



**Wednesday, August 14, 2024, 5:30 PM, DPW Front Conference Room at 645 Pine or  
REMOTE**

**When: Aug 14, 2024 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**  
**Topic: Charter Change Committee Meeting**

**Please click the link below to join the webinar:**

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## **1. Agenda**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>1.1. Motion to amend/adopt agenda</b>
Meeting	August 14, 2024 - Charter Change Committee Meeting - Wednesday, August 14, 2024, 5:30 PM, DPW Front Conference Room at 645 Pine or REMOTE
Category	1. Agenda
Department	
Type	
Recommended Action	

## 2. Adopt Draft Minutes from 7/1

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>2.1. Adopt Draft Minutes from 7/1</b>
Meeting	August 14, 2024 - Charter Change Committee Meeting - Wednesday, August 14, 2024, 5:30 PM, DPW Front Conference Room at 645 Pine or REMOTE
Category	2. Adopt Draft Minutes from 7/1
Department	Council and Board
Type	
Recommended Action	

## 3. Public Forum

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>3.1. Verbal Comments</b>
Meeting	August 14, 2024 - Charter Change Committee Meeting - Wednesday, August 14, 2024, 5:30 PM, DPW Front Conference Room at 645 Pine or REMOTE
Category	3. Public Forum
Department	Council and Board
Type	

## 4. Councilor Compensation

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>4.1. Councilor Compensation</b>
Meeting	August 14, 2024 - Charter Change Committee Meeting - Wednesday, August 14, 2024, 5:30 PM, DPW Front Conference Room at 645 Pine or REMOTE
Category	4. Councilor Compensation
Department	Council and Board
Type	
Recommended Action	

## 5. Property Tax Revenue Neutrality and Income Sensitivity

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>5.1. Property Tax Revenue Neutrality and Income Sensitivity</b>
Meeting	August 14, 2024 - Charter Change Committee Meeting - Wednesday, August 14, 2024, 5:30 PM, DPW Front Conference Room at 645 Pine or REMOTE
Category	5. Property Tax Revenue Neutrality and Income Sensitivity
Department	Council and Board
Type	
Recommended Action	

## 6. Report on Department Head Charter Change Priorities

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>6.1. Report on Department Head Charter Change Priorities</b>
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Meeting August 14, 2024 - Charter Change Committee Meeting - Wednesday, August 14, 2024, 5:30 PM, DPW Front Conference Room at 645 Pine or REMOTE

Category 6. Report on Department Head Charter Change Priorities

Department Council and Board

Type

Recommended Action

## **7. Any Other Committee Business**

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**Subject 7.1. Any Other Committee Business**

Meeting August 14, 2024 - Charter Change Committee Meeting - Wednesday, August 14, 2024, 5:30 PM, DPW Front Conference Room at 645 Pine or REMOTE

Category 7. Any Other Committee Business

Department Council and Board

Type

Recommended Action

## **8. Adjournment**

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**Subject 8.1. Motion to adjourn**

Meeting August 14, 2024 - Charter Change Committee Meeting - Wednesday, August 14, 2024, 5:30 PM, DPW Front Conference Room at 645 Pine or REMOTE

Category 8. Adjournment

Department Council and Board

Type

Recommended Action

**Charter Change Committee**  
**Monday, July 1, 2024**  
**Bushor Conference Room in City Hall. or Remote via Zoom.**  
**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Councilor Bergman (Chair), Councilor Carpenter, Councilor Doherty (remote)

**Staff Present:** Kimberlee Sturtevant (Assistant City Attorney), Hayley McClenahan (Assistant City Attorney), Jon Murad (Chief of Police), Eric Dallamura (BPD, BPOA)

**Public Present:** Jeffrey Jarrad, Jack Keefe (Police Commission), Carolyn Hanson, Chris Haessly (Marketplace Commission), Mark Hughes, Shelby Lincoln

Meeting called to order at 5:32 PM.

**1. Agenda**

**1.01 Motion to amend/adopt agenda**

*Motion to Adopt Agenda as is.*

*Motion by Councilor Doherty, Seconded by Councilor Carpenter*

*Final Resolution: Motion Passes*

*Yes: Unanimous*

**2. Adopt Draft Minutes from 6/25**

**2.01 Adopt Draft Minutes from 6/25**

*Motion to Adopt Draft Minutes from June 25.*

*Motion by Councilor Doherty, Seconded by Councilor Carpenter*

*Final Resolution: Motion Passes*

*Yes: Unanimous*

**3. Public Forum**

Carolyn Hanson: I was fortunate to be on the Police Commission for six months. I feel like the Commission has good processes, but reading the minutes from the last meeting I feel like the Commission has been thrown to the weeds. A lot of conversation is going into who will be going to be on the independent panel. I would urge you all to read DD-40 as it lays out a really good process. I would also encourage you to look at what the Criminal Justice Training Council does. The Council usually has the department do an internal investigation, but they have the power to hire an outside investigator to do an investigation if necessary. I think it is important to consider every option before we expand the budget to pay for more things. My boss, the Attorney General, did not want me to continue to be on the Commission and I found it very hard to find people to recruit to be on the Commission. I don't know what the independent panel will accomplish, even while we already have a good process in the Commission currently. My two big issues that I could never raise with the Commission during my tenure was that the

department always needs to have someone answer the phone when the public calls. The other issue is the department lobby is horrendous and not inviting. It feels like you're going into a jail. I think those two things would go a long way to building trust with the public.

Eric Dallamura: I am the treasurer of the BPOA. I don't think it is necessary to have a panel with individuals that are handpicked by political leaders, either the Mayor or the Council. We already have an HR Department, we have State oversight. This will drag out the process and will be bad for morale. I appreciate you are moving things along to get the issue to the voters quickly. BPOA wants educated people to make the important decisions and do it quickly. It is in the interest of the BPOA to have good officers and that is good for the public as well.

