

REIB City Council Committee

April 30, 2024 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Champlain Room, 149 Church Street, 3rd Floor City Hall, Burlington, VT

Attendees:

Councilor Melo Grant

Councilor Becca Brown McKnight

Councilor Gene Bergman

Phet Keomanyvanh (REIB)

Christian Berry (REIB)

Katie Greene (REIB)

Acting Director Durfee (HR/REIB)

Keren Sita (Community Member)

Meeting Convened: 5:35 pm

Agenda

1. Motion to Approve the agenda

Council Bergman motioned to approve. Councilor McKnight seconded.
Unanimous pass.

2. Motion to approve the meeting minutes from [March 19, 2024](#)

- Councilor Grant motioned to amend minutes from March 19, 2024:

Correction to 4c: Clarify, "The need for a comprehensive list of these groups to avoid any oversight was highlighted." Councilor Grant specified that the REIB Council requires a list of organizations the department is supporting and working with, aiming to identify demographics in need of assistance and prevent anyone from "falling through the cracks."

Councilor Grant suggests amending the March 19 minutes to include Acting Director Durfee's points under 4. Committee Discussions and Next Steps of the VNAAC Report, particularly regarding support within the school system and for basic needs.

- Councilor Bergman motioned to approve. Councilor McKnight seconded.
Unanimous pass.

3. Public Forum

- Inquired about Director Kim Carson's status and Juneteenth preparations.
- Advocated for support for New Americans, emphasizing empowering youth and dispelling misinformation.
- Suggested celebrating African heritage and involving African individuals in Juneteenth festivities.
- Addressed discrimination issues and proposed legal education to handle related matters effectively.

4. REIB Updates

1. Education & Training

1. CEDO collaborations

1. NPA

1. Power and Identity Workshop

The Power and Identity Workshop collaboration between REIB and CEDO/CJC was discussed, with Katie updating about the survey sent to steering committees. Christian proposed a skill-building community of practice. Councilor Grant asked about discrimination in neighborhood planning, while Councilor Bergman sought clarity on draft materials and dates. Christina emphasized collaboration for a likely fall workshop. Christian clarified the survey's purpose, and Councilor Grant raised concerns and gave updates about NPAs' grievance procedures. Acting Director Durfee discussed NPA collaboration tasks, and Councilor Grant sought ongoing updates.

2. Workforce Development

1. PCA DEI training

Christian discussed collaborating with CEDO on PCA training for New Americans. Gillian from CEDO sought Christian's assistance in this initiative, reflecting the city's collaborative approach. Councilor Bergman supported the project's internal execution, asking about the number of PCAs trained and DEI Training content. Christian mentioned at least five participants and emphasized addressing challenges PCAs and their vulnerable clients face. Training focuses on rights, responsibilities, and career advancement for PCAs.

2. Language Access Program (LAP)

Christian discussed reinvigorating policy collaboration between REIB and CEDO, aiming to bring it to the HR committee for accountability. Acting Director Durfee mentioned Director Pine's interest in incorporating it into the City policy manual. Councilor Grant requested policy details, which Acting Director Durfee shared. Councilor Bergman inquired about the HR committee process, explained by Acting Director Durfee. The goal is broad stakeholder involvement for alignment with city culture and procedures.

3. Fair Housing Month workshops

1. May 8th and May 22nd

Housing seminars scheduled for May 8th and 22nd at City Hall and Richard Kemp Center and feature panels of housing experts to clarify confusing processes. Councilor McKnight inquired about social media promotion, to which Acting Director Durfee confirmed postings. Councilors Grant and McKnight offered tagging assistance and requested summaries for council. Christian mentioned a social media campaign.

4. REIB equity training updates

Acting Director Durfee discussed plans to resume equity training with Vanessa from HR, focusing on internal efforts and expanding to other departments. Councilor Grant expressed interest in updates and inquired about the departments involved. Christian highlighted the potential impact on retention. Councilor Grant emphasized the importance of retention based on personal and statistical evidence.

2. Programmatic / Event Updates

1. Embrace & Belonging Ceremony

Phet updated on Embrace and Belonging monument installation, potentially unveiled by Juneteenth. Councilor Grant raised past communication issues, emphasizing improved

response. Councilor McKnight queried Farmers Market monument resolution. Councilor Bergman suggested immediate social media updates. REIB took communication responsibility. Committee proposed public input on storage. "Save the date" for events to be sent out.

