



## **Racial, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging**

**Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)**

Held in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room, Ground Floor City Hall

OR

via Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96324562039>

Meeting ID: 963 2456 2039

Or Use Phone number: 305-224-1968

Meeting ID: 963 2456 2039

### **1. Call to Order**

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### **2. Motion to Approve Agenda**

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### **3. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>3.1. August 2025</b>
Meeting	September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	3. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	

### **4. Public Forum**

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### **5. REIB Updates**

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<b>Subject</b>	<b>5.1. Staffing</b>
Meeting	September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	5. REIB Updates
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	

**Subject** **5.1. Director Search Update**  
Meeting September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)  
Category 5. REIB Updates  
Department Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)  
Type  
Recommended Action

**Subject** **5.2. REIB Charter Update**  
Meeting September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)  
Category 5. REIB Updates  
Department Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)  
Type

**Subject** **5.3. BIPOC Stakeholder Meeting: Citywide Housing Initiatives**  
Meeting September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)  
Category 5. REIB Updates  
Department Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)  
Type

## 6. TCV Updates

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## 7. Community Forum

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## 8. Wrap Up & Motion to Adjourn

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**Subject** **8.1. Motion to adjourn**  
Meeting September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)  
Category 8. Wrap Up & Motion to Adjourn  
Department Council and Board  
Type  
Recommended Action

## 9. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

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**Subject** **9.1. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. For more information on access, call Lori Olberg, Licensing, Voting and Records Coordinator (802-865-7136)(TTY 802-865-7142). Persons with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate are encouraged to contact 802-865-7000 (voice) or 802-865-7142 (TTY) at least 72 hours in advance so that proper arrangements can be made. This meeting will also air**

**on Town Meeting TV the Wednesday after the meeting, starting at 8:00 pm and repeating at 1:00 am and 7:00 am the following day. 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.**

Meeting September 16, 2025 - Agenda v1 - Tuesday, September 16, 2025, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Category 9. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

Department Council and Board

Type

**Minutes taken by: Vicky Luciano**

**REIB City Council Committee**

**May 20, 2025 5:30 – 7:00 pm**

**Sharon Bushor Room**

**Attendees:**

**Christian Berry, Interim Director REIB (in person)**

**Katie Greene, Community & Belonging Program Manager REIB (in person)**

**Vicky Luciano, Administrative and Financial Coordinator REIB (in person)**

**Councilor Becca Brown McKnight (in person)**

**Ferene Paris (in person)**

**Councilor Melo Grant (Virtual)**

**Councilor Ranjit “Buddy” Singh (Virtual)**

**Councilor Evan Litwin (Virtual)**

**Councilor Ben Traverse (Virtual)**

**p.lopee@gmail.com (no name listed, virtual)**

**Emma Wall (Virtual)**

**Lizzy Clements (Virtual)**

**Michelle Bookless (Virtual)**

**Charlotte Safran (Virtual)**

**Christine Hughes (Virtual)**

**Elizabeth Cornell (Virtual)**

**Sherwood Smith (Virtual)**

**Grey Barreda (Virtual)**

**Jaada Longmore (Virtual)**

**Mona Tolba (Virtual)**

**Mary Gannon (Virtual)**

**Reverend Mark Hughes (Virtual)**

**Meeting Convened: 5:38 PM**

**Agenda:**

**1. Call to Order**

- a. Councilor Grant called the meeting to session at 5:38 PM

**2. Motion to Approve Agenda**

- a. Councilor Singh motioned to approve the agenda. Councilor McKnight seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**3. Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes**

- a. Councilor Singh motioned to approve the meeting minutes. Councilor Mcknight seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**4. Public Forum**

- a. Members of the public voiced strong support for the REIB and Interim Director Berry and expressed concerns and disappointment for the delay in the naming of the permanent director for the REIB. A few members of the public expressed the need to acknowledge what is happening on a national level. A member of the public asked what is the criteria for being a part of the BIPOC Stakeholders meeting and expressed a need to center the topics affecting BIPOC. Refer to the video.
  - i. Councilor Grant apologized for the delay and expressed they would not be able to make the announcement as it is Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak's announcement to make. Councilor Grant said she would look into the criteria for the BIPOC Stakeholders meetings. She brought up the community forum as another space to bring some topics to have conversations. She expressed an interest in speaking to the members to talk about their concerns. Refer to video.
  - ii. Councilor Mcknight expressed their appreciation of all the words, comments, opinions, thoughts, and frustration that was shared and empathized with all that was said. She expressed that she supports Interim Director Berry as the permanent director. She noted it would be harder for whoever does come in if it is not Interim Director Berry. Refer to video.
  - iii. Councilor Singh echoed the frustrations the members of community expressed and apologized to Interim Director Berry and the REIB staff for being put through the process and expressed gratitude for Interim Director Berry and staff for working through the pressure and staying professional. Refer to video

**5. REIB Updates**

**a. Staffing**

**i. Director Search Update**

- 1. Interim Director Berry informed everyone the staffing process is in the same holding pattern. The 2 program managers for education and health equity can't be hired until the permanent director has been named.
- 2. Councilor Grant informed everyone that the decision for the new director has been named and an announcement will be coming from the mayor but she is not sure when the announcement will be made. Refer to video.

