



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT

CITY COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION, ENERGY & UTILITIES COMMITTEE

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Councilor Mark Barlow, Chair, *North District*
Councilor Gene Bergman, *Ward 2*
Councilor Evan Litwin, *Ward 7*
Councilor Marek Broderick, *Ward 8*

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Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee of the City Council **Tuesday September 24, 2024 – 5:30PM** **--DRAFT MINUTES--**

Chair Mark Barlow (MB) calls meeting to order at 5:33 PM

1. Agenda

Councilor Gene Bergman (GB) moves to approve the agenda. Councilor Marek Broderick (MBr) seconds. All in favor, passes unanimously.

2. Minutes of 7/22, 8/27, 9/3

Unanimous approval

3. Public Forum

Desta Takele - been with GMT for approx 12 years. Concerned with proposed cuts about who it affects and climate impacts.

Curtis Clough - Works with drivers/for Teamsters. There will be real impacts. Encourages residents to review public comments and learn about impacts. People have made decisions about where they live based on location of bus services.

Alain Hirsch - cutting service not the way to being a green city.

4. Deliberative Agenda

- **4.1 Water Resources Upcoming Capital Projects**

Director Chapin Spencer (CS) opens with an intro to the improvement projects.

GB asks to clarify that this is for revenue bonds. CS confirms.

Water Resources Division Director Megan Moir (MM) and Engineering Manager Martin Lee (ML) join from Water Resources. MM gives overview and presentation to detail recently completed investments from the 2016 drinking water bond and 2018 clean water bond (wastewater/stormwater) as well as the need for a revenue bond to fund additional work.

GB asks for clarity on # of miles City had hoped to complete from the 2016 bond for drinking water main repair. MM says we may have slightly exceeded this.

MM highlights significant investment needs, even with recent upgrades of infrastructure. Highlights age of infrastructure, future needs, and climate change as key drivers. Acknowledges estimated financial need is substantial. Always seeking grants/other non-ratepayer mechanisms.

GB asks about prior bonding and potential bonding: what is the life expectancy and amortization? Clarifies that he's asking about the useful life of the equipment and when we would need to go back for more bonding. MM acknowledges this is important and is working on this.

Timing driven by wastewater permit, housing growth, need for employee safety.

MB asks about beach closures and to clarify how beach closures are preventable if the phosphorus load is so high already in Lake. MM clarifies that there is a difference between preventable beach closures and less preventable. Need to be clear with public.

GB suggests putting numbers behind the variety of closures, what is preventable and not.

MBR – asks when we need to hit the phosphorus mandate and what the consequences are. MM is working that out with state now, and hypothesizes that if permit issued 2025, then potentially 3-5 years from then.

MB asks about projected flows with anticipated projects thru 2028 and clarity on what this includes; and how much hypothetical is contained within that. MM commits to send list and says the hypotheticals are relatively likely. ML says this also includes UVM.

GB asks if City has considered impact fees, which MM acknowledges yes. GB says important to proceed on these.

GB says mid-estimate is \$235M. MM clarifies that rates can be ticked up at different times given staggered start of some of the projects. However, it is about minimizing not eliminating rate impacts.

MB asks how our rates compare to neighboring communities. MM says that our rates are higher (older, combined, etc) and we don't have economies of scale compared to Champlain Water. Offers to get that information.

GB suggests the schedule is overly ambitious to get a vote in March – especially with the public engagement portion and the ability to explain to people (and allow them to digest). Says first reaction from most people will be no. The amount of education will be significant. Wonders whether November 2025 would be better.

MM asks if we went in November, would Council feel comfortable authorizing substantial funding for continuing design? GB says gut is yes, but that people need time to understand the gravity.

MB asks what the ongoing design costs would be. ML suggests 10% of overall cost is potential. MM will look at what that ask would be, maybe \$10-\$20M. Said that November would be furthest out would feel comfortable doing this, given the potential risks to infrastructure.

EL suggests that as we talk to the public about this, we do need to have citywide asks put together so not considering tax impacts, rate impacts in a silo. Include the Administration. BSD

presentation from summer is a good model for this. MM says that by November they can present more specific rate impacts, and the schedule of increases.

EL also has future ask: what are the qualifications for Affordability program and how to look at this citywide.

GB suggests using monthly bill to communicate to water customers.

- **4.2 GMT Proposed Service Reductions**

Clayton Clark (CC), GM of GMT, offers appreciation for GMT personnel who spoke during public comment. Offers a preview of the proposed rate cuts which would save \$3M. CC clarifies the current gap is really \$2M which is a good trend. The reduction plan is broken out in phases.

