



City Council - Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee

Friday, May 29, 2026, 2:00 PM, Remotely via Zoom

Join: <https://zoom.us/j/92820128318>

Webinar ID: 928 2012 8318

1. Agenda

Subject	1.1. Motion to amend/adopt agenda
Meeting	May 29, 2026 - Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee - Friday, May 29, 2026, 2:00 PM, Remotely via Zoom
Category	1. Agenda
Department	
Type	Action Procedural
Recommended Action	Motion to adopt agenda.

2. Public Forum

Subject	2.1. PUBLIC FORUM - Verbal Comments
Meeting	May 29, 2026 - Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee - Friday, May 29, 2026, 2:00 PM, Remotely via Zoom
Category	2. Public Forum
Department	
Type	Action Public Hearing
Recommended Action	Open public forum. Close public forum.

3. Discussion and Vote on Tax Fairness Resolution

Subject	3.1. Draft Resolution re Tax Fairness Charter Change
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Meeting May 29, 2026 - Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee - Friday, May 29, 2026, 2:00 PM, Remotely via Zoom

Category 3. Discussion and Vote on Tax Fairness Resolution

Department Council and Board

Type Action

4. Continued Discussion on Committee Priorities

Subject 4.1. Discussion on Committee Priorities

Meeting May 29, 2026 - Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee - Friday, May 29, 2026, 2:00 PM, Remotely via Zoom

Category 4. Continued Discussion on Committee Priorities

Department Council and Board

Type Discussion

5. Scheduling

Subject 5.1. Scheduling for future meetings

Meeting May 29, 2026 - Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee - Friday, May 29, 2026, 2:00 PM, Remotely via Zoom

Category 5. Scheduling

Department Council and Board

Type Discussion

6. Adjournment

Subject 6.1. Motion to adjourn

Meeting May 29, 2026 - Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee - Friday, May 29, 2026, 2:00 PM, Remotely via Zoom

Category 6. Adjournment

Department Council and Board

Type Action
Procedural

Recommended Action Motion to adjourn.

Resolution Relating to

TAX FAIRNESS CHARTER CHANGE

RESOLUTION _____

Sponsor(s): Neubieser
Introduced: _____
Referred to: _____

Action: _____
Date: _____
Signed by Mayor: _____

CITY OF BURLINGTON

In the year Two Thousand Twenty-Six.....

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

1 That WHEREAS, affordability is a major threat to the economic vitality, social equity, and quality of life of
2 Burlington due to the escalating costs of housing, transportation, health care, child care, food, and taxes, and
3 salaries and wages fail to keep pace, and the City’s current municipal property tax structure does not reflect
4 ability to pay, and is regressive, thereby contributing to the affordability crisis; and

5 WHEREAS, affordability is a priority of the Mulvaney-Stanak administration, and the Mayor
6 convened a bipartisan Tax Fairness Working Group in 2025 comprised of City staff with expertise in the field,
7 City Councilors, community members, and external policy experts, which recommended advancing two tax
8 fairness strategies:

- 9 1. Exempting between \$30,000 and \$50,000 of the assessed value from the taxable value of homestead
10 properties;
- 11 2. A property transfer tax, the revenue from which would be dedicated to creating and maintaining
12 affordable housing; and

13 WHEREAS, on January 20, 2026, a majority of the Council nonetheless voted against placing a non-
14 binding homestead exemption advisory question on the March Town Meeting ballot; and

15 WHEREAS, instead, on February 17, 2026, the City Council passed a resolution establishing an ad hoc
16 bipartisan Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee comprised of City Councilors and one Mayoral administration
17 appointee having jurisdiction over tax fairness, including proposing any charter changes; and

18 WHEREAS, the Council committee was directed to continue the work of the Mayor’s Tax Fairness
19 Working Group with the hope of bringing a binding charter change to Burlington voters on a special city
20 election scheduled for the November 2026 General Election; and

