

**BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL
CITY HALL, CONTOIS AUDITORIUM *OR*
REMOTE MEETING WITH CALL-IN
BURLINGTON, VERMONT
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 10, 2025
DRAFT**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joan Shannon
Mark Barlow
Gene Bergman
Ben Traverse
Melo Grant
Carter Neubieser (at 6:05 PM)
Joe Kane
Becca Brown McKnight
Evan Litwin
Marek Broderick

OTHERS PRESENT:

Emma Mulvaney-Stanak
Erin Jacobsen
Katherine Schad
Jessica Brown
Lori Olberg
Keaton Knowles
Theresa Vezina
Nancy Stetson
Christian Berry
Pablo Bose
Brian Pine
Chapin Spencer
Peter Boccaccio
Sarah Bermingham
Charles Dillard

1. CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA

The meeting was called to order by City Council President Traverse at 6:07 PM.

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

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2. EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

2.1. Executive Session for Contract Negotiations and Related Legal Advice Pertaining to an Agreement with UVMMC

City Council President Traverse noted his recusal from this discussion and executive session due to a professional conflict of interest.

MOTION by Councilor McKnight, SECOND by Councilor Bergman, that the City Council find that premature general public knowledge of information concerning contract negotiations of an agreement with UVMMC and related legal advice would clearly place the City at a substantial disadvantage with such negotiations.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries (City Council President Traverse recused).

MOTION by Councilor McKnight, SECOND by Councilor Bergman, that based upon that finding, the City Council enter into executive session to receive information regarding

agreement negotiations with UVMHC and receive confidential attorney-client communications. 1 VSA Section 313(a)(1)(A) and (F).

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries (City Council President Traverse recused).

2.2 McNeil Commercial Items

MOTION by Councilor McKnight, SECOND by Councilor Bergman, that the City Council find that premature general public knowledge of commercial and real estate and contract negotiations between the Burlington Electric Department and private parties would clearly place the City at a substantial disadvantage in such negotiations because the City risks disclosing confidential information in public.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

MOTION by Councilor McKnight, SECOND by Councilor Bergman, that based upon that finding, the City Council enter into executive session under the provisions of 1 VSA Section 313(a)(1)(A) and 1 VSA Section 313(a)(2), to include legal counsel, the City Council, the Mayor and her staff, the Chief Administrative Officer and/or her departmental designees, and appropriate Burlington Electric Department staff.

3. MAYOR – GENERAL CITY AFFAIRS (TO INCLUDE CLIMATE AND PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY EMERGENCY UPDATES)

3.1 Verbal Reports

Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak began by noting that she attended the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Providence, Rhode Island and provided updates from that conference that pertain to community safety, such as touring its Overdose Prevention Center (OPC) and recruitment and retention strategies for police officers.

Special Assistant for Overdose Prevention Vezina introduced herself and spoke about her background and career history. She said that as the City moves into the implementation phase of the Overdose Prevention Site project, the Mayor's Office will have a strong focus on community engagement across all sectors of local health care providers, public safety, and law enforcement, as well as the community at large. She emphasized the importance of recognizing Burlington's more rural setting than other communities that have set up overdose prevention centers.

Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak then provided a number of community safety updates. She noted that there will be a more substantive update at the next City Council meeting on February 18, 2025, at which she will speak about the firm selected to help with the recruitment process for the next Chief of Police. She noted that her office has begun a press gathering on Thursdays to provide more updates on community safety for the public, including updates on police and fire, public health responses, and general safety updates. She noted that she will be meeting with Charles Ramsey, who consults with mayors on community safety issues. She noted that the City has begun negotiating collective bargaining with BPOA.

Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak then provided an update on the Fiscal Year (FY) 26 budget development process. She said that they have designed a program and service inventory effort to dive deeply into what the City actually offers by department, which will aid in efforts to right-size the government.

4. CITY COUNCIL – GENERAL CITY AFFAIRS (TO INCLUDE CLIMATE AND PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY EMERGENCY UPDATES)

4.1 Verbal Reports

Councilor Shannon noted that she and Councilor Grant have been participating in the Community Academy, which is a program put on by the Police Department for members of the community better understand what the Police Department does. She spoke about the immense pride that the BPD has in the community work that they do.

