



City Council

Monday, April 6, 2026, 6:00 PM, Contois Auditorium, 149 Church Street, 2nd Floor

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1. Agenda

Subject	1.1. Motion to adopt agenda
Meeting	April 6, 2026 - City Council Organization Meeting Day - Monday, April 6, 2026, 6:00 PM, Contois Auditorium, 149 Church Street, 2nd Floor
Category	1. Agenda
Department	Council and Board
Type	Action Procedural
Recommended Action	Motion to adopt agenda

2. Oath of Office - Newly Elected and Re-elected City Councilors

3. Mayor's State of the City Address

Subject	3.1. Mayor's State of the City Address
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Meeting April 6, 2026 - City Council Organization Meeting Day - Monday, April 6, 2026, 6:00 PM, Contois Auditorium, 149 Church Street, 2nd Floor

Category 3. Mayor's State of the City Address

Department Mayor's Office

Type Communication Information

4. Public Comment (verbal)Public Comment will be limited to City Council agenda items for this meeting: the election of the City Council President and the election of the Board of Finance members** **See above for signup instructions****

Subject 4.1. Verbal Comments

Meeting April 6, 2026 - City Council Organization Meeting Day - Monday, April 6, 2026, 6:00 PM, Contois Auditorium, 149 Church Street, 2nd Floor

Category 4. Public Comment (verbal)**Public Comment will be limited to City Council agenda items for this meeting: the election of the City Council President and the election of the Board of Finance members** **See above for signup instructions**

Department Council and Board

Type Action Procedural

Recommended Action open Public Comment
close Public Comment

5. Election of City Council President

6. Election of Board of Finance Members

7. Adjournment

Subject 7.1. Motion to adjourn

Meeting April 6, 2026 - City Council Organization Meeting Day - Monday, April 6, 2026, 6:00 PM, Contois Auditorium, 149 Church Street, 2nd Floor

Category 7. Adjournment

Department Council and Board

Type Action Procedural

Recommended Action Motion to adjourn

8. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

Subject 8.1. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. For more information on access, call Lori Olberg, Council and Licensing Coordinator (802-865-7136)(TTY 802-865-7142). Persons with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate are encouraged to contact

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Meeting	April 6, 2026 - City Council Organization Meeting Day - Monday, April 6, 2026, 6:00 PM, Contois Auditorium, 149 Church Street, 2nd Floor
Category	8. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements
Department	Council and Board
Type	Information

Mayor Emma Mulvaney-Stanak
State of the City Address 2026

Good evening, everyone, and thank you for joining us in City Hall's Contois Auditorium, whether in person or virtually.

And a special thank you to my wife, Megan and our kids, Ruby and Elliot. Serving as Mayor isn't something one person does alone – it asks a great deal of a family, and mine has been part of this work every step of the way.

Let me take a moment to congratulate our Ward City Councilors on their re-elections: Gene Bergman, Marek Broderick, Carter Neubieser, Sarah Carpenter, Ben Traverse, Becca Brown McNight, and Evan Litwin. I'd also like to extend a very warm welcome to our newest Councilor, Laura Sanchez-Parkinson, who is Burlington's first Latina woman on the Council. Ward 3 is lucky to have you. And finally, I'm grateful to our District Councilors for their continued service – Melo Grant, Allie Schacter, Mark Barlow, and Buddy Singh.

With the election cycle behind us, our work now begins – to govern together.

In this work, we are not only elected officials – we are stewards of a shared community. And when I think about what it truly means to show up for one another in that way, I'm reminded of a lesson I learned long before I stepped into public service.

When I was growing up, my parents encouraged me to include all the kids on our street when we went out to play. That wasn't always easy. An older boy lived next door. He was four years older than the rest of us, the only boy in the group – and he liked to relentlessly tease all of the girls. For those who know me well, you can imagine, this didn't sit well with me even as a kid.

One day, when I was 10, he challenged us to jump off the roof of a carport. I climbed up. I looked down. The ground felt *miles* away. My stomach twisted. But I didn't want to show fear. So I jumped – and felt instant relief. I had survived!

