

Mon., Mar. 23rd	Public Art Commission	5:00 PM	City Manager's Conference Room, City Hall Conference Call, TBD
Tue., Mar. 24th	Conservation Commission	6:30 PM	Conference Call, TBD
Wed., Mar. 25th	Homelessness Task Force	11:30 AM	City Council Chambers, City Hall Conference Call, TBD
Wed., Mar. 25th	City Council Meeting	6:30 PM	City Council Chambers, City Hall



Community Prosperity

Budget

We are reviewing the current status of the FY20 budget as well as projections for FY21 with regard to possible impact from COVID 19. The FY20 budget is already very tight, revenue loss will require some real belt tightening. We will have harder numbers before next week's meeting. In the meantime we are putting holds on all major spending and hiring.



Environmental Stewardship

MPD Hybrid Cruiser

The Montpelier Police Department has purchased a 2020 Ford Utility SUV Hybrid cruiser. It is a new platform for police vehicles and is the first hybrid police vehicle for the Montpelier Police Department. Graphics and police specific equipment will be installed starting next week. The cruiser is anticipated to be online and serving our City within the next 2 weeks.



Responsive and Responsible Government

Coping with COVID-19

(See Attached)

Montpelier Takes Action to Address Covid-19 Impact

The Montpelier City Council unanimously approved a series of actions related to concerns caused by emergency measures implemented to halt the spread of COVID-19.

At their meeting of March 18, the Council voted to:

- Immediately suspend use of parking meters and related enforcement. Until further notice, people will not be required to pay for parking at meters and no enforcement will occur for meter violations. Enforcement will continue for improper use of accessible spaces, blocking hydrants, blocking driveways, snow emergency regulations and other such violations.
- Property Tax installments due on May 15th will not accrue interest or penalties for late payments until June 15th. This date will be reviewed, along with water/sewer due dates in May in light of circumstances which may exist at that time. People who are able to make their tax payments by May 15th are urged to do so in order to maintain public operations without excessive borrowing.
- Direct the City Manager to review the city's budget for all projects and purchases which could be delayed while maintaining essential services. This is to offset anticipated revenue shortfalls from rooms, meals and alcohol taxes, parking fees/fines and recreation/senior programming. This is also to potentially reallocate funding to address emergency community needs.
- Authorize the Mayor to initiate reformation of the Capital Area Neighborhoods (CAN) program to create local support systems for residents.

Planning Department quarantine

As of Friday, the entire planning department and building inspection staff is under quarantine. It is unknown at this time when this will end. Staff are still working from home but not having anyone in the office means some services cannot be handled.

- First, there will not be anyone available to answer the phones. Please email questions to staff and if you do not know who to contact you can contact Mike Miller at mmiller@montpelier-vt.org.
- Second, there will be no one to help with title searches of permit files. Please plan ahead for all title searches as we cannot guarantee timely service. Please email Audra Brown any requests (abrown@montpelier-vt.org) and we will help as soon as we are available and in the office.
- Third, inspections will be on hold. Please contact Chris Lumbra (clumbra@montpelier-vt.org) and he can advise you on any inspections you have coming up. Again, please be planning in advance as much as you can.

As for other impacts related to Covid-19, the Planning Commission has cancelled the public hearing on proposed changes to design review regulations that was scheduled for Monday March 23rd. That will be rescheduled at a later with another full set of notices to the newspaper.

The final Downtown Master Plan presentation with City Council will take place on Wednesday as scheduled with the consultants making a remote presentation. Look to the Council agenda for specific details.



Inclusive, Equitable and Engaged Community

February 2020 Above & Beyond Recipient: Carrie McCool

February continued the success of the "Above & Beyond" Employee Recognition Award program. The program has the City awarding a small bonus to an individual City employee that has demonstrated exceptional dedication in upholding the City's values while exhibiting exemplary behavior and demonstrating going 'above and beyond' in their position.

February's recipient is Carrie McCool, a Dispatcher for the Montpelier Police Department. Carrie had two separate nominations, and both highlighted how focused and driven Carrie is to serve both the employees of the City and the residents in our community.