21 WHEREAS, tax fairness demands that ability to pay serve as a core principle underlying tax system
22 design, and those who sell a residence for a price exceeding \$1.0 million demonstrate a higher capacity to
23 contribute financially to city needs; and

24 WHEREAS, a City property transfer tax of 3% of sale price, applied to residences valued at \$1.0
25 million or more, would have raised \$999,000 in 2025, and a tax of 5% would have raised \$1,665,000 in 2025;
26 and

27 WHEREAS, in 2023, the administration of Mayor Miro Weinberger retained consultant Urban3 to,
28 among other goals, evaluate the equity of the City property assessment system, and Urban3 identified
29 systemic, repeated over-valuation and over-taxation of the City’s lower-valued residences and under-valuation
30 and under-taxation of the City’s higher-valued residences and thereby recommended abating \$75,000 from the
31 assessed value of every home in the city to address this assessment inequity; and

32 WHEREAS, the Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee of the Burlington City Council has proposed a
33 Charter amendment, as reflected in this resolution, and the City Council desires to propose the same to the
34 legal voters of the City of Burlington;

35 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Burlington directs that
36 the following question be placed on the ballot for the November 3, 2026 general election:

37
38 *“Shall the Charter of the City of Burlington, Acts of 1948, No. 298, as amended, be*
39 *further amended to amend Article 31 Sec. 102f and Article 28 Sec. 81 to read as follows:*

40

41 **81 Tax classification; repeal of inventory tax.**

42 (a) Except for the property of utilities subject to the provisions of [30 V.S.A. chapter 3](#), all personal and real
43 property set out in the grand list which is not used as residential property, farmland, and vacant land zoned
44 “recreation, conservation and open space (RCO)”, shall be classified as nonresidential property and shall be
45 assessed at 120 percent of fair market value; and further provided that inventories and personal property
46 belonging to an owner whose total personal property does not exceed the fair market value of \$45,000.00 shall
47 no longer be set out in the grand list of the City as taxable personal estate. Additionally, every owner whose
48 total personal property does exceed the fair market value of \$45,000.00 shall be taxed only on the amount of
49 that property that exceeds \$45,000.00. The amount of the exemption may be increased by the City Council
50 prior to approval of the next fiscal year’s budget. Properties upon which in-lieu-of-tax payments are made
51 shall be likewise classified and assessed for the purposes of such payments. The tax on nonresidential personal
52 property shall be eliminated effective July 1, 2026, or sooner by resolution of the City Council.

53 (b) For the purposes of this section, "residential property" is hereby defined to include all property used for
54 dwelling purposes including accessory property which is subordinate to or customarily incidental to the main
55 residential use such as garages and outbuildings. Where a property is used for both residential and
56 nonresidential purposes, then it shall be apportioned according to such uses and then classified and assessed as
57 herein provided. Notwithstanding the foregoing, for the sole purpose of calculating the educational grand list
58 and for the assessment of property taxes for education purposes under Act 60, so-called, as the same may be

59 amended from time to time, all nonresidential properties as above defined shall be assessed at one hundred
60 (100%) percent of fair market value.

61 (c) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this charter or any other statute, the City Council shall be
62 empowered to establish by ordinance one or more tax subclassifications consisting of different types, classes,
63 or uses of residential property, and shall set tax rates applicable to each such residential property
64 subclassification, subject to approval by a majority of the legal voters of the City voting on the question at an
65 annual or special City meeting duly warned for that purpose.

66 (d) Notwithstanding the foregoing, and for purposes of property taxation for non-education purposes, there
67 shall be an exemption of \$50,000 of the grand list value for all properties for which the owner has filed for the
68 tax year in question a declaration of ownership for homestead purposes pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5410, as the
69 same may be amended or renumbered from time to time, and for which the current assessed value is \$350,000
70 or less. An adjustment of tax rates set in Article 31 for municipal assessments and Title VII (Retirement) of
71 this charter shall be made so that the foregoing exemption is revenue neutral. The City Council is authorized
72 to make periodic adjustments to the dollar values set forth in this subsection by resolution pursuant to the
73 budget adoption process established in Sec. 157 of this Charter.

