

Montpelier Community Fund Board
Minutes, December 12, 2019
City Council Chambers, City Hall
39 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

Christine Zachai called the meeting to order at 9:15 A.M.

Present: Amy Cunningham, Judy Stermer, Michael Sherman, Ron Wild, Christine Zachai

1. **Agenda:** Amy moved to approve the agenda; Judy second. Approved.
2. **Minutes of meeting November 14, 2019:** Judy, motion to approve; Ron, second. Approved
3. **Public Comment:** None
4. **Review and determination of submitted FY2021 grant applications:**

The board reviewed 47 applications and made recommendations on the following applications for FY2021:

All Together Now. Request \$1,000. Project. Funding for All Species Day; Spring Pageant.

Recommendation: \$ 1,000

American Red Cross. Request, \$1,000. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$ 500

Another Way. Request: \$5,000. Project.

Discussion whether to consider. Motion by Amy to consider the late application. Judy Second. Passed 4 aye; 1 nay. Board members noted that the new executive director presented clear evidence of mistaken submission to the Montpelier Foundation of the application intended for the Montpelier Community Fund. The two funds, close enough in name to confuse a newcomer, have distinctly different criteria and scope of funding.

Review of application:

Recommendation: \$ 5,000

Capital City Band. Request: \$1,000. General Operating.

The Board again urges the organization to increase it is efforts at fundraising and donations.

Recommendation: \$ 750

Capital City Concerts: Request: \$2,500. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$ 2,500

Capstone Community Action. Request: \$2,000. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$ 2,000

Center for Arts and Learning. Request: \$2,000. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$ 2,000

Central Vermont Adult Basic Education. Request: \$6,000. General Operating.

The Board noted that applicant responded this year to its request in the previous year's review for more specific information about outcomes.

Recommendation: \$ 6,000

Central Vermont Council on Aging. Request: \$10,000. Programs.

Recommendation: \$ 5,000

Central Vermont Memorial Civic Center. Request \$2,000. Program.

The Board considered the application to provide poor evidence or articulation of the need or details for providing an expanded public skating program and the impact of an expanded public skating program for Montpelier residents.

Recommendation: \$ 0

Circle. Request: \$3,000. Program.

Recommendation: \$ 3,000

Community Harvest of Central Vermont. Request: \$5,500. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$ 5,500

Downstreet Housing & Community Development. Request: \$5,000. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$ 5,000

Family Center of Washington County. Request: \$3,500. General Operating.

Board members noted the absence of information about the organization's prior year budget and insufficient financial information overall. These reflect the Board's repeated concerns about financial reporting in the application.

Recommendation: \$ 2,500

Friends of the Winooski River. Request: \$750. Program.

Recommendation: \$ 750

Gifford Retirement Community d/b/a Project Independence, Barre. Request \$2,000. Program.

The application does not make a good case for support from Montpelier by describing what the organization is doing for the Montpelier community, stating that only 5 Montpelier residents are currently being served, and presented insufficient financial information specific to their program.

Recommendation: \$ 0

Girls and Boyz First Mentoring/Washington Central Friends of Education. Request: \$2,000. Program.

Recommendation: \$ 2,000

Good Beginnings of Central Vermont. Request: \$1,000. Program.

Good progress report. Explains impact of services.

Recommendation: \$1,000

Green Mountain Film Festival (Focus on Film). Request: \$2,000. Program.

Board understands that pages 9, 10, 11 of application financial reports were sent in error and we understand that they are inaccurate. Nonetheless, the Board would like to have received some report of FY 20 expenses. The Board cited some weaknesses in the application, but also acknowledged the changes in the organization structure and leadership and the importance of the festival to Montpelier and the area.

Recommendation: \$ 2,000

Green Mountain Youth Symphony Orchestra. Request: \$1,500. General Operating.
Recommendation: \$ 1,500

Green Up Vermont. Request: \$300. General Operating.
Recommendation: \$ 300

Hyperbaric Vermont. Request: \$1,500. General Operating.

The Board concluded that it is not the purpose of the community fund to support specific medical treatments.

Recommendation: \$ 0

Just Basics, Inc. Request: \$14,100. Program and some General Operating expenses.

Because this is a critical organization for the welfare of large proportion of Montpelier citizens, the Board is concerned about the lack of sustainable revenues and human resources staff positions.

Recommendation: \$ 14,100

Lost Nation Theater. Request: \$7,500. Program.