Councilor Bergman spoke about the passing of Sandy Baird, who has been involved in community work for a number of decades in Burlington and has given much to the community.

Councilor Grant spoke about an upcoming work session on developing a strategic plan for recruitment and retention for the BPD. She spoke about her continued review of the BPOA survey comments, noting several comments that spoke about the lack of focus on recruitment and retention. She said the City needs to think about the level of communication and engagement that need to occur in order to have successful recruitment and retention efforts.

Councilor Litwin echoed Councilor Grant's comments about the need for strong commitment on recruitment efforts for the BPD. He thanked Chief Murad for his work at the swearing-in ceremony for new BPD personnel. He spoke about the lengthy recruitment process (around 1.5 years) for sworn officers. He also thanked Director Longo for facilitating a tour of the Burlington International Airport last week.

5. PUBLIC FORUM: TIME CERTAIN: 6:45 PM

5.1. Verbal Comments

Forum opened at 6:52 PM.

COMMENTS:

Burlington residents (in person):

- Brett Yates spoke about the Housing Trust Fund resolution, saying that the root of the housing problem is not that UVM students are crowding other residents out of the City's housing stock, and that this resolution does not take action but simply a first step by commissioning a study. He also noted that the resolution structures itself around the interests of existing homeowners, not those who need affordable housing.
- Jane McDougal spoke about the poor conditions of the City's sidewalks, saying that they need to be fixed so that people can be safer.
- Andre Clark spoke about his nonprofit work that focuses on street level outreach and partnering with local social service and mutual aid organizations to support unhoused neighbors. He expressed concern about the Council's focus on rebuilding the police department instead of focusing on the City's actual challenges. He urged the City to focus on data-driven solutions, and said that the City's current shelter policy is inhumane.
- Amy Wright spoke about her work in developing senior and affordable housing, and urged the City Council to support the Housing Trust Fund resolution and work with CEDO to find ways to increase its funding. She spoke about the developments that have been created through the Housing Trust Fund and the positive impact that these types of affordable developments have for the community.
- Ali Schachter commended the work of the community and UVMMC to engage with Ward 1 residents and address their concerns. She advocated for delaying the vote on the MOU until the Council's East District seat is filled and Ward 1 has full representation on the Council, given continued concerns from residents on lot coverage, building height, traffic, and parking lot size.
- Lee Morrigan said that last week a current Democratic City Councilor used their online platform to incite dogpiling on anyone criticizing Burlington Democrats, noting that they have been on the receiving end of this harassment, which is concerning. They then continued reading a portion of their resignation letter (begun during the previous City Council meeting), noting that they were subjected to relentless attacks, threats, and harassment by Burlington Democrats and that they attempted to take their own life twice during this time. They said that politics should not drive people to suicide.

Burlington residents (via Zoom):

- Emma Wall Kouri urged the Council to bring a resolution forward to address the immediate and long-term needs of the City's unhoused individuals. She said that the current band-aid solutions do not go far enough. She said that there needs to be more access to emergency shelters and that the City needs to put political differences aside and unite to bring forth solutions to the larger problem.

- Erhard Mahnke spoke in support of the Housing Trust Fund resolution, speaking about the housing crisis and noting that there are currently an estimated 250 individuals sleeping unsheltered in the Burlington area. He spoke about the maximum affordable rent for someone with the average income in Burlington, noting that it is around half of what current Burlington rents are. He said that the City needs to continue to dedicate City funds for affordable housing, to ensure affordability for working families, seniors, people with disabilities, and others living on low, moderate, or fixed incomes.
- Sharon Bushor spoke about the UVMHC MOU, noting that she worked on the original MOU, which was put into place during a period of hospital expansion to ensure that it did not drown residents with traffic jams and parking issues. She noted that employees at UVMHC have to be there for 25 years before they can use on-site parking. She said that understanding who is using parking (the mix of employees, physicians, patients, and family members) is key to right-sizing the amount of parking the hospital is anticipating they need. She spoke about the proposed new parking structure, saying she hopes the height can be reduced to lessen the impact on the neighborhood.
- Carol Jaramillo spoke as the community building at the Northgate Residence Ownership Corporation, and spoke regarding the Housing Trust Fund. She expressed continued gratitude for the funds that were given to Northgate from this fund in 1990, which helped defray costs for improvements. She expressed support for seeking more resources for the Housing Trust Fund.

