



**BURLINGTON VEHICLE FOR HIRE LICENSING BOARD
SHARON BUSHOR ROOM AT THE CITY HALL
MINUTES OF MEETING
February 11, 2026**

Members present: Paul Hines (Chair)
Dave Hartnett
Steven Hamlin (Remote)
Yacine Ait Aissa (Remote)

Also present: Attorney Emmett Wood (Remote)
Tenzin Chokden

Meeting start time: 5:31 PM

1. Agenda

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1.1. Motion to amend/adopt agenda

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Motion to approve was made by Dave Hartnett and seconded by Steven Hamlin. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Introductions

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2.1. New Board Member

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All members introduced themselves and Yacine Ait Aissa joined as newest member serving on the board.

3. Previous Minutes

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3.1. Approval of Previous Minutes from 07/09/2025 Meeting

Steven made the motion to approve the previous minutes and seconded by Dave Hartnett. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Forum

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4.1. PUBLIC FORUM - Verbal Comments

No members of the public addressed the forum.

5. Airport TNC Agreement

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5.1. Request to authorize the Patrick Leahy Burlington International Airport to increase rates associated with Transportation Network Companies

Nic Longo, the director of Burlington International Airport presented a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding airport fee structures for Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), specifically Uber and Lyft. The agreement establishes a six-year schedule for incremental fee increases to avoid the stagnation experienced over the previous decade.

The proposed fee schedule is as follows:

- **Effective Date – Sept 2027:** Increase from \$2.00 to \$3.00 per trip.
- **Oct 2027 – Sept 2029:** Increase to \$3.25 per trip.
- **Oct 2029 – End of Term:** Increase to \$3.50 per trip.

Nic Longo noted that while the initial goal was \$4.00, the current figures represent a negotiated settlement. A recommendation for approval to the City Council is requested.

Paul Hines sought clarification, noting that the Board's role is to provide recommendations to the City Council.

Nic Longo confirmed that the motion is to approve the written agreement as presented.

Yacine provided testimony on the economic difficulties facing the industry, specifically citing high insurance and permit costs alongside the price advantage held by Uber and Lyft. He noted the difficulty of maintaining an airport presence during periods of low demand and excessive wait times. Suggestions were made to prioritize taxis at the airport and establish a rotating shift schedule to ensure nighttime coverage.

Nic Longo responded to concerns regarding taxi competitiveness by highlighting increased terminal signage and staff training initiatives designed to promote the taxi queue. Regarding nighttime availability, he noted that while nighttime rates have already been increased to incentivize drivers, they are also considering a shift-based permit system. This would involve Dividing the current pool of permits to ensure a balanced number of drivers are available during both peak and off-peak hours.

Ricky Handy inquired whether the proposed price increase applies to taxi services or to Uber/Lyft.

Paul Hines stated that the increase in question is limited to Uber and Lyft services and does not impact taxi rates.

Paul Hine invited a motion to recommend the proposed TNC rate increases to City Council for approval.

Dave Hartnett made the motion to approve and seconded by Steven Hamlin. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Hearings

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6.1. Blazer Complaint

Tenzin Chokden noted that Paul Hines is recused from this hearing due to his status as the complainant. The Board subsequently approved the appointment of Dave Hartnett as the Hearing Officer for this matter.

Attorney Emmett Wood swore in Ricky Handy, the owner of the Blazer Transportation (Respondent) and Paul Hines (Complainant) before the hearing began.

Paul Hines testified that on January 7, he was charged \$53.50 for a standard 6.7-mile trip from the airport to his home—a fare significantly higher than the usual \$35.00 rate he typically pays for the same route. While he commended the driver’s professionalism, he expressed concern that the rates charged exceeded the maximum fees established by the City. He stated that the purpose of his complaint is to ensure uniform adherence to City-approved pricing.

Ricky Handy apologized for the January 7th incident, citing a suspected meter malfunction as the cause for the \$53.50 fare. He stated that internal tests performed after the complaint was filed showed the meter was back to city-approved rates. Mr. Handy maintained that the overcharge was not intentional and offered to refund Mr. Hines immediately. He noted that he has yet to determine the exact technical cause of the "double charge" but is working to ensure it does not recur.

Yacine suggested that drivers should perform manual calculations (Mileage × \$3.50 + Base Fees) to double-check meter accuracy. This practice helps resolve fare doubts immediately and ensures that customers are charged correctly regardless of technical issues.

Dave Hartnett emphasized that the complaint filed by Paul Hines highlights a significant issue for the city’s transportation standards. He inquired about the company’s meter maintenance schedule and stated that a more reassuring "plan going forward" is necessary to prevent recurrences. The Board called for the respondent to propose specific improvements to their operational format to ensure adherence to city rates.

Ricky Handy responded that meters undergo regular inspections. He noted that drivers are familiar with standard fares to frequent destinations, such as the DoubleTree and Hilton hotel, which serves as a secondary check for rate accuracy.

Tenzin Chokden clarified that following the meter rate change, all businesses were required to recalibrate their meters. He observed that Blazer Transportation failed to have their equipment certified by Byron Corcoran, the designated technician. Additionally, evidence submitted in the complaint revealed that the meter in question lacked the necessary inspection seal, suggesting it had not been properly vetted.

Yacine suggested that these security seals on taxi meters be cross-referenced with paper records during annual renewals to verify that equipment hasn't been tampered with. Additionally, the possibility of conducting random spot inspections to ensure all meters remain calibrated to City-approved rates throughout the year.

Dave Hartnett stated that the Vehicle for Hire Licensing board will provide a written decision following the conclusion of the deliberative session.

7. Deliberative Session

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Deliberative session entered at 6:17 PM and ended at 6:23 PM.

8. New Business

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Attorney Emmett Wood reported that edits to the Vehicle for Hire ordinance (Chapter 30) are nearing completion for review by the Ordinance Committee. To ensure efficiency, they suggested the Board meet soon to discuss any additional amendments they wish to propose. By consolidating the Board's requests with the state-mandated TNC licensing updates, the City can finalize all necessary changes in a single package. Staff requested a formal proposal of changes from the Board to be incorporated into the final draft.

Tenzin Chokden will email the current Vehicle for Hire ordinance to all members. The Board was directed to review the text and return proposed amendments to be consolidated and submitted for formal ordinance change.

9. Adjournment

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9.1. Motion to adjourn

Dave Harnett moved to adjourn the meeting, and Steven Hamlin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Meeting ended at 6:43 PM