Jeffrey Jarrad: I am a resident of Ward One. I don't know every detail of things that have happened in the last five years and I am working on that. But if I made a list of issues or difficulties from the last five years I would include things like officers being paid out and resigning and complaints from the public. So what would those issues have looked like if we had the proposed changes to the charter in effect at that time. Would these proposed changes have mitigated or eliminated some of the issues? That is a litmus test of the value of the changes to the charter.

Mark Hughes: I would like to see some oversight of every agency in the state that is substantial and impactful. There is overlap here with Title 20 on the state side. Everybody wants to be safe and have a fair process. This department was the first to require use-of-force (UOF) data and that was back in 2018 or 2019. There was some pushback on that. Because of that change the rest of the state started requiring that data shortly after. I still think the proposed changes are not enough. I say that as a former Police Commissioner and retired army officer. I understand what oversight and responsibility looks like. I don't see why you don't advance this to the full Council before it gets killed before it sees the light of day. Then we can hold Councilors accountable since it is a political process, just as the Commission is political because of how the members are appointed. I do not think most of the officers that have had important complaints about them are or were "bad" police officers. I think there is a bad system which is why we need oversight. It is intrinsically designed to fail. Even the proposed appointment process for the independent panel creates a predictable outcome. It builds fortifications to protect the system. We should stop this and bring the changes to the Council.

#### **4. Councilor Discussion and Review of Draft Police Oversight Changes**

*Attorney Sturtevant shared the draft language changes in resolution format. The draft resolution is available in the agenda packet.*

Councilor Carpenter said that while the Committee has spent time on particulars recently, a lot of the big changes to the charter are to codify the current working processes of the Commission and the Department as they are currently only in effect by executive order from the Mayor.

Councilor Bergman said that the Mayor's Office also sent in a request late in the day and the Committee will be seeing that for the first time tonight.

Attorney Sturtevant said the change to line 32 was to correct a typo. The change to lines 33-34 is to establish that the Commission has access to certain kinds of documents as laid out in ordinance. This change was to ensure confidentiality and to bring the charter language into line with the current working processes and allow changes in document access to be made in ordinance which is easier to adjust going forward.

All councilors agreed that the change in proposed language was what they intended.

Attorney Sturtevant continued that the changes to lines 58-64 were to move the experience requirements to be on the independent panel into ordinance rather than charter. Councilor Bergman clarified that the stricken language to have an appointment from the BPOA was to reflect a request from the BPOA and not language that was approved by the Committee. The language change was voted on in the June 25 meeting.

Councilor Doherty reiterated Councilor Carpenter's comment that most of the proposed changes are to codify the existing processes between the Commission and the Department that are working well. He said he has not heard the BPOA say the current system is not working. One issue that is not currently addressed is if there is a difference in opinion on discipline between the Commission and the Chief. That is the reason for the independent panel.

Councilor Doherty continued that he didn't think the Committee had voted on the inclusion of the BPOA appointment, but rather had agreed to disagree and moved on. He said he disagrees with the current draft language and would like the BPOA to have an appointee on the panel.

Councilor Carpenter said that the Committee contemplated other ideas instead of the current proposed independent panel. She said that most communities in Vermont use the legislative body as the final appeal body and Burlington does not. She said she isn't sure the City Council wants that authority, but it was discussed. She said there has to be a body that can make a decision if there is a disagreement between the Chief and the Commission.

*Motion to have the City Council be one of the appointing bodies for the independent panel in place of the BPOA.*

*Motion by Councilor Bergman, Seconded by Councilor Carpenter*

*Final Resolution: Motion Passes*

*Yes: Councilors Bergman and Carpenter*

*No: Councilor Doherty*

Councilor Doherty reminded everyone that there is still more procedural steps to complete before the current proposed language will be put into the charter. The proposed language must be passed out of the Committee, go through the City Council, and be approved by the voters.

Attorney Sturtevant said the changes to lines 69-71 were only to clarify the current powers of the Mayor and that the changes do not confer additional powers onto the Mayor.

Councilor Bergman said he supported the changes to ensure there is no question about the existing powers of the Mayor due to a lack of a reference. Councilors Carpenter and Doherty agreed.

Attorney McClenahan said the changes to lines 88-90 were due to the optics of the Commission exercising their authority under Section 184(d) to make discipline recommendations or hire an outside investigator, while then also potentially sitting as an appellate body for an officer facing discipline under Section 190(a). She said the proposed language would allow the independent panel to be used as an appellate body if there is not a quorum of commissioners due to some commissioners feeling they have actual or apparent conflicts of interest.

Councilor Carpenter said there was some concern about having the Commission be an appellate body for officers but the Committee also heard that both the BPOA and the Commission wanted to keep the Commission as the appellate body. She said she agreed with the proposed changes.

Councilor Doherty also agreed and said this was a helpful change to ensure that there are no violations of any officer's due process rights. Councilor Bergman also agreed and that the changes insulates the Commission from any appearance of a conflict.

Jon Murad (Chief of Police) said there was previous arbitration wherein the arbitrator found no conflict even without this proposed change. The counsel for the Police Commission at the time had a different opinion, however. There was actually already a situation where the Commission changed their mind in an appeal of discipline after they heard more evidence and heard from the officers directly involved through the appeal process. That is to say the Commission was not tainted by the initial consultation with the Chief and can, and has, changed its opinion on appeal.

Attorney Sturtevant said the changes to lines 112-115 is a codification of the current system that only exists by executive order. This language is by request of the Mayor's Office.

Jon Murad said the proposed language is taken almost verbatim from an executive order from 2020 and that he had no issue with the language being included in charter.

Attorney McClenahan said the inclusion of the language that allows the process to be designated in ordinance was to allow the details like timing to be laid out in a more adjustable way through ordinance.

