

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF FINANCE
FY25 BUDGET PRESENTATIONS
BUSHOR CONF. ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, CITY HALL *OR*
REMOTE MEETING WITH CALL-IN NUMBER
BURLINGTON, VERMONT
MINUTES OF MEETING
DRAFT
May 15, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ben Traverse
Mark Barlow
Sarah E Carpenter
Joe Kane
Emma Mulvaney-Stanak

OTHERS PRESENT:

Katherine Schad
Erin Jacobsen
Scot Barker
Meagan Tuttle
Kerin Durfee
Marek Broderick
Gene Bergman
Melo Grant

1.0 CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA

Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak called the Board of Finance meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

MOTION by Councilor Carpenter, SECOND by Councilor Barlow, to amend and adopt the agenda as follows:

- **Remove agenda item 6.0 Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging—it will be part of 5/29 budget presentations (per CAO Schad);**
- **Remove agenda item 9.0 Regional Programs—it will be part of 5/22 budget presentations (per CAO Schad).**

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2.0 PUBLIC FORUM (VERBAL)

2.1 Verbal Comments

Sharon Bushor asked whether the position related to the grants functions in the Clerk & Treasurer's Office can be utilized by any department. She also asked about the dollar amount of funds that were moved from Human Resources to IT, and asked how many of the recruited positions for FY24 were new or temporary positions.

3.0 INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

3.1 Innovation & Technology

Chief Innovation Officer Barker began the IT Department's FY25 budget presentation by providing an overview of the department's team structure and purpose. He noted that this includes 7 positions and that one of them is currently vacant. He said that in FY25, the team's focus will continue to be on innovative technology projects, employee support, and City-wide departmental needs, as well as an increased focus in cybersecurity. He said that the IT Department is focused on providing the right technology for the right price across the City, providing data and cybersecurity to meet increased cyber threats, providing high-quality service to support technology users across the City, and leveraging data, knowledge, creativity, and relationships to foster more innovative ideas across the City for employees and residents. He also spoke briefly about the activities the department conducted in FY24, including completing the network move-out from Memorial Auditorium, renegotiating the City's cellular phone network plan (resulting in savings of \$100,000 over the next two years), renewing the Burlington Telecom contract with no increase in costs, rolling out CivicClerk for boards and commissions, bringing the City's GIS software in-house to realize more savings, and expanding the use of Asset Management software to more departments.

Chief Innovation Officer Barker then spoke about looking ahead to planned activities in FY25. He said that they are looking to further increase the City's cybersecurity through a new hire, training, tools, and cybersecurity best practices. He said that they are also focusing on "digital first" engagement with residents, to help make tools and services available when citizens want and need them. He said that they are further focusing on continuous improvement, equity and accessibility, facilitating deeper relationships across City departments, and replacing the City's website backend processes to make it more modern, secure, and accessible.

Chief Innovation Officer Barker then said that this results in a budget that is \$2,024,710, or 1.9% higher than the FY24 budget. He said that this is broken out into personnel (which has lower costs than in FY24), operations (which is higher than in FY24), and professional and consultant services (which has lower costs than in FY24). He said that the operations are higher due to centralizing more software licensing and cloud services into the IT budget from other departments across the City.

Councilor Carpenter encouraged the City to increase consistency between departments on the City's website in terms of the information and format presented. Chief Innovation Officer Barker said that this would be addressed through the new website platform, which will help standardize pages between the departments. Councilor Carpenter also noted that some people still aren't digital and that it remains important for services to be available and accessible to them.

Councilor Barlow asked if there is money in the budget for anticipated taxi scheduling software, and Chief Innovation Officer Barker replied that there is funding included in the FY25 budget for this. Councilor Barlow asked about open data software so that users can conduct self-service activities such as running reports, rather than asking staff to produce them. Chief Innovation Officer Barker replied that there is an open data portal available, particularly in the in-house GIS software. He also noted that there is a significant amount of raw data available through spreadsheets, but that they are focusing on ensuring that more of this data is available to end users.

Councilor Bergman asked if there are priority projects for the IT Department that are not able to move forward at this juncture due to the current financial constraints the City is facing. Chief Innovation Officer Barker replied that there are no pressing, high-priority items that are currently unfunded and that the City's IT resources are in good shape in terms of meeting current needs. Councilor Bergman said that if needs arise, the department should alert leadership early and often.

Councilor Grant requested that City Councilors are involved as the new website design is rolled out, given that she is interested in providing feedback. She said that there is no consistent web-posting throughout the City and that each department conducts these activities at its own

discretion, and suggested that there be a single point of contact in future for posting to the website across departments, to ensure consistency. She asked about the percentage of technology and cybersecurity trainings that are completed by City employees (and the percentage that aren't). Chief Innovation Officer Barker said that there are staff in the Human Resources Department with whom he works to ensure that as many employees take trainings as possible.

