

REIB City Council Committee

March 19, 2024 5:30 pm - 7:30pm

Sharon Bushor Room, 149 Church St, 1st Floor City Hall, Burlington VT

Minutes

Attendance:

Ali Dieng	Ben Traverse	Melo Grant
Christian Berry	Katie Greene	Phet Keomanyvanh
Kerin Durfee	Sital	Mark Hughes
Will Clavelle		

5:35 PM Start

1. Motion to approve the agenda
 - a. Motion to approve by Councilor Traverse, seconded by Councilor Grant, unanimous pass
2. Motion to approve the meeting minutes [December 19, 2023](#)
 - a. Motion to approve by Councilor Traverse, seconded by Councilor Grant, unanimous pass
3. Public Forum
4. Committee Discussion & Next Steps of the VNAAC Report (Supporting New American Youth and Families Affected by Gun Violence)
 - a. Councilor Dieng, in light of having cancelled recent meetings, funding changes, and the incoming administration, proposes to move topic for next committee.
 - b. Councilors also discussed budget matters, including funding recommendations.
 - i. Councilor Dieng mentioned that one recommendation was to create a specific position for new American affairs in the department, which would require funding or restructuring.
 - ii. Another recommendation was to allocate funding to established nonprofit organizations. Councilor Dieng emphasized that these organizations are not fully accessing the city services and information, which is causing problems.
 - c. The committee discussed the communication and funding between the city and Congolese and Somali Bantu nonprofit organizations. The need

for a comprehensive list of these groups to avoid any oversight was highlighted. Councilor Grant expressed financial concerns and the need for education and grant assistance. The committee also discussed inviting representatives from various organizations for more in-depth discussions.

5. REIB Updates

a. Programmatic / Event updates

i. Black Experience

1. Good community participation ~1100-1200 participants.

ii. Fair Housing Month

1. April is Fair Housing Month. Plans include partnering with a mortgage industry veteran, to host seminars on navigating the housing system. The committee discussed agreed to consider the idea of making these seminars more accessible to teenagers. All part of a broader strategy to provide various services and resources to the community.

2. Christian discussed the financial contributions of the reib department to two events, the black experience and fair housing month.

- a. \$7500 was given to the black experience, with \$4000 going to Flynn for curating the performers and \$3500 to New Wave as part of the black experience creators. For fair housing month, \$1000 was donated, with a contribution of staff support.

iii. Juneteenth 2024 / Embrace & Belonging Ceremony

1. The committee discussed the planning for Juneteenth and the progress of the "Embrace and Belonging" monument. Councilor Grant emphasized the importance of clear communication about the project, particularly regarding the construction start date of April 1st. Christian agreed on the need for improved communication and assured that the information will be shared on the front porch form. The committee also discussed the need to contact the Old North End farmers market for coordination.

b. Empowerment Grant Process Update

- i. REIB is working on a review of the empowerment grant process, which is currently being reviewed by the City Attorneys. The aim is to start awarding outstanding proposals as part of the empowerment funding. Councilor Dieng highlighted the need for continuous communication, even if there is no response.
 - ii. Councilor Dieng raised concerns about the outreach strategy for the application process and the support available for those with limited access. The REIB team emphasized their commitment to working with community partners and using various methods to reach out to the community. The committee also discussed the need for a sustainable funding plan and the possibility of hosting information sessions or webinars before the application process begins. Councilor Dieng also inquired about the funding limit, and REIB confirmed that they can allocate up to \$50,000 per request. Councilor Dieng highlighted an issue about some organizations who have been waiting for a long time to hear about their requests. REIB assured that they are working on expediting the process for these organizations.
 - c. REIB City of Burlington Website
 - i. REIB also discussed the transition of the Reib department's webpage to a new platform.
6. Community Forum
- a. Rev. Mark Hughes expressed appreciation for the work of Councilor Dieng and the REIB Office as well as Director Durfee and the other councilors
 - b. Councilor Traverse thanked everyone as well.
 - i. Councilor Grant seconds
 - ii. Director Durfee mirrored thanks to Councilor Traverse
7. Motion to Adjourn
- a. Motion to Adjourn by Councilor Traverse at 6:55
 - i. Seconded by

Zoom information:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92744162495?pwd=YVNhUUUzU3RFYjIwODFIZm8xTFc0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 927 4416 2495

Passcode: 225169