Councilor Doherty did not see why the language needed to be included in charter at all. The Mayor can have a standing order with the Chief of Police about how the Mayor should be informed of such incidents and their disciplinary outcome.

Councilor Bergman said the inclusion of the language that allows the process to be laid out in ordinance conflicts with the current statutory structure. The nature of the discipline goes beyond what is being considered here. The nature of discipline is laid out already in things like DD-40. Councilor Bergman says it does make sense for the Mayor to be informed by the Chief of UOF incidents or issues of significant public concern and having that in charter is sensible. He said he

was supportive of the proposed changes if the language “by a process designated by ordinance” was removed.

Jon Murad said DD-40 already directs the Chief to consult with the Mayor, City Attorney, and/or HR Director as necessary for disciplinary matters. That consultation is already built into the current system.

Councilor Carpenter said the proposed charter language seems redundant given what is already in DD-40. She said the language “seek the Mayor’s concurrence with the Chief’s decision” does not make sense. She said the Mayor should be informed of such issues, but the rest of charter lays out the process and does not consider that the Chief will seek the Mayor’s concurrence on discipline.

Councilor Bergman said the proposed language seems aspirational, but does not require the Chief and Mayor to come to an agreement on discipline.

Councilor Carpenter said the language should be more general and only instruct the Chief to consult with the Mayor about these issues.

Councilor Doherty said he was uncomfortable with adding this language to the charter and that it is too specific to be in the charter.

Councilor Bergman said he is fine with not including the language as the consultation is included in DD-40.

*Motion to refer with recommendation the draft charter changes back to the City Council to be placed on the November, 2024 ballot as drafted and be warned for public hearing.*

*Motion by Councilor Carpenter, Seconded by Councilor Bergman*

*Motion to divide the previous motion into two questions: one to refer the draft language back to the City Council and another about recommending the language for adoption.*

*Motion by Councilor Doherty, Seconded by Councilor Bergman*

*Final Resolution: Motion Passes*

*Yes: Unanimous*

*Motion to refer the current draft charter change language back to City Council.*

*Motion by Councilor Doherty, Seconded by Councilor Bergman*

*Final Resolution: Motion Passes*

*Yes: Unanimous*

*Motion to recommend the current draft charter change language be placed on the November, 2024 ballot and be warned for public hearing.*

*Motion by Councilor Bergman, Seconded by Councilor Carpenter*

*Final Resolution: Motion Passes*

*Yes: Councilors Bergman and Carpenter*

*No: Councilor Doherty*

Councilor Doherty clarified that he believes the BPOA has been supportive of many parts of this drafting process and at present the draft language is not something he can recommend. He said he is glad to see the process move back to the City Council but is also hopeful that there will be some final changes in the City Council.

## **5. Any Other Committee Business**

Councilor Carpenter brought up the possibility of a future charter change to the redistricting process that would take the process away from the legislature. Councilor Bergman added two other potential future charter changes: councilor compensation and the public financing of elections.

## **6. Adjournment**

### **6.01 Adjournment**

*Motion to adjourn.*

*Motion by Councilor Doherty, Seconded by Councilor Carpenter*

*Final Resolution: Motion Passes*

*Yes: Unanimous*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:18 PM.

August 13, 2024  
To: Charter Change Committee  
From: Dante Seguino  
Re: City Councilor Compensation

From what I've found there is little consistency in the compensation that city councilors receive in small/medium sized cities and towns. That being said I only found 3 cities that paid less than \$5,000 annually; Montpelier Vermont (\$2,040), Bangor Maine (\$2,000), & Brookline Massachusetts (\$3,500). Montpelier and Bangor are each less populous than Burlington and Brookline seems to have tried to go from a modest \$3,500 yearly stipend to a \$30,000 salary which unsurprisingly failed. Montpelier was the only jurisdiction I found that offered the proposal on a ballot to voters. The highest compensation I could find was in Harrisburg Pennsylvania which pays council members \$20,000 annually (since 2006). The largest single-year increase that I found was in Pawtucket Rhode Island where the Council received a \$6,000 raise from \$7,000 to \$13,000.

In Ithaca New York council members used the MIT Living Wage Calculator to calculate the rate which council persons are paid. Multiple members stated that the work takes at least 20 hours a week and thus the roughly \$4,000 increase would put them in line with the rest of Ithaca's part time workforce. This was disputed by opponents and countered with a lower living wage figure from a local workers center. Ultimately it was agreed that compensation should be based around an 18 hour work week. The compensation increase was passed September 6th 2023. Notable however is that this may have been made possible by the shift from a traditional mayor to a city manager. The ballot measure passed with nearly 80% approval. The mayor's salary of \$30,000 was reduced by more than half from \$61,489 in the budget proposal increasing the compensation of council persons. The mayor's revised salary was proposed to be one third more than that of council persons. Ithaca's alderpersons are also offered a generous stipend to offset healthcare costs which is not included in the compensation figure (covers 80% up to \$22,000 in costs).

The city of Cortland New York doubled its Common Council pay in their 2022 budget increasing compensation from \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually. The budget was approved unanimously although a proposal to increase the mayoral salary from \$25,000 to \$30,000 was rejected with 5 votes in opposition, 2 votes in favor and 1 absent voter. There was also a proposal to lock the councils pay at \$5,000 which failed a vote with 2 in favor and 6 opposed. As in the case of Ithaca, the council stressed that the role of councilors would need to be more formalized indicating that not all councilors were equally involved in their roles on the council. The details of said formalization does not appear however in the text of the amendment so I am unclear how the duties of councilors may have been altered.

Schenectady New York had an interesting battle over their 2024 budget which featured a 16% pay raise for the 7 city councilors (\$14,100-\$16,356 plus health coverage). The mayor had proposed this increase in the 2020 budget but the council agreed to only a 4% increase in compensation, as a concession the mayor's compensation also did not increase for the remainder of his 4 year term (elected in 2019). He has since been reelected to a fourth term and this rate freeze has presumably expired. Although I do not foresee similar challenges in Burlington I

believe this can be avoided by amending the pay structure of counselors outside of the budget through a city ordinance. Burying such things in the budget seemed to lead to unnecessary political constringation.

