

Montpelier Homelessness Committee

Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 21

Attendance

- **Members:** Zack Hughes (Chair), Marty Roberts, Dawn Little, Lee Wilschek, Ali McGuirk
- **Council Representatives:** Jim Sheridan, Cary Brown
- **Staff:** Matt Jelacic (Community and Economic Development Specialist)
- **Public:** David Delcour, Steve Whitaker, Sophie Lewis, Nolan Carver

Approvals

- Agenda approved.
- July 2 minutes approved (moved Roberts, seconded Little).
- Future first- and third-Monday meetings moved to 5:30 PM (no objection).

Winter Shelter Planning

- Jelacic (with Capstone's Ramsey Papp and Ronna Gable, plus Rick DeAngelis) has identified a property that, with some work, could provide a 24/7 emergency shelter for more than 30 people, potentially on a 10-year lease. Funding for the work has been tentatively identified. Odds put at about 70 percent. Negotiations are delicate; details to follow.
- This would be in addition to the City Hall basement overflow (about 12 people). Fire marshal has approved reuse of the basement for next winter.
- Open questions: Unitarian Church (about 15 beds last winter) is not expected to run its shelter this year; the state may raise the cold-weather threshold temperature; and whether the new shelter will be congregate and low-barrier is not yet decided (deferred to Capstone).

Camping / MOU

- The volunteer-based camping proposal was withdrawn by its proposers, who chose to prioritize winter. Hughes voiced frustration after the committee had pushed it to Council.
- Steve Whitaker (public) said the MOU terms and proposed location made the project unworkable and that a required city plan for camping, indoor space, daytime space, and hygiene has not been produced.
- Jelacic will open a dialogue with ACLU attorney Jessica Radborn (referred by Chad Simmons) to help make the camping policy workable, since the ACLU is the key gatekeeper.

Point-in-Time Count (Little)

- About 63 people currently sleeping outside in Montpelier alone (not counting Berlin or Barre, or anyone housed at Good Sam). Numbers fluctuate daily and typically drop about 40 percent in fall.

North Branch / Downstreet Housing Funding (Jelacic)

- A \$1.4M Congressionally Directed Spending award (Elm Street / North Branch units) must be used; Downstreet is reworking the project scope. City met with Downstreet; application due the next day at noon.
- Separately pursuing a FEMA flood-mitigation grant to preserve the flood-endangered units. A district-heat line extension could remove basement oil tanks and count toward the city's required 25 percent match. Sanders/Welch and Vermont Emergency Management relationships are key.

State Emergency Housing Rules

- Vermont DCF issued new emergency housing rules described as severe, with a very short comment window. Chad Simmons is collecting community comments; Jelacic shared a link. Implications not yet clear.

Street Outreach & Recruitment

- Outreach (Hughes, Little, OSA) tracks weather and flood gauges, conveys warnings, distributes equipment and supplies, and makes referrals. Ongoing concern about equipment supply and places for people to go. Morning warming spaces at Trinity and Christ Church noted as helpful.
- Recruitment notice posted to Front Porch Forum. Merger with the Housing Committee remains under discussion, with concerns to resolve before support.

Adjournment

Moved by Little, seconded by Roberts; approved. Adjourned about 5:55 PM.

Note: some names were auto-transcribed and should be verified before distribution (e.g., Jessica Radborn, David Delcour, and the Capstone facilities manager).