

Minutes of the Montpelier City Council Meeting
March 13, 2019 6:30pm
City Council Chambers, City Hall

In attendance: Mayor Anne Watson (Chair), Councilors Dona Bate, Conor Casey, Lauren Hierl, Ashley Hill, Glen Hutcheson, and Jack McCullough, and City Manager Bill Fraser. Assistant City Clerk Sheila Healy acted as secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 6:32pm.

- 19-081. Without objection, the proposed agenda was adopted.
- 19-082. Ian Quinlan came forward for a brief discussion on the Winter Parking Ban, and suggested the Council reconsider banning parking on Elm St. on nights when there is no immediate need for snow removal. City Manager Bill Fraser recommended adding this item to the agenda for a future Council meeting wherein the 2018-2019 Winter Parking Ban will be discussed in more detail. Steve Whittaker came forward for a brief discussion on city infrastructure, suggesting that the signs on Baldwin St be removed, and providing Council with a legislative update on the feasibility study for train service in Montpelier.
- 19-083. Councilor McCullough moved to approve the consent agenda. Councilor Casey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- 19-084. City Manager Bill Fraser opened discussion on whether the council wishes to continue doing site visits and tours of city facilities, and the Councilors confirmed that they would after brief discussion. Fraser also announced that Montpelier has a new City Council Handbook.
- 19-085. Mayor Watson opened discussion on the Council's ethics policy. Councilor Hierl moved to approve the ethics policy. Councilor Bate seconded. Councilor Hill posed a question for brief discussion regarding the Council's policy for identifying conflicts of interest. The motion carried unanimously.
- 19-086. Council opened discussion on rules of procedure for electing officers. Councilor McCullough moved to adopt the rules of procedure as written. Councilor Casey seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- 19-087. Council opened discussion on electing a President, Vice President and Parliamentarian. Councilor McCullough confirmed that a second is not needed for nominations.
- Councilor Hutcheson nominated Councilor McCullough to be Parliamentarian. Councilor Bate seconded. Councilor McCullough accepted. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilor Bate nominated Councilor Hill for President. Councilor Hill accepted. The appointment carried unanimously
Councilor Casey nominated Councilor Bate for Vice President. Councilor Bate accepted. The appointment carried unanimously.

- 19-088. Garret Baxter from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns came forward to provide Council with a presentation on Vermont's Open Meeting Law, and to lead a discussion and answer questions from Council.

The Mayor called a 5 minute recess before the meeting reconvened.

- 19-089. The Council opened discussion on appointments to committees. After discussion, Councilor Hill moved to approve the following committee appointments and changes:

- Americans with Disabilities Committee: Councilor McCullough will remain on committee,
- Building Code Appeals Committee: Councilor Hutcheson will remain, and Councilor Hill will replace Councilor Krueger.
- Capitol Complex Committee: Council will make this appointment in the future.
- Capital Improvement Plan Committee: Mayor Watson and Councilors Bate and Hutcheson will remain.
- Central VT Public Safety Authority: Councilors Bate and Hill will remain.
- Central VT Regional Planning Commission: Councilor Bate will remain.
- Central VT Solid Waste Management: Councilor Hierl will replace Councilor Bate.
- Citizen Advisory Board: Councilor Casey will replace Councilor Hill.
- City Hall Art Committee: Mayor Watson and Councilors Bate and Hutcheson will remain, (with Hutcheson as Committee Chair).
- Energy Advisory Committee: Mayor Watson will remain, and Councilor Hierl will join.
- Harry Sheridan Scholarship: Mayor Watson will remain.
- Housing Task Force: Jack McCullough will remain.
- Housing Trust Fund: Jack McCullough will remain.
- Investment Committee: Councilor Casey will replace Mayor Watson.
- Montpelier Alive Board: Councilor Casey will remain.
- Parking Task Force: Mayor Watson and Councilor Bate will remain.
- Social & Economic Justice Advisory Committee: Councilor Hierl replaced Councilor Hill.
- Transportation Infrastructure: Councilor Bate will remain, and Councilors McCullough and Casey will join.
- T.W. Wood Board: Councilor Hutcheson will remain.
- Water Rate Study Committee: No appointments to be made.

