



City Council Meeting

Monday, April 1, 2024, 6:00 PM, Contois Auditorium, 2nd Floor, City Hall

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To participate in Public Comment in person, sign up at the meeting.

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1. Agenda

Subject	1.1. Motion to adopt agenda
Meeting	April 1, 2024 - City Council - Organization Day Meeting - Monday, April 1, 2024, 6:00 PM, Contois Auditorium, 2nd Floor, City Hall
Category	1. Agenda
Department	Council and Board
Type	Action Procedural
Recommended Action	Motion to adopt agenda

2. Mayor - Oath of Office

3. Mayor's State of the City Address

Subject	3.1. Mayor's State of the City Address
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Meeting	April 1, 2024 - City Council - Organization Day Meeting - Monday, April 1, 2024, 6:00 PM, Contois Auditorium, 2nd Floor, City Hall
Category	3. Mayor's State of the City Address
Department	Council and Board
Type	Communication Information

4. Oath of Office - Newly Elected and Re-elected City Councilors

5. Public Comment (verbal) ****Public Comment will be limited to City Council action items for this meeting: the election of the City Council President and the election of the Board of Finance members** **See above for signup instructions****

Subject	5.1. Verbal Comments
Meeting	April 1, 2024 - City Council - Organization Day Meeting - Monday, April 1, 2024, 6:00 PM, Contois Auditorium, 2nd Floor, City Hall
Category	5. Public Comment (verbal) **Public Comment will be limited to City Council action items for this meeting: the election of the City Council President and the election of the Board of Finance members** **See above for signup instructions**
Department	Council and Board
Type	Action Procedural
Recommended Action	open Public Comment close Public Comment

6. Election of City Council President

7. Election of Board of Finance Members

8. Adjournment

Subject	8.1. Motion to adjourn
Meeting	April 1, 2024 - City Council - Organization Day Meeting - Monday, April 1, 2024, 6:00 PM, Contois Auditorium, 2nd Floor, City Hall
Category	8. Adjournment
Department	Council and Board
Type	Action Procedural
Recommended Action	Motion to adjourn

9. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

Subject	9.1. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. For more information on access, call Lori Olberg, Licensing, Voting and Records
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Category	9. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements
Department	Clerk/Treasurer's Office
Type	Information

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS 2024
Mayor Emma Mulvaney-Stanak

Friends, neighbors, and distinguished guests, good evening, and welcome. I am deeply grateful to share in this historic night with all of you here in-person, and with those of you watching online.

I stand before you today, both honored and humbled to be the first woman and first openly LGBTQ person to serve as Burlington's Mayor. And, after 159 years, let me just say it's about time.

I want to thank Mayor Miro Weinberger for his twelve years of service to our City, and for his gracious and collaborative partnership throughout the transition. I also want to acknowledge former Mayor Clavelle, Lieutenant Governor Zuckerman, and Senator Leahy, who are here tonight, and extend my appreciation for your collective years of service.

And I am truly grateful for every Burlingtonian who leaned in to engage on the issues during this election. Whether you volunteered for a campaign, attended events, or simply cast your ballot, you have helped to bring our community back to itself.

I also want to extend gratitude to my fellow candidates in the Town Meeting election for their thoughtful engagement on the issues facing our City. And a special thank you to Councilor Joan Shannon, for your two decades of service to our City and your call to your supporters to be "all hands to be on deck" in the months ahead. The challenges and opportunities facing our City will require all of us to work together.

To the outgoing and former City Councilors, I thank you for your service to the community over the past several years. I hope for and look forward to your ongoing engagement as we get to work addressing challenges like community safety, and the FY25 budget, and also begin to work on new and exciting opportunities for our City. Welcome to the new Councilors who begin their service tonight.

I especially want to thank my family. My wife Megan, our kids Ruby and Elliott, and my parents, Joelen and Ed, my sibling Llu, and my extended family who traveled to be with me on this special night. I would not be here without your love and support and I can't thank you enough for being on this journey with me. Our entire family, friends and colleagues have been by our side since day one and it means so much to us. And Elliot, thank you for not wearing pajamas tonight. Your Mommy really appreciates it.

I ran for mayor because I have a deep love for Burlington. Like so many of you, my wife and I actively chose to put down roots and raise our family here. And similarly, we have shared the

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anxiety about the unraveling of our sense of community over the last several years. This concern comes from a place of love and care for our home, for our neighbors, and for the vibrancy and natural beauty of our City. Throughout this election season, I have engaged with residents of all political and economic backgrounds. What shone through in each of those interactions was hope for our collective future, and an eagerness to be engaged and involved in the work ahead. The residents of Burlington are ready and willing to help address our challenges and renew our sense of community. It is because of this hope and renewed sense of community empowerment that I see a bright future for our City and all who live here.