Non-Burlington residents (in person):

- Amy Demetrowitz, Chief Operating Officer of Champlain Housing Trust, spoke in support of the resolution that aims to increase funding for the Housing Trust Fund. She said this fund has been an essential tool in supporting the development of affordable housing in Burlington over the past 35 years. She spoke about what these funds have allowed CHT to do and provide to the community.

Non-Burlington residents (via Zoom):

- Keren Sita spoke about how the City is not acknowledging Black people during Black History Month, and said the Mayor should acknowledge that she failed to do that.

Forum closed at 7:20 PM.

6. WORK SESSIONS

6.1 Work Session Regarding Data-Driven Community Safety: Rebuilding the BPD

Senior Policy and Data Analyst Stetson began by noting that the goal of this effort is to develop ways to track and understand what efforts are working in terms of police recruitment, and how the City can rebuild its police department that can respond to all requests for services without stretching its officers too thinly. She began by showing the staffing levels for sworn officers, noting a sharp decline in 2020-2021, to a low point in 2022 of 61 officers. She noted that since then, the BPD has been able to hire more officers but that they have left at around the same pace. She projected that if the BPD continues at this pace of hiring officers, the City won't reach its target of 84 sworn officers for another 10 years. She then spoke about data around the number of applications for police officers received in 2022-2024, noting that applications outpaced the City average (for any job) in 2022 and 2023, but have fallen in 2024.

Senior Policy and Data Analyst Stetson then spoke about incident response data, defining an incident as a measure of police activity that includes both crimes (assault, burglary), and non-crimes (traffic stops, welfare checks, etc). She showed that the number of incidents rose sharply from 2021 through 2023 to pre-pandemic levels and that they have stabilized in 2024. She then provided more detail on these incidents by responder type for each year, noting that an expanded team of CSLs and CSOs have been able to take on a substantial share of the increase in incidents. She noted that in 2024, 61% of incidents were responded to by a sworn officer, 24% by a CSO or CSL without sworn officer present, and 15% of incidents did not receive a response. She then provided more detail on the incidents that were responded to by a sworn officer, given the City's interest in the demand on sworn officers. She noted that 2022 was the year with the fewest incidents with a sworn officer response, and that 2022 and 2023 had lower levels of sworn officer response than in pre-pandemic times. She

noted that 2023 saw a steep increase in the number of individual officer responses without a matching increase in sworn staffing, meaning that the number of responses per office increased sharply from 2022 to 2023. She also noted that a handful of officers respond to a large volume of incidents each year. She further noted that urgent, Priority 1 incidents make up an increasing share of sworn officers' workload in recent years. She said that prior to 2020, no one officer responded to more than 200 Priority 1 incidents in a year, but now, more than a dozen officers are responding to that many Priority 1 incidents per year. She said that taking all this data together, the total volume of incidents that BPD are responding to is not particularly unusual from what the City has seen in past years, but they are responding to more intense incidents than they would have gone to in the past.

Councilor Litwin said he would like to see an analysis on the police application spikes and drops, and would like to see the cause of those. He also asked what could be driving the increase in stacked factors in the data. He then said he would be interested in teasing out the sharp uptick from 2022 to 2023 of individual sworn officer responses. Senior Policy and Data Analyst Stetson replied that she doesn't have a good answer about the stacked responses, noting that the data is from the Valcor system and that the "stacked, no response" label is fairly new.

Councilor Grant expressed appreciation for having this kind of data, and said she would like to understand from staff what other kinds of data could be useful to share with the Public Safety Committee, especially with new police leadership coming online soon. She noted that a number of the high priority incidents have been driven by the worsening drug crisis in Burlington, and that traffic stops have decreased because the City wasn't able to implement something to address the biases associated with traffic stops. She said she would like to dive deeper into recruitment data and understand what applications are coming in and why some are filtered out, which can help fine-tune recruitment improvements. She said she would also like to include the recruitment team in some of these conversations.

Councilor Shannon asked for more information on BPD's Priority 1 incidents. Senior Policy and Data Analyst Stetson walked through the graph in more detail, noting that it shows the total number of incidents and then removes the incidents that did not actually receive a response. She noted that most of these incidents receive a response, but that overdoses are counted as Priority 1 incidents and are primarily responded to by the Fire Department, especially beginning in 2024.