Then the boy's younger sister jumped. She landed and immediately crumbled to the ground. She started to turn pale. Her breathing became labored. And the panic in her eyes spread quickly to the rest of us.

I ran across the street to get my mom. When she arrived, she took the girl's hand and asked us to sit in a circle on the ground. We all joined her and began to shift nervously in our grassy spots. I held my breath, waiting for the teasing to start as soon as my mom left. The boy from next door sat with his head down, avoiding eye contact. His body was tense as he tried to make himself as small as possible.

There was no lecture. My mom didn't yell. Instead, she asked us what we could do next time to keep each other safer. The boy's shoulders slowly started to relax.

It took me years to understand what that moment was really about. 15 years later, I found myself sitting in the back of the boy's funeral. His mother stood at the front of the room, trying to speak through her tears as she prepared to bury her now-adult child. She made eye contact with my dad, who sat next to me, and shared something important: How, as a working single-mother, my parents played a big role in helping raise her son and daughter.

And in that moment, I realized something I hadn't understood as a child: what I thought was awkward over-parenting...was actually an act of care for the people we lived alongside. It was my first real lesson in what it means to build community.

And that lesson has stayed with me – shaping how I understand what it means to care for one another...and what it means to lead.

I carried this with me two years ago, when I walked into this very auditorium on a warm April evening with my own two children. The room was full of the diverse faces of our community:

- Fifth graders from Champlain Elementary who had spent months studying the local election.
- Dedicated City employees.
- Friends and families of eight newly elected City Councilors – five of whom were elected to public office for the very first time.

We took turns standing in the middle of the room, raising our hands to take an oath to service this city. The room was *vibrating* with excitement for a fresh start. The room felt *bright*. We were in community.

But the truth is, governing in this moment has been *hard*. And that moment, two years ago, can feel far away.

We are facing complex local challenges in the midst of deep national division. Debates at this table have sharpened. Patience has worn thin. Empathy often seems to be in short supply, and there have been many missed opportunities to seek understanding instead of division. And when we feel embattled, it becomes harder – and harder – to come to the table in good faith.

I have left too many City Council meetings feeling deeply discouraged about how we had engaged with each other. And I know I'm not alone in that. At a time when we must work *together* to move this city forward, what's often missing is a willingness to work together through our differences.

And yet – I *know* we are capable of something better. We've seen it.

Nearly every Councilor – and many members of my administration – picked up a paintbrush for the VCET mural. And many of you came back the very next day to repair it after it was vandalized. We've seen bipartisan alignment to strengthen housing standards for UVM students. And just two weeks ago, every Councilor showed care and concern as we began to examine the harm caused by the March 11 ICE incident in South Burlington.

And beyond public view, there are the quiet moments – the emails, the text messages, the check-ins across political differences – small reminders that we can still see one another as fellow community members, trying our best.

Today, we have a choice. We can lead this city through a moment of rising fear – together. We can turn away from the division of the past two years and make a fresh start. **If this is possible anywhere – it is here in Burlington.**

But it will take intention. From all 13 of us at this table. So tonight, let's reset the tone. Let's use this new session of City Council that begins tonight as a new beginning. Let's commit to governing together.

Will you join me in setting aside our differences – and work towards cooperation and unity to serve the community we all love? Because moments like this – hard moments – are when co-governing matters most. And the truth is, even in the midst of these challenges, something important has been happening in Burlington.

There is *momentum*.

And not just from those of us up here – but also from the people of this city. From the residents, schools, organizations, and businesses that continue to believe in this city.

Our library staff and volunteers, who keep that sacred public space welcoming, fundraise to take care of our historic building, and build towards a vibrant future building that will continue to serve as the heart of our downtown. Thank you to Director Mary Danko and Friends of Fletcher Free for their leadership, creativity, and the mini golf moment a couple of weeks ago.

Our local business owners, who employ local folks, consciously invest here by staying in our community even when it has been challenging, and contribute to our economy in ways that only local businesses can.

Our faith community leaders that support many of us in times of deep uncertainty – through relationship building and helping us not lose each other through conflict. Several faith leaders have been trusted advisors to me in the last year – thank you for this.