In Pawtucket Rhode Island the Finance Director for the city sent a letter to the council regarding realigning compensation to be in line with inflationary and the Consumer Price Index. He argued that the fact that elected officials were being compensated on par with the City Sargeant and the Sealer of Weights and Measures “could not continue”. It had been over two decades since the pay of elected officials had been updated or reviewed. The \$7,000 stipend was raised to \$13,000 for city councilors; the council president's compensation went from \$8,000 to \$14,000 (\$1000 less than originally recommended). The mayor's compensation also increased from \$80,000 to \$130,000 (\$20,000 less than the finance office recommended.) The Council compensation was agreed to be 10% of the mayor's salary. The mayor will receive a 2% raise per year for eight years with council pay being tied to this figure. This structure was to mitigate allowing council pay to again fall behind other local jurisdictions. There is a rule in place that does not allow for councilors to vote to increase their own compensation so the final vote will be held early next year, after new elections are held.

In Woonsocket Rhode Island there is an increase in councilor compensation from \$10,000 to \$12,000 slated to take effect in the 2025-2026 calendar year. The salary changes were passed unanimously but there were concerns around inflating the budget in uncertain economic times. The mayor also got a raise from \$80,000 to \$120,000 in the new proposal. The council voted separately to reduce the pay of the city's Planning and Development Director after a \$1M land deal scandal involving the former mayor.

It appears as though most increases to city councilor compensation are presented either by the council themselves or in coordination with finance and budget departments of the city government. I was unable to find much evidence of resistance from constituents but there were instances of dissent amongst council members. Given the optics, most city and town councils present proposed raises as efforts to bring compensation in line with other comparable part-time city positions. There is an emphasis on keeping the municipality competitive with other local governments. When faced with pushback it can be helpful to codify the role of a council member to the public, allowing them to see that the job consists of a breadth of responsibilities beyond simply attending the meetings.

Most Vermont cities and towns do not compensate councilors/board members but that does not track with other similar sized cities in larger states. Using the MIT Living wage calculator for Chittenden County and assuming counselors do 15 hours of work a week, an adjusted stipend would equate to \$13,361.40 annually. This uses the \$17.13/hr rate for a 2 income family with no children. If we reduce the workload to 10 hours a week the stipend would be \$8,907.60. Adjusting the figure to Vermont state minimum wage (\$13.67) and assuming counselors work only 10 hours a week, the adjusted stipend would be \$7,108.40. Although still a substantial increase, my research indicates that most part time counselors work closer to 15-20 hours a week. Using the current \$5,000 stipend and a 10 hour work week councilors make a wage of \$9.62/hr, a figure closer to the tipped minimum wage of \$6.84/hr than the actual minimum wage. Councilors of course do not collect tips.

Personally, I would recommend working with the Charter Change Committee and/or the Director of Finance to draw up various compensation proposals based on an audit of current council workloads. Some cities have created an independent select committee to do this work. I would then compare the results with Vermont minimum wage and a living wage estimate provided by the Vermont Department of Labor. I suggest that there be language in the proposal that ties compensation to that of the mayor or other elected officials. Alternatively a percentage yearly raise that follows the rate of inflation could be applied directly to counselor compensation. I believe that it is important that the proposal contain efforts to keep the compensation rate competitive moving forward. Any change would likely benefit politically by being pushed to be enacted after the current city council terms expire.

An additional state level strategy would be to commission a compensation survey for city and town officials. The Vermont Legislature appears to have done this for statewide elected officials in 2004 as a tool to restructure legislative pay. I found a similar survey for city/town officials in Oregon where they have a ballot initiative (Measure 116) reinstating an elected officials compensation board. The Oregon board has gone in and out of solvency since being introduced originally in 1983 and eliminated most recently in 2017. This seems to be the most holistic approach to determining a competitive statewide pay structure but also clearly comes with costs both financial and political and may not be feasible nor prudent in a small state such as Vermont.

Attached is the table I created with all of the information on compensation that I could find and verify with a source. I did find an article detailing numerous raises to officials across Westchester county New York but the article contained a dead link and I could not confirm many of the figures presented therein so I excluded that data. Here is the link to that story however.

<https://www.lohud.com/story/news/investigations/2016/07/11/elected-official-raises-westchester/86573894/>