Going "Above & Beyond" in her position, Carrie consistently comes to work with a good attitude and is always professional and efficient. Even between fielding emergency calls for service and sometimes difficult resident requests, she always fits in extra work. One of Carrie's nomination forms highlighted how she spends any downtime at work cleaning, organizing, or finding independent projects to handle. They said that Carrie always aims to better the environment she's in- whether at work or in the community. Carrie is an example- setting employee for our organization. One of her nomination forms stated "I wholeheartedly believe Carrie goes above and beyond every day and deserves this recognition".

According to a Corporal Truhan in our Police Department, "Carrie has an incredible work ethic. She is always willing to help others and self-initiates taking on various tasks that make the office operate more efficiently. Carrie also serves as a dispatch trainer and is an invaluable resource to our department".

We will be acknowledging Carrie at our March 25th Council Meeting.

City Memo – 3-20-20 – Community Services

COVID-19 outbreak have you going a little stir crazy? Montpelier Rec has just the thing to get you and yours outside and moving (at a socially acceptable distant, of course). We've come up with a few of family-friendly activities with prizes and bragging rights up for grabs! We've got a Montpelier Parks "find that location" search. A city-wide scavenger hunt and more coming soon! To see the list of activities and details on how to participate, please visit: montpelierrec.org/outbreak_activities

MSAC FEAST Senior Meal Program

With MSAC closed to the public (like other senior centers and long-term care facilities around the state), FEAST is the primary direct service MSAC is still providing during the Covid-19 crisis. MSAC is prepared in the event that meal requests increase significantly, and a full week of frozen back-up meals are in our walk-in freezer with production remaining high, and off-site contingency meal sources identified.

FEAST at Home (Meals on Wheels) continues to be managed by our dedicated, long-time FEAST Program Manager, Jessica Sanderson, on-site, with additional staff and others supporting on and off-site and being cross-trained for back-up. Jessica is in frequent communication with the regional Nutrition Coordinator and other meal site leaders as they respond to the evolving situation and strategize for what the future may hold. Jessica maintains an ever-changing roster of meal recipients and delivery drivers and ensures each of them has what they need.

FEAST at Home delivery has been reduced to once weekly to decrease exposure between recipients and volunteers, with one weekly hot meal and up to six frozen meals delivered at the same time, depending on need. Volunteer drivers are trained to follow strict updated safety protocols and are equipped with hand sanitizer and other precautionary measures. On non-delivery days, meal recipients receive friendly wellness check-in calls from the volunteer drivers they have come to know, and other needs are assessed regularly.

FEAST To Go is now served from a tent in the courtyard in front of 58 Barre Street --available Tuesdays and Fridays from noon to 1:00 pm. Reservations are encouraged (by calling 262-6288 or emailing feast@montpelier-vt.org) but not required. Meals are offered by suggested donation of \$5 for people aged 60+ and for \$7 for anyone under age 60. People appreciate the brief contact and delicious meal they receive during this time of increasing social isolation, and the March 17 corned beef and cabbage meal was a big hit!

Good Taste Catering's professional kitchen manager, Chef Mike Morse, continues to manage meal production with backup by Chef-owner Justin Turcotte, and a third chef is trained and ready to step in if needed. All kitchen staff are trained in Serve-safe methods, and the 58 Barre street kitchen maintains a strict hygiene protocol specified by the Department of Health.

Volunteers who usually assist with food preparation have been released from kitchen and serving posts for now, to minimize the number of people in and out of the facility and to follow social distancing protocols.

We are anticipating FEAST meal demand to increase in the coming weeks and are prepared to increase the frequency of FEAST To Go if needed.

MSAC Director Janna Clar is participating in advocacy efforts with the Area Agencies on Aging, the State of VT, Legislators, and Congressional staffers, aimed at ensuring that federal emergency funding for senior meals gets to meal sites around the state as soon as possible.



Sustainable Infrastructure

DPW Street & Water/Sewer Divisions:

The City of Montpelier Street Division worked in many different areas of the city this week. As all of our divisions are doing first and foremost, our Street Division activated certain procedures to ensure our staff/residents safety in the current public health crisis. Our division has attended city meetings in regards to the COVID-19 as well as hung "no entry signs without prior approval" at the City garage, Water Resource Recovery Facility and the Water Treatment Plant.