Councilor Kane asked how the consultant and professional services line item within the IT budget is used by the department. Chief Innovation Officer Barker replied that the line item is used for work related to network configuration, cybersecurity, and other ad hoc needs. He noted that about 45% of the line item is anticipated and the other 55% is reserved for ad hoc work.

4.0 PLANNING

4.1 Planning

Director Tuttle began by speaking about the Office of City Planning's functions, noting that while the team is small, its scope is large and cross-cutting across City departments. She spoke about functions related to comprehensive planning, ordinance development, urban analytics and design, and providing support to boards and commissions (such as the City Council Ordinance Committee and the Planning Commission). She spoke briefly about the Planning Office's activities in FY24, which were heavily focused on major housing ordinances related to the previous Administration's ten-point housing plan.

She then spoke about the Office's FY25 goals and priorities. These include preparing long-range plans and supporting other departments' planning initiatives, such as planBTV's New North End project and preserveBTV's Historic Preservation Plan project. They also include facilitating the implementation of planBTV through policy work and special projects, and supporting data analysis, research, and best practices for key City priorities and projects.

Director Tuttle provided information about the Planning Office's FY25 revenues and expenses. She noted that its revenue is 98% funded from the General Fund, with 2% coming in through grants. She further noted that an additional \$160,000 in work is funded through the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) but that doesn't flow through the budget. She noted that they are requesting approximately \$25,000 of unspent budget from FY24 to roll over into FY25 to continue funded projects. She noted that 89% of expenses for the Office covers staffing, and that the Office has 5.1 FTEs. She noted that they are not requesting funding for the data fellow position in FY25. She noted that the Office's net FY25 General Fund request of \$744,963 is approximately \$24,300 less than the FY24 request, due to pausing the data fellow position and that FY25 activity will be to continue multi-year projects whose funds had been allocated in prior fiscal years.

Councilor Barlow asked what work won't be able to be done with the pausing of the data fellow position. Director Tuttle replied that it is a new position and was originally used to help manage transitions among other staff. She noted that the position helped build out the City's climate data, and is currently helping with a housing report. She said that the position also conducts research, data cleaning and publishing, and website maintenance. She said that pausing the position may temporarily reduce the Office's capacity to support newly requested initiatives or respond to new reporting needs.

Councilor Bergman asked for more detail on the transportation demand management (TDM) study and impact fee study. Director Tuttle replied that the TDM study will be reviewed by the Transportation, Energy, and Utilities Committee (TEUC) and the Planning Commission later this spring. She said that the study will include recommendations around how the City can advance robust transportation options and systems. She said that she anticipates follow-on work coming out of the TDM study, such as developing neighborhood-level transportation option plans. She said that she hopes that recommendations can help the City determine whether it needs to make funding decisions in future years related to the types of services being offered, whether there are policy changes related to requirements for transportation solutions,

and may point to different ways the City can partner with other organizations to realize a more holistic approach to transportation. She said that for the impact fee study, they are almost ready to share and vet draft impact fees with the departments that utilize impact fees. She said that they have had to pay close attention to the use of fees and the types of developments they are being charged to, and the interaction between capital plan investments and capacity from these new developments. She said that there are capacity needs to expand walk/bike infrastructure within the transportation system, which will be an important element of the user fee study. She said that she anticipates sharing these recommendations with other departments and the Council during FY25.

Councilor Grant said that she would like to try and work with the Planning Department staff to address issues with data relating to the Police Commission's annual reports from this year and last year. She also recommended improvement in onboarding for new data analyst staff, particularly around pulling data from Valcour, as the learning curve can be steep and permissioning for databases can be delayed. Director Tuttle agreed.

Councilor Kane asked about the use of consultant services in the department for the past fiscal year and this fiscal year. Director Tuttle replied that they keep that funding to ensure that needs can be met if demands increase, given that the Planning Office has a relatively small staff and engages in a wide range of issues. She said that the next year's budget for consulting has no specific requests currently, but that they would like to keep it for ad hoc requests.

Councilor Carpenter asked whether transportation will be a focus of the planBTV New North End project, and Director Tuttle replied that this plan is centered on transportation.

City Council President Traverse asked about filling the Planning Director position that will be vacant at the end of June, and Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak spoke in more detail about this process.

5.0 HUMAN RESOURCES

5.1 Human Resources

Director Durfee began by noting that the Human Resources Department does not have revenue and as such, she tries to pay close attention to small budget lines and reducing those even modestly. She said that the department is focused on realizing efficiencies, such as moving software to the IT department.