I know we are all acutely aware of the challenges facing our community. The complex and overlapping crises of homelessness, addiction, and mental health are causing Vermonters to suffer deeply on our City's streets. We must also confront the related crisis of affordability and availability of safe and stable housing. At the same time, we are heading into a budget year that will require difficult and courageous choices to close a nine million dollar budget deficit. These challenges, while complex, are not insurmountable. Through thoughtful engagement and collaboration, I'm confident that we can work together to find solutions that make Burlington a vibrant and resilient community for all of our neighbors for years to come.

As your Mayor, Community Safety will be my top priority, because everyone deserves to feel and be safe in our City. When you call for help, you should have peace of mind knowing that you will receive a timely and appropriate response. If you experience harm, you deserve both immediate and ongoing support to repair that harm. Whether or not you have a permanent home, you deserve dignity, respect, and support from our City.

In the first months of my administration, I will work to break down silos so we can move forward in a collaborative and cohesive manner. I have identified and begun working with a coalition of advisors on community safety, including subject matter experts and people with lived experience. We will work together to develop a citywide strategy to coordinate our community safety work in the coming weeks, and to establish and appoint a dedicated Special Assistant to the Mayor on Community Safety to carry this focus forward.

I will look to continue the initiatives that are working well; I want to take a moment to thank Mayor Weinberger for his efforts to combat the overdose crisis here in Burlington. I had the honor of sitting beside him during his last CommunityStats meeting last week where the group reflected on his 8 years of leadership convening stakeholders to advance harm reduction policies. There were not many dry eyes in the room given the critical and life saving work involved in this work.

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I also want to recognize the members of the Burlington Fire Department for their creative thinking and quick action with Fire Chief Michael Lachance to stand up the Community Response Team, as well as the ongoing efforts of the Burlington Police Department on the promising BTV CARES initiative.

Our work to address the overdose crisis continues. As a legislator, I have supported the establishment of an overdose prevention center pilot program in Vermont. As Burlington's mayor, I will continue to advocate for this crucial intervention with legislators and Governor Scott, and I will work locally to ensure our community is ready to support an overdose prevention center when that legislation passes.

Overdose Prevention Centers are simply one part of the solution. We know that Vermont lacks crucial resources to support those struggling with addiction. We need more investment and coordination across the continuum of care. We need more housing at all levels, from low-barrier shelters to affordable permanent housing.

We saw this need firsthand when our adverse weather shelter program came to an end during a snowstorm. While we worked quickly to ensure support was available to our most vulnerable, our neighbors deserve better. They deserve dignified solutions as we address this housing emergency, including reliable and robust support from both the city and the state. In the past few weeks, I have been engaging closely with city staff, Mayor Weinberger, and Vermont's Agency of Human Services, and will continue to work in collaboration to prioritize humane solutions.

Several of our community safety initiatives have shown early promise; however, asking our first responders to continue working additional hours is not sustainable. I want to acknowledge and express deep gratitude for all of the City employees who have found themselves unexpectedly on the frontlines of these crises, including the dedicated staff at our Library. I am eager to work together with our front-line workers, including City staff, the Howard Center, and UVM Medical Center, to add new mental health and harm reduction capacity to our community safety system.

I am also eager to rebuild a Police Department that is right-sized for Burlington and that includes comprehensive staffing of social workers, sworn officers, and first responders. By building a department that is responsive to and reflective of our community's needs, we can ensure that Burlingtonians receive an appropriate response when they call for help. By collaborating with resources like our Community Justice Center, we can provide services before, during, and after harm occurs, and so prevent and respond to crime while ensuring victims receive ongoing support.

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I am committed to working with community partners, impacted individuals, service organizations, and state lawmakers to address community safety and to advocate for policy changes that will break down barriers to support for unhoused Vermonters and those struggling with addiction or mental illness. Through a collaborative effort guided by evidence and data, we can make progress on this together.

As we make our community safe, we must also work to make it affordable for all. The cost of living continues to rise here in Burlington and across the country. I know that this is having a significant impact on working people, especially families with young children. My family has felt that impact, and I hold my breath for a moment each time I open our property tax bill. I want Burlingtonians of all income levels to know that I will be mindful of the fact that while the City needs to raise revenue, we must make every effort to ensure Burlingtonians, particularly low- and middle-income residents and those living on fixed incomes, are not priced out of our City. I will be calling on community members to join me in forging a new path forward.

