

**BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL
ORGANIZATION DAY
CITY HALL, CONTOIS AUDITORIUM *OR*
REMOTE MEETING WITH CALL-IN
BURLINGTON, VERMONT
MINUTES OF MEETING
April 1, 2024
DRAFT**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joan Shannon
Sarah E Carpenter
Mark Barlow
Gene Bergman
Ben Traverse
Tim Doherty
Melo Grant
Carter Neubieser
Joe Kane
Becca Brown McKnight
Evan Litwin
Marek Broderick

OTHERS PRESENT:

Emma Mulvaney-Stanak
Katherine Schad
Lori Olberg
Joe Magee
Charity Clark
Nick Leddy

1. CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA

The meeting was called to order by Chief Administrative Officer Schad at 6:04 PM.

MOTION by Councilor Bergman, SECOND by Councilor Traverse, to adopt the agenda.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2. MAYOR - OATH OF OFFICE

2.1 Swearing In Of Mayor

Vermont Attorney General Clark administered the oath of office and swore in Emma Mulvaney-Stanak as the Mayor of Burlington.

3. MAYOR'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

3.1 Mayor Presents State of the City Address

Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak began by welcoming community and state leaders, as well as members of the community. She thanked outgoing City Councilors for their service to the City, and welcomed newly-elected City Councilors to the table. She spoke about her love of Burlington and how she shares the anxiety felt by many about the unravelling of the sense of community over the last several years. She noted the collective sentiments of hope and readiness to address the City's challenges and renew its sense of community. She spoke about the complex challenges associated with homelessness, addiction, and mental health that cause suffering to many in the City, as well as the related crises of affordability and the availability of safe and stable housing. She additionally spoke of the challenges associated with closing a \$9 million budget gap for Fiscal Year 2025. She said that these crises can be addressed through thoughtful engagement and collaboration, and that she is confident that together, the City can find solutions to make Burlington a vibrant and resilient community for years to come.

Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak spoke about community safety as one of her top priorities. She said that all members of the community deserve dignity, respect, and support from the City. She said that in her first few months as Mayor, she will work to break down silos to ensure that work can continue to confront these challenges in a collaborative and cohesive manner. She said that they will work together to develop a Citywide strategy to coordinate community safety work in the coming weeks, as well as establish a dedicated Special Assistant to the Mayor on Community Safety. She said that she will look to continue initiatives established by the prior administration that have been working, and thanked Mayor Weinberger for his efforts to combat the overdose crisis in Burlington. She thanked the Burlington Fire Department for their efforts to develop a Community Response Team, as well as ongoing efforts by the Police Department to develop the BTV CARES Initiative. She spoke about the importance of harm reduction strategies, such as establishing overdose prevention centers in Vermont (and specifically in Burlington) once related legislation passes. She spoke about the importance of increasing investment and coordination across the continuum of care to support those struggling with addiction. She spoke about the importance of more housing on all levels, from low barrier shelters to affordable permanent housing. She said that several community safety initiatives have shown early promise, but that asking first responders to continue working additional hours isn't sustainable. She expressed gratitude to all City employees who have been on the front lines of these crises, including dedicated staff at the Fletcher Free Library. She spoke about collaborating with City staff, the Howard Center, and the University of Vermont Medical Center to bolster mental health and harm reduction capacity in the community's safety system. She also spoke about rebuilding the Police Department to address Burlington's needs, including staffing of social workers, sworn officers, and first responders. She spoke about collaborating to support the Community Justice Center to prevent and respond to crime and ensuring that victims receive ongoing support.

Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak spoke about the need to ensure that Burlington addresses its affordability issues. She said that the City must make every effort to ensure that Burlingtonians, particularly low-and-middle income residents, are not priced out of the City. She said that she is committed to working with City staff to develop a budget that maintains the level of service that Burlingtonians deserve, while doing everything possible to minimize the impact on working people. She spoke about several tools to do this, including lessons provided by an ongoing operational study and creative structured solutions for long-term affordability. She said that she is committed to providing transparency, clear communication, and as many opportunities for engagement as possible throughout the remainder of the budget development process.

Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak said that racism, identity-based hate, and violence have no place in the City. She said that they must work to create safe spaces for productive dialogue on divisive issues, removing transphobic stickers from public spaces as soon as they appear, condemning

acts of hate swiftly, and coming together as a community to show up for impacted people. She said that the City's Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Department will play a key role in this, and will be supported throughout these efforts to foster an inclusive community.

Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak then spoke about the work needed to address the climate crisis. She spoke about resilience on many fronts, including those of farmers in the Intervale who persevered after the flooding of last summer. She said that the latest report by the Burlington Electric Department was encouraging, showing that the City's climate metrics have begun to trend downward again. She said that to continue this progress, the City needs to take bold action and think broadly about how to align climate goals with all major City decisions, such as housing and urban development.

Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak ended by asking for the Council's partnership to ensure that public conversations create a space for open, honest, and difficult conversations in the years ahead, as well as looking forward to strengthening partnerships with legislators at the State level to advance the important issues that Burlington is facing. She thanked City staff for their tireless work on behalf of the City's residents, businesses, and visitors.

4. OATH OF OFFICE – NEWLY ELECTED AND RE-ELECTED CITY COUNCILORS

4.1 Swearing In Of Newly Elected and Re-elected City Councilors

Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak swore in newly elected and re-elected City Councilors Bergman, Broderick, Carpenter, Kane, Litwin, McKnight, Neubieser, and Traverse.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

5.1 Verbal Comments

None.

6. ELECTION OF CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

6.1 Election of City Council President

Chief Administration Officer Schad called for nominations for City Council President.

MOTION by Councilor Carpenter to nominate Ben Traverse as City Council President.

DISCUSSION:

- **Councilor Carpenter spoke about the work embodied by former City Council President Paul that the Council should represent and serve those in the City as its primary duty, and said that Councilor Traverse will uphold and carry on this guiding philosophy and high standard. She said that Councilor Traverse is a clear leader on the Council and is able to grasp and analyze issues quickly, as well as thoughtfully presents the issues to other Councilors and the public. She said that he is respectful of others' views, is fair in this position, and works hard to try and forge consensus.**

There were no other nominations.

VOTING (by roll call): Councilor Barlow – aye, Councilor Bergman – aye, Councilor Broderick – aye, Councilor Carpenter – aye, Councilor Doherty – aye, Councilor Grant – nay, Councilor Kane – nay, Councilor Litwin – aye, Councilor McKnight – aye, Councilor Neubieser – aye, Councilor Shannon – aye, Councilor Traverse – aye (10 ayes, 2 nays); motion carries.

City Council President Traverse congratulated newly-elected and re-elected City Council members and Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak. He said that the Council will strive to partner, collaborate, and find common ground where it can in its work this session. He said that all Councilor voices will be vital to the work this session. He emphasized the importance of transparency in government, and committed to working with Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak to ensure that there are ample opportunities to engage the public throughout the Council's work this session. He spoke about the importance of ensuring that the Council fosters a welcoming and inviting space for all members of the community at its meetings. He also spoke about working to ensure that service on the Council is as accessible as possible for future generations of City Councilors.

7. ELECTION OF BOARD OF FINANCE MEMBERS

7.1 Election of Board of Finance Members

City Council President Traverse called for nominations to the Board of Finance.

MOTION by Councilor Bergman, SECOND by Councilor Grant, to nominate Councilors Kane, Carpenter, and Barlow to the Board of Finance.

There were no other nominations.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

8. ADJOURNMENT

8.1 Motion to Adjourn

MOTION by Councilor Bergman, SECOND by Councilor Grant, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

The City Council meeting adjourned at 6:49 PM.

RScty: AACoonrad