Councilor McKnight spoke about the importance of referring to this data over time, as the City continues process improvement in these areas and measures its success (or lack thereof) over time. She asked what the Administration can do with this data to help inform its efforts to solve these issues with recruitment and retention. She asked whether this data confirms or denies any of the strategies the Mayor and her staff are developing, and whether any of those proposals are similar to those that Chief Murad presented. Councilor Grant noted that the BPD needs to start focusing on digital advertising and social media presence. Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak added that this was not presented as an accompaniment to recruitment strategies, but is an analysis to highlight trends. She said that one of the goals is to begin more rigorously tracking how recruitment strategies perform by looking at this type of data and basing decisions on what the data shows.

Councilor Bergman asked if incidents reported online are included in the stacked numbers within the data. Senior Policy and Data Analyst Stetson replied that online incidents are not generally counted in the stacked number. Councilor Grant asked how the online incidents are being tracked. Senior Policy and Data Analyst Stetson replied that online incidents are reported on, and they are also in the Valcor system.

City Council President Traverse noted that there is a lot of evidence received from downtown business owners, residents, and visitors that isn't necessarily captured in the numbers, so the City needs to be mindful of what the numbers are and aren't showing. He also pointed out that some individuals have stopped calling the police altogether, and that this isn't reflected in the data.

6.2 Report of the City of Burlington Reparations Task Force

Pablo Bose, Chair of the Reparations Task Force, provided a summary of the report, including its charge, the work of the task force, and recommendations. He noted that the Reparations Task Force was established in August 2020 through a City Council resolution, and it was meant to initiate a study

of the historical involvement and impacts of the institution of slavery in the City of Burlington and to develop a proposal to address that history, including the possibility of enacting resolutions, policies, and other actions. He said that membership in the task force included the REIB Director, a representative from the Vermont Human Rights Commission, an appointee of the City Council president, an appointee by the Vermont Racial Justice Alliance, and an appointee by the Burlington Mayor's Office. He noted that he has been the Mayoral appointee on the task force. He noted that there has been turnover on the task force for its membership and said that one of the challenges faced by the task force was lack of engagement (but acknowledged that it began during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic). He spoke about the group's activity, which included creating an RFP for consultants to look into the history of slavery in the City and engaging with those consultants. He said that two consultants produced reports about the history of slavery in Burlington and on the use of racialized covenants in the City. He noted that the task force was dormant in 2021 and 2022, but that they tried to meet more, and he noted that he personally took up some of the work of the task force with his UVM students and classes. He said his classes researched different examples of reparations, particularly at the City level (and cited an example of Evanston, Illinois). He noted that they have engaged with current and former City Councilors on some of this work, as well. He spoke about the items the task force has not completed, which include a historical analysis of how the City of Burlington (including businesses and individuals) might have been involved in the institution of slavery, a review of the cases and incidents of discrimination from the abolition of slavery to the present day, and a set of recommendations on specific reparations mechanisms and strategies for the City to consider. He said that if the task force is re-engaged, all positions on it need to be filled, and he recommended establishing a regular reporting schedule to REIB or to the City Council, a more regular work schedule for the task force, clear staff support for the task force, and developing a clear work plan for the task force. He also recommended revisiting the original resolution and narrowing the scope of what is intended, considering what funding source would be utilized for providing adequate compensation for any reparations program, determining what department would be responsible for administering such a program, and engaging in a strategy for community outreach and education to the public. He noted that the task force was allocated \$50,000 and that around \$25,000 remains unspent.

Councilor Grant acknowledged the challenge posed by the turnover among membership and staff, and said she looks forward to discussing this at a future REIB Committee meeting. She asked what Mr. Bose would suggest in terms of specifics around moving forward. Mr. Bose replied that a clearer mandate would be extremely helpful for the success of any future task force.

Councilor Neubieser thanked the task force for its work.

Councilor Bergman requested the reports and accompanying synopses, in order to continue the work of the task force in the future. He said that he looks forward to future conversations about this work in the REIB Committee.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

7.1 Motion to adopt the consent agenda (as amended) and take the actions indicated

7.2 Accountability List – C/T – waive the reading, accept the communication, and place it on file.

7.3 Communication: Michael Long, re: The Council Working Together Regardless of the Party in the Majority – waive the reading and place the communication on file.