Hoping for productive conversations with legislature, especially when pointing out the impacts on the public. Expresses optimism that there may be help, though the proposed cuts are significant.

Thanks Councilor Broderick for presence at a GMT public meeting.

MBr asks about the most common Burlington feedback GMT has received.

CC says people are worried about City Loop (#8), it connects to senior living, assisted living.

MBr asks about impacts to municipalities on ADA requirements/removing service from nearby to older folks/those with disabilities. Asks if CC has #'s on the impact to taxpayers to cover this service.

CC says the impacts will come from outlying areas, such as the #10. This would push these people to other programs creating cascading effect. When it comes to Burlington, not sure the reduction in the 8 creates a desert area with no transit within .75 of a mile.

MBr asks if there are contingency plans for the existing routes, for instance if the 8 is eliminated. CC says absolutely and GMT continuing to review.

EL has heard from a lot of people. One thing Burlington does is when approving new developments, we approve less parking spots. Can't afford to cut routes around the City. Feels strongly about the #8 not being taken offline.

EL strongly in favor of micro-transit for airport.

GB doesn't want any cuts, but acknowledges doesn't have \$ to offer. Asks if there are opportunities beyond state money. Says that Transportation Demand Management important. Wants to promote the dialogue for GMT to approach CATMA, towns, airport and find more transportation money.

CC has been to every municipality, asked for consideration of special assessments; also need to look beyond state transportation committees; meeting with Senator Baruth to understand how Senate may respond to this. Also consider large employers, schools, hospitals as other funding sources. Also says that recently approved GMT nonprofit which opens up eligibility for grants.

MB thanks CC for their time and asks which public GMT recordings are available.

Director Chapin Spencer (CS) underscores importance of sustainable funding sources.

- **4.3 Shelburne/Home Intersection Study**

Engineers Maddy Suender (MS) and Julia Ursaki (JU) give brief presentation on the outcome of Shelburne, Home, Farrell Intersection Scoping Study, the request for TEUC approval of PAC recommendations – to include exclusive pedestrian phase, and the timeline.

EL asks if South Burlington is splitting any cost. JU clarifies that they are not responsible for intersection, but are responsible for anything going on Farrell, like paving.

EL says Google Maps divides the intersection between Burlington and South Burlington. JU clarifies that parcels east of Route 7 is South Burlington, but the rest is Burlington's right of way.

GB makes motion to approve staff's motion; MBr seconds. Unanimous approval.

- **4.4 Courthouse Plaza Parking Agreement - Utilization & Update**

Director Spencer gives overview of utilization and indicates Department preference is to keep arrangement.

GB has many questions on Main/Winooski lot, the utilization there and how that impacts the Courthouse data. Not sure this is penciling out. Skeptical about arrangement, but wants item to come back another time.

EL asks about whether the City is losing \$5K/month as of August. CS confirms that yes, correct. Points to original Council memo which said this would not be revenue neutral and was a construction mitigation measure.

MB asks whether we can change the # of spaces we lease. CS confirms yes.

MB says it would be valuable to understand who the parkers are, when they're parking, etc. Wants to see agreement play out longer.

Councilor Joe Kane (JK) joins as having originally requested this item come to TEUC. JK views arrangement as a subsidy given that transportation emissions are # 1 source of greenhouse gas emissions.

GB acknowledges we subsidize downtown parking, like with 2 hour free. Does not agree with corruption charge.

MBr also curious about utilization, who's using it to be able to evaluate.

MB says that while it can be viewed as subsidy, it's also a support given the downtown business climate, lingering covid impacts, etc.

- **4.5 Schedule Next BERO Meeting**

MB opens up to discuss need for another BERO meeting. First was not well attended and we need further input from key stakeholder groups. Suggests next TEUC meeting on 10/22 be devoted to this topic.

Asks placeholder for 10/29 TEUC meeting.

5. Director's Report

Upcoming parking rate adjustment, replacing meters with kiosks. Going to Commission for approvals in October. Thanks to TEUC interest on 505 Riverside, City moving forward with grant application.

6. Councilor Items

MB says that the lane change at North and Plattsburg – receiving a lot of negative feedback, a lot of excessive queuing, and tractor trailers turning north having issue.

EL has contacted most of the area businesses, they have expressed displeasure with the change.

7. Next Meeting

10/22 @ 5:30pm

8. Adjournment

Chair Barlow adjourns at 8:30 PM.