



# Ward 3 Neighborhood Planning Assembly

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

Sharon Bushor Room, Burlington City Hall

## Meeting Minutes

### 1. Welcome & Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:30 PM by Zach Cummings, Ward 3 NPA Steering Committee member.

### 2. Attendee Introductions

- **NPA Steering Committee Members:**

- ✓ Brooks Cummings, Cherry Street
- ✓ Zachary Cummings, South Champlain Street
- ✓ Christopher-Aaron Felker, Park Street (via remote attendance)
- ✓ Darrell Fields, Church Street
- ✓ Christopher Haessly, College Street
- ✓ Charlie Messing, College Street

- **City Officials/Staff:**

- ✓ Melo Grant, City Councilor, Central District
- ✓ Barbara Turnbull, Dept of Finance and Administration
- ✓ Charlie Giannoni, Town Meeting TV

- **Presenters:**

- ✓ Emma Mulvaney-Stanak, Mayor
- ✓ Dr. Kelly Perkins, Director of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB)

- **Community Members/Public:**

- ✓ Amy Taylor, College Street
- ✓ Susan Forester, College Street
- ✓ Alan Rubin, College Street
- ✓ Suki Rubin, College Street
- ✓ Susan Dow, South Champlain Street
- ✓ Jeffrey Peterson, Monroe Street
- ✓ Laura Sanchez Parkinson, Front Street
- ✓ Trudy Richmond, Elmwood Avenue (via remote attendance)
- ✓ Faried Munarsyah, Ward 5

### 3. CDBG Advisory Board Updates

Presented by: Brooks Cummings, Ward 3 Representative

Brooks Cummings provided an update on the work of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Advisory Board:

- **Orientation & Timeline:** An orientation is occurring this month; the first official meeting is scheduled for March 5th.
- **Grant Allocation:** In the 2025 cycle, approximately 14 organizations requested funding, with a recommended award total of just over \$500,000.
- **Process:** The board serves in an advisory capacity, making recommendations that are ultimately decided by the Mayor and City Council.
- **Delineation of Funds:** Federal requirements mandate that certain percentages be allocated specifically to public service projects.

### 4. City Budget Presentation

Presented by: Emma Mulvaney-Stanak, Mayor

The estimated gap between revenues and expenses for the upcoming fiscal year (FY27) is between \$10 million and \$12 million, approximately 10% of the general fund.

There are several factors driving the budget gap:

- **Grand List Growth:** Revenue from property taxes grows only about 1% annually, while operating costs rise faster.
- **One-Time Funding:** Previous reliance on ARPA and COVID-related grants to fund ninety-eight (98) full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.
- **Healthcare Costs:** A projected 10% increase in health insurance premiums for city employees.

**Right-Sizing Measures:** Departments have been tasked with 5% to 10% percent reductions. The city is also exploring voluntary furloughs and temporary hiring freezes.

### 5. Town Meeting Day Ballot Questions

#### Public Safety Tax Question

Presented by: Emma Mulvaney-Stanak, Mayor

- The Mayor is proposing a 5-cent increase to the police and fire splinter taxes to raise \$3 million.
- This \$3 million aligns with the projected increase in compensation and benefits for first responders next year.
- For a median-assessed home valued at \$353,000, this represents a \$285 annual increase or approximately 9% percent.

## 5. Town Meeting Day Ballot Questions (Continued)

### REIB Charter Change

Presented by: Dr. Kelly Perkins, Director of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (REIB)

- **Ballot Question:** On March 3rd, voters will decide whether to make the REIB office a permanent part of the City Charter.
- **Scope of Work:** The department handles language access (including expanding to Braille), coordinates the Aging Council, and manages the "Trusted Community Voices" program for immigrant and refugee outreach.
- **Budget Impact:** The department accounts for approximately \$700,000 or 0.7% of the general fund.

## 6. City Council Candidate Forum

City Council Candidate: Laura Sanchez Parkinson

Resident of the Old North End, parent of students at the Sustainability Academy, and professional in organizational management and mental health. Laura's key issues are:

- **Housing:** Advocated for creative solutions, including shared housing models and density, to allow families to stay in Burlington.
- **Economic Vitality:** Focused on supporting small businesses and addressing the "commuter" issue where essential workers cannot afford to live in the city.
- **Civility:** Expressed a commitment to improving the tone of dialogue on the City Council and listening to diverse viewpoints, including those opposed to her positions.

## 7. Public Forum

Several members of the community came forward to speak on various topics.

- **Nikhil Goyal (Main Street):** Announced candidacy for State Senate (Chittenden Central) with a focus on education, universal primary care, and keeping public dollars in public schools.
- **Faried Munarsyah (Ward 5):** Introduced a petition for a charter amendment (Proposition Zero) to allow Burlington residents to place items on the ballot via petition similar to other Vermont towns.
- **Melo Grant (City Councilor):** Reminded residents of the February 26th Public Safety Committee meeting featuring State's Attorney Sarah George.
- **Jeffrey Peterson (Monroe Street):** Raised concerns about being "priced out" of the city and requested a more serious, non-partisan housing policy.
- **Christopher Haessly (College Street):** Encouraged economic development through a convention center to capture an estimated \$63 million in lost revenue.

## 8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:42 PM.