7.4 Communication: Owiso Makuku, re: Comment In Support of Lifting Cap of Burlington Police Force – waive the reading and place the communication on file.

7.5 Authorization to Sponsor The Flynn Center for Performing Arts' Co-Production & Management of the Black Experience 2025 Event – REIB – authorize the Director of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging executes a grant agreement with the Flynn Center for Performing Arts for the production and management of the Black Experience 2025 event in an amount not to exceed \$10,000.00, subject to review by the City Attorney's Office.

7.6 Maple Street – Landing area for front door and ADA accessible ramp – Pathways Vermont – DPW – approve the Encumbrance Application for Pathways VT Inc. at 141 Maple Street requesting use City Right of way for an ADA Accessible ramp and front door landing area and authorize the Mayor to enter into a license agreement with the Applicant for use of the portion of the right-of-way outlined in the Application, subject to review by the City Attorney's Office.

7.7 Special Event Indoor and Outdoor Entertainment Permit Application (one day only): Bern Gallery, 135 Main Street, Suite 101, Friday, February 14, 2025, 12 pm – 5 pm, DJ (inside), small speaker (outside) approve the one day only special event indoor and outdoor entertainment permit application for Bern Gallery, 135 Main Street, Suite 101, Friday, February 14, 2025, 12 pm – 5 pm, DJ (inside), small speaker (outside).

7.8 2025-2026 Tobacco License and Tobacco Substitute Endorsement Renewals: see attached list – approve the 2025-2026 Tobacco License and Tobacco Substitute Endorsement Renewals as listed.

7.9 2025 VTRANS Certificate of Highway Mileage – DPW - accept the recorded mileage for the City of Burlington with the Vermont Agency of Transportation in the 2025 Highway Mileage Certificate, and authorize Chapin Spencer, Director of Public Works, to execute the certificate on behalf of City Council.

7.10 Grant Approval for Electric Bucket Truck – BED - authorize the General Manager of the Burlington Electric Department to enter into a grant agreement with the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, as described above, to accept up to \$564,000 in grant funds to support the purchase of an all-electric bucket truck for Burlington Electric's fleet, subject to final review and approval from the City Attorney's Office.

7.11 Reclassification of existing Planner position to Senior Planner – Planning - authorize the reclassification of the Planner, a regular, exempt Grade 18 position to a regular, exempt Grade 19 position within the Office of City Planning.

7.12 Reclassification of Operations Director to Financial and Budget Manager and Elimination of Budget Manager – C/T - approve the elimination of the vacant Budget Manager position, a Regular, Non-union, Full-Time, Exempt, Grade 22, role in the Clerk/Treasurer's Office; and 2. Approve the reclassification of the Operations Director, a Regular, Non-union, Full-time, Exempt, Grade 24 position to Financial and Budget Manager, a Regular, Non-union, Full-time, Exempt, Grade 22 position in the Clerk/Treasurer's Office.

7.13 Communication: Residents of Ward One/Eastern District, re: UVMCC Proposed MOU – waive the reading and place the communication on file.

7.14 December 9, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes, Draft – C/T – waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file, and adopt the minutes at the February 18, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.15 December 16, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes, Draft – C/T - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file, and adopt the minutes at the February 18, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.16 December 16, 2024 Local Cannabis Control Commission Meeting Minutes, Draft – C/T - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file, and adopt the minutes at the February 18, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.17 December 16, 2024 Local Control Commission Meeting Minutes, Draft – C/T - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file, and adopt the minutes at the February 18, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.18 January 13, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes, Draft – C/T - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file, and adopt the minutes at the February 18, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.19 January 13, 2025 City Council With Mayor Presiding Meeting Minutes, Draft – C/T - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file, and adopt the minutes at the February 18, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.20 January 27, 2025 Full Board of Abatement of Taxes Meeting Minutes, Draft – C/T - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file, and adopt the minutes at the February 18, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.21 January 27, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes, Draft – C/T - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file, and adopt the minutes at the February 18, 2025 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.22 City of Burlington and University of Vermont Medical Center Third Agreement to Extend 1999 Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement – City Attorney's Office/Planning – authorize the Mayor to sign the City of Burlington and University of Vermont Medical Center Third Agreement to Extend 1999 Memorandum of Understanding and Agreement.

