

REIB City Council Committee Meeting
Oct. 15, 2024
5:30pm – 7:00pm
Sharon Bushor Room, 1st Floor City Hall and Zoom
Minutes

Attendance: Councilor Melo Grant, Chair; Councilor Gene Bergman; Councilor Becca Brown McKnight; Phet Keomanyvanh, Interim REIB Director, Mark Hughes, Pablo Bose, Christine Hughes

Meeting Start: 5:45pm

Motion to approve the agenda

Councilor Bergman motions, Councilor Brown McKnight seconds. Agenda is approved.

Motion to approve the minutes of [September 17, 2024](#)

Councilor Bergman motions, Councilor Brown McKnight seconds. Minutes are approved.

Public Forum

Mark Hughes invites the public to the REIB's Mission and Vision community conversation that will be at Richard Kemp Center on Sat. 19th at 3-5pm. Mark brought up the City's legislative agenda, and expressed collaboration with the City to work with the Racial Justice Alliance in issues as the Equal Protection Constitutional Amendment, the Reparations bill, the economic justice policy and also statewide police oversight. There was a discussion about charting the REIB and this opportunity is almost lost for it being the middle of October. Expressed that the resolution, dated 29, June 2020 and Racism is a public health emergency has been pushed off to the wayside like the work never existed.

REIB Updates

Reparations Task Force Report

Pablo Bose and Christine co-chairs of the Reparations Task Committee

A report was put together about what the task force has done to date and the background of the Task Force's charge. Looked at the overall landscape of reparations, some of the different forms it's taken and indicated some of the work that the task force had commissioned. Several of the studies of Burlington history and other relevant work. There has been turnover of the task Force members and with the REIB leadership. Also there has been very inconsistent engagement with the City Council itself. It's time to reinvigorate the process and re-engage with City Council. The Task Force wasn't able to carry out many of the charges due to all sorts of reasons, mainly because of the REIB leadership changes. The Task force was launched during COVID and now 4 years later past this charge of work. Access to the original funding that or started out with is not available and the committee members have not been paid their stipends out since the start. There's much more that can be done and ought to be done. Reading the original resolution it looks like time is essentially up because there is only 26

meetings that are allowed. This report has circulated with Task Force committee members in January and the preliminary recommendations that was included has been removed due to decision of being premature on majority of Task force members.

Actions for Nov. 19 REIB CC Committee meeting:

1. Phet to compile histories and processes of the Reparations Task Force and post them on the REIB website.
2. Phet to provide an update on stipends for Reparations Task Force members at the next meeting.
3. Phet to put together the next meeting of Reparations Task Force to discuss and prepare recommendations for next steps to present at the REIB CC Nov. meeting.

Mission and Vision Community Conversations

Phet shared upcoming community mission and vision community conversations will be on Saturday, October 19th from 3 to 5 Pm at the Richard Kemp Center and Thursday, October 24th 5 to 7 Pm. at the Burlington Electric Department in the Spark Space Conference Room and then Wednesday, October 30, th from 8 30 – 10am at City Hall in the Sharon Busher Room.

Empowerment Fund

The Empowerment Fund opened up October 1st and will close November 5. These funds are about empowering black and brown communities. We are making this accessible to people. You don't have to be a nonprofit. It's really uplifting and community building.

Community Forum

Councilor Grant had some ideas about engaging the gunfire task force and the new American Advisory Council that also talked about youth to give some advice in terms of how we could proceed with community safety. This would be a good community forum.

Nov. 19 agenda items

Status of the Reparations Task Force and potential funding needs.

REIB Committee to review and discuss preliminary recommendations from the Reparations Task Force and REIB Committee vote

Empowerment Fund applications update

Motion to Adjourn

Councilor Brown McKnight motions, Councilor Grant seconds.

Meeting adjourned

7:15pm

Minutes by Phet Keomanyvanh

REIB CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Sharon Bushor Room, 149 Church Street, 1st Floor, City Hall, Burlington, VT