Our extreme weather shelter staff who create warmth, safety, and refuge for our unsheltered neighbors on the coldest winter nights.

Our mutual aid groups, showing up again and again to serve warm meals and steady support to our most vulnerable unhoused neighbors – and, more recently, standing in unwavering solidarity with our immigrant neighbors during this deeply disturbing moment of federal immigrant enforcement. This reminds us what community looks like in action.

Honestly, I could go on for hours highlighting how wonderful our Burlington community is. Please join me in thanking our community members for these acts of love and so many more left unsaid. **This is Burlington at its best.**

And it's that spirit of showing up for each other that has driven the progress we've made this past year and fuels our forward momentum for the year ahead. Because when a community shows up for each other the way we do in Burlington – that work really begins to take hold. And we are starting to see the results.

Not just in what we've done as a city – but in how we've chosen to do it.

In Burlington we are building a model of **pragmatic progressive governing** that is creating *real* momentum for our city. That work is truly taking shape and forming how we approach our problems and solve them in a way that benefits residents of this great city today and into the future.

We are trying new approaches that will strengthen our resilience – because the old ways are just not enough for this moment. And we are building for a vibrant future– because this is a moment of *generational* work for Burlington. Work that will shape the future of this community for decades to come. *This* is how we are creating momentum in Burlington.

Burlington is being tested, like cities across the country, by a convergence of unprecedented challenges:

- A trifecta of homelessness, unmet mental health needs, and substance use challenges,
- A housing shortage and an affordability crisis, and
- The lasting impacts of the pandemic, especially on our young people.

The question is not whether we face these challenges – but how we choose to tackle them. For my administration, that response is grounded in a core idea: **progressive pragmatism** that builds our resilience. And we've put that idea into practice.

Over the past two years, we've taken a clear approach: to build a more comprehensive and responsive community safety system. Because we *know* enforcement alone doesn't create safety. Our approach addresses both immediate needs *and* root causes – so we can reduce harm, improve accountability, and prevent crises before they happen.

Today, when someone calls for help, Burlington responds with the right kind of response – something that wasn't always possible a year ago. Under Chief Shawn Burke, we've strengthened how our Burlington Police Department team works together – sworn officers, CSOs, CSLs, and dispatch now have clarity of roles and responsibilities. Plus, our partnerships are stronger than ever before with our community partners – the Burlington Community Justice Center with its victim services, social service agencies, and our judicial

system. We are all making the most out of our limited resources and staffing to make Burlington safer. And it is working.

Our downtown foot patrols are now at their highest level since 2020. And incident counts are up since residents are calling for help again – because we are rebuilding the trust that the City will respond.

Our Fire Department, under former Chief Lachance and current Chief Michael Curtin, responded to more than 11,000 calls in 2025 alone – meeting emergency needs at record levels, while also expanding into community-based care.

And we're building beyond traditional response. We launched the Situation Table last July – bringing nearly 30 organizations together every single week to intervene early before crises escalate.

The Situation Table recently worked with an older man who had been living in difficult conditions and falling through the social service cracks, unable to connect to the help he needed. Our team came together to take on his case – coordinating services more regularly and intentionally at the weekly Table meetings. The team brought in his family and built new support around him. Things began to change. Today, he has housing closer to his family and is receiving the care he needs, medically and emotionally. He still has a long road ahead, but for the first time in a long time, he's not walking it alone.

We also made an historic investment this year in our 20+ year partnership with the Howard Center for the Street Outreach Team. We quadrupled our contribution because they provide crisis response and proactive engagement to support those most in crisis. This relieves the pressures on our first responders and also means we send the right type of professional to respond to the need.

This is what it looks like when systems work – when we can meet people where they are and help them move forward – making our entire community safer in the process.

But we recognize that Burlington cannot do this work alone. That's why we've strengthened our partnerships with the State – working closely with the State's Attorney Sarah George, and partnering with Governor Phil Scott to launch the Community Accountability Court.