Over the next three months we will be asked to make courageous and difficult decisions in order to close a nine million dollar budget deficit. Together with department heads and City staff, I will work diligently to build a budget that maintains the level of service that residents, businesses, and visitors expect and deserve, while also doing everything possible to minimize the impact on working people.

We have several tools to help us move through this moment with the values that we share as Burlingtonians; including the lessons provided by an ongoing operations study, and creative structural solutions for long-term affordability. I have also identified a team of dedicated advisors with deep financial and budgetary experience, including former elected City leaders, to support me in developing an effective, balanced budget.

While we must work quickly in the remaining weeks of this budget cycle, I am committed to providing transparency, clear communication, and as many opportunities for engagement as possible - because you deserve to know how we are spending money and see our community priorities reflected in our budget.

We must all lean in to create a vibrant, livable, and healthy city where everyone feels they belong. As your mayor, I want to make clear that racism, identity-based hate and violence have no place here in Burlington. We must work together to heal the harm experienced by members of our community. This means creating safe spaces for productive dialogue on divisive issues. It means removing transphobic stickers as soon as they appear. It means responding quickly to

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condemn acts of hate, such as the recent shooting of three Palestinian students, and coming together as a community to show up for impacted people.

The Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging will be a critical resource in the work ahead. It also does not stand alone: we all have a part to play to foster an inclusive community.

Burlington is a community where we care deeply for our neighbors; I'm hopeful to see the energy we all put forth into building coalitions and creating community during this election continue.

For our community to remain welcoming and livable, we must also address the climate crisis. Recent extreme weather events in our region offer all the evidence we need to confirm that the climate crisis is a real and present threat to our City, our unparalleled natural resources and our food systems.

In the face of this challenge, I see cause for hope; gleaning insights from the work members of our community are already doing to create a climate resilient future for Burlington. We see resilience in the work of farmers in the Intervale, who continue to persevere following the flooding last July, including June Farm, who provided the beautiful flowers around us tonight; we see passion in the work of local advocates to pursue climate solutions; and we see dedication from local and regional climate policy experts. I am encouraged by the latest report from Burlington Electric Department, which shows that our climate metrics have begun to trend downward again.

This is an important step in the right direction. To continue this progress, we must be ready to take bold action, and think broadly about how to align our climate goals with all major city decisions, such as housing and urban development. Together, we can move with the urgency required to combat climate change locally and become a model for municipal climate policy across the country.

Everyone who ran for office on Town Meeting Day knew that our community would be faced with pressing challenges, as well as immense opportunities in the years ahead. To our City Councilors, both newly elected and returning, I thank you for stepping up to serve our community. Local elected office is arguably the hardest elected position in government as the stakes are so high. We directly impact people's daily lives by our action or inaction. We set the tone and tenor for community engagement. I know you join me in taking this responsibility seriously and I ask for your partnership as we work to ensure our public conversations create

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space for open, honest, and difficult conversations. We can do this together, in a way where everyone feels safe, seen, and heard.

To my legislative colleagues in the room and watching online, thank you. I miss you all already even though it has only been a couple of days since I resigned my legislative seat. Thank you for your partnership in Montpelier, and for being present this evening. I look forward to strengthening our partnership as city and state leaders to advance important issues needed in our community such as a better emergency housing system, just cause eviction rights for tenants, and more resources and better policies to support people living with substance use disorder.

To the hundreds of dedicated City employees doing crucial work every day to keep our city moving - thank you. I look forward to working with you and department leaders to create supportive and sustainable work environments. I am eager to get to work alongside each of you in service to our City's residents, businesses, and visitors.

I did not run for Mayor because I believed that I alone had the answers to meet our current moment. I ran because I believed my experience as a community and labor organizer, and my ability to bring people together to solve complex problems, was and is exactly the kind of leadership our City needs at this critical moment. And through every engagement I had with groups and individuals alike during this election, I know that Burlingtonians are ready and willing to show up for each other.

From day one, my administration will actively engage members of our community to address quality of life concerns in every corner of Burlington. This will require all of us, working together. So to the 5th graders at Champlain Elementary - ten of whom are in the audience tonight, along with their teacher and guardians - I'll be in touch! After all, I have to make good on my promise to you and work on addressing graffiti and trash in our neighborhoods. Tonight, I ask every Burlingtonian to think of ways that you can support the health and wellbeing of our City in the months and years ahead.

This election was grounded by the idea that we do not have to confront these challenges alone – that we are in this together, and we all have a role to play in creating a bright future for all Burlingtonians. And that is the kind of Mayor I will be. I will lead with hope and with love for our City, working in collaboration with all of you, as we look toward a future that we can all be proud of – now let's move forward together.

Thank you.