7.23 FIO Documents – for information only.

MOTION by Councilor Shannon, SECOND by Councilor Neubieser, to approve the consent agenda and take the actions indicated for items 7.1-7.23 (City Council President Traverse recused himself for item 7.22 due to a professional conflict of interest).

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

8. DELIBERATIVE AGENDA

8.1 Resolution: Doubling Burlington's Investment In Affordable Housing (Councilors Neubieser, Grant, Bergman, Kane)

MOTION by Councilor Neubieser, SECOND by Councilor Bergman, to waive the reading and adopt the resolution.

DISCUSSION:

- Councilor Neubieser said this resolution asks City staff to research how to increase the Housing Trust Fund by at least \$1 million, which would roughly double the amount of money the City invests into affordable housing. He said the resolution asks for ways to increase the funding through current authority as well as pathways that would require a charter change to pursue, and asks that the options be either revenue neutral, or that they raise revenue progressively. He noted that more than one-third of Burlington's renters spend more than half of their income on rent in Burlington, and that the City is grappling with an unhoused crisis and a very low vacancy rate.
- Councilor Broderick made a friendly amendment to add a final whereas clause before the first resolved clause, as posted on CivicClerk.
- Councilor Shannon noted that while the tax burden shifted from businesses to residents during the last reassessment, businesses are already being taxed at 120% of their value, which is important to recognize if the City is looking for other sources of revenue for the Housing Trust Fund. She made a friendly amendment to insert a whereas clause after Line 12 to state "whereas, in an effort to address the regressivity of property taxes, Burlington has long been taxing commercial property at 120% of its assessed value."
- Councilor Litwin noted that he lives in a Champlain Housing Trust building and is grateful to have benefited from that. He said that he has concerns about the lack of clarity around what is meant by "progressive taxation measures." He said he would also like more time to better understand the income expenditures that are coming and going from the housing fund as it stands, and does not want extra funding to be eaten up by administrative or operational expenses. He said he would like a commitment to reduce dependency on this fund for those types of expenditures.
- Councilor Grant said that if the City is trying to increase the success of the Trust, it should be recognized that there will be higher administrative costs as staff try to pursue alternative modes of increasing funding (such as pursuing grants).
- Councilor Broderick expressed support for this resolution, and spoke about the importance of the whereas clause he proposed adding. He said there is no one cause of the City's housing crisis and pushed back against the notion that removing students from off-campus housing would solve the City's housing woes.
- Councilor Barlow expressed support for the resolution. He noted that the City has worked in the past to increase the balance of the Housing Trust Fund and has been successful at it.
- Councilor McKnight requested that when the resolution comes back to CDNR that the most recent income and expense reports for the Housing Trust Fund.
- Councilor Shannon noted that the high balance in the Housing Trust Fund is due to the City taxing Airbnbs and other short-term rentals at a high rate. She asked how many units this tax is coming from, saying that where it comes from matters.

VOTING (as amended): unanimous; motion carries.

8.2 Resolution: Municipal Resolution for Downtown Transportation Fund (Board of Finance)

Director Spencer said this seeks approval to apply for a Vermont downtown transportation grant to fund an array of street furnishings and amenities for the Great Streets Main Street project. He said the project has financial constraints and that the project had to be value-engineered from the start. He noted that they had to reduce the project from 6 blocks to 3 blocks and had to remove most of the street furnishings in the project to get to a place where the project could move forward. He noted the team continues to proactively find other revenue sources to put the important street amenities back in the project, and this is an effort to do that.

Senior Engineer Boccaccio provided an update on what has been done to date and what still remains for work on this project. He noted that the contractor has constructed new sewer mains and service connections and has progressed east of the South Winooski and Main Street intersection. He noted that the contractors also constructed a new water main to the west of Church Street and is preparing to install a new temporary water main east of Church Street. He said that water and sewer replacement work will continue for the remainder of 2025. He spoke about stormwater retention tanks that will be installed near City Hall Park and on Pine Street, and noted that some of the streetscaping Director Spencer spoke of earlier will be completed by the end of 2025 with the remainder being completed in 2026. He acknowledged the impacts for residents, visitors, and businesses of this construction, and said that the City is providing information on alternatives for routes and parking.

