondering what the status of moving that sculpture was.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh expressed her excitement to see the applications from nonprofits for the fireboxes.

13-285. The Mayor noted the meeting of the Vermont Coalition of Mayors tomorrow and reported on the meeting of the Carr Lot Design Review Committee.

13-287. City Manager Fraser reported on the budget process.

Councilor Edgerly Walsh moved for adjournment. Councilor Watson seconded. Motion carried unanimously at 9:35.