



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 Becca McKnight**, *Ward 6*  
**Councilor Marek Broderick**, *Ward 8*

**Inquiries:**  
**Rob Goulding**  
802.881-2278  
[rgoulding@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:rgoulding@burlingtonvt.gov)

**Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee of the City Council**  
**Tuesday, November 25, 2025 – 4:00PM**  
**--DRAFT MINUTES--**

**See video for full meeting:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D\\_YCEb4MOYU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_YCEb4MOYU)

**Councilors absent: Councilor McKnight**

**Councilors present: Chair Barlow, Councilor Bergman & Councilor Broderick via zoom**

**Chair Barlow** calls meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

**1. Agenda**

**Councilor Bergman** moves to approve the agenda as posted.

**Councilor Broderick** seconds.

**All in favor, Unanimous approval**

**2. Minutes of 9/30/25 & 10/29/25**

**Councilor Bergman** moves to adopt both sets of minutes.

**Councilor Broderick** seconds.

**All in favor, Unanimous approval**

**3. Public Forum**

**Peter McOsland** spoke about recycling program.

**Sharon Bushor (via zoom)** raised issues about the timing of meetings close to holidays, particularly noting the upcoming meeting on December 23rd, and emphasized the importance of public input on major city decisions.

**Pike Porter (via zoom)** presented questions about discrepancies in CO2 emissions data from the EPA Clean Air Market Program and raised concerns about BED's power purchase agreements, particularly regarding McNeil's eligibility for Connecticut RECS and the need for a lifecycle analysis of wood combustion emissions.

**4. Deliberative Agenda**

**4.1 Velerity Report**

**Darren Springer, General Manager of B.E.D, Mike Harron, Director of Generation Operations of B.E.D, Seth Clifford Chief Forrester of B.E.D, Ali Kenney B.E.D**

**Commissioner, present for the meeting. Brad Bradshaw & Katherine Birnie from Valerity presented information.**

**Councilors** asked questions about EPA data, different options for replacing McNeil, and will email any further questions to Darren. Ali asked for clarification about absolute decisions, if McNeil were not in service, why would there be a need for additional capacity?

**AI generated minutes w/ slight staff revisions:** Darren Springer, General Manager of Burlington Electric, introduced the Valerity report, which explores options for reducing stack emissions and increasing efficiency at the McNeil site. Brad and Catherine from Valerity presented the findings, focusing on establishing an emissions baseline and analyzing potential initiatives for emission reduction. They discussed various options, including low-carbon fuels, efficiency improvements, and waste heat recovery, while considering their impact on operating costs, capital requirements, and rates. The presentation highlighted the need for further evaluation of specific technologies, such as organic ranking cycle and wood pyrolysis, to achieve the desired emission reductions. Brad presented an analysis of carbon reduction options, comparing their impact on rates and emissions. He highlighted that ammonia and RNG have high costs, while carbon capture and wood pyrolysis are more promising. The analysis showed that carbon capture and pyrolysis could achieve a 50% reduction in emissions with smaller impacts on rates. Brad explained that carbon capture could be used to sell CO<sub>2</sub> in the Northeast market, while pyrolysis offers increased efficiency and the production of biochar. Brad explained that McNeil provides cost-effective renewable energy, contributes to ISO New England's capacity requirements, and acts as a hedge against high market prices. The discussion explored potential alternatives if McNeil were not in service, including wood pyrolysis, hydropower, and battery storage options. Two scenarios were presented: one based on wood pyrolysis and another on hydropower, both aimed at meeting Burlington's renewable energy and capacity obligations. The conversation ended with a recommendation to explore longer-duration battery storage systems and distributed energy resources to complement any new renewable energy sources. Brad explained that the analysis used 2024 as a baseline for comparing emissions reductions across different technologies, and clarified that wood pyrolysis would not generate the same capacity as the current McNeil plant, requiring additional storage or capacity purchases. Brad clarified that January data was randomly selected to represent McNeil's value stream as a hedge against high prices, and explained that carbon capture and pyrolysis options would require significant capital investment. The committee agreed to follow up with Darren regarding written answers to outstanding questions about the report.

## **Information only**

### **4.2 Unaccepted Streets (Changed from 4.3)**

**Laura Wheelock, Senior Public Works Engineer Technical Services, Philip Peterson, Senior Transportation Engineer & Alice Schwencke, Excavation Inspector presented information.**

**Councilors** asked about having the breakdown of the lists into wards. Does the City provide support? Proposed rates?

**AI generated minutes w/ slight staff revisions:** The meeting focused on the management and potential acceptance of private and unaccepted streets within the city. Phillip, Alice &

Laura discussed the challenges of identifying and addressing these streets, including the need for comprehensive mapping and outreach to property owners. The group agreed that providing formal notices to property owners about the status of their streets is important, though the timeline for sending these notices may be pushed back from the initially proposed October 1, 2026 deadline. They also acknowledged the complexity of the situation, with some streets being privately owned but maintained by the city, while others are unaccepted and present more significant challenges.

## **Information only**

### **4.3 Recycling Next Steps (Changed from 4.4)**

**Chapin Spencer, Director of DPW** presented information.

**Councilor Bergman and Councilor Broderick** expressed concerns about the city's ability to regulate and control a private contractor, particularly Casella, which has a history of price increases. The group agreed that building capacity within city departments and maintaining democratic control over the program is preferable to privatization, despite the financial challenges involved. **Chapin Spencer** expressed opposition to privatizing Burlington's recycling service, emphasizing the importance of democratic control and accountability over public goods. He highlighted concerns about losing infrastructure and the ability to control pricing and worker exploitation if the service is privatized. **Chapin Spencer** emphasized the need for financial sustainability and the potential for the service to remain unchanged for residents.