Our Street Division also completed the following list of task:

- Cleaned up cold storage in main building
- Cleaned city trucks and equipment
- Placed cold patch in areas around the city that were in need
- Salted Streets and sidewalks for safe passage
- Repaired streetlights on Stone Cutters Way, State Street, Main Street and Elm Street
- Picked up leftover curb from Shared Use Path project on Granite Street
- Hauled and stockpiled 1 ¼ stone for dirt road issues when they arise
- Installed a broom on the sidewalk plow
- Cleaned up street sweepers for preseason service
- Repaired sink hole at the Terrace Street Ext. and Bailey Avenue Intersection

Next week our crews will continue winter operations as they come, performing maintenance on streets and sidewalks, repairing dirt roads with travel issues resulting from mud and rain events and if weather permits, begin sweeping sidewalks and streets.

Our Water/Sewer Division also attended meetings with other City to develop response plans with to the current public health crisis, as well as completing the following task list:

- Responded to a resident concern of water in basement on State Street
- Leak detection on State Street
- Leak detection Terrace Street area
- Leak detection Vine Street
- Pump Station checks daily
- Back check valves checked/cleaned daily
- Dig safe utility markings
- Water license class via video conference

- Correlator training

Next week our Water/Sewer Division will mark out utilities on North College Street in advance of survey work for the Murray Hill Home Owners Association connection, continue leak detection, perform sewer pump station checks daily, continue checking/cleaning back checks daily, dig safe utility markings, work on moving inventory from cold storage to stump dump storage, prepare for spring cleanup and lawn restorations, prepare for hydrant flushing and continue COVID 19 planning/prevention cleaning.

WRRF:

Startup on one of the new screw presses and rotary drum thickeners was successful performed this week. Two of the new gate valves for the UV channels have been installed. Next week work will continue on in dewatering building for the second screw press.

Public access as well as contractor access to the Administration building have limited. Staff is ensuring adequate chemical supplies are in place in the event of delivery disruption and operator support systems are being put in place with neighboring communities.

Water Treatment Plant:

The City of Montpelier's Water Treatment Plant has been preparing and taking action in regards to the current public health crisis.

As many cities around us also have been doing, we have spent time securing our facility in our efforts to honor social distancing. Our facility is continuing to offer other water/waste water systems the service of leaving samples in a cooler we provide outside our facility to be taken to the lab via a courier service. We have confirmed that all our process chemicals have adequate reserves in the event that this public health crisis continues for an extended period of time.

Our team has communicated directly with neighboring community plant operators for staffing support in the event of all operators for once facility become quarantined.

All of our compliance sampling has been completed to meet state and federal water regulations for the month of March in order to minimize public interaction.

Street Lighting:

The City of Montpelier had a complete street light outage on State Street last week, which was corrected by our electrician the following day. Department of Public Works also replaced several bulbs that were found to be out on State Street, Main Street & Stone Cutters Way. Electrical work remains to be done on Stone Cutters Way to restore 4 lights where we'll be retrofitting two of these fixtures with LED bulbs as a demonstration effort.

A new street light has been added on Barre Street, at the new shared use path crossing.

DON'T FLUSH THAT:

Due to the public health crisis, not only is our city seeing a shortage on toilet paper, but many communities are as well. Department of Public Works would like to remind everyone what should NOT be flushed. Flushing items listed below could cause sewer blockages, in which could cause plugged and overflowing toilets, poorly draining sinks and showers, raw sewage backing up through floor drains, manholes overflowing onto the ground or into nearby surface waters, health hazards and nuisance odors, increases in the City's maintenance costs and costly maintenance and repair bills for YOU.

- Paper towels
- Baby wipes
- Moist towelettes

- Cosmetics and cosmetic wipes
- Cloth or paper napkins
- Shop towels
- Condoms
- Tampons and pads
- Diapers
- Cat litter
- Cigarette butts
- Dental floss
- Latex gloves
- Hypodermic needles
- Facial tissues
- Fats, oils or grease
- Clothing or rags
- Medications (pills or liquid)
- Bandages
- Cotton balls
- Food scrapes
- Swiffer pads
- Plastic of any kind

DPW COVID-19 UPDATES

- Due to the current public health crisis, the City of Montpelier’s Stump Dump is closed until further notice. We apologize for the inconvenience and will update the public as soon as we have an anticipated re-opening date.
- Department of Public Works Administrative Office is closed to the public until further notice. Our administrative staff currently is working between days in the office, and some working from home. The office phone (802) 223-9508 is still accepting calls during normal business hours of 8:00am to 4:30pm.
- Our divisions within Department of Public Works will also not be entering homes until further notices unless it is an emergency. We often need to enter homes for different reasons such as, meter repairs, water coming through the floor of a basement, etc. If a resident has a concern/issue, please don’t hesitate to call DPW and our crew will assess the situation as best as they can via phone to determine if entering the home is necessary under emergent situation.