Our Community Accountability Court has been a game changer – resolving nearly *80 percent* of the backlog of criminal cases that strained our court system for years, while

delivering swift, meaningful accountability. While the Accountability Docket is now closed, I'm grateful to State's Attorney George for continuing key elements of this work in the year ahead. And I appreciate the Governor for engaging Burlington as partner in advancing a safer community.

We are seeing even more momentum in making Burlington safer. Violent crime has declined to levels we haven't seen since 2021. Homicides have dropped significantly. And nearly all of the outstanding gun violence cases from 2022 have now been resolved.

The change in Burlington is real – and people can feel it. Just last week, I was out shopping in our downtown for my State of the City outfit. I stopped into a local woman-owned business that opened two years ago. The owner, Robin, stayed a little late to help me find the right look and to share her appreciation for the city and this community. She specifically thanked the Peace & Justice Center clean-up crew for diligently cleaning up syringe litter in the courtyard outside her door and our Public Works team for reopening Main Street with a reimagined streetscape. She reported her numbers are up, and people are coming downtown again. *This* is the momentum we need to keep encouraging.

The distinct way in which we respond to our challenges is also about addressing whether the systems underneath us are strong enough to hold. That's why we are strengthening our foundation for the long term – creating a steady shift toward the city we all want Burlington to be.

I convened a Climate Advisory Group – bringing together experts and community partners to strengthen how we plan, measure, and deliver on climate action – and to ensure so we are building real resilience. Because we know the impacts of climate change aren't just in the future – they're already here. Some of these Climate Advisors are in the audience here today.

Guided by the Advisory Group's recommendations – which will be shared at City Council on April 13th – tonight, I am announcing three key actions that my team will prioritize in the coming months:

- Improving how we monitor and respond to cyanobacteria risks at our beaches and water systems through earlier detection and better public safety tools,
- Earmarking city capital resources to invest in a new splash pad/water cooling location in the city to help residents when the lake is not swimmable, and

- Establishing a clearer reporting and oversight system so the public can see our climate goals, progress, and results by department.

Being a resilient city is one that can adapt – not just to today’s challenges, but to what’s ahead. And just as importantly, our approach must be equitable.

On Town Meeting Day, voters approved a charter change to permanently establish the Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Office in our City Charter. That means this work is no longer temporary or optional – it is embedded in how we govern. Under the leadership of Dr. Kelli Perkins, we are strengthening this work across departments – ensuring that equity is a practice that shapes all decisions, policies, and outcomes across the City. Because every resident – especially those who have been historically marginalized – deserves the opportunity to be safe, supported, and to thrive.

Leading up to the Town Meeting Day vote on the REIB charter change, we heard a clear message from across our community – from residents, nonprofits, city councilors, state leaders, and employers like Rhino Foods that employ many immigrants in our community. The message was simple and powerful: Embedding the REIB Office in our City Charter acts upon our values as a city when the federal government is actively dismantling equity work and attacking the vibrancy of our diverse nation. We stand clearly as a city committed to equity as it benefits and enriches all of us.

Because building a more equitable, resilient city is never a single moment – it’s steady, sustained work over time. We are not just responding to challenges – we are strengthening the foundation of this city for the future. And that foundation – stronger, more connected, more resilient – is what allows us not just to endure change, but to lead it. And that’s exactly what comes next.

We’re not only a resilient city – we’re choosing to do things differently. Because cities across the country are facing the same challenges – but too often, they fall back on the same playbook. Here in Burlington, we’re taking a different approach: One that blends progressive values –with a pragmatic focus on what actually works. One that is willing to innovate and try new ideas.

Nowhere is that clearer than in how we’re approaching housing. Because housing is not just a market issue – it’s a community issue. And our “people first” housing strategy

reflects a simple belief: Housing policy must be shaped by the people who actually live here – by community needs, lived experience, and shared values.

That’s why we’re reorganizing City government to deliver on that vision – bringing teams together, innovating, and moving faster on the solutions our community needs. This past year we brought together two core City departments – our Community and Economic Development Office and the Office of City Planning – so we can innovate faster and more effectively on housing. By combining and co-locating these departments, we have created a team that is singularly focused on moving development projects forward and delivering results for our residents. And I want to thank Kara Alnasrawi for her leadership at CEDO – bringing people together, driving this work forward, and helping turn vision into real progress for Burlington.

