

Montpelier Community Fund Board
Minutes, February 4, 2020
City Council Chambers, City Hall
39 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602

Christine Zachai called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

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

1. **Agenda.** Add discussion of Montpelier Parking Meter funds. Amy moved to approve the agenda as amended; Judy second. Approved.
2. **Minutes of meeting December 12, 2019.** Amy, motion to approve; Judy, second. Approved.
3. **Public Comment.** None
4. **Parking Meter funds.** The City Council approved transfer of \$1,250 from parking meter proceeds to the Community Fund. These were made available after the board had completed its review of applications and submitted its recommendations for grant awards to the City Council. The board reviewed its list and agreed that it did not want to recommend making additional awards or increase amounts of grant recommendations and suggested that the \$1,250 be used to pay out grants as recommended. This would, in effect, allow the city council to add \$1,250 to the city budget fund for FY2021.
Amy Cunningham moved to apply the \$1,250 of parking meter funds to the amount recommended by the board and reported to the City Council. Judy, second. Passed.
Christine will communicate the board's decision to City Manager Bill Fraser and send a note of thanks to Montpelier Alive for recommending the transfer of parking meter funds to the Community Fund.

5. **FY21 grantmaking application and process review.** The committee reviewed questions and concerns that arose during and as related to the application forms for the FY21 cycle and discussed revisions for the FY 22 cycle. Specific recommendations include:
 - a. **Cover page:**
 1. Grant types.
 - i. Paragraph 1. **(revision)** Two types of grants: 1) Grants to organizations or institutions (social services, arts and culture, etc.); 2) grants to individuals (creative artists, performers, for projects or programs than benefit the community, typically \$1,000 or less).

2. Timeline. (change heading from **Grant Awards** on application form for FY21). Acknowledge and remind applicants about the long timeline—applying in November of current fiscal year for funds that will be awarded in August of the following fiscal year to accomplish projects that will not be implemented or completed until late in that fiscal year.

The board recommends that this reminder be included in the text of the application form and on the landing page of the MCF web page:

<https://www.montpelier-vt.org/448/Community-Fund-Board>

3. **Final reporting (addition to cover page—“Recipient Reporting”):** The board noted that grantees who do not apply for funding in a subsequent grant cycle are currently under no obligation to report on the results or the use of grant funds for their previous grant award. The board therefore will implement a request for final reports from the FY2020 and FY2021 grantees for final narrative and fiscal reports. Judy Stermer maintains the list of addresses and contacts of former applicants and will request final reports from those organizations and individuals who have not submitted a subsequent application.

Going forward, the cover page of the of the FY22 grant application form will include the requirement for such reporting in the paragraph on “Recipient Reporting” on the cover page. The board will also request that the current year’s application form remain accessible on Montpelier Community Fund page of the City web site.

b. **Financial reporting (item 9 on FY21 application form):**

1. Organization budget: The Community Fund Board requires for all organizations applying for a grant for general operating expenses or a specific program or a specific project BOTH their the most recently completed financial statement (actual/budget) AND their board-approved budget for the coming fiscal year.
2. Program or Project budget: The Community Fund Board requires of all organizations and individuals applying for program or project grants BOTH the organization budgets (see item 1, above) AND a budget for the specific program or project proposed for funding. The board acknowledges the long timeline between application for and implementation of programs and projects for which funding is requested, and will accept best estimates for these budgets.
3. **Fees (New item for FY22):** If an organization charges a fee for services, admission, or other similar charges, describe the fee structure and if/how the organization makes accommodations for individuals who cannot afford the standard fee.

c. **Numbers of individuals served (Addition to item 5 on FY21 application form):** For program and project grant proposals: In addition to providing

information about the unduplicated number of individuals served by the organization as a whole, provide information about the unduplicated number of individuals that are or will be served by the specific program or project proposed in this application for funding.

- d. **Grant award letters:** The board acknowledged that grant award letters currently do and can only go out after the City budget is approved by voters. Consequently, unless they read the committee minutes online or consult the City Annual Report, successful applicants do not receive word of the grant award until several months after the board has completed its awarding process. Furthermore, because the city sends letters only to those applicants receiving Community Fund grants, unsuccessful applicants do not receive any comments or feedback from the board. The board will discuss with the appropriate city officials a plan for communicating to each applicant results of the board's review and report. This may be helpful for unsuccessful applicants if and as they prepare applications for a subsequent funding cycle.

6. Other business:

Montpelier Community Fund/Montpelier Foundation. The board has occasionally heard of confusion about the difference between the Community Fund and the Montpelier Foundation. The Foundation is about to become an independent 501(c)(3) organization, separate from the City. It concentrates on funding capital needs projects. In at least one case that came to the board's attention, the new executive director of a non-profit service organizations submitted to the Foundation an application clearly intended for the Community Fund. Christine reported on a conversation with the chair of the Foundation board about efforts to clarify and make easily available the differences and between the two funding groups.

Next meeting: _____?

Adjourn 5:30 P.M.

Submitted,

Michael Sherman

(2/6/20)