**b. REIB Charter Update**

- i. Councilor McKnight informed everyone the Charter Change Committee met to fine tune the language for the Charter. She said in the previous meeting they narrowed in on 3 issues to open up for public discussion, if the director should be appointed by the mayor,

how long the appointment should be, and the list of power and responsibilities of the office. Refer to the Charter Change memo below. And the last issue is creating a citizen-led commission or advisory board. Refer to the video. Councilor Grant expressed her concerns about having a commission over an advisory board. Refer to the video. Councilor McKnight expressed she and the other Council members on the Charter Change Committee would be willing to talk about the issues. She mentioned the deadline to get the language fine-tuned would-be early December. Refer to the video. A member of the community asked a clarifying question about who needs to be appointed by the mayor. Interim Director Berry answered that all of the Department heads and some directors are appointed. Refer to the video. Councilor Singh expressed his thoughts on the composition of the board and urged people to give their opinions on the issues brought up by Councilor McKnight. Refer to the video.

**c. BIPOC Stakeholder Meeting: Citywide Housing Initiatives**

- i. Councilor Grant informed everyone the next BIPOC Stakeholders meeting would be on Wednesday the 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am. A member of the community presented a few questions for Councilor Grant to bring to Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak. Refer to the video.

**6. TCV Updates**

- a. No TCVs had any updates.

**7. Community Forum**

- a. Councilor Grant informed everyone that for the next Community Forum she would like to invite representatives from Food not Cops, Food Not Bombs, Street Cats, and the owners of King Street Laundry as they all do significant amounts of work with the unhoused population. Councilor Grant expressed she would welcome any emails with additional topics for community forum. A member of the public encouraged the City Councilors to have a conversation about what accountability looks like, thanked them for offering their perspectives and offering up what their roles could be and expressed a need for community support, especially white allies. Other member of the community expressed frustration and disappointment in Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak. Another community member reviewed the Declaration of Racism as a Public Health Emergency in 2020 and the Reparations Task Force. Refer to the video.

**8. Wrap Up & Motion to Adjourn**

- a. Councilor Grant adjourned the meeting at 7:30 pm

## **Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB)**

**Date:** July 9, 2015

**To:** Burlington City Council

**From:** Christian Berry, Interim Director

**Re:** Recommended Action: Motion to Refer the REIB Proposed Charter Language to the Charter Change Committee

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### **Introduction**

This memo proposes the formal addition of the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) to Burlington's City Charter and recommends City Council refer the proposed REIB Charter Language to the Charter Change Committee for further action.

Establishing the REIB Office within the city's charter signifies a commitment to advancing racial equity and social justice throughout our city. This initiative aligns with our ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive community, and it addresses systemic inequities that have historically affected the most underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized members of our community.

### **History of Racial Equity and Social Justice Work in City Governance**

The City of Burlington has taken significant strides towards racial equity and social justice since the early 2000s. In 2000, the City Council adopted the Legacy Action Plan, outlining a vision for improving the city's economic, environmental, social, and cultural health for future generations. This plan initially overlooked the urgent need to assess and address systemic barriers related to diversity and racial equity, which were incorporated into the plan in 2010.

In 2011, under the direction of the Social Equity Director, Wanda Hines, a Unity Retreat convened over 50 stakeholders to identify structural barriers and emphasize the necessity of a coordinated, city-supported plan to advance racial equity. This work laid the foundation for future initiatives. A resolution to create a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee was passed by the City Council in 2012 and by late 2013, the city enlisted the Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity to develop a strategic plan addressing racial and ethnic disparities. This plan was adopted in 2014 with the goal of embedding inclusion, equity, and justice into city operations.

In response to identified gaps in Burlington's approach to addressing racial and social disparities, the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) was established in 2019. This formal launch created a centralized structure to lead internal systems change efforts and public-facing equity initiatives throughout the city. Tyeastia Green was appointed as the City's first Director of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in 2020.

### **Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging**

Initially, the City of Burlington's efforts to address racial equity were often reactive rather than proactive, leading to a fragmented approach to social justice. Establishing a dedicated Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging provided a centralized focus for racial equity and social justice-based efforts and initiatives, ensuring ongoing attention to issues faced by the most underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized members of our community.