Tuesday, December 17th, 2024

5:20 PM Meeting Called To Order

In Attendance

Gene Bergman, Melo Grant, Christian Berry, and Mark Hughes

Minutes

1. Motion to adopt the agenda.
 - a. Motion to adopt the agenda by Council Member Melo Grant,
 - b. Motion seconded by _____?___(I am not sure who was speaking)
 - c. Unanimous pass
 - d. There aren't any October or December meetings uploaded so we will approve them in January 2025.
2. Mark expressed his congratulations to Christian on her new assignment and assured her of the community's support. He also mentioned that they had not yet reviewed the administration's [Memorandum](#) on the history of the REIB.
Re: Report on the background of the REIB
3. Melo on glanced at it, it exhaustive and it is a lot of work it for the Mayor to do a deep dive. Mayor Emma is very supportive of this work.
4. Interim Director Christian Berry provided Directors Updates on Community Engagement conversations around the Vision and Mission.
 - 1) Hired Maria Davies as the Administrative and Finance Coordinator, starting in January.
 - 2) Katie in Africa attending a wedding.
 - 3) Christian on her own for now.Mayor's Office conversation:
 - 1) **Clarity**- community wants clarity on the function of the office. We will do our due diligence to go out more into community. There is a mistrust in the community we need to address that.
 - 2) **Frustrations**- Folx thought that given the previous climate around previous director this was not the right time for these conversations.
 - 3) **More centering on blackness**. Getting away from diversity being a measurement to whiteness.
 - 4) **We were unable to meet with our Burlington Business Owner and Burlington School District**. Holding more of these conversations in the New Year.
 - 5) **City Council Member Melo Grant - Dr. Livingston presentation was amazing**.
5. Melo Grant encouraged about things happening around the city.

Next Steps

1. Melo Grant- What is the ETA to schedule the meetings with Burlington based business owners and school district? Christian indicated this will happen in the New Year.

2. Christian to follow up with IT to get the agenda and attachment back up on the website.
3. Christian to schedule additional vision and mission community engagement sessions with Burlington-based business owners and the school district after the New Year.
4. Christian to send an email to the Council about upcoming vision and mission community engagement sessions.
5. Christian to inquire if Dr. Robert Livingston's previous talk was recorded.
6. Christian to reach out to Town Meeting TV about potentially recording Ta-Nehisi Coates' upcoming talk. Melo Grant will promote this.
7. Christian to follow up with Emiliano about funding commitment for the Black Experience event. Phet and Emiliano spoke about possible funding. Christian will honor the funding.
8. Christian to finalize details for a potential luncheon with Ta-Nehisi Coates.
9. Christian to investigate creative ways to provide food at REIB meetings within city budgetary constraints.
10. Christian to look into holding future REIB meetings at community locations such as the Richard Kemp Center.
11. Christian to follow up with Mark Hughes regarding the status of his empowerment grant application.
12. Mark Hughes to send information about the Martin Luther King Gospel concert on January 20th to the committee.
13. Mark Hughes would like to figure out ways to better engage and entice the community to come out to these meetings. Community could be looking at Empowerment Grants. Catering meetings may be helpful.
14. Monday, January 20, Melo Grant's birthday.
15. Awarded 32 organizations in the community with the Empowerment Grant Funding.

Announcements

Mark Hughes- Game Night on Friday (12/20); Blackopoly, Saturday (12/21); Legal Clinic from 11- 1PM; MLK Gospel Concert Night (1/20).

History of the REIB. Melo on glanced at it. Place it on the January agenda.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, January 21, 2025, Sharon Bushor Room, 149 Church Street, 1st Floor. 5:30 PM- 7:00 PM

Meeting adjourned at 6:16 PM

Tuesday, December 17, 2024, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

REIB Burlington is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/97637329770?pwd=ZsbLOuFjbvv0XFhhuOSuhqgDYGFpoQ>.

1 Meeting ID: 976 3732 9770 Passcode: 079383 ---

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- +1 309 205 3325 US
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 646 931 3860 US • +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
- +1 689 278 1000 US • +1 719 359 4580 US • +1 253 205 0468 US
- +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 360 209 5623 US • +1 386 347 5053 US
- +1 507 473 4847 US • +1 564 217 2000 US
- +1 669 444 9171 US
- +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 976 3732 9770

Passcode: 079383

REIB City Council Committee

February 25, 2025

5:30 – 7:30 pm

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

Attendees:

Christian Berry, Interim Director REIB

Katie Greene, Community and Belonging Program Manager REIB

Councilor Melo Grant

Councilor Gene Bergman

Mark Hughes

Jacob Alfar

Meeting Convened: 5:33 PM

Agenda:

- **Motion to Approve Agenda**

Councilor Melo Grant motioned to approve. Councilor Gene Bergman seconded.
Unanimous pass.

- **Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes**

- a. **October 2024**

- b. **December 2024**

Approval of minutes moved to next month

- **Public Forum**

N/A

- **REIB Updates**

- a. **Staffing**

- Currently five positions available in the department but not yet posted. Discussion on incorporating roles focused on New American communities, health equity, Indigenous representation, and education.

