

Ward 6 NPA Meeting Agenda

Thursday, February 5, 2026

Location: Department of Public Works, 645 Pine Street

Or on zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/81027856568>

6:00 Community Dinner – join us for great (free!) food and a chance to connect with your neighbors

6:30 Call to Order,

- Introductions
- Announcements
- Nomination of Hannah Riley to the Steering Committee and vote
- Call for additional Steering Committee members

6:45: Shall the Ward 6 NPA express its support for the sentiments expressed in the Open Letter to City Council that was presented to us at our December 4, 2025 meeting? (Text of Letter is below the agenda.).

Brief comments, consideration of any proposed amendments, and a vote.

7:15 School Budget Presentation and Candidate introduction: Clare Wool (candidate for re-election) and Jeff Wick

7:30 City Ballot items

- Tax Fairness Advisory Question and Public Safety Tax Increase: Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak and CAO Katherine Schad
- Proposed Racial Equity Inclusion and Belonging Charter Change: REIB Director Kelli Perkins and REIB Communications and Community Engagement Manager Christian Berry

8:15 Adjourn

Open Letter to City Council (referenced above)

Dear Burlington City Council & Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak,
Democrats on the City Council blocked the AFC pledge advisory question from going to voters two years in a row, despite thousands of Burlington residents signing petitions to put the pledge on the ballot. In April 2025, the Council unanimously approved a resolution for protecting free speech on Palestine, and it is time to rectify the fact that our free speech rights have been repeatedly denied. There should be a democratic vote on adopting the pledge.

THE APARTHEID-FREE COMMUNITY PLEDGE:

WE AFFIRM our commitment to freedom, justice, and equality for the Palestinian people and all people;
and

WE OPPOSE all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression; and

WE DECLARE ourselves an Apartheid-free community and to that end,

WE PLEDGE to join others in working to end all support to Israel's Apartheid regime, settler colonialism, and military occupation.

We, the undersigned, **SUPPORT** the Apartheid-Free Community (AFC) pledge, and **DEMAND** that the Burlington City Council place the AFC advisory referendum question on the town meeting day 2026 ballot.

[end of open letter]

What is the NPA?

Neighborhood Planning Assemblies (NPAs) are grassroots, neighborhood organizations that were established in each of Burlington's wards to encourage resident participation in City government. Working as neighborhood advocacy groups, Neighborhood Planning Assemblies help improve communication between the residents of Burlington and City government through regular meetings scheduled in each Ward. For more information, click [here](#).

What is involved in being on the Ward 6 NPA Steering Committee?

The Steering Committee is responsible for managing the affairs of the NPA, which includes organizing, publicizing, and overseeing regular and special NPA meetings; sharing information about the NPA with neighbors and the wider community; monitoring community developments and City policy to identify issues relevant to the neighborhood and inviting speakers to present at the NPA; and overseeing the NPA's budget from the City. We typically meet once each month to plan the following month's meeting, and then have various tasks to follow up on (such as contacting speakers, arranging for food, etc.).



REIB CHARTER CHANGE

OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY, INCLUSION, & BELONGING (REIB)

January 15, 2026




REIB Charter Change: What Voters Are Being Asked to Decide

- On March 3, Burlington voters will decide whether to add the Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB) to the City Charter
- The City Charter defines which parts of City government are permanent
- This change would make the REIB a stable, ongoing part of City government.
- Placing the REIB in the Charter helps ensure this work continues consistently over time, regardless of changes in leadership.



What is DEI in City Government?

Practical tools to improve systems & outcomes for everyone

Diversity	Equity	Inclusion
<p>Recognize our community's differences</p> <p>Understand that one-size-fits-all solutions don't always work.</p> 	<p>Address barriers to access and opportunity</p>  <p>Provide fair support so all can succeed</p>	<p>Ensure people feel welcomed and valued</p>  <p>Create spaces where everyone can participate.</p>

Focusing on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion helps the City serve all its residents effectively and fairly.

REIB Charter Change: What the REIB Does and Why it Matters for Burlington

What the REIB Does in Burlington

- Supports city departments in the development, implementation, and coordination for programs and services to ensure consistency and accessibility
- Provides training and guidance for City staff, boards, and commissions
- Creates ways for community members to engage directly with City government

Why This Matters for Burlington

- Helps the City and community respond to diverse and community-identified needs
- Supports a strong local economy and community resilience.
- Brings diverse perspectives into City decision-making and builds trust.



