

Montpelier Social and Economic Justice Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes, February 5, 2020

City Manager's Conference Room, Montpelier VT

Present: Julia Chafets, Shaina Kasper, Cameron Niedermayer (Assistant City Manager, staff representative), Michael Sherman

Shaina Kasper called the meeting to order at 8:30 A.M.

1. **Agenda.** Approved.
2. **Notes of January 22, 2020 meeting.** Postponed.
3. **Comments from Visitors:** Ken Russell, chair of the City of Montpelier Homelessness Task Force, spoke with the committee about the task force's work, goals, and accomplishments to date. The homeless population includes a wide range of individuals and reflects problems in our community and society as a whole concerning class, race, mental health, disabilities, and other issues. These are challenges for the whole Montpelier community, but are often focused on the downtown area. The task force is attempting to have the community as a whole see these issues as human problems and find ways to address them humanely. The task force has appeared before a legislative committee to request state funds to hire street outreach workers, with a focus on helping homeless people get through the night during the winter and into warmer weather. This includes crisis response, obtaining and installing outdoor toilets and temporary storage lockers, getting information to homeless individuals about available services, community lunch, shelter, and other critical and immediate needs. Russell estimates that there are about 40 individuals who are homeless in Montpelier, around 1,200 throughout the state. The task force meets in the City Council Chamber at City Hall, Wednesdays at 11:30 a.m.
4. **Update on progress and publicity for RFP.** Cameron Niedermayer reported that the RFP was posted on the city website and the city's usual outlets on January 31. Funds appropriated by the City Council for the committee in FY21 are being used to purchase advertising space in other local and regional media outlets. Shaina Kasper has posted the RFP on the Montpelier Front Porch Forum and will continue to do so up to the deadline for submitting proposals. The February 19 meeting of the committee will be largely devoted to receiving questions about the RFP submitted by interested individuals and organizations in person, by telephone, email, or other means of communication. The committee will create a list of questions, prepare answers, and circulate them to all individuals and organizations that have indicated an interest in submitting a proposal.

5. **Carry over funding from FY21 to FY22.** It is not yet clear if the city council will approve carry over to FY22 of unused funds set aside for the committee in FY21. The city council will have to vote on that and Ms. Niedermayer will work to get this on a council meeting agenda as “other business” as soon as possible.
6. **Press release.** The committee reviewed and revised the draft of a press release about the RFP prepared and circulated by Shaina Kasper. After approving the revisions, the press release was sent via email to The Bridge, Times-Argus, and VTDigger.
7. **Update on recruitment.** A vacancy notice is posted on the city web site. Committee members expressed hope that as information about the RFP circulates, it will stimulate interest in joining the committee.
8. **Next meeting dates:**
February 19, 2020, 8:30 A.M. in the City Manager’s Conference room, City Hall.

Adjourned at 9:50 A.M.

Submitted,

Michael Sherman