2. Juneteenth 2024 planning

Christian mentioned a meeting with a potential sponsor and ongoing interviews for event and volunteer coordinators. Updates on a new pastor for a gospel brunch and plans for art/spoken word/essay on Church Street were discussed. Councilor Grant suggested reaching out to Jason Raymond for youth involvement, with OK2 also engaging with Burlington Technical Center. Programming ideas for Juneteenth were shared, including activities for different age groups. Acting Director Durfee suggested consolidating community events and emphasized inclusivity. Councilor McKnight recommended promoting events through school channels. Councilor Grant emphasized plugging into the Superintendent's office and preparing for contingencies like rain. Plans for another community dinner were mentioned, with OK2 invited to the May meeting.

3. Black Experience follow-up

Christian provided updates on the Black Experience, including financial estimates from Emiliano and discussions with Jay from the Flynn about potential revenue of around \$65,000 for the City during the event weekend.

3. Project Updates

1. SS4A Grant

Phet shared that SS4 Grant was awarded under DPW for equity mapping, with REIB allocated \$500K for the project. The mapping will cover transportation and housing, allowing data overlay for policy insights. The multi-year grant is in the agreement stage, with implementation possibly starting in 2026. Councilor Bergman suggested reviewing DPW's matrix for sidewalk repairs to ensure accurate needs representation. Phet emphasized consolidating data and incorporating qualitative insights to address disparities in programs. Councilor Bergman expressed interest in participating in the transportation management study on S. Winooski Ave., focusing on new American businesses. Phet outlined plans for a community assessment in the study's second phase, involving consultants and temporary staff every three years to analyze regional and census data on community interactions.

2. Black Forest MIT Project

Christian mentioned VJ, the city arborist, brought the Black Forest initiative to REIB, a participatory public art project honoring black individuals who lost their lives to COVID-19 with tree plantings. The event is planned for the fall, and Christian offered to share a link for more information. Councilor Grant suggested regular sharing of information.

4. Committees / Task Forces

1. Burlington Advisory Committee on Accessibility

Phet mentioned a committee established years ago and staffed by CEDO. Christian noted Ethan's participation as a note-taker on both committees and expressed interest in playing a more active role, particularly in collaboration with the VT Justice Language project.

2. Vermont Language Justice Project

Phet discussed the Accessibility Committee, managed by CEDO. Christian expressed interest in REIB more active role, particularly with the VT Justice Language Project. The project aims to improve accessibility through videos, catering to various literacy levels. Councilor Bergman

proposed collaborating on voter registration efforts for New Americans. Phet emphasized the need for outreach to populations with non-written languages.

3. IDEAL Vermont (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Action, Leadership)

Christian mentioned Director Carson as the previous representative, and Christian is now attending meetings. The meetings include representatives from other municipalities, providing opportunities for collaboration. Christian also discussed an Equitable and Inclusive Committees grant, potentially offering up to \$10K. They plan to meet with a representative from the VT Community Foundation to discuss how the community can best utilize the grant.

5. Funding and Staff

1. Empowerment Funds Update

Acting Director Durfee discussed the Empowerment Fund, mentioning Christian's rubric and low-barrier application inspired by Work Force Development matrix to keep legal consistency. Councilor Grant requested to review documents before the fiscal year's end. Christian emphasized the need for equity in fund distribution. Councilor Bergman suggested clarifying criteria in the application process. Christian agreed to simplify the matrix language and provide technical assistance. Councilor Bergman sought clarification on decision-making processes.

2. REIB Staff

Committee discussed efforts underway to hire a volunteer admin person for Juneteenth, with volunteers enlisted as necessary. Future discussions will address the configuration and staffing within the office, focusing on embedding staff members into every department. Training is being considered as a mechanism, with additional strategies under exploration.

3. VNAAC Recommendations

The VNAAC report, featuring recommendations on the last page, was discussed. The committee strongly considers these recommendations, particularly regarding a partially funded role within the school district. Councilor Grant emphasized the importance of public engagement, highlighting issues within the Congolese community and the need for improved cultural competency within the police department. There was consensus among members to request a presentation of the report to the full council and the public. Councilor Bergman proposed a motion to expedite this request, supported by Acting Director Durfee and Councilor Grant. Councilor Grant stressed the importance of understanding cultural competency issues, citing real-life examples from the report. The agenda for the next meeting was reviewed, with consideration given to inviting Sandrine and Ali Dieng. Councilor Grant questioned the necessity of the Community Forum agenda item, suggesting it might be redundant. It was agreed to maintain the Public Forum and give different individuals a designated item number on the agenda.

6. Community Forum

7. Motion to Adjourn

Council Bergman motioned to adjourn. Councilor McKnight seconded.

Unanimous pass.

Meeting adjourned 7:14 pm.

Zoom information:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92744162495?pwd=YVNhUUUzU3RFYjlwODFlZm8xTFc0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 927 4416 2495

Passcode: 225169