City	State	Year	Population	Salary	Previous Salary	Source
Burlington	VT	2021	44,595	\$5,000	N/A	<a href="https://go.boarddocs.com/vt/burlingtonvt/Board.nsf/files/C2RGHU43F0BF/\$file/City%20Council%20-">https://go.boarddocs.com/vt/burlingtonvt/Board.nsf/files/C2RGHU43F0BF/\$file/City%20Council%20-</a>
Montpelier	VT	2023	8,023	\$2,040	N/A	<a href="#">Montpelier, Vermont, Article 11, Council Member Compensation Measure (March 2023) - Ballotpedia</a>
Bangor	ME	2016	31,588	\$2,000	N/A	<a href="#">City of Bangor, ME City Council</a>
Brookline	MA	2020	62,698	\$3,500	N/A	<a href="#">Brookline rejects proposal to raise elected officials' compensation</a>
Salem	MA	2015	44,722	\$10,000	N/A	<a href="https://www.salemma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif12836/f/uploads/ordinance_amending_ch.2_sec.271_city_council_compensation.pdf#:~:text=The%20members%20of%20the%20City,an%20additional%2">https://www.salemma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif12836/f/uploads/ordinance_amending_ch.2_sec.271_city_council_compensation.pdf#:~:text=The%20members%20of%20the%20City,an%20additional%2</a>
Pawtucket	RI	2024	75,066	\$13,000	\$7,000	<a href="#">Pawtucket City Council approves pay raises for its members, mayor</a>
Woonsocket	RI	2025	41,603	\$12,000	\$10,000	<a href="#">Woonsocket mayor and councilors to see pay increase in 2025   News   valleybreeze.com</a>
Harrisburg	PA	2006	50,183	\$20,000	N/A	<a href="#">City of Harrisburg, PA Compensation of Elected Officials06</a>
Lancaster	PA	2024	57,453	\$7,200	N/A	<a href="#">Job Classifications &amp; Salary Schedules   City of Lancaster</a>
Ithaca	NY	2023	32,108	\$17,091	\$13,141	<a href="#">City of Ithaca, NY Salaries and Compensation</a> <a href="#">Common Council members approve \$4K raises for 2024 - The Ithaca Voice</a>
Somers	NY	2024	21,656	\$15,426	\$14,904	<a href="#">Somers Town Board Approves Preliminary Budget</a>
North Salem	NY	2022	5,136	\$17,563.08	N/A	<a href="#">North Salem Town Board adopts 2022 budget</a>
Utica	NY	2020	65,283	\$7,000	N/A	<a href="#">City of Utica, NY Elected Officers</a>
Schenectady	NY	2024	67,047	\$16,356	\$14,100	<a href="#">Third time is the charm as Schenectady council adopts 2024 budget signed by mayor</a>
Cortland	NY	2022	17,314	\$10,000	\$5,000	<a href="#">City of Cortland approves 2022 budget at Tuesday night's common council meeting (Video)</a> <a href="https://www.ci.apple-valley.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/18247/06-03-2024-Amend-Section-3005-f">https://www.ci.apple-valley.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/18247/06-03-2024-Amend-Section-3005-f</a>
Apple Valley	MN	2025	55,416	\$11,064	\$9,132	<a href="#">2026#:~:text=the%20salaries%20of%20the%20Mayor%20shall%20be%20\$1%2C320%20per%20mont</a>
Loveland	CO	2021	77,884	\$7,200	N/A	<a href="https://www.reporterherald.com/2021/02/03/loveland-council-debates-pay-raises-for-members-ask">https://www.reporterherald.com/2021/02/03/loveland-council-debates-pay-raises-for-members-ask</a>

**Resolution Relating to**

**CITY COUNCILOR COMPENSATION**

**RESOLUTION 5.04**

Sponsor(s): Councilors Hanson,  
Stromberg, Dieng

Introduced: 05/10/21

Referred to:

Action: adopted as amended

Date: 05/10/21

Signed by Mayor: 05/20/21

**CITY OF BURLINGTON**

In the year Two Thousand Twenty-one.....

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

1 That WHEREAS, Article 6 of Chapter 1 of the Vermont Constitution provides that “all power” is  
2 “originally inherent in and consequently derived from the people,” meaning that all government officers are  
3 the “trustees and servants” of the “people,” while Article 7 provides that the community has “an indubitable,  
4 unalienable, and infeasible right, to reform or alter government;” and

5 WHEREAS, to make this promise of our constitution real and our representative democracy healthy,  
6 history has shown that the fullest participation and representation of the people in the structures of democracy,  
7 including the boards and councils of local government, is required; and

8 WHEREAS, history has also shown that the City Council and other elected officials in the city of  
9 Burlington have not sufficiently represented the full range of people in the city, especially people with low and  
10 moderate incomes, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous People of Color) residents, people with dependents (children or  
11 the elderly) to care for; and

12 WHEREAS, one of the reasons for the lack of participation on the City Council by the aforementioned  
13 is the low rate of compensation for the high volume of work done by people serving in the role; and

14 WHEREAS, Burlington City Councilors are expected to be well informed on the issues that come  
15 before them each meeting, as they are expected to vote on those issues; and

16 WHEREAS, being well informed on the various issues that come before the Council requires hours of  
17 research and conversation before each meeting; and

18 WHEREAS, Councilors are expected to attend many meetings each month, including at a bare  
19 minimum: full City Council meetings, Committee meetings for three different standing committees of the  
20 Council on which they serve, and the Neighborhood Planning Assembly meeting for their ward/district; and

21 WHEREAS, Councilors are expected to respond to communications from constituents and help them  
22 understand City policy, resolve issues they are facing, and/or access the appropriate City resources; and

23 WHEREAS, as each Ward Councilor represents roughly 5,000 constituents and each District  
24 Councilor represents roughly 10,000 constituents, these constituent services can require large amounts of time  
25 helping individuals through complicated challenges; and

\* \* \* \* \*

**DISTRIBUTION:**

I hereby certify that this resolution has been sent to the following department(s) on

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ORIGINAL

**RESOLUTION RELATING TO**

**Adopted by the City Council**

....., 20.....

..... Clerk

Approved....., 20.....

..... Mayor

Vol. .... Page .....

**Attest:**

\* \* \* \* \*

26 WHEREAS, Burlington City Council annual compensation is \$5,000 per year which, for a Councilor  
27 spending an average of 12 hours per week fulfilling the duties of their role, is equivalent to \$8.01 per hour, an  
28 amount well below Vermont’s minimum wage; and

29 WHEREAS, if appropriately compensated for their work, Councilors, particularly those facing  
30 financial strain, would have a greater ability to serve their constituents well as there would be a reduced  
31 pressure to balance full time work with the low-paying but time and energy-consuming Council-related work;

32 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council refers the question of the appropriate  
33 level of compensation for City Councilors to its Charter Change Committee for consideration of a charter  
34 change to be considered and voted on at the 2022 Annual City Election, including but not limited to  
35 consideration of the amount of work required of City Councilors, the appropriateness of cost of living  
36 increases, the possibility of other benefits (such as health insurance) for City Councilors, tying compensation  
37 to the annual raises given to other city officials, and whether or not such compensation shall be set in the  
38 charter or by other means such as by budget resolution; and