REIB Charter Change: Budget Clarity

Budget clarity:

- The REIB already exists
- It represents about **0.7% of the City's General Fund**
- At its highest funding level, it has never exceeded **1% of the General Fund**



FY27 General Fund Budget & Police and Fire Tax Rate Increase

NPA Presentation

January-February 2026



FY27 Budget: Big Picture

- Estimated **\$10-12M budget gap** at this time
 - Approx. 10% of City's \$107M budget
- **Current FY27 general fund personnel estimate is \$78.5M (increase of 7.5%)**
- **This is in line with expectations**
 - Still includes estimates for health insurance & worker's comp based on timing of the current fiscal year and self-insured nature of our insurance plan



FY27 Budget: Personnel

- Started with FY26 personnel budget of \$73M
 - Departments recently provided updated information
- New police and fire union contract provisions unanimously supported by City Council and Mayor:
 - Add **2 new firefighters** per BFFA contract FY27
 - **Cost of living adjustments** of 7% (fire) and 4.75% (police). In line with regional salaries for first responders.
 - AFSCME negotiations start in February for FY27 so used a conservative figures for salary/benefits
 - Non-union – used AFSCME estimate as is our recent practice



FY27 Budget: Personnel

- Add required **annual step increases** for all eligible employees
- Increase **employer healthcare costs by 10%**
 - Based on initial estimate and subject to change based on current usage
- Increase **employer retirement costs by 5%**
 - Initial estimate
- Increase **worker's compensation** insurance costs by **5%**
 - Initial estimate



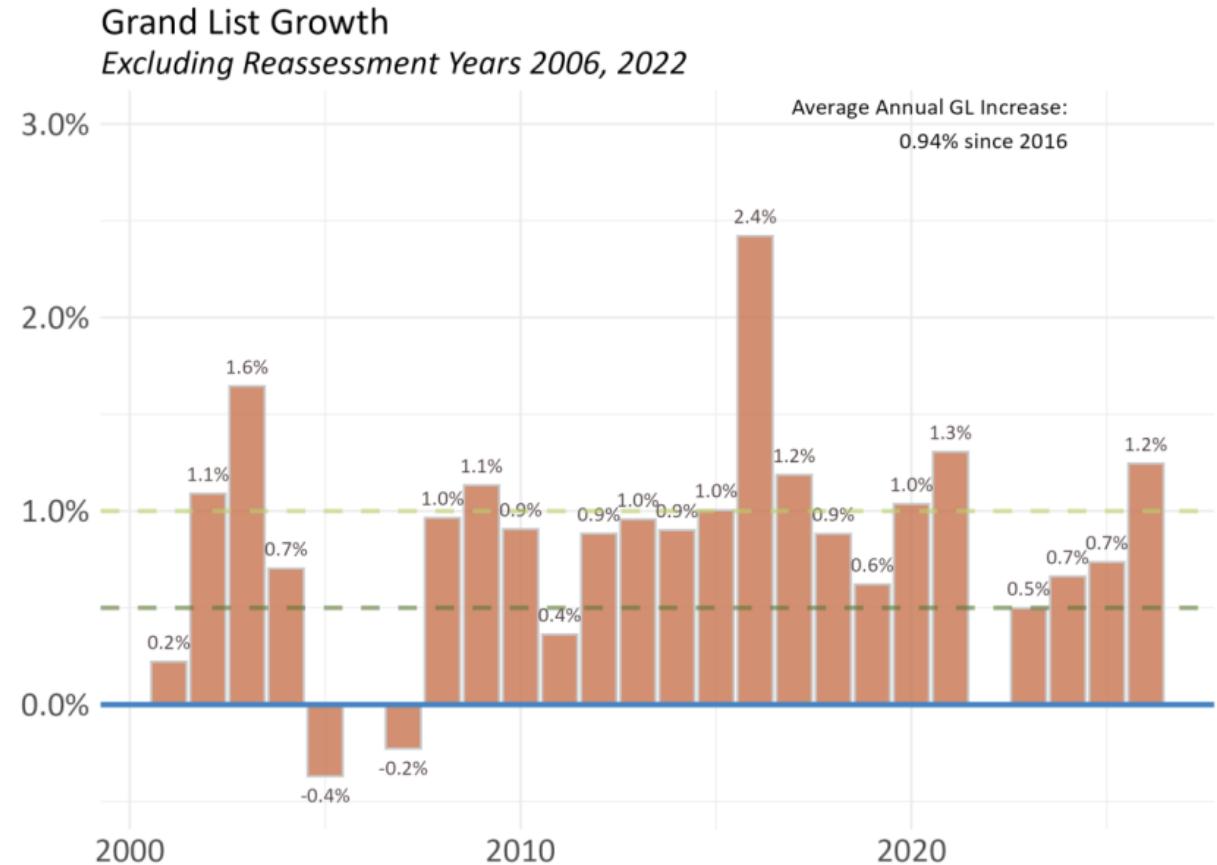
FY27 Budget: Operating

- Add **3% for inflation** on most other non-personnel operating costs
- Added money to have cash available to purchase **9 new vehicles on the urgent/dire need list**: 6 are for Police & Fire, remaining are for Parks
 - Since 2013, City has constrained replacement of vehicles and equipment for budget reasons
 - In 2020, fleet committee estimated City needs \$2.7M/year for sustainable replacement of fleet
 - City has not yet been able to find sustainable fleet money in budget
 - Situation is no longer sustainable for first responders



Why Ongoing Structural Budget Gap?