With this merger, we are ready for the state challenge to Burlington: To create up to 7,000 units by 2050. To achieve this lofty goal, my administration is not relying on any single solution to get there. We are implementing three key strategies:

- First by modernizing our core legacy tools – like our inclusionary zoning ordinance and the Housing Trust Fund – to create more affordable housing. We will do this by increasing requirements where appropriate and unlocking new funding for smaller developers and individuals – what I call the democratization of our housing policy.
- Second, by activating the Neighborhood Code that was put in place by Mayor Weinberger – we will make it easier to build the kinds of homes our neighborhoods need, including duplexes, triplexes, and accessory units.
- And third, by reclaiming the public sector’s role as a housing leader – we will explore how we might use public-private partnerships to thoughtfully develop housing on certain City-owned land to meet community needs.

An example of this includes the South End Coordinated Redevelopment Project, which is our newest public-private-partnership and will deliver more than 200 homes in its first phase alone – with plans for more are underway, including the City developing our parcel in the same area for public-owned housing. This will be a whole new neighborhood in what is now a massive parking lot!

Finally, over the past year, an interdepartmental team has met weekly to come up with immediate innovative ideas we can bring online to address our housing challenges. This is

part of Burlington being selected to be part of the international City Leadership Initiative. Tonight, I'm announcing two new innovation pieces of our housing strategy:

- One is the Priority Parcel Initiative, which will identify a collection of underutilized parcels throughout our city to be analyzed for potential development and zoning changes to unlock more housing potential.
- And the second is the creation of a “Housing Shepherd” to help guide infill housing projects for individuals from idea to completion.

This is exactly the kind of innovation we need – and it's only the beginning. Thank you to this city team!

This is what innovation looks like: A government that works as one team, uses every tool available, and stays focused on results. My administration is turning ambitious housing goals into real, meaningful action. And it's already changing how we show up as partners.

Take our relationship with UVM – one that has been difficult in the past, and too often fell short of meeting our shared housing needs. But today, the new UVM President, Dr. Marlene Tromp and I, are turning the page – building a strong partnership between UVM and the City of Burlington. Dr. Tromp and I know the success and well-being of our city and UVM are intertwined. She brings successful experience in city-university housing innovation with her work to stand up the Lusk Redevelopment Project alongside the mayor of Boise, Idaho. This project is a public-private housing development designed to meet that community's housing needs. It breaks ground this fall. I'm excited to use this as an inspiration for what we can do together in Burlington.

Innovation isn't just about new ideas – it's about building new ways of working together to deliver better outcomes. But this work isn't just about what we build today. It's about what we set in motion for the future. Because if resilience is how we meet the moment, and innovation is how we change it – then the next question is: How do we shape Burlington for the next generation?

And at the end of the day, all of this work – comes down to something fundamental: What kind of city we are building for the next generation? Because Burlington is in a *generational* moment. A moment where the decisions we make now will shape this city for decades to come.

You can see it in the investments all around us. After decades of planning, our Public Works team is preparing to open the Champlain Parkway – reconnecting neighborhoods and reshaping how people move through our city. The Great Streets Main Street project will be completed this summer – creating a safer, more vibrant downtown for residents, businesses, and visitors alike. We hope you will join us to celebrate on July 17 and 18 – event details will come soon. You are invited!

In the fall, a new Burlington High School will open its doors – a generational investment in our students, our educators, and our future. There will be an opportunity for a community celebration of this milestone as well. And in 2025, voters approved critical water infrastructure bonds. We broke ground to start this work at our main wastewater treatment plant last summer. It will help us mitigate our impact on Lake Champlain by removing ALL of the phosphorus in the city’s outflow when completed, while also supporting our ability to grow housing in our city.

These are commitments – to a Burlington that is stronger, more connected, and ready for what comes next. But building for the future also requires fiscal discipline and pragmatism today. Because affordability is one of the defining challenges of our time.