39 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council respectfully requests that the Charter Change  
40 Committee refer this item back to the full City Council **for its review** no later than its last meeting in August  
41 **September. The report may include any recommendations for a charter change or ballot item to be**  
42 **considered at the 2022 Annual City Election.**

43 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Charter Change committee will further research what the**  
44 **barriers to service are, for potential candidates, other than the stipend.**

45  
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47  
48  
49

Ib/EBlackwood/Resolutions 2021/City Council – City Councilor Compensation  
4/21/22 amended; adopted 05/10/21 LO

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ORIGINAL

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I hereby certify that this resolution has been sent to the following department(s) on

City Attorney's Office  
Charter Change Committee

**RESOLUTION RELATING TO**

City Councilor Compensation

*As amended*  
**Adopted by the City Council**

May 10, 2021

*[Signature]*  
Clerk

Approved *[Signature]*, MAY 20, 2021  
Mayor

Attest:

*[Signature]*  
Lori Olberg  
Licensing, Voting and Records Coordinator

Vol. .... Page .....

\* \* \* \* \*

**Resolution Relating to**

THE FAIRNESS OF THE REAPPRAISAL PROCESS AND  
THE PROPERTY TAX SYSTEM (REVISED)

**RESOLUTION 6.05**

Sponsor(s): Councilors Magee,  
Hanson, Hightower, Stromberg, Tracy  
Introduced: 11/08/21  
Referred to: \_\_\_\_\_

Action: adopted as amended  
Date: 11/08/21  
Signed by Mayor: 11/15/21

**CITY OF BURLINGTON**

In the year Two Thousand Twenty-one.....

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

1 That WHEREAS, Burlington recently completed its first city-wide property value reappraisal, since 2005,  
2 over 15 years; and

3 WHEREAS, this reappraisal resulted in taxes for residential properties increasing as a share of the  
4 City’s property tax collections by over \$10 million, which is an increase of almost 2% to 80.6% of the total  
5 property taxes generated<sup>1</sup>; and

6 WHEREAS, the increases were significant in every ward: Ward 1 by 12.3%, Ward 2 by 12%, Ward 3  
7 by 18.5%, Ward 4 by 7.9%, Ward 5 by 18.1%, Ward 6 by 9.4%, Ward 7 by 9.9%, and Ward 8 by 16.4%<sup>2</sup>; and

8 WHEREAS, these increases have resulted in significantly higher living expenses and potential home  
9 losses<sup>3</sup>; and

10 WHEREAS, the administration down-played the impact of reappraisal on residents’ tax bills<sup>4</sup>; and

11 WHEREAS, this reappraisal also resulted in taxes for commercial properties decreasing by over  
12 \$900,000, which is a decrease of 2.2% to 16.2% of the total property taxes generated; and

13 WHEREAS, the valuation method used for commercial appraisals accounted for pandemic related  
14 decreases in business income; and

15 WHEREAS, the reappraisal did not account for the economic hardship experienced by residents as a  
16 result of the COVID-19 Pandemic; and

17 WHEREAS, the shift of tax burden away from commercial properties due to COVID driving incomes  
18 down could have been anticipated and shared with the community sooner; and

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/tax-burdened-residents-bear-the-brunt-of-burlingtons-first-property-reassessment-in-16-years/Content?oid=33632279>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/tax-burdened-residents-bear-the-brunt-of-burlingtons-first-property-reassessment-in-16-years/Content?oid=33632279>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/tax-burdened-residents-bear-the-brunt-of-burlingtons-first-property-reassessment-in-16-years/Content?oid=33632279>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.sevendaysvt.com/OffMessage/archives/2021/04/13/some-burlington-home-owners-shocked-by-reappraisal-figures?\\_ga=2.30655999.1707607063.1636051964-1645375984.1632670895](https://www.sevendaysvt.com/OffMessage/archives/2021/04/13/some-burlington-home-owners-shocked-by-reappraisal-figures?_ga=2.30655999.1707607063.1636051964-1645375984.1632670895)

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Adopted by the City Council

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..... Clerk

Approved....., 20.....

..... Mayor

Vol. .... Page .....

\* \* \* \* \*

Resolution Relating to

THE FAIRNESS OF THE REAPPRAISAL PROCESS AND THE PROPERTY TAX SYSTEM (REVISED)

19 WHEREAS, residents, renters, and homeowners, have spoken out against the high cost of the City's  
20 housing, which they say has been exacerbated by this reappraisal; and

21 WHEREAS, in press reports and constituent grievances, homeowners have raised serious concerns  
22 about the length of time between reappraisals, the process used by, and the accuracy of the City's contracted  
23 residential reappraisal consultant, Tyler Technologies; and

24 WHEREAS, residents' grievances regarding the reappraisal process include:

- 25 • the lack of advanced notice as to the extent of potential increases;
- 26 • the failure to consider the effects of the COVID pandemic on the timing of the reappraisal and the  
27 economic insecurity caused by the pandemic;
- 28 • factual errors that were not corrected by the time of the tax appeals process;
- 29 • a confusing process;
- 30 • the failure of Tyler to conduct initial appeals in a way that gave residents a fair chance to correct  
31 errors and point out inequities, including
  - 32 ○ rushed appeals;
  - 33 ○ Tyler representatives who did not understand the properties and neighborhoods they were  
34 assessing thereby causing Tyler to make significant errors; and
  - 35 ○ Tyler representatives who were generally unresponsive, uninformed, unprepared, and  
36 unprofessional;
- 37 • failure to explain the basis for decisions; and
- 38 • appearance of arbitrary decisions; and

39 WHEREAS, although Vermont's education tax system has income sensitivity built into it through its  
40 rebate system, the property tax increases caused by this reappraisal are not eligible for increased rebates for  
41 the current 2021-2022 tax year due to the rules of the statewide education tax system; and

42 WHEREAS, this reappraisal also revealed systemic problems, including:

- 43 • unfairness of considering financial hardship in calculating values for commercial properties but not  
44 considering financial hardship in calculating residential valuations;
- 45 • insufficient and less than accessible information about residential appraisals and the appeal process  
46 in general, thereby making it confusing;
- 47 • the start of appeal period before the issuance of a statement on the actual or carefully estimated net  
48 impact on a homeowners' tax bill; and

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Approved....., 20.....