- Grand List is foundation of our revenue: property taxes.
- Property taxes represent **approximately half** of City's General Fund revenue
 - Other revenue comes from grants, other types of taxes (ex: gross receipts), and fees.
- **Our Grand List grows at a lower rate than our operating costs.**
- **Average annual grand list growth of 1.05% since 2016**
- Note: In FY27, we no longer collect \$1M of business personal property tax revenue, and there is no replacement source of revenue.





Why Ongoing Structural Budget Gap?

- **The City has overly relied on one-time funds.** We are changing this practice and removing historically unachievable revenues from our budget.
- FY26 Included **\$1.2M of ARPA funding** for police and fire salaries that is no longer available.
- FY26 included **\$650k of one-time increased collection** of delinquent property taxes and gross receipts – removing for further discussion.
- Some revenues overbudgeted in recent years, and budget not met – revising downward to make realistic creates an **additional expected gap of \$1.3M**



Why Ongoing Structural Budget Gap?

- The City has grown the size of our workforce, services and programming over the past decade.
- The City added 98 FTEs positions with salaries funded by the General Fund between FY14 – FY24.
 - This is an ongoing operational expense we added with one-time revenue sources in many cases.



Balanced Budget: 3-Part Approach

- A gap of \$10-12M in City budget of \$107M is approximately 10% and will **require a balanced, three-part approach:**
 - Raise Revenue
 - Rightsize Government
 - Realize Strategic Opportunities





Raise Revenue: Raise Police & Fire Tax

- One option to raise revenue is **\$0.05 increase to police & fire tax**
- **Would raise about \$3M toward projected gap**
- Overall expected increase to FY27 compensation and benefits for police & fire is **\$3.05M**
 - Excluding retirement, which is covered by dedicated tax
- Current police & fire tax projected to raise \$6.4M this year
 - In contrast, budgets for those departments are \$39.1M
 - Police & fire tax only raises 16% of costs for the services
- **Bipartisan City Council vote (9-3) to place tax rate increase on TMD March ballot**



Municipal Tax Effect

Note: \$353K is current median assessed value for home or condo in Burlington



Fiscal Year	Muni Tax Rate	Total Muni Tax on \$353K Property	\$ Increase	% Increase
FY22	\$.6704	\$2,367		
FY23	\$.7085	\$2,501	\$134	5.7%
FY24	\$.7523	\$2,655	\$154	6.2%
FY25	\$.8326	\$2,939	\$284	10.7%
FY26	\$.8556	\$3,020	\$81	2.8%
FY27	\$.9363 *	\$3,305	\$285	9.4%



* Proposed rate for FY27 including \$.05 police and tax increase + other increases required by Charter.



Preliminary Early Balanced Solution

Category	Solution	Amount	Notes
Raise Revenue	Increase Police & Fire Property Tax \$.05	\$ 3M	Council approved question to be placed on Town Meeting Day ballot.
Raise Revenue	Utilize One-Time Revenues	\$ 2M	Exploring use of dedicated tax balances from many years previous in appropriate, budget-relieving ways.
Raise Revenue	Enhance Collections	\$ 1M	Examples include parking tickets, ambulance fees and building permits. Refine amount.
Rightsize Government	Reduce Government Expenses 5-10%	\$ 3M	Department Heads made recommendations for further discussion.
Rightsize Government	Create Voluntary Furlough Program	\$ 0.2M	HR moving forward to create voluntary program.
Realize Strategic Opportunities	Sale of City Property	\$ 1M	Vacant properties or used for parking. Would create one-time money and add to ongoing property tax revenue.
	Total	\$ 10.2M	

Numbers are preliminary, and this is just an initial look at one way we could choose to structure the solution.



Summary

- \$10-12M current gap
- Will utilize a three-part approach to handle – raising revenue, rightsizing government, and realizing strategic opportunities
- \$0.05 increase to police and fire tax will raise \$3M, which pays for increases City is obligated to contract to pay to those employees
- Vote happens on Town Meeting Day, March 3
- Each department will present budget to Board of Finance in early April
- Budget drafted by Mayor and must be approved by June 30 by City Council