74 **102f. Annual assessment and property transfer tax for housing trust fund use authorized.**

75 a. The City Council shall annually assess upon the property grand list of the City to assist in meeting the
76 appropriation made for distributions and uses of the Housing Trust Fund as set forth in Article 18-404 of the
77 Code of Ordinances a tax that will, in the judgment of the City Council, be sufficient to assist in meeting the
78 appropriation, but the rate shall not exceed one cent upon the dollar of the property grand list, except when a
79 larger rate shall be authorized by the legal voters of the City. The tax shall not be included within the
80 limitations of the amount of tax for City purposes prescribed in section 99 of this chapter.

81 b. There shall be a tax at the rate of five percent (5%), imposed in a like manner to the tax imposed
82 pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 9602, as the same may be amended or renumbered from time to time, upon the
83 transfer of any residence (single family home or condominium) having a value at or above \$1 million. The
84 term “value” in the previous sentence shall have the same meaning as set forth in 32 V.S.A. § 9601, as the
85 same may be amended or renumbered from time to time, and the City Council may increase the \$1 million
86 threshold set forth in the same sentence in a like manner as the dollar values set forth in Section 81(d) of this
87 Charter. As used in this subsection, “homestead property” means that as of the next preceding April 1 prior to
88 the transfer, the property was subject to the requirement to file a homestead declaration pursuant to 32 V.S.A.
89 § 5410, as the same may be amended or renumbered from time to time. The proceeds of the tax created by this
90 subsection shall be dedicated to the same fund as the tax assessment described in subsection (a) of this section.
91 Subject to the orders and ordinances of the City Council, the Chief Administrative Officer shall create
92 regulations and forms necessary or convenient to implement this subsection.

93
94
95

Resolution Relating to

TAX FAIRNESS CHARTER CHANGE

RESOLUTION _____

Sponsor(s): Neubieser
Introduced: _____
Referred to: _____

Action: _____
Date: _____
Signed by Mayor: _____

CITY OF BURLINGTON

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Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

1 That WHEREAS, affordability is a major threat to the economic vitality, social equity, and quality of life of
2 Burlington due to the escalating costs of housing, transportation, health care, child care, food, and taxes, and
3 salaries and wages fail to keep pace, and the City’s current municipal property tax structure does not reflect
4 ability to pay, and is regressive, thereby contributing to the affordability crisis; and

5 WHEREAS, affordability is a priority of the City Council and Mulvaney-Stanak administration, and
6 the Mayor convened a ~~bipartisan~~ Tax Fairness Working Group in 2025 comprised of City staff ~~with expertise~~
7 ~~in the field~~, City Councilors, and community members, ~~and external policy experts~~, which recommended
8 advancing ~~various two~~ tax fairness strategies as warranting additional review, including:

9 1. Exempting between \$30,000 and \$50,000 of the assessed value from the taxable value of homestead
10 properties;

11 2. A property transfer tax, the revenue from which would be dedicated to creating and maintaining
12 affordable housing;

13 2.3. Establishing varying tax rates for different classifications of property (e.g., second homes, vacant
14 properties, etc.); and

15 ~~WHEREAS, on January 20, 2026, a majority of the Council nonetheless voted against placing a non-~~
16 ~~binding homestead exemption advisory question on the March Town Meeting ballot; and~~

17 WHEREAS, ~~instead,~~ on February 17, 2026, the City Council passed a resolution establishing ~~an ad~~
18 ~~hoc~~ bipartisan Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee comprised of City Councilors and one Mayoral
19 administration appointee ~~having jurisdiction over tax fairness, including proposing any charter changes;~~ and

20 WHEREAS, the Council committee was directed to continue the work of the Mayor’s Tax Fairness
21 Working Group ~~with the hope of bringing a and to recommend any~~ binding charter change to Burlington voters
22 ~~as early as~~ a special city election scheduled ~~to coincide with~~ for the November 2026 General Election; and