Director Durfee provided an overview of the HR Department. She spoke about its mission, which is to attract, develop, motivate, retain, compensate, and serve a diverse workforce within a supportive and culturally competent work environment. She provided an overview of the HR Department's structure and organization. She spoke briefly about the various functions within the HR Department. She spoke about efforts over the last few years to increase inclusive recruitment and diversity within the City's workforce. She spoke about worker's compensation statistics and trying to decrease claims by increasing awareness on the workforce about safety through trainings. She spoke about FY24 highlights for the department, including onboarding a new administration, completing 4,800 trainings, attending 17 job fairs, hosting a job fair at City Hall, recruiting and hiring 140 employees, upgrading the payroll system, hosting vaccination clinics for Covid and the flu, and developing a new safety portal for reporting and tracking safety incidents. She noted that of the 140 new employees, many of them are temporary or seasonal employees. She noted that two of them were hires in the Water Department, but that she will provide a more detailed breakout.

Director Durfee then spoke about the FY25 proposed budget. She said that she tries to eliminate redundancies and right-size the department every year. She noted that the software and IT-related expenses were moved to the IT budget to provide better vendor management and

oversight, that the largest expense for the department is wages and benefits and the second largest is the services provided to City employees, and that the department continues to prioritize investment in trainings and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) to enhance and empower the City's workforce. She spoke in more detail about trainings and empowerment of the workforce.

Councilor Carpenter asked for a snapshot of the increase in personnel from 2020 until now, to see any impacts from Covid. She also expressed concern that department heads and senior managers may not get enough support, and said that the City should seriously prioritize this. Director Durfee replied that the level of cooperation and transparency from this new Administration has been significant, and the level of support and engagement from this new Administration has been incredible. Councilor Carpenter expressed appreciation for this and said that this will continue to be a focus and priority for her. Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak noted that her office is trying to move in the direction of providing more support for each department in the City, and that this will also feed into that larger conversation about right-sizing the City.

Councilor Grant asked about the recruitment line item and asked whether digital advertising is occurring for open positions, particularly for the Police Department. Director Durfee replied that the Police Department has its own recruitment officer and non-sworn coordinator, which has a budget line for their own recruitment. She recommended asking the Police Chief about this during his budget presentation. She also noted that the HR department also has a small recruitment budget to use across departments. Councilor Grant emphasized the importance about showing consistent and updated information across websites when recruiting.

Councilor Barlow asked whether the HR department anticipates needing consulting or additional resources to implement any of the recommendations coming out of the operational analysis. Director Durfee replied that the HR Department has done a lot of work internally to determine its own pinch points and redundancies and that it is well-positioned to implement the recommendations. Councilor Barlow asked if the department needs additional resources for the move from 200 Church Street, and Director Durfee replied that facilities management has funding to implement the physical move, and that this doesn't sit fully in her budget.

City Council President Traverse asked about the shift of the Payroll department to the HR department, when it happened, and whether it came over intact. Director Durfee replied that it came over in October 2023 and that it came over intact and without any additional or removed positions.

Councilor Carpenter asked who manages the City's footprint and space and how it is managed. Chief Administrative Officer Schad replied that her department generally handles the management of space and that it is handled collectively if it falls into the General Fund. She said that they do not anticipate any space-related activities occurring in FY25.

6.0 RACIAL EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING **AGENDA ITEM REMOVED—WILL BE PART OF 5/29 BUDGET PRESENTATIONS**

6.1 Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging
No discussion—agenda item removed.

7.0 CLERK AND TREASURER

7.1 Clerk and Treasurer

Chief Administrative Officer Schad began by providing an overview of the Clerk & Treasurer's Office. She noted that the Treasurer's Office is tasked with overseeing and managing the City's finances, and the Clerk's Office is responsible for the five basic structures of local democracy (elections, public records, City Council proceedings, licensing, and the dissemination of public information). She spoke briefly about the

assessment of the Clerk & Treasurer's Office that was conducted in 2021, noting that there were several areas of improvement around reducing staff workload and ensuring that each had designated back-ups, the need for more clarity on roles and responsibilities, a lack of written documentation for procedures, and benefiting from managerial and customer service training. She spoke about some of the reorganization that came out of those recommendations, including combining the Accounts Receivable and customer services units into operations, adding two senior accountants, moving the Payroll Department to Human Resources, adding a grants function, developing more written procedures, ensuring that all staff have back-ups so that they are able to take leave, and holding the budget manager and commission associate positions vacant. She provided an overview of the Department's organizational chart.

Chief Administrative Officer Schad then provided an overview of the CT Office's revenue and expense budgets. She noted that the Office is a revenue generator, and its proposed FY25 revenue budget is \$3.8 million. She noted that sources of revenue include indirect fees, interest on taxes, recording fees, licenses and certificates, and taxi fees. She said that in terms of expenses, the anticipated FY25 budget is \$3.5 million, and is comprised of personnel costs, election costs, audit costs, and CCTV costs.