Over the past two years, my administration has taken a different approach to the City’s finances – making tough decisions to ensure Burlington remains on stable financial footing. And, as part of my commitment to co-governance, we’ve strengthened our budgeting process – starting earlier, increasing transparency with city councilors and the public, and creating opportunities for City staff to engage throughout.

For three consecutive years, we’ve had to close multi-million-dollar structural budget gaps to deliver a balanced budget that has not overly relied on tax increases for residents. I cannot overstate how difficult that work has been – the pressure has been significant, and not just for me, but for our Department Heads and City staff, who have carried a heavy responsibility to help us reach a more sustainable place.

We’ve focused on streamlining government operations, while working to grow our revenue base, and making careful choices to ensure long-term stability – even when those choices were not easy.

Probably the hardest moment as Mayor came last year, when we had to implement reductions in force as part of this work. It was a necessary step for the City’s long-term health – but it meant that valued employees and colleagues lost their jobs. In a city like

Burlington, that impact is deeply felt, and I still carry that with me. We took these lessons into our work building next year's budget for FY27.

And it's in moments like these – when decisions are difficult and the stakes are high – that public trust matters most. That's why I'm grateful to voters for approving the five-cent tax increase on Town Meeting Day 2026, with 70% support – a strategic ask to help us deliver a balanced FY27 budget while minimizing further impacts to critical City services.

All of this financial work is paying off. The majority of residents saw lower municipal tax bills in fiscal year 2026 which upholds my commitment to maintaining affordability for both our renters and homeowners. And this year, Burlington received a credit rating upgrade from Moody's – a clear signal that our financial stewardship is strengthening the City's future and protecting taxpayers by keeping our debt costs down. Because when we manage our finances responsibly today, we create more room for affordability tomorrow.

Burlington's strong financial footing has taken incredibly hard work. Thank you to CAO Katherine Shad and all of our Department Heads, our City Union leadership, our City employees, and City Councilors for your partnership.

In addition to our work on the City's budget, we are working to make our tax system fairer. I convened a bipartisan Tax Fairness Working Group – bringing together community members and stakeholders to take a hard look at how our system can better serve the people who live here. And now, we are building on that work – in partnership with the City Council, I hope we can advance a tax fairness proposal for the November ballot.

Because meeting the affordability needs of our residents requires coalition governing – working together across perspectives to deliver solutions that are fair, practical, and provide the relief our residents so badly need. It's about balancing “ability to pay” to ensure we maintain economic diversity and equity in Burlington.

None of this is easy. And none of it happens overnight. But taken together, it reflects something bigger than any one project or policy: A city that is planning not just for the next year – but for the next generation. And if we get this right – if we stay focused, disciplined, and guided by our values – then the Burlington we pass on will be more resilient than the one we inherited.

We've got a lot on our plate here in Burlington. It would be easy to feel discouraged. But here tonight, I feel something else. ***I feel hope. I feel pride. I feel determination. And I feel momentum!***

Because in Burlington, we don't sit moments like this out.

- We show up – because participation is an act of care and solidarity. *Everyone* in our city should have a seat at the table and a voice in our future.
- We debate – because we need to hold power accountable. We learn together, test ideas, and make sure our policies reflect the real lives of our residents – especially those our systems continue to fail.
- We take responsibility – because words alone aren't enough. It's our civic duty to actively shape the city we want to live in.
- We fight for equity and justice – because Burlington must work for *everyone*. And I do mean everyone: our longtime residents *and* our newest neighbors; homeowners *and* renters; those with resources *and* those struggling to make ends meet; those with stable housing *and* those living without shelter.

And we do all this together. Because the truth is, there is no moving forward alone.

The work of building an equitable and just city asks us to wrestle with hard problems, to hear perspectives that challenge us, to share power with those who are too often left out, and to stay at the table even when the conversation is uncomfortable.

That's what it means to pair our progressive ideals with a pragmatic approach – grounding our values in action, and doing the hard, often unglamorous work of turning them into real results. Because that's how progress happens...when we take care of each other – especially the kids next door, like my next door neighbor and his sister – and act as one community bound by shared responsibility and shared values.

So tonight, let's celebrate what makes Burlington special. And let's get energized for the future we're building together – the future we *all* want for our city.