Recommendation: \$ 7,000

Montpelier Chamber Orchestra. Request: \$2,500. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$ 2,500

Montpelier Community Gospel Choir. Request: \$1,000. Project.

Recommendation: \$ 750

Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools. Partners in Education. Request: \$1,600. Program. The Board was in agreement that additional funding for the Montpelier-Roxbury schools should be coming from the School Board budget.

Recommendation: \$ 0

North Branch Nature Center. Request: \$12,000. General Operating and Project.

Recommendation: \$ 5,500

Orchard Valley Waldorf School. Request: \$10,000. General Operating.

The board has strong reservations about funding private education for K-8.

Recommendation: \$ 0

People's Health and Wellness Clinic. Request: \$2,000. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$2,000

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont. Request: \$1,200. General Operating.

The application failed to present evidence of the specific impact of its services in Montpelier.

Recommendation: \$1,000

Scrag Mountain Music. Request: \$2,500. General Operating.

Board acknowledges and appreciates the organization's efforts to make music accessible with its donation practices and its outreach activities.

Recommendation: \$ 2,000

Sexual Assault Crisis Team of Washington County. Request: \$5,000. Project.

The Board understands the critical nature of these services; however, the project budget was missing, and the Board felt that the applicant did not make a compelling case for a significant increase from the previous year.

Recommendation: \$ 3,000

Summit School. Request: \$2,700. Program.

The Board supports the plan for a festival that enhances the life of the community, but was concerned about the limited or lack of support from other relevant organizations for some aspects of the project.

Recommendation: \$ 1,000

Turtle Island Children’s Center. Request: \$5,000. Program/Project.

The board would be more receptive to a proposal in the future that increases affordable access to high-quality early childhood care.

Recommendation: \$ 0

T. W. Wood Gallery. Request: \$10,000. General operations.

The Board noted the increased accessibility to and use of its facilities and collections. Good reporting and explanations.

Recommendation: \$ 7,000

Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Request: \$500. Program.

Recommendation: \$ 500

Vermont Center for Independent Living. Request: \$5,000. Program.

Recommendation: \$ 5,000

Vermont Family Network. Request: \$500. Program.

Recommendation: \$ 500

Vermont Historical Society. Request: \$2,500. Project.

Michael Sherman recused himself.

Recommendation: \$ 2,500

Vermont Humanities Council. Request: \$1,500. Project.

Recommendation: \$ 1,500

Vermont Philharmonic. Request: \$500. General Operating.

Recommendation: \$ 500

Vermont River Conservancy. Request: \$7,000. General Operating.

New applicant. The Board acknowledged that Montpelier residents benefit from VRC projects. However, a larger request would be more compelling if it focused on projects in Montpelier.

Recommendation: \$ 2,000

Washington County Diversion Program, Inc. Request: \$2,000. General Operating.

Recommendation. \$ 2,000

Washington County Mental Health Services. Request: \$10,000. Project.

Focus on use of money for renovations to provide group homes. No budget for project in FY2021, but there is information on current year expenses.

Recommendation: \$ 4,500

Washington County Youth Services Bureau. Request: \$17,000. General Operating.

The Board was pleased to see more and more detailed information about programs, use of services, and budget. Good documentation of plan and rationale for expenses.

Recommendation: \$17,000

Willow Wonder. Request: \$1,000. Project.

The application presented insufficient budget information and lacked confirmation of firm commitments from cooperating organizations.

Recommendation: \$ 0

Summary: Applications: 47

Total grant amount recommended: \$ 130,150

Amy, motion to approve recommendations; Ron, second. Passed unanimously.

5. FY20 Community Connections Grant.

Christine Zachai reported that the Montpelier School Board decided at end of FY 2019 to discontinue its contract with Community Connections. Community Connections therefore is no longer serving Montpelier and should not be receiving city funds. However, a check for the grant was issued and sent to Community Connections before the Board was able to forward information and stop distribution.

Amy, motion: That the Montpelier Community Fund Board instruct the chair to request that the City of Montpelier recall any funds distributed as part of the Montpelier Community Fund grant to Community Connections, for FY2020. Judy, second.

Christine: Notes on process: Christine recommended initiating discussions with city and administrators of the Montpelier Foundation about how to clarify and advertise the difference between the two bodies and their procedures and priorities. The Board will meet soon after it submits its recommendations to City Council in order to review application format and text, its requirements, and expectations of documentation from applicants.

Next meeting: Wednesday, January 29, 2020, 5:30 p.m.

Adjourn 2:05 P.M.

Submitted,

Michael Sherman