Council Meeting Minutes
September 8, 2026

Present:

Council: Carl Etnier, Steven Farnham, Jeff Roberts, Giles Brulé (Online - lost connection at 8:18:00-8:25:00), Greg Gerdel (5:32), Catherine Lowther (Online - lost connection at 8:25:00), Mark Seltzer, Leesa Stewart (Online - Departed 6:09:30PM)

Staff: Jess Knapp, Mary Mullally, Elly Wood, Tom Wright

Facilitator: Elly Wood

Guests: None

Audio (Timestamps in blue indicate where audio corresponding to a given paragraph can be found in the recording. There are two parts to this meeting's recording; all timestamps refer to part 1, except where indicated that it's part 2.)

1. Opening 5:30:26PM (0:00:00)
The Council conducted a bonding exercise that consisted of all members answering a question posed by the facilitator, Elly.

2. Commencement 5:41:36PM (0:00:03)
Carl called the business portion of the meeting to order, welcoming Council members, staff, and guests.

3. Agenda Review 5:42:27PM (0:00:52):
Elly reviewed the agenda; there were no changes.

4. Community Comments 5:43:20PM (0:01:41):
None.

5. Consent agenda 5:43:30PM (0:01:54):
Jeff moved to approve the Consent Agenda items: minutes from April 28, 2026, minutes from June 23, 2026, the most recent equity refund requests, and accepting the resignation from the Council of Giles Brulé, effective the beginning of the November 10 Council Meeting. Mark seconded. Ayes: 7, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Council Retreat Preparation 5:46:01PM (0:04:27):
Laura King introduced the topic and directed Council members' attention to the list of ideas in the packet. Mark likes "How to become a sought-after board to join? Steven preferred no item in particular, but urged those present to focus on items that involve planning instead of training, noting that the co-op pays for training that is routinely available all the time from Columinate. Jeff agreed with Mark and Steven. Greg agreed that training is "another category." Catherine wants a focus on building a strong community among Council members. Carl reminded the group that this retreat will be open to both incoming and departing Council members.
After discussion on time and place Jeff moved to hold retreat October 17, 9:00AM to 4:00PM, at 707 Stonecutters Way, or Montpelier City Council Chamber if 707 is

unavailable. Mark seconded. Ayes: 7, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Executive Session: Renew CBLD Membership 6:00:44PM (0:19:06):

Jeff moved to find that knowledge of the contract discussion by Co-op Members could cause substantial harm to the Co-op or a person involved, and to enter executive session to discuss negotiation of a contract, under section 7.3(c) of the bylaws. Greg seconded. Ayes: 7, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously.

Council entered Executive Session at 6:01:47PM. Jess and Tom left the room.

Jeff moved to exit Executive Session, Greg seconded. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously.

Council exited Executive Session 6:12:35.

Carl moved to authorise the renewal of the Co-op's membership in Columinate's CBLD program for the 2027 calendar year. Jeff Seconded. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously.

8. HMCCF Grants 6:14:30PM (0:21:22):

Matt Levin discussed the HMCCF Committee's activities. While Matt expressed surprise at small number of submissions, a higher percentage of them were on target. He described the scoring rubric. Nine of the eleven applicants received funding. Matt described the committee's focus - what is and is not likely to be funded. The committee did not award all funds - there's more than usual remaining. In response to queries from Council, (1) Matt described the decision process as consensus: Everyone on the HMCCF Committee may not say yes, but no one says no. (2) In the case of funding requests for food, Matt expressed that it would be difficult and unusual for a granting organisation to place restrictions on the source of the food, and therefore grantees are allowed to purchase food from corporate grocery stores, not just the co-op. He also noted that they try to prioritise infrastructure (e.g., a freezer) over consumables like food.

(3) The maximum grant amount is $3,000.00 in order to optimise impact with the Co-op's limited resources. (4) Money not awarded is invested in a fund that provides loans to other co-ops. Interest from that can be used by the HMCCF Committee for future grants. (5) Grants are awarded once per year, but if an aspiring grantee experienced an emergency mid-year, they can bring their request to staff. Matt also mentioned that if an emergency arises, to advise him accordingly, and he'd try to find a funding source.

Carl moved to approve the grant proposals of the Hunger Mountain Cooperative Community Fund Committee. Jeff Seconded. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously.

Tom stated a decision on the destiny of the excess funds needed to be made by a September 15th deadline. Carl suggested delegating that to the Executive Committee. There was no objection.

9. Executive Session: Year-End Financial Statements 6:46:27PM (0:53:30):

Jeff moved to find that knowledge by Co-op Members of the unaudited financial statements and accompanying Council discussion could cause substantial harm to the Co-op or a person involved, and to enter executive session to discuss business plans, under section 7.3(d) of the bylaws.. Greg seconded. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously.

Council entered Executive Session at 6:47:30. Mark moved to exit Executive Session. Jeff seconded. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously The Council exited Executive Session at 7:15:23.

10. Break 7:15:25PM (0:54:31)

11. Annual Meeting Plan 7:25:54PM (0:54:46):

Jess Knapp stated the Annual Meeting will be on September 24, described the agenda, and explained the new voting platform.

12. Policy for Council Member Email Addresses 7:32:23PM (1:01:15):

Jeff moved to find that knowledge by Co-op Members of attorney-client privileged material could cause substantial harm to the Co-op or a person involved, and to enter executive session to discuss a matter that may, by law or contract, be considered confidential, under section 7.3(e) of the bylaws. Carl seconded. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously. Council entered Executive Session at 7:33:28.

Jeff moved to exit Executive Session. Greg seconded. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously. Council exited Executive Session at 7:58:00PM.

Jeff moved to require Council members to use a Hunger Mountain Co-op email address for Council-related communications, effective the first Council meeting with the new Council after the 2026 Annual Meeting. Giles seconded. Ayes: 5, Nays: 1, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed.

13. Committee Reports 7:59:11PM (1:03:38):

In response to a query from Steven, Carl explained what is meant in the Strategic Planning Committee report by background resources, condensed public-facing plans, detailed funder-facing plans, and extensive statewide initiatives.

14. Executive Session: 8:03:40PM (1:08:12):

Jeff moved to find that knowledge by Co-op Members of the business plans and accompanying Council discussion could cause substantial harm to the Co-op or a person involved, and to enter executive session to discuss business plans, under section 7.3(d) of the bylaws. Greg seconded. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously. Council entered Executive Session at 8:04:41PM

Jeff moved to exit Executive Session. Mark seconded. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously. Council exited Executive Session at 8:28:01PM

15. Denouement 8:28:05PM (Part 2 - 0:00:03):

Action Items

What	Who	🎶
Determine council retreat location by 9/11 and reserve City Council Chambers if necessary.	Mary	
Renew CBLD contract for Council	Carl	
Send Matt Levin follow up email regarding HMCCF remainder.	Mary	Done
Decide on HMCCF remainder by 9/14	Executive Committee	
Next council meeting: Tuesday 9/22	All council	

16. Adjournment 8:31:13PM (Part 2 - 0:03:12):

Excepting one outlier, meeting evaluations scored 8, accompanied by these comments: “Sandwich on the way to Stowe,” “Fine,” appreciation to folks for staying late to finish, “Appreciate everything we got through,” “Looking forward to future meetings and more plugs for electric cars,” “No comment,” and “Good Discussion”

Jeff moved to adjourn. Mark seconded. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0, Abstentions: 0. The motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:31:28PM