

Homelessness Committee - Meeting Minutes - August 17, 2026

City of Montpelier

August 17, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Zoom

DRAFT — Not yet approved

Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM by Zachary Hughes with a roll call vote.

- Dawn Little (Member) — Present
- Lee Wilschek (Member) — Present
- Martha Roberts (Member) — Present
- Zachary Hughes (Chair) — Present
- Ali McGuirk (Member) — Absent
- Sophie Lewis (Member) — Absent

Also present: Cary Brown (City Council Member), Evelyn Prim (City Communications Coordinator), Jim Sheridan (City Council Member), David Delcore, Nancy Reed

Introductions

Chair Zachary Hughes introduced himself and his affiliations. Committee members Lee Wilschek, Martha Roberts, and Dawn Little, along with City Council Members Jim Sheridan and Cary Brown, and Communications Coordinator Evelyn Prim introduced themselves. Nancy Reed introduced herself as a prospective member listening in, and David Delcore from the Times-Argus introduced himself.

Review and Approve Agenda

Chair Hughes outlined the proposed agenda, which included reviewing the August 3rd minutes, discussing pavilion occupancy deterrence, winter planning collaboration between Barre, Berlin, and Montpelier, public comment, and combined updates from the City Council and Street Outreach. The committee agreed to proceed with the agenda as outlined.

Review and Approve Minutes from August 3rd

The committee reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting. Ms. Little requested a minor amendment to clarify that she suggested checking the Barre capacity for extreme cold weather occupancy, rather than asking staff to check the cold weather capacity.

Motion: Motion to approve the minutes for August 3rd with the amendment to say that it was suggested that we check the Barre capacity for cold weather occupancy.

Made by: Dawn Little

Second: Lee Wilschek

Vote: 4-0-0 — PASSED

Pavilion Occupancy Deterrence

Chair Hughes shared that he received emails regarding a bird noise device installed at the state pavilion area to deter people from staying there, noting that it is a state issue impacting the capital city. Councilmember Brown explained that she discovered the state's Department of Buildings and General Services installed the

noisemakers to discourage people from sleeping on the porch due to ongoing challenges with human waste and a fire, despite a state employee initially claiming it was to deter birds. She expressed concern over the state's lack of transparency. Councilmember Sheridan recalled a similar, ineffective tactic used at City Hall for pigeons and suggested the committee should not antagonize the state if the city hopes to secure state funds. Chair Hughes noted he had received feedback that the noise is annoying but does not necessarily deter people.

Winter Planning

Chair Hughes introduced the idea of collaborating with Barre and Berlin regarding a winter shelter or other services. Councilmember Sheridan noted that this initiative was primarily led by Matt Jelacic, who was absent. Chair Hughes suggested moving the discussion to the next meeting when Mr. Jelacic returns. Ms. Little recommended that before making a formal recommendation, the committee should determine Barre's capacity and consult with the Barre homelessness task force to ensure they are prepared for extreme cold weather events.

Public Comment

None

Updates - City Council

Councilmembers Sheridan and Brown reported that there were no significant updates from the recent City Council meeting, as the discussion on homelessness was brief and the meeting was largely occupied with union matters. Chair Hughes announced that he received an email indicating Jay Borges is in the process of joining the committee.

Updates - Street Outreach

Ms. Little reported that transportation and theft continue to be major issues for the unhoused population, noting instances where people's gear was stolen while they were away, likely by other individuals outside. She asked about the status of the storage lockers behind the senior center, noting that combinations had been changed and outreach workers could not access them. Ms. Prim explained that it was her understanding that the city had phased out managing the lockers due to two assaults reported by female staff members while they assisted individuals in retrieving their items from the lockers during the night. She also explained the lack of staff capacity as a factor in the inability of the city to reinstate this program safely. Ms. Little requested more information on the assaults to ensure the safety of outreach workers. Chair Hughes noted that violent incidents downtown seem to be decreasing slightly and mentioned that outreach continues to provide water service to known locations. Ms. Little advised anyone wanting to volunteer or distribute food at night to contact Street Outreach first for safety and coordination.

Nancy Reed stated that very few people are trespassed from the community lunch. She asked if police reports sent to the City Council include incidents at the community table, as police were called there today.

Subcommittee Update

Chair Hughes reported that a small subcommittee consisting of himself, Martha Roberts, and Ali McGuirk met to discuss organizing an educational event, potentially at the library in October. He noted that the plans are not finalized and will be brought back to the full committee for further discussion.

Other Business and Adjournment

Councilmember Sheridan advised the committee not to schedule their next meeting in two weeks, as it would fall on Labor Day weekend. The committee agreed to schedule it for the week after Labor Day. Ms. Roberts

asked about plans to speak to the business association and to contact the Barre committee. Chair Hughes stated he would email the Barre chair to coordinate attending their next meeting and would notify the committee.

Motion: Motion to adjourn.

Made by: Martha Roberts

Second: Dawn Little

Vote: 4-0-0 — PASSED

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:32 PM.