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Vol. .... Page .....

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Resolution Relating to

THE FAIRNESS OF THE REAPPRAISAL PROCESS AND THE PROPERTY TAX SYSTEM (REVISED)

- 49           • the lack of technical assistance and advocacy for owners trying to navigate the system, other than  
50           the assessor’s office which has a conflict of interest as it is the office that oversees the reappraisal  
51           process, including participating in the appeals process in defense of the values arrived at; and

52           WHEREAS, a reasonable assessment of the above stated problems indicates that there are potential  
53 systemic solutions to them, including that:

- 54           • each reappraisal notice to residential property owners includes a statement of the actual or carefully  
55           estimated net impact on the homeowner’s tax bill, thereby supplying key missing data to support an  
56           informed decision about whether to appeal a reappraisal;
- 57           • the appraisal appeal process starts when a tax bill has been issued or a carefully estimated  
58           statement of tax impact has been provided;
- 59           • city-wide reappraisals occur more regularly (15 years is too long);
- 60           • the City provide technical assistance to residential property owners, including access to an  
61           independent ombudsperson or residential property owner advocate;

62           WHEREAS, the City should review current property taxation policy and propose changes that provide  
63 more equity for our lowest income residents; some ideas to achieve might include:

- 64           • property tax credits for affordable residential rents
- 65           • differential tax rate for second homes
- 66           • property transfer tax
- 67           • surcharge tax on short-term rentals
- 68           • tax classification of rental properties
- 69           • municipal tax income sensitivity
- 70           • increasing the city commercial property tax rate

71

72           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that before December 20, 2021, the Council President shall appoint  
73 a special ad hoc committee to formally gather public testimony about the recently conducted reappraisal,  
74 including appeals, and potential changes to the current process, in consultation with the City Assessor and  
75 with staff support provided by the office of the City Attorney; and

76           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee be comprised of not more than nine members, to  
77 include a resident from each of City’s four districts, at least two homeowners, two renters, a commercial

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..... Clerk

Approved....., 20.....

..... Mayor

Vol. .... Page .....

\* \* \* \* \*

**Resolution Relating to**

**THE FAIRNESS OF THE REAPPRAISAL PROCESS AND THE PROPERTY TAX SYSTEM (REVISED)**

78 property owner, one person with experience on the Board of Tax Appeals, one person with experience on the  
79 Board of Assessors, and one City Councilor; and

80 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Clerk shall advertise the vacancies, with applications due  
81 by December 15<sup>th</sup>.

82 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the ad hoc committee hold public hearings to gather public  
83 testimony before February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022; and

84 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the ad-hoc committee work with the City Attorney to provide a  
85 report to the City Council by the body's last meeting in June 2022 which includes:

- 86 • Identification of timelines and practices during the assessment process that are impediments to citizen  
87 participation and fair valuations; and recommendations around those;
- 88 • Review of the appeals process and recommendations;
- 89 • Develop a best practice around education and participation of citizens in the assessment process and  
90 how their properties are valued. Provide recommendations on how that support will be offered;
- 91 • Develop recommendations for the frequency of citywide reappraisals including; funding, criteria for  
92 selection of consultants, and consideration of a rolling appraisal process;
- 93 • Review capacity of the Assessor's Office, including staffing and IT needs.
- 94 • Opinions on which of the recommended changes are consistent with the authority already vested in the  
95 City Council and which require a charter change; and

96 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, beginning in January 2022, the Community Development and  
97 Neighborhood Revitalization Committee, with staff support from offices of the City Treasurer and the City  
98 Attorney, as well as the Community and Economic Development Office, be charged with further  
99 investigation, study, and analysis of the fairness of Burlington's property tax system, including:

- 100 • Review of the city's revenue raising options, with particular focus on the property tax;
- 101 • Analysis of the of the burdens of property taxation on various property types;
- 102 • Review and recommendations on shifts in burden with the goal of reducing tax impact on our lowest  
103 income residents;
- 104 • Analysis of proposals and recommendations on city revenue with review by the Finance Committee

105 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Community Economic Development Office in consultation with the  
106 Community Development and Neighborhood Revitalization Committee, shall develop a request for proposals  
107 to retain a consultant with the goal of further analyzing Burlington's tax system, including the above

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Approved....., 20.....

..... Mayor

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\* \* \* \* \*

108 suggested changes, with a report due to the committee upon completion. Proposals and recommendations will  
109 be vetted by the committee for review on other impact's i.e., housing affordability, business development or  
110 growth in the city

111

112 *TM/JM//Resolutions 2021/Reappraisal Policy Changes*

113 *November 8, 2021*

\* \* \* \* \*

ORIGINAL

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City Attorney's Office  
CEDO  
CDNR Committee

RESOLUTION RELATING TO

The Fairness Of The Reappraisal Process And The Property Tax System (Revised)

*As amended*  
Adopted by the City Council

November 8, 2011

*ADNR* \* Clerk

Approved November 15, 2011

*[Signature]* Mayor

Vol. Page

Attest:  
*[Signature]*  
Lori Olberg  
Licensing, Voting and Records Coordinator

\* \* \* \* \*

## **COMPENSATION & BENEFITS IN COLLEGE CITIES**

### LIST:

- Asheville, NC
- Charlottesville, VA
- Ithaca, NY
- Portland, ME
- San Luis Obispo, CA
- Davis, CA
- Chapel Hill, NC
- Cambridge, MA

### Asheville, NC

- Part time work
- Mayor and City Councilors are paid - avg salary \$26,000 - \$28,000 per year
- 8 weeks of paid leave for new child or to take care of a family member
- Medical, dental, vision insurance
- Healthcare + dependant care flexible saving account
- NC local govt retirement system employer contribution
- Paid vacation, paid sick leave, 13 paid holidays
- Sick leave sharing bank
- Life insurance
- Education assistance program
- Employee health clinic and disease management program employee use at no cost
- Full time or part time?
- Important to note: all city councilors are women + the mayor !!

