

**Charter Change Committee**  
**Monday, November 10, 2025**  
**Remote via Zoom/In-Person in Sharon Bushor Conference Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, City Hall,**  
**Burlington, Vermont**  
**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Becca Brown McKnight (Chair), Gene Bergman, Evan Litwin

**Staff Present:** Jessica Brown (City Attorney), Jennifer Zakaras (Deputy Chief of Staff), Bradley Kukenberger (Director of Finance)

**Public Present:** Nolan Rogers, Sharon Bushor, Melo Grant (Central District Councilor)

Meeting called to order at 6:03 PM by Councilor McKnight.

**1. Adopt the Agenda**  
**1.01 Adopt the Agenda**

*Motion to Adopt Agenda as written.*

*Motion by Councilor Bergman, Seconded by Councilor Litwin*

*Final Resolution: Motion Passes*

*Yes: Unanimous*

**2. Public Forum**  
**2.01 Verbal Comments**

Nolan Rogers of Ward 3 expressed being in support of a progressive property tax but is concerned the proposed structure disincentivizes development and will work against Burlington's ability to increase housing density in the long term.

Sharon Bushor commented to follow up on the information she had requested at the last meeting and expressed support for the homestead exemption but wonders what the impact will be to commercial properties and non-homestead owners. Regarding the general tax rate increase, Bushor requested clarification on what is included in the cap and asked the Committee to consider how these changes will impact voters' control in local government. Bushor also commented on Item 4.01, noting concerns over the potential debt the City could take on if this change goes through and is open to increasing the authority to pledge credit for the City but has reservations about increasing the limits for Water Resources and BED.

Councilor Melo Grant encouraged the Committee to enforce a culture of civility in their public forum.

Public forum closed at 6:19 PM.

**3. Adding the REIB Department to the Charter Discussion**

### **3.01 Adding the REIB Department to the Charter Discussion**

Dr. Perkins reviewed the changes that had been made to the language since the last meeting:

- The Director position was written to be hired through the Human Resources' hiring process, as opposed to being subject to mayoral appointment.
- "Recommend" was changed to "consult" on page 4 of the memo containing the charter change language.

*Motion to bring the REIB charter change back to the full council for action on their next meeting to place this item on the Town Meeting Ballot with a recommendation of approval.*

*Motion by Councilor Bergman, Seconded by Councilor Litwin*

*Final Resolution: Motion Passes*

*Yes: Unanimous*

## **4. City Council Authority to Pledge Credit Charter Discussion**

### **4.01 City Council Authority to Pledge Credit Charter Discussion**

Finance Director Kukenberger assured the Committee he and CAO Schad would follow up by the next meeting with further data and documentation regarding the financial impacts to taxpayers from this charter change item.

Councilor Bergman distinguished the charter change is only asking to increase the Council's bonding capacity, not to increase current bond amounts themselves and noted any new bonds would continue to go before the City Council for a vote, and that there is a repeal process for Council decisions the public could enact for any votes with which they do not agree.

Councilor McKnight requested information on the frequency for which the City is meeting borrowing thresholds.

No action was taken.

## **5. General Fund Tax Fairness Charter Discussion**

### **5.01 General Fund Tax Fairness Charter Discussion**

Deputy Chief of Staff Zakaras proposed to the Committee putting the value-based exemption on the next ballot as an advisory question while the general fund tax inflator would be voted on at a later date to allow more time for the Mayor's Office to engage the public on the matter. Attorney Brown confirmed for Councilor McKnight that the Committee was not required to take any further action to make this change.

The Committee discussed whether to symbolically recommend to the City Council that the value-based exemption be an advisory question on the next Town Meeting Day ballot.

Councilor Bergman noted if the general fund tax inflator is being deferred, then the Administration should put the changes forward as two separate resolutions, as the tax inflator would be considered by a future iteration of the Committee.

Councilor Litwin asked that the Committee have an additional meeting to review language for the advisory question.

No action was taken.

**6. Any Other Committee Business**

**6.01 Any Other Committee Business**

The Committee set the next meeting date for November 20 at 6:30 PM.

No action was taken.

**7. Adjournment**

**7.01 Motion to adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned with no objection at 7:00 PM.