Since its establishment in 2019, the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) has emerged as a key driver of systemic equity efforts throughout city governance. The office's work is now integrated into internal policies,

public engagement initiatives, budget planning, education and training, and service delivery. In response to community needs and

organizational gaps, the REIB's strategic and operational responsibilities have expanded. The REIB continues to be relied upon to lead and support equity-based initiatives across departments and within city policies.

Currently, the need for a formal REIB Office is more urgent than ever. National conversations surrounding racial inequality and ongoing attacks on human rights reveal the systemic injustices faced not only by racial and ethnic groups, but also by various underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized groups, including those impacted by socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and other factors that result in disparate treatment.

The focus on inclusion and belonging emphasizes the importance of creating a community where everyone feels safe, valued, and supported, irrespective of their backgrounds or experiences. An official Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging would ensure that racial equity and social justice considerations are integral to all city policies and programs, rather than an afterthought.

### **Justification for Including the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging and REIB Director position in Burlington's City Charter**

Institutionalizing the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging within Burlington's City Charter offers numerous benefits for future governance. By embedding the REIB Office in the Charter, the city demonstrates an unwavering commitment to prioritizing racial equity and social justice in all aspects of governance and community development. This institutionalization creates a mechanism for long-term accountability, ensuring that city officials and employees remain responsible for promoting equity and belonging in both policy decisions and program implementations.

Furthermore, a chartered REIB Office facilitates a centralized, coordinated approach to equity-based initiatives, effectively breaking down silos between departments while ensuring comprehensive strategies that address systemic inequities. It also allows for dedicated funding and resources, thereby enabling the sustainable development of programs that cater to the needs of the most underrepresented, underserved, and marginalized members of our community. This formal commitment fosters greater public trust and engagement, as community members will feel more included in the decision-making processes knowing there is an office specifically dedicated to their concerns.

With the REIB Office enshrined in the City Charter, considerations of racial equity would be systematically integrated into all city policies, programs, practices, and services, promoting a culture of inclusion throughout municipal governance. The REIB can conduct regular assessments, collect data, and provide ongoing training regarding racial equity, leading to better-informed decision-making by city officials. Moreover, its establishment encourages community engagement and empowerment, creating a platform where voices from various backgrounds can be heard, leading to more impactful initiatives.

Additionally, the REIB can set measurable goals and benchmarks for achieving racial equity, allowing the city to track progress over time and make necessary adjustments to strategies. Ultimately, embedding the REIB Office within the City Charter serves to facilitate a cultural shift towards inclusivity, supporting a broader societal change that values diversity and belonging. In summary, institutionalizing the REIB Office would create a robust framework for addressing systemic issues, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive Burlington for everyone.

**Request:**

Establishing the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging within Burlington's City Charter is a vital step towards fostering an inclusive and equitable community. This formal recognition will ensure that our commitment to racial equity, inclusion, and belonging is embedded in the governance of our city, paving the way for systemic change and accountability. Adding the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging to Burlington's City Charter is a crucial step toward reinforcing our commitment to equity and justice.

**Proposed Motion:** "To waive the first reading of the proposed Charter Change and forward the language to the Charter Change Committee for further deliberation subject to review and approval of the City Attorney's Office."

**Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) Charter Language**

The City of Burlington shall form an Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging and establish a Director of Racial Equity Inclusion and Belonging.

The REIB Director role shall be a permanent position in the City appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council.

1. The REIB Office shall be under supervision, direction and control of director subject to the orders and ordinances of city council
2. The office of racial equity, inclusion, and belonging administrative officer shall have all of the powers, duties, and responsibilities as are provided in the racial equity, inclusion, and belonging director position description.

Subject to the orders and ordinances of the City Council, the Mayor and REIB director shall develop and implement a comprehensive racial equity, inclusion, and belonging strategy for the City of Burlington.

In furtherance of this work, the REIB director shall, subject to the orders and ordinances of the City Council, have the following rights, powers and duties, and implement such alongside all city departments:

1. To work on behalf of the City to advance equity and social justice by championing diversity, inclusion, belonging, and anti-racism;
2. To develop, coordinate, implement, and administer racial equity and inclusion strategies and projects for the City;
3. To recommend to city departments, the mayor's office, and City Council, policy and program changes to better advance racial equity and inclusion in the City;
4. To enhance representation in city government through decision-making bodies, community engagement initiatives, and policy development process for folks who hold underserved communities;
5. To coordinate and facilitate resident engagement in the City that encourages inclusive spaces for engagement with city government.