Grants Associate Birmingham provided background and information on the grant being pursued. She said that the Downtown Transportation Fund is a financing tool which assists municipalities in paying for transportation related capital improvements within designated downtown districts, and is administered through the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. She said the grant is for \$200,000 with a \$50,000 local match (for a total of \$250,000), with the local match coming from downtown TIF funding. She said the grant covers the purchase of 21 benches, 19 bicycle racks, a bus shelter, granite elevation indicators, staff time, and 10% contingency. She noted that the deadline for the application is February 17, 2025, and that awards will be announced in April of 2025.

MOTION by Councilor Barlow, SECOND by Councilor Bergman, to authorize the Director of Public Works and the Grants Team to apply for the Downtown Transportation Fund grant administered by VACCD for the Main Street amenities in the amount of \$200,000, obligating the City to commit to a local match of \$50,000 of the total project budget of \$250,000, subject to approval by the City Attorney's Office.

DISCUSSION:

- **Councilor Litwin said that in light of some of the bus shelters in the City having been removed due to past issues in the downtown area, and his continued concerns with funding related to FY26 budgets and beyond, he asked whether some of this expenditure could be pared back. Director Spencer noted that this is the partial restoration of some of the amenities that were proposed for the original project, and that they contribute to a vibrant and activated downtown area.**

VOTING: 9-1 (Councilor Litwin dissenting); motion carries.

8.3 Ordinance: CDO—Performing Arts Centers in the E-LM District ZA-25-04 (Planning, Planning Commission)

MOTION by Councilor Shannon, SECOND by Councilor Bergman, first reading, waive the reading and refer to the Ordinance Committee.

DISCUSSION:

- **Councilor Bergman said that if this is going to be successful, the parking and traffic issues will need to be addressed.**
- **Councilor Shannon asked how this differs from some of the allowances related to outdoor entertainment that were put in place during the Covid-19 pandemic, and asked whether this would attract more people or create more traffic than what was already in place. Director Dillard replied that this would be indoors and that any noise impact would be negated, but that he will follow up with stakeholders and get more information back to the Council.**

- Councilor Litwin expressed concern about implementing this now, given the impacts of Champlain Parkway and other traffic pressures on Pine Street, particularly around the King/Maple intersections. Director Dillard replied that staff are sensitive to the King/Maple neighborhood issues and that they will certainly work with Public Works on any mitigation needed for those. He noted that the City's plans call for more arts facilities in the South End area, as well as a network of shared parking facilities and that the South End Coordinated Redevelopment effort is attempting to implement some of that shared parking.
- Councilor Grant said that having Higher Ground come into Burlington will contribute to the vibrancy of the South End.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

8.4 Ordinance: CDO—Champlain College Bed Caps ZA-25-05 (Office of City Planning, Planning Commission)

When asked about the more time-sensitive nature of this amendment and the desire to hold a public hearing on it in the very near future, Director Dillard replied that Champlain College approached the City about converting Aiken Hall back to residences (it is currently office space) and would like to offer it as student housing for the upcoming August semester. He said that in order to complete the work in that time, a zoning amendment and ordinance change are required.

MOTION by Councilor Shannon, SECOND by Councilor Bergman, first reading, waive the reading and refer to the Ordinance Committee.

DISCUSSION:

- Councilor McKnight asked if there has been a process to gather feedback from the public on this. Director Dillard replied that the Planning Commission held a meeting on December 3, 2024, at which it warned a public hearing for January 14, 2025 on these items. He said the meetings are typically warned in Seven Days and on the City's website, and this public hearing is the public's avenue to provide feedback. He noted that there was no special engagement on this amendment.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1. Verbal reports

Councilor Shannon noted that the Ordinance Committee is meeting on February 20, 2025 at 1:00 PM to discuss the two above items as well as the vacant building ordinance.

10. CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT – COUNCIL UPDATES

10.1. Verbal reports

City Council President Traverse noted that the City is statutorily required to hold a public hearing on its ballot questions, which will occur on February 12, 2025.

11. ADJOURNMENT

11.1 Motion to Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 PM.

RScty: AACoonradt