Councilor McCullough seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

- 19-900. Council opened discussion on Central VT Solid Waste Management District Appointment. Councilor Bate moved to appoint Ellen Cheney to the committee, and Councilor Hierl as alternate. Councilor McCullough seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- 19-091. Council opened discussion on Montpelier Transportation Infrastructure Committee Appointment. Councilor Casey moved to appoint Kate McCann to the committee. Councilor Hutcheson seconded. The motion carried unanimously.
- 19-093. Councilor Bate reported that the Infrastructure Committee had approved expenditure for a new bike rack, and the Complete Streets Committee has been working with Norwich University on design. The Parks Committee also has elected a new member- Kassia Randzio. Councilor Bate is also working to get more state funds for Montpelier's bridges and roads.

Councilor Casey shared that Council had previously made a motion to engage ESG experts to look at divesting from groups whose message is counter to labor, human or good citizen rights. There is now a group of experts who will join a public meeting soon to discuss these issues. Councilor Casey has also drafted a new socially responsible contractor ordinance that will be discussed in future meetings. Councilor Casey urged everyone to fill out the scooter survey with their input about the return of electric scooters.

Councilor Hutcheson shared that the T.W. Wood Gallery is searching for a new Executive Director, and that there is now a helpful new snow plow tracker available on the City's website. Councilor Hutcheson will be at Bagitos tomorrow (Thursday 3/14) from 8:30-9:30am for a listening session.

Councilor Hill thanked District 3 voters for voting on Town Meeting Day and expressed the need for starting conversations about article 14 as soon as possible.

Councilor McCullough shared that the ADA Committee has been going through process of evaluating all municipal properties in city and has retained a consultant to come up with a plan for bringing everything into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, from City Hall to Hubbard Park. Committee will be presenting a plan to the Council, with a goal of having a plan in place by June 1st.

Councilor Hierl thanked the voters of District 1 and encouraged them to contact her any time with input. Her information is on the City Council website.

- 19.094. Mayor Watson reported that Energy Committee is working on several projects, including projects that have potential with regards to the green revolving loan fund, projects that involve exciting prospects for biodiesel, and weatherization projects that would make buildings more energy efficient. The Mayor is also staying up to date on the water resource recovery facility project. Mayor Watson

thanked everyone who came out to vote on Town Meeting Day and is excited to start having extensive public discussions about article 14.

- 19.095. Assistant Clerk Sheila Healy reported that the Town Meeting Day election ran smoothly, but the Montpelier Clerk's office is continuing to look at ways to encourage more civic participation in Town Meeting Day. It was also reported that the two charter changes passed by the voters of Montpelier in the November, 2018 election are continuing to move through the State Legislature.
- 19.096. City Manager Bill Fraser reported that he has been talking with the Mayor and the City's consultant about the upcoming strategic planning sessions on the 15th and 16th of April, and how to make them as successful as possible. City Manager Fraser also shared that the Montpelier school has put out an RFP for after school programs, and that the Montpelier Recreation Department had been in the midst of planning for a similar program. The proposals are due Friday, and the City Manager asked that the Council let staff know if they disagree with staff submitting a proposal. The Council did not have any objections after brief discussion. The City Manager also reminded people that the weather this weekend is going to warm up, and City staff will be holding an emergency team meeting and call with the national weather service to ensure Montpelier can deal with the flood warning safely and effectively. Brief discussion about weather alerts followed.
- 19.097. Councilor McCullough moved that the Council find that there is an issue related to litigation that premature general public knowledge would place the public body at a substantial disadvantage. Councilor Hill seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Steve Whittaker asked that public comment remain open and came forward to bring 2 issues to the Council's attention: 1. That DNW Construction has been using more space than is needed for storage with regards to the former M and M Beverage property, and 2. That the City needs a clear policy about when to require parking payments when snow banks make access to meters difficult. Councilor McCullough moved that Council go into Executive Session pursuant to 1 VSA Section 313A1 for the purposes of discussing pending civil litigation to which the City is a party. Councilor Hierl seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Without objection, the meeting returned to open session and was subsequently adjourned at 8:49pm.