- Councilor Grant inquired if the five positions represent cutbacks. Christian clarified that while different, the positions align with available resources for the upcoming fiscal year and will evolve based on office needs.

- b. **Education & Training**

- i. **City-wide Bias Awareness Trainings**

- Christian shared that this initiative stems from the 2020 resolution and responses to the open letter. A training and education model has been presented to the administration and will be included in FY26 to ensure continuous learning throughout the City.
- Councilor Grant asked about the continuation of past bias awareness trainings. Christian confirmed that the last sessions stopped under previous leadership and were not continued due to transitions within the office.
- Christian confirmed plans to collaborate with HR and track training progress via UKG. Updates will be provided to the committee.

ii. BPD Bias Awareness Trainings (BPOA survey)

- Councilor Grant highlighted the results of a police survey showing dismissive attitudes toward racial disparities. Concerns were raised about continued bias awareness training for officers.
- Body cam footage reportedly shows racial profiling of Black and New American youth.
- A discussion was held about how REIB should engage with the Mayor and interim police chief regarding training needs.
- Councilor Bergman suggested preparing a report on bias training to present to the City Council.
- Christian noted that this is the first time all department heads have equity-based goals.

c. Programmatic / Event Updates

i. Vision / Purpose Next Steps

- Seven engagement sessions held across the city in the fall.
- Next phase: Engaging businesses and schools, creating space for youth input.
- Timeline: Expected completion by mid-to-late March.

ii. Juneteenth 2025 Planning

- Christian stated that REIB will work closely with BCA on event production.
- Due to budget constraints, REIB is seeking sponsorship and working with Doreen for fundraising efforts.
- Current estimated budget: \$70,000, with only half secured so far. Fundraising discussions with BCA are ongoing.
- Councilor Grant asked about the possibility of a community dinner; Christian said it's too early to confirm but smaller welcoming events are planned.

d. Project Updates

i. Empowerment Grant Update

- Part 1 completed in the fall; Part 2 to be released in early March.
- Adjustments made based on feedback to reduce applicant burden.
- Responses expected by May.
- Councilor Bergman suggested highlighting grant impacts through personal stories.
- Councilor Grant recommended incorporating photos and videos.

ii. VNAAC Report

- Follow-up discussions on momentum from prior presentation.
- Shared with department heads; discussions on collaboration underway.
- Mayor and Christian met with VNAAC representatives to discuss next steps.

iii. 2020 Resolution

- Discussion held on ensuring tangible next steps for progress.

a. Committees / Task Forces

- **Burlington Advisory Committee on Accessibility:** Awaiting restart; REIB will collaborate closely.
- **Vermont Language Justice Project:** Focus on disseminating legislative changes and digestible updates to the public.
- **IDEAL Vermont:** Monthly state-led meetings on inclusion, diversity, and equity across municipalities. Christian to extend an invitation to Xusana Davis.
- Community Forum
 - **Community Safety Issues Affecting BIPOC Kids:** Discussion tabled for next meeting.
 - Suggestions to invite representatives from King Street Center and Boys & Girls Club.
 - **Concerns in the New American Community:** Possible collaboration with AALV and community partners.
 - **Committee Meeting Locations:** Discussions on holding meetings at community centers for accessibility.

Public Comment: Jacob Alfar's Experience at BPD

- Former CSO Jacob Alfar shared concerns about workplace culture at BPD, describing a lack of inclusion and hierarchical division.
- Issues highlighted:
 - Officers physically and socially separate from CSOs and other staff.

- Lack of basic workplace courtesy (e.g., greetings from leadership).
 - Racial disparities in BPD's workforce composition.
 - Under-enforcement of laws in certain areas.
- Councilor Grant and Bergman acknowledged concerns and requested written testimony for committee records.
- Discussion on potential engagement with the interim police chief regarding department culture.

Reparations

- Mark Hughes provided an update on reparations discussions.
- A pending state-level reparations bill mirrors H432.
- Discussion on advocating for release of related constitutional articles post-Town Meeting Day.
- Police oversight bill (H361) under review, with implications for city-level accountability.

- Motion to Adjourn

Councilor Melo Grant motioned to approve. Councilor Gene Bergman seconded. Unanimous pass.

Adjourned at 7:05 PM

Zoom information:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92744162495?pwd=YVNHUUUzU3RFYjIwODFlZm8xTFc0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 927 4416 2495

Passcode: 225169