William Fraser
City Manager

Upcoming Agenda Items (TENTATIVE)

3/25	Downtown Master Plan Above & Beyond - February	4/8	Ordinance – Chapter TBD W/S Budget, Rates Parking Fees Parking Garage Update
4/15	DRB Appointments Personnel Plan Tax Stabilization Policy	4/28 - 4/29	Strategic Planning

Coping with COVID-19

For Montpelier Bridge, March 25, 2020

By William Fraser, City Manager

Hello Friends and Neighbors. I am writing this month's page on behalf of Mayor Watson, the City Council and the entire City Staff in light of all the activity and changes that are happening as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic.

We understand the anxiety and fear that many people are feeling. Like you, we are heartbroken to see all the closed businesses in our City. We are aware that some people are losing work, income, and security. These are challenging times to be sure. We want you to know that your City government is here for you.

As city officials, we are learning about this virus along with you. We are relying on public health professionals for guidance and information and urge you to do the same.

The safety and health of this community is our top priority. The City government is committed to providing you with all your essential services. Working in conjunction with neighboring communities, we are assuring that clean water comes from your tap, properly treated wastewater is released into the rivers, public safety services are delivered and essential road and utility maintenance is continued.

The City Manager's office is remaining open for the time being to address your needs. The City Clerk's office is continuing basic services by appointment. Other offices have restricted access. Please utilize call in and on line alternatives. The city's website has information how to interact with the city government.

The City's website also contains information about community resources, social services, and links to our State's health department. The City itself is not equipped to be a human services agency but we are playing an active role to connect people to needed services. As this social distancing period continues, we will be pursuing more ways to directly assist.

In the meantime, the City Council has taken some first steps to try to help. We will continue seeking ways to ease people's fears. Please offer us your suggestions and do not hesitate to contact any city officials

This will not be a fast or easy challenge. We are here for you and with you all the way.

City Response to COVID-19

At their meeting of March 18, the Council voted to:

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spaces, blocking hydrants, blocking driveways, snow emergency regulations and other such violations.

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- Direct the City Manager to review the city's budget for all projects and purchases which could be delayed while maintaining essential services. This is to offset anticipated revenue shortfalls from rooms, meals and alcohol taxes, parking fees/fines and recreation/senior programming. This is also to potentially reallocate funding to address emergency community needs.
- Authorize the Mayor to initiate reformation of the Capital Area Neighborhoods (CAN) program to create local support systems for residents.

Administrative Actions:

Closings and Remote Access:

- In order to continue to provide core services to residents the City highly limited access to its public buildings.
 - City Hall- Closed except by appointment for all departments except the City Manager's Office
 - City Council meetings will continue as scheduled in City Hall. The City will communicate remote call-in options to interact with Council remotely as they become available in the near future.
 - Other City facilities (Senior Center, Rec Center, DPW Garage, Water Treatment and Wastewater, Police and Fire) are closed to the public at this time.
- All Committee Meetings are now by remote access
 - Staff will still be on-site if members of the public do want to attend in person.
- All City events and programs have been cancelled or postponed until further notice.

City Continuity of Operations:

- City staff have updated their Continuity of Operations Plans. These plans insure that we maintain internal capacity to provide our residents core services.
 - Departments are reaching agreements with other jurisdictions for Mutual Aid support (including our Wastewater and Water treatment plants)

- City Staff has increased the frequency of scheduled cleaning and sanitation efforts across City facilities, especially in common spaces and highly trafficked areas.

City Employee's Status:

- Individual departments, if their work allows, have been implementing work from home and other social distancing options.
- If an employee is formally quarantined, they will be paid administrative leave for their two weeks away from work. We are also not letting staff run out of sick time for COVID-19, and they can borrow time.
- We may implement a child-care option for City Staff, so they can continue to provide services to the residents of Montpelier.