### Charlottesville, VA

- Part time work
- Entitled to benefits based on VA state law
- <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title15.2/chapter14/section15.2-1414.3/>
- Compensation policy

- Policy adjustments - provides an equitable system for council members and aids pay in specific circumstances

#### Portland, ME

- [https://www.employeeconnects.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/CityOfPortland\\_2024\\_BenefitsGuide\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.employeeconnects.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/CityOfPortland_2024_BenefitsGuide_FINAL.pdf)
- 

#### Ithaca, NY

- Avg salary: \$13,141
- After looking into their city council laws, it seems like they do not receive benefits outside their salary.
- Part time work

#### School Board Commission Benefits:

Interesting Read: [13 states bar school board members from getting paid - here's where it's allowed](#)

KIMBERLEE J. STURTEVANT, ESQ.  
ACA, Director of Litigation  
HAYLEY I. MCCLENAHAN, ESQ.  
Assistant City Attorney  
ERIK RAMAKRISHNAN, ESQ.  
Assistant City Attorney

149 Church Street  
Burlington, VT 05401-8489  
Phone: (802) 865-7121  
Fax: (802) 865-7123  
TTY: (802) 865-7142



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT  
OFFICE OF  
THE CITY ATTORNEY  
AND  
CORPORATION COUNSEL

**MEMORANDUM**

To: Gene Bergman, Charter Change Committee Chairperson  
From: Erik Ramakrishnan, Assistant City Attorney  
Date: August 14, 2024  
Re: Burlington Charter Section 98a: revenue neutrality versus income sensitivity  
Cc: Erin Jacobsen, Chief of Staff

---

The City’s Charter sets forth various municipal property tax rates, including the general city rate (Section 99) and rates for bonded indebtedness (Sections 100 and 101), police and fire (Section 102a), streets (Section 102b), library (Section 102c), parks (Section 102e), and the housing trust fund (Section 102f). Section 98a of the Charter provides that the general city rate and the special rates for police and fire and for streets should be factored down after every general reassessment to achieve revenue neutrality.

For example, following the general reassessment effective FY22, the City’s grand list increased nearly 50 percent from approximately \$37.8 million to approximately \$55.5 million. The general city rate was adjusted down accordingly from 27.29 cents to 19.52 cents. To account for new construction and the vagaries of TIF, this adjustment still resulted in a slight increase in revenue, but it was nothing close to the additional \$4,313,629 that could have been generated from the reassessment.

Revenue neutrality achieves the benefit of stabilizing property tax bills, but it also creates a structural deficit in the long-term because it fails to account for inflation. To counter this effect, the Charter allows voters to approve tax rate increases, but this is not typically effective in countering inflation. For example, in 2021, inflation in the U.S. was around 5 percent, and in 2022 it was around 8

The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status or genetic information. The City is also committed to providing proper access to services, facilities, and employment opportunities. For accessibility information or alternative formats, please contact Human Resources Department at (802) 540-2505.

percent. On Town Meeting Day 2022, voters were asked to increase the general city rate by only 5.5 percent effective FY23, but this measure narrowly failed. Consequently, despite historic inflation, the general city rate has not increased since the last general reassessment.

This built-in structural deficit requires the City to make cuts, defer maintenance, realign priorities, and find revenue from new sources. As the City prepares for its next general reassessment, this begs the question whether Section 98a requires reimagining. One approach may be to eliminate revenue neutrality and replace it with income sensitivity.

Achieving a form of income sensitivity appears to have been the original purpose of Section 98a, which I am informed is rooted in circumstances occurring in the 1980s. Before Vermont instituted a statewide system of education funding in the 1990s, the City was free to decide when to order a general reassessment. Prior to the enactment of Section 98a, the City had not conducted a general reassessment in many years, as a consequence of which conducting one would have resulted in an unprecedented property tax increase that would force many of the City's middle- and lower-income households out of their homes. Revenue neutrality was put forward as the solution. However, revenue neutrality had the effect of stabilizing taxes for homeowners at all income levels and for both vacation homes and commercial properties. In that sense, it was a particularly blunt instrument for helping middle- and lower-income households keep their homes.

Income sensitivity as an alternative to revenue neutrality would allow revenues generated from property taxes to increase over time while still protecting vulnerable homeowners from sharp increases following a general reassessment. State education taxes provide a model for what this might look like. Statewide, a single education tax rate adjusted in each municipality according to its Common Level of Appraisal applies to nonhomestead properties. The homestead education tax rate varies by municipality based upon the municipality's approved school budget. However, for households with incomes below a set threshold, currently around \$128,000, the homestead rate cannot exceed a specified percentage of household income, any excess due over that amount being applied as a "prebate" against the subsequent year's property taxes. Even lower income households qualify for an additional renter or homeowner tax rebate.

To address the City's structural deficit, it may be appropriate to consider whether Section 98a is still serving its purpose or whether it should be amended to superseded. Like all Charter amendments, any change would require introduction by petition or City Council action followed by a vote of City residents and approval by the General Assembly. Introduction of some form of income sensitivity would also likely require cooperation from the Vermont Department of Taxes since the City has limited resources to create a local system for determining household incomes and auditing returns.

Please let me know what legal questions, comments, or concerns you or other members of the Charter Change Committee may have relating to these issues.