

MEAC Minutes 2024-12-19

Voting Attendees: Karl Johnson, Amy Gamble, Dan Jones, Tim Favorite, Kate Stephenson, Amanda Sardonis, Geoff Fitzgerald

Non-voting attendees: Sal Alfano

Public Comment: none

Upcoming Events: none

Sustainability Coordinator Update: Chris has emailed his update (see Addendum below). Sal mentions that Stevens made a presentation at CC and has sent plan to FEMA. \$16 million to bring 3 city buildings up to code, restoration. FEMA would send lump sum of some amount if plan approved. Uncertain of timeline for approval. Possibly work would begin in 2026.

Project Updates: none

Annual Report: There is difficulty coming up with major activities MEAC took part in other than Window Dressers and supporting the Sustainability Coordinator's work. General agreement to include a paragraph on Window Dressers, school board and city staff advisory.

Meeting Date/Time Discussion: Jon Copans cannot meet on the third Thursday of January. We will meet on January the 14th (Tuesday)

Charter Update: Karl has proposed some changes to the MEAC charter which will decrease the amount of members to 11 from 20, which will make obtaining quorums at future meetings more likely. Attending members vote to have Karl submit the changes suggested with a few minor tweaks to the language.

Discussion on meeting with Plainfield Hazard Mitigation Committee Chair: met with Michael Billingsley (emergency response coordinator), learned about the history of the committee. Broad scope. Has been in place since 2005. Sent surveys to residents on their concerns, and came up with a list of topics to focus on accordingly. Designate experts on committee (e.g chemical spill). Response to real events has had mixed results. During covid had difficulty getting traction with town leaders. With the flooding event last year, they had a larger role to play in response and recovery. Debating moving the town center (30 buildings or so) uphill to a town-owned parcel, but a big

challenge is cost. Managed retreat seems unique in Vermont currently. Question is whether MEAC should pivot to a mission somewhat like Plainfield's HMC, and plan for upcoming crises. Do we "declare victory" on energy and move on to this? It is possible that energy could be just one aspect of what a new committee addresses. Concern about having a contentious relationship with other committees/commissions. Commission is a temporary mandate, so who will be thinking about this in the long term. Another option is to drop the municipal aspect and focus on the community. A third option is to disband and embed in other committees to support net zero concerns. Discussion about viability of city committees in general, and need for committees to have specific goals to pursue. Microgrids floated as a potential way for MEAC to pursue energy and resilience. Interest in hearing from Jon Copans about HMC, and potentially the new fire chief who will be the emergency response coordinator. Questions about how much of this work should be done at a county level - for example dispatch is done by 23 towns. Proposal to meet with Jon Copans but individually re envision what the committee might look like in the future. Would be good to know what the fire chief is responsible for. Amanda proposes we read through MAPLE before meeting with Jon.

Addendum (Chris Lumbra's emailed update):

- The Citywide LED building lighting changeover has resumed and is 48% complete. Lamps have been replaced at DPW Equipment Barn and Shop, MFD, MPD, WRRF, and WTP. MSAC and the Rec Center (gym only initially) will be the next facilities to receive LED lamps. This project has been further delayed due to manpower conflicts with flood repairs to downtown streetlights, but progress continues to be made.
- We have received notice that our application for VT BGS' Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) implementation grant was not selected for award. Municipalities that had been determined to have a high energy burden were given preference for grant award, and Montpelier has a low energy burden per the 2019 Efficiency VT study that BGS used to guide the selection process.
- We have been awarded a Thermal Energy Storage Grant sponsored by U.S. DOE to replace the heating and electrical service at the Barre St Rec Center. This project will eliminate approximately 7,200 gallons of oil use which represents +/- 28% of the City's heating oil usage. DOE is granting up to \$1.2 million with a required match of 20% (up to \$300,000) from the city. The 1 st phase of the removal of asbestos containing mechanical insulation is complete. The second phase is underway and expected to be complete next week. This work will be credited towards the required grant match. The subgrant agreement has been executed and a kickoff meeting has been held. We initially selected Wright-Pierce in Burlington to provide pre-qualified engineering services for system design,

unfortunately they informed us that they do not have capacity at this time. We have issued an engineering RFQ to enable us to contract with a different firm for these services. We have received notices of interest from 4 engineering firms.

- The District Heat system started on October 1 st . October and November usage has been recorded. Minor bugs in the metering equipment and communication network/software have been identified and corrected. Site visits were conducted last week to verify initial configuration settings for the flow meters. The MDH metering, billing, and communication is fully operational and restored to pre-flood functionality.
- GMP has completed the installation of 2 dual port Flo Ultra DC Fast Chargers at the rear of the lot at 12-16 Main St.

Facilities:

- Stevens and Associates are working to advance design options for the repair and resiliency of city facilities to present to FEMA. Draft programming and code study reports have been prepared and have been reviewed by City staff. S&A have revised the reports based on staff input. Preliminary cost estimates have been received and have been reviewed by city staff. Bob Stevens of S&A presented the report to City Council at the 12/18/2024 meeting.
- GSH has received funding for improvements to the emergency warming shelter. New doors have been installed. The shower installation project is complete.
- Repair work to the Finance wing of City Hall and the Fire Station is nearing completion. Drywall replacement is complete in finance and MFD. Flooring is complete and final base installation and painting are underway. This work is being coordinated around ongoing city operations in these spaces with much of the work being performed during night and weekend hours.
- Winterization has been performed to prevent pipe freezing at the Pool House.
- Office fit-up is underway to create space for DPW Engineering and Administration staff at the DPW Garage. The existing carpet and cabinets have been removed, new flooring has been installed and the walls are painted. The installation of modular office walls is underway.
- Follow up FEMA site inspections were conducted at City Hall, MFD and MPD.
- An ADA complaint that was raised at the 12/11/2024 City Council Meeting was investigated. The partially installed push button door opener on the Taylor St door to the Transit Center is not required by the 2010 ADA, and its inoperable status does not constitute an ADA violation. Only the overhead mechanism is currently installed, and there are no buttons present to give the appearance that there is a functioning opener installed. There is a functioning door opener on the other door. Both doors were designed and built with the maneuvering clearances that are required by the 2010 ADA.

- A meet was held with GMT management to discuss Transit Center maintenance and signage needs.