Chief Administrative Officer Schad then spoke about the FY25 priorities for the CT Office. These include developing policies and procedures to document best practices, continuing to report on monthly financial information to ensure a smooth FY24 audit, and preparing for the FY26 budget.

Councilor Kane asked about the employee parking line, saying that the City should rather incentivize using the bus or subsidizing bicycle maintenance, instead of having a transportation subsidy for parking. Chief Administrative Officer Schad noted that the City does provide free bus passes for employees, and that the line item for parking is for discounted parking at the City's own garage, which means it's going back into the City's own coffers. Councilor Kane asked about a proposal to increase recording fees, and Chief Administrative Officer Schad replied that she is unsure whether the City can set its own recording fees or whether these are set by the State. Councilor Kane asked about consulting services for the CT Office, and Chief Administrative Officer Schad replied that this has historically been used for work that staff couldn't do. She noted that this was heavily used last year because the City did not have a Director of Finance and needed more assistance to prepare for its financial audit. She said that in the proposed FY25 budget, this line item has been reduced from FY24. She said that they still may need assistance with preparing for the FY24 audit, but not to the degree that it was required previously.

Councilor Broderick asked how holding the budget manager position vacant will impact the ability to work on the FY26 budget. Chief Administrative Officer Schad replied that the City has never had a budget director, but that they anticipate the new Financial Director being able to cover that skillset.

Councilor Barlow asked if the City can quantify the amount of money that has been brought in by the grants position, as he views this as a form of revenue also. Chief Administrative Officer Schad replied that staff have a running list of the grants applied for and obtained, and she will send this to Councilor Barlow. She also said that the City is constrained by its human capacity (a two-person grants team), as well as human capacity in other departments to work with the grants team on department-specific grants.

Councilor Broderick asked about how the CT Office is ensuring more election access and transparency. Chief Administrative Officer Schad replied that the CT Office mails out ballots to everyone, has ballot boxes, and said that they would be open to hearing about more strategies from Councilors.

8.0 MAYOR'S OFFICE

8.1 Mayor's Office

Chief of Staff Jacobsen began by providing an overview of the Mayor's Office and staff. She noted that the Office includes the Mayor, Mayor's Chief of Staff, a Communications Director, Administrative Coordinator, and Transition Coordinator (this position is ceasing today, as the transition has been completed). She noted that the Communications Director and Administrative Coordinator positions currently have pending reclassification requests, as the Mayor's Office is trying to modernize the office and make it more responsive and collaborative to department heads and other staff. She said that they also have a number of interns in the office as well.

Chief of Staff Jacobsen then spoke about the first 45 days of this Mayor's Administration and activities. She spoke about the proclamation of Trans Day of Visibility, meetings with Department Heads and staff, meetings with the Unions, meetings with community leaders and stakeholders, and several events, such as the Leddy Park Clean-up, Eid Celebration, Free Cone Day, Decker Tower residents meeting, Africa Day, and the solar eclipse. She also spoke about efforts in the Mayor's Office to close the FY25 budget gap.

She then spoke about the Mayor's Office's FY25 budget priorities. She said that they are focusing on passing a budget that is sustainable and right-sized, maintaining transparency about the budget process and policy decisions, advancing policy priorities such as public safety and climate resiliency, collaborating with department heads, staff, community members, and other leaders to further the City's work, and establishing systems for effective and efficient communication across the City, as well as planning later this summer for the FY26 budget.

Chief of Staff Jacobsen then spoke about the Mayor's Office's budget. She said that it is primarily comprised of personnel costs for positions, and she noted that the General Fund request for FY25 is \$11,000 less than for FY24 (and includes reductions in expenses related to travel, office supplies, dues, subscriptions, and emerging needs).

Councilor Carpenter asked about ways to decrease health insurance costs, potentially by buying out part of the benefit or other strategies. Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak replied that one of the suggestions being pursued by her and department heads for longer-term financial planning is examining the health insurance program and whether maintaining self-insured status is sustainable for the City.

City Council President Traverse asked about the potential of reviewing the Mayor's position for reclassification, saying that is worth exploring to make it more competitive. Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak replied that she appreciates this comment, and said that this could be part of the right-sizing conversation and ensuring modern wages across all City positions.

9.0 REGIONAL PROGRAMS **AGENDA ITEM REMOVED—WILL BE PART OF 5/22 BUDGET PRESENTATIONS**

9.1 Regional Programs

No discussion—agenda item removed.

10. ADJOURNMENT

10.1 Motion to Adjourn

With no further business and without objection the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 PM.

RScty: AACoonrad