City Communications:

- The City has updated its website to be a clearing-house of sorts for the community to connect to resources such as volunteer opportunities. The website also has information regarding the Small Business Administration's disaster loan assistance. Please look for the Coronavirus Tab.
- We've also been providing Front Porch Forum, and Facebook updates as often as possible.
- Mayor and City Manager have been doing Facebook Live updates
- Staff has been in constant contact with state and area partners, to ensure that we are up to date on response best practices.
 - o This includes outreach to local Churches and food-pantries- to offer guidance and to connect them to volunteer networks

City Online Payments:

- The Following Services can be accessed through the online payment portal (available through our website)
 - Property Tax Payments
 - Water/Sewer Bills
 - Paying for Permits
 - And other misc. payments- working with City Staff

Other Online City Services:

- Marriage License Applications
- Birth, Death, and Marriage Records
- Parking Ticket Appeals
- Zoning - Design Review Proposal Regulations

Community Care and Outreach:

- The Senior Center's FEAST (Meals on Wheels) Program is a priority for the City- we have transitioned giving meals 'to-go' and are always looking for volunteers to help deliver meals. Volunteers can contact them at 802-262-6288 to volunteer.
- Because the Police Department's 24/7 Bathroom access has been limited, an accessible porta john has been placed in the parking lot behind City-Hall, and an additional accessible unit is coming behind the Senior Center.
- The Recreation department will be cleaning off all hard surface recreation facilities, including the skate park, outdoor basketball courts, and tennis courts so that folks have outdoor recreation options, weather depending.
- The Community Services Department, including Parks and Rec, will be creating a guidebook for activities to do around Montpelier that allow you to keep safe social distance, but can still be active and enjoyable- look out for that!
- The High School is providing breakfast and lunches for kids to pick up down at the loading dock at the high school starting tomorrow (3/19/20). Our Recreation Department will be working with the School's Food Services Director to ensure that lunches are being distributed.

Homelessness

- Members of the City Council's Homelessness Task Force are working with the Washington County Homeless Response Team, which are addressing the needs of this vulnerable population on a County-wide basis.
 - o Other representatives on this team include the State's Department of Public Safety and Department of Health, the Central Vermont Hospital, Washington County Mental Health, Capstone, and Good Samaritan Haven.
 - o This team is leading local response and have created internal groups focused on creating procedures, locations, and resources for Congregate Recovery Sites, Medical support, transportation, Food Access, Street Outreach, Volunteer Management, and Training opportunities.
- This Washington County Homeless Response Team is working with the State's Health and Human Services department to ensure the State's EOC is getting real-time information about this issue in our Counties.
- Locally, Good Samaritan is working very hard to lower the concentration of folks in the shelters, and has found alternate shelter for many- including at hotels, motels, and in empty area college dorms.

Information

For those of you who want to stay abreast of information about city government, there are several ways to do so:

- All meetings of City Boards, Commissions, Committees and the like are open to the public. Most are now being conducted remotely with a call in or log in option for the public.
- This article in the Bridge is written by the Mayor or me and is published monthly.
- The City's website www.montpelier-vt.org includes news, updates, notices and information about projects as well as agendas, minutes and other meeting documents. All documents which go to the City Council for meetings are posted publicly.
- The City Manager and Department Heads write a weekly memo to the City Council providing updates and information about city activity. This memo is posted for all to see on the City's website.
- All (or most) Council meetings and meetings of major boards and committees are broadcast – and often rebroadcast – on local cable TV.
- All (or most) of the above meetings are both streamed and archived for viewing on the city's website.
- The City has a Facebook page “City of Montpelier, VT – official” which posts updates and also links some updates from the website.
- The City has a Twitter account “@VTMontpelier” which also posts updates and links from the website.
- The City regularly posts items of interest, including council agendas, on Front Porch Forum.
- The Annual Report, distributed in February, provides an overview of the city government's year. It is available on line or in print at City Hall.
- **ALL** emergency notifications, including winter parking ban notices, are issued using VT-Alert. People can receive phone calls, text messages, e-mail or all. Register for VT-Alert through www.vtalert.gov or by calling 802-347-0488.

Finally, of course, please feel free to contact me or your elected officials with questions or comments about the City Government. I can be reached at wfraser@montpelier-vt.org or 802-223-9502. Other city officials' email addresses and phone numbers are available on the web.