

minutes of the Montpelier City Council Meeting – NOT FINALIZED
January 13, 2021 6:30pm
Videoconference

In attendance: Mayor Anne Watson (Chair), Councilors Dona Bate, Conor Casey, Lauren Hierl, Dan Richardson, Jay Ericson, and Jack McCullough. City Clerk John Odum acted as secretary.

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

- 2021-012. The agenda was approved by acclim with the additions of liquor license renewals to the consent agenda and the Council photo at the end.
- 2021-013. General Business and Appearances. Stephen Whitaker spoke on the availability of facilities at the transit center and City Hall.
- 2021-014. The consent agenda was moved by Councilor McCullough and seconded by Councilor Richardson. After brief discussion, Councilor McCullough moved to amend his motion to remove the ACCD grant for discussion. Councilor Hierl seconded and the motion to amend carried unanimously. The underlying motion as amended passed unanimously.
- 2021-015. The Budget Public Hearing was opened at 6:46. Comments were received from: Stephen Whitaker, Mara Stevens, Stella Cohn, Flynn Aldrich, Stephanie Gomory, Abbey Jermyn, Rachel Desilets, Lucy Jerman, Meredith Warner, Peter Kelman, Shaun Stevens, and Nell Sather, regarding Police and Public Works budgets.
- Councilor McCullough moved to adopt the budget and present it at the next public hearing. Councilor Bate seconded and the motion carried unanimously. The public hearing was closed at 8:09 PM.
- 2021-014 The Council discussed consent agenda item c. ACCD Better Places Grant Application. Councilor McCullough moved to approve and was seconded by Councilor Bate. The motion carried unanimously. Stephen Whitaker gave comments during discussion.

The meeting was called into a recess at 8:30 and reconvened at 8:40.

- 2021-016. The Council review 2nd Quarter budget status. No formal action.
- 2020-017. After discussion (which included Police Chief Peete), Councilor McCullough moved to adopt the Council Resolution concerning National Election and related events with the following language appended to the document as presented at the end of the final “Whereas” paragraph the following: “in addition there is neither need or necessity to be armed at this protest and anyone coming to any of these events please do so without firearms.” Councilor Richardson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.
- 2021-019. Retail Cannabis Ballot Item. Virginia Renfrew and Chief Peete participated. Councilor Bate moved that we put “Shall the City of Montpelier permit the operation of cannabis Retailers and Integrated Licensees which are licensed by the State of Vermont pursuant

to Act 164 of 2020, subject to such municipal ordinance and regulation as the City Council may lawfully adopt and implement” onto the Town Meeting Day ballot. Councilor Casey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

2020-020. The lawsuit to force Clerks’ offices to return to pre-COVID access procedures was discussed. Councilor McCullough moved we express the sense of the Council to oppose the relief sought by this litigation, although not promoting any funds or resources to do so. Councilor Bate seconded.

Councilor McCullough with agreement from the second amended his motion to strike all language and replace with the following: “It is the sense of the Council that the limits on access to the Montpelier Land Records adopted by the Montpelier City Clerk are reasonable; and reasonably targeted to protect the public health and safety while maintaining reasonable access to public documents; and in conformity with Vermont law and the governor’s executive order. Consequently, the Montpelier City Council supports the municipalities who are opposing the action now pending as Connecticut Attorneys Title Insurance Company v. Town of Bolton, et al.” The motion carried unanimously.

2020-021. The hearing for the Warning for 2021 Annual City Meeting opened at 9:48. After discussion, it was closed at 9:52 PM. No action taken.

2021-023. Council Reports: Councilor Bate spoke about creative uses of current properties for housing. Councilor Casey encouraged people to download the MyRide app. Councilor Ericson (with Kevin Casey) discussed the successful Vermont River Conservation grant, noting the participation of city staff and his wife. Councilor Richardson spoke about the possibility of attracting the Vermont Law School to Montpelier, suggested a welcome packet to new city residents, and encouraged listeners to stay safe. Councilor McCullough echoed the comments, encouraging residents to stay home during the pro-Trump demonstrations. Councilor Hierl commented on the President’s second impeachment and potential threats to the community, and also thanked the Police and Fire Chiefs for their work.

2021-024. The Mayor's echoed council comments about public safety and the coming demonstration. She noted that the City Manager evaluation was on the way.

2021-025. The City Clerk gave an election update.

2021-026. The City Manager commended the police department before ceding the floor to Chief Peete for an update. Brief discussion followed.

A Councilor Bate’s request, Councilors McCullough, Hierl, and Richardson spoke briefly on behalf of their candidacies for re-election.

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15PM.