

City of Montpelier
Homelessness Committee
Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, August 3, 2026
Location: Remote meeting via Zoom (no physical meeting location)

Attendance

Committee Members Present: Zack Hughes (Chair), Dawn Little, Martha Roberts, Ali McGuirk, Lee Wilschek

City Staff Present: Matt Jelacic (Staff Liaison)

City Council Liaison: Jim Sheridan (non-voting)

Members of the Public / Guests: Rev. Joan Javier-Duval, Dave Bellini, Beth Ann Maier, Nancy Reid

Call to Order, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Chair Zack Hughes called the meeting to order at approximately 5:39 p.m., led introductions, and reviewed the agenda, which the committee approved by unanimous consent.

Approval of Minutes — July 20, 2026

The committee reviewed the draft July 20 minutes with no changes requested. Minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

City Council Update

Jim Sheridan reported eight violent incidents downtown in less than a month, most involving individuals experiencing homelessness, and noted merchant concern that continued incidents could deter fall visitors.

Downtown Conditions and Public Safety

Members discussed a difficult weekend downtown involving several tense or physical incidents, reduced police staffing, and delayed response times, emphasizing that most disputes were between people who knew each other rather than random encounters with the public. Matt Jelacic reported meeting with the Montpelier Business Association to share research on the issue, and members briefly linked the discussion to picnic-table placement as a way to disperse gatherings.

Winter Shelter Planning

Beth Ann Maier reported that a new statewide cap on motel rooms is expected to leave roughly 140–150 people unsheltered regionally this winter and urged Barre, Berlin, and Montpelier to jointly pursue a larger 50–60-bed shelter, since no downtown church can safely house more than 15. The committee agreed to continue developing a formal written recommendation to City Council for a future meeting.

Public Comment

Dave Bellini urged the committee to seek direct meetings with state legislative candidates this election year to advocate for increased funding. Rev. Joan Javier-Duval clarified that the Unitarian Church has hosted, but never independently run, an overflow shelter, capped at 15 beds.

Street Outreach and Staff Updates

Matt Jelacic noted he will be out of town before the next meeting, and Hughes shared that a young adult was successfully housed over the weekend.

Other Business

Beth Ann Maier confirmed interest in running a shelter at the Unitarian Church, and Martha Roberts clarified an error in the July 20 minutes as her own note-taking mistake. Matt Jelacic raised concern that the fire marshal had not yet conducted this year's required site visit, and Dawn Little asked staff to check on expected shelter capacity in Barre.

Adjournment

Martha Roberts made the motion, seconded by Ali McGuirk

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at approximately 6:58 p.m.