**AI generated minutes w/ slight staff revisions:** The meeting focused on the city's recycling program and potential changes to its operation. The city is considering either continuing to run the consolidated collection service in-house or contracting it out to a private hauler. A memo was presented that outlined the options, including a recent competitive bid for a contracted service. The DPW Commission voted in favor of contracting out the service, though the final decision rests with the council. **Colby Delaire, Union President** expressed concerns about staffing challenges in the recycling department, noting high turnover and difficulty attracting new candidates, even with incentives. They emphasized that any changes to the program should not result in the loss of union jobs.

**Councilor Bergman** moves to recommend that the city maintains the recycling program.

**Councilor Broderick** seconds.

**Councilor Bergman – Aye**

**Councilor Broderick – Aye**

**Chair Barlow – Nay**

### **4.4 Great Streets Bank & Cherry Update (Changed from 4.2)**

**Julia Ursaki, Transportation Engineer** presented information.

**Councilor Bergman** supports & wonders what the likelihood of the economic progress council not supporting us is. **Councilor Broderick & Chair Barlow** supports this.

**AI generated minutes w/ slight staff revisions:** the committee supported removing it from the current project to address a \$16.6 million funding shortfall, allowing work to proceed on other streets while seeking additional funding.

**Information only**

**5. Director's Report**

**None**

**6. Councilor Items**

**None**

**7. Next Meeting**

Tentative - December 16 or 19, 2025 at 645 Pine St at noon.

**8. Adjournment**

**Chair Barlow** adjourns meeting at 7:20 pm.

From: Pike Porter <[pikeporter@gmail.com](mailto:pikeporter@gmail.com)>  
Sent: Tuesday, November 25, 2025 3:42 PM  
To: Mark Barlow <[mbarlow@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:mbarlow@burlingtonvt.gov)>; Gene Bergman <[gbergman@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:gbergman@burlingtonvt.gov)>; Becca Brown McKnight <[bbrownmcknight@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:bbrownmcknight@burlingtonvt.gov)>; Marek Broderick <[mbroderick@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:mbroderick@burlingtonvt.gov)>; Darren Springer <[dspringer@burlingtonelectric.com](mailto:dspringer@burlingtonelectric.com)>  
Subject: CO2 data question

[ WARNING ]: This email was sent from someone outside of the City of Burlington.

Hi all,

I attach data from the EPA clean air market program website: <https://campd.epa.gov/data/custom-data-download> (McNeil facility code is 589) which provides different CO2 data than the Velerity slide presentation. Can Velerity explain the discrepancy during its presentation?

Thanks.

Pike

From: Gene Bergman <[gbergman@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:gbergman@burlingtonvt.gov)>  
Sent: Tuesday, November 25, 2025 4:16 PM  
To: Julia Ursaki <[jursaki@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:jursaki@burlingtonvt.gov)>  
Subject: FW: public records request

Also for TEUC public comment please

From: Pike Porter <[pikeporter@gmail.com](mailto:pikeporter@gmail.com)>  
Sent: Tuesday, November 25, 2025 2:55 PM  
To: Mark Barlow <[mbarlow@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:mbarlow@burlingtonvt.gov)>; Gene Bergman <[gbergman@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:gbergman@burlingtonvt.gov)>; Marek Broderick <[mbroderick@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:mbroderick@burlingtonvt.gov)>; Becca Brown McKnight <[bbrownmcknight@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:bbrownmcknight@burlingtonvt.gov)>  
Subject: Fwd: public records request

[ WARNING ]: This email was sent from someone outside of the City of Burlington.

Hi all,

I requested any evidence to support that outlandish assertions that, " When McNeil generates power using wood as fuel, the wood used is sustainably harvested, primarily in Vermont and upstate New York, but at times has come from other sources throughout the Northeast. BED has been approached by Connecticut wood suppliers regarding taking wood supply from tree trimming operations and other Connecticut non-commercial wood sources." Below is the response advising that there is no evidence to support these claims.

See you at 4.

Thanks.

Pike Porter

Burlington Electric rate payer tired of "a troubling pattern of [BED]...inconsistencies and shortfalls."

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Joseph Dempsey <[jdempsey@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:jdempsey@burlingtonvt.gov)>

Date: Mon, Nov 24, 2025 at 3:26 PM

Subject: RE: public records request

To: Pike Porter <[pikeporter@gmail.com](mailto:pikeporter@gmail.com)>

Good afternoon Pike,

I can confirm that the City has no records responsive to this request. There are no written documents or communications with wood suppliers in Connecticut.

Thank you and have a great holiday week,

Joe

--

Joseph Dempsey

Public Information Officer

City Attorney's Office

The City of Burlington, Vermont

[jdempsey@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:jdempsey@burlingtonvt.gov)

Please note that this communication and any response to it will be maintained as a public record and may be subject to disclosure under the Vermont Public Records Act.

From: Pike Porter <[pikeporter@gmail.com](mailto:pikeporter@gmail.com)>  
Sent: Monday, November 17, 2025 5:53 PM  
To: Joseph Dempsey <[jdempsey@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:jdempsey@burlingtonvt.gov)>  
Subject: public records request

[ WARNING ]: This email was sent from someone outside of the City of Burlington.

Hi Joe,

I've attached a letter BED had submitted on its behalf that makes two statements:

...but at times [the wood] has come from other sources throughout the Northeast. BED has been approached by Connecticut wood suppliers regarding taking wood supply from tree trimming operations and other Connecticut non-commercial wood sources.

I request to review all documents possessed by Burlington Electric that helped inform these statements, or can substantiate these statements, including wood contracts from other sources throughout the Northeast evidencing dates and source locations of this wood, and emails or other correspondence from Connecticut wood suppliers.

Thanks.

Pike Porter