23 ~~WHEREAS, at the time of passing the February 17, 2026 resolution, the City Council understood it~~
24 ~~may have until as late as August 2026 to recommend a binding charter change question in November 2026.~~

25 ~~The City Council subsequently learned the State of Vermont’s election calendar, related ballot printing~~

26 deadlines, and statutory requirements for presenting binding charter change questions would require the City
27 Council to approve the presentation of a charter change question no later than its regular meeting scheduled
28 for June 1, 2026; and

29 WHEREAS, this accelerated timeline has not permitted the Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee or the
30 general public an opportunity to fully review the strategies referenced above and, as such, the membership of
31 the Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee held divided opinions on whether the City Council should approve
32 charter change questions to coincide with the November 2026 General Election or the March 2027 Municipal
33 Election. These divided opinions also considered the fact that holding a special election in November 2026
34 will cost the City of Burlington tens of thousands of dollars at a time when the City faces significant budget
35 constraints; and

36 WHEREAS, notwithstanding these concerns, a majority of the Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee,
37 including the representative from the Mayor’s Office, voted in favor of proceeding with the binding charter
38 change question outlined below regarding a homestead property tax exemption; and

39
40 ~~WHEREAS, tax fairness demands that ability to pay serve as a core principle underlying tax system~~
41 ~~design, and those who sell a residence for a price exceeding \$1.0 million demonstrate a higher capacity to~~
42 ~~contribute financially to city needs; and~~

43 ~~WHEREAS, a City property transfer tax of 3% of sale price, applied to residences valued at \$1.0~~
44 ~~million or more, would have raised \$999,000 in 2025, and a tax of 5% would have raised \$1,665,000 in 2025;~~
45 ~~and~~

46 WHEREAS, in 2023, the administration of Mayor Miro Weinberger retained consultant Urban3 to,
47 among other goals, evaluate the equity of the City property assessment system, and Urban3 identified
48 systemic, repeated over-valuation and over-taxation of the City’s lower-valued residences and under-valuation
49 and under-taxation of the City’s higher-valued residences and thereby recommended abating \$75,000 from the
50 assessed value of every home in the city to address this assessment inequity; and

51 WHEREAS, the Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee of the Burlington City Council has proposed a
52 Charter amendment, as reflected in this resolution, and the City Council desires to propose the same to the
53 legal voters of the City of Burlington; and

54 WHEREAS, the Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee also desires to continue its review, with necessary
55 input from the public, City staff, and policy experts, on varying tax values for different classifications of
56 property and a property transfer tax; and

57 WHEREAS, a City property transfer tax of 3% of sale price, applied to residences valued at \$1.0
58 million or more, would have raised \$999,000 in 2025, and a tax of 5% would have raised \$1,665,000 in 2025,
59 assuming properties would have sold at the same values they did in 2025, notwithstanding the addition of a
60 5% property transfer tax; and

61 WHEREAS, the State of Vermont assesses its own property transfer tax of 0.5% on the first \$200,000
62 in residential property value and 1.47% (a 1.25% base rate and 0.22% clean water surcharge) on any value
63 exceeding \$200,000; and

64 WHEREAS, City staff are not currently equipped to assess a municipal property transfer tax to the
65 same extent as the State of Vermont or to assess varying tax values for different classifications of property
66 considered by the Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee thus far. Accordingly, the Tax Fairness Ad Hoc
67 Committee must consider the capacity of existing City staff to stand up new taxation models; and

68 WHEREAS, the Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee must also consider the likelihood of the State
69 Legislature and Governor endorsing a municipal property transfer tax that is more than double that currently
70 assessed by the State, or their supporting varying tax values for different classifications of property at a time
71 when the State Legislature is also actively considering a similar model for the State’s property tax
72 assessments; and

73

74 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Burlington directs that
75 the following question be placed on the ballot for the November 3, 2026 general election:

76

77 *“Shall the Charter of the City of Burlington, Acts of 1948, No. 298, as amended, be*
78 *further amended to amend Article 31 Sec. 102f and Article 28 Sec. 81 to read as follows:*

79

80 **81 Tax classification; repeal of inventory tax.**

81 (a) Except for the property of utilities subject to the provisions of 30 V.S.A. chapter 3, all personal and real
82 property set out in the grand list which is not used as residential property, farmland, and vacant land zoned
83 “recreation, conservation and open space (RCO)”, shall be classified as nonresidential property and shall be
84 assessed at 120 percent of fair market value; and further provided that inventories and personal property
85 belonging to an owner whose total personal property does not exceed the fair market value of \$45,000.00 shall
86 no longer be set out in the grand list of the City as taxable personal estate. Additionally, every owner whose
87 total personal property does exceed the fair market value of \$45,000.00 shall be taxed only on the amount of
88 that property that exceeds \$45,000.00. The amount of the exemption may be increased by the City Council
89 prior to approval of the next fiscal year’s budget. Properties upon which in-lieu-of-tax payments are made

90 shall be likewise classified and assessed for the purposes of such payments. The tax on nonresidential personal
91 property shall be eliminated effective July 1, 2026, or sooner by resolution of the City Council.

92 (b) For the purposes of this section, "residential property" is hereby defined to include all property used for
93 dwelling purposes including accessory property which is subordinate to or customarily incidental to the main
94 residential use such as garages and outbuildings. Where a property is used for both residential and
95 nonresidential purposes, then it shall be apportioned according to such uses and then classified and assessed as
96 herein provided. Notwithstanding the foregoing, for the sole purpose of calculating the educational grand list
97 and for the assessment of property taxes for education purposes under Act 60, so-called, as the same may be
98 amended from time to time, all nonresidential properties as above defined shall be assessed at one hundred
99 (100%) percent of fair market value.

100 ~~(c) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this charter or any other statute, the City Council shall be~~
101 ~~empowered to establish by ordinance one or more tax subclassifications consisting of different types, classes,~~
102 ~~or uses of residential property, and shall set tax rates applicable to each such residential property~~
103 ~~subclassification, subject to approval by a majority of the legal voters of the City voting on the question at an~~
104 ~~annual or special City meeting duly warned for that purpose.~~

105 ~~(cd) Notwithstanding the foregoing, and for purposes of property taxation for non-education purposes, the City~~
106 ~~Council shall be empowered to establish by ordinance, subject to approval by a majority of the legal voters of~~
107 ~~the City voting on the questions at an annual or special City meeting duly warned for that purpose, re shall be~~
108 ~~an exemption of up to \$750,000 of the grand list value for all properties for which the owner has filed for the~~
109 ~~tax year in question a declaration of ownership for homestead purposes pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 5410, as the~~
110 ~~same may be amended or renumbered from time to time, and said ordinance shall establish a maximum for~~
111 ~~which the current total assessed value is of \$3500,000 or less to which the exemption will apply. The~~
112 ~~ordinance may also establish additional eligibility criteria for the foregoing exemption, including but not~~
113 ~~limited to income qualifications. An adjustment of tax rates set in Article 31 for municipal assessments and~~
114 ~~Title VII (Retirement) of this charter shall be made so that the foregoing exemption is revenue neutral. The~~
115 ~~City Council is authorized to make periodic adjustments to the dollar values set forth in this subsection by~~
116 ~~resolution pursuant to the budget adoption process established in Sec. 157 of this Charter.~~

117 **102f. Annual assessment and property transfer tax for housing trust fund use authorized.**

118 a. — ~~The City Council shall annually assess upon the property grand list of the City to assist in meeting the~~
119 ~~appropriation made for distributions and uses of the Housing Trust Fund as set forth in Article 18-404 of the~~
120 ~~Code of Ordinances a tax that will, in the judgment of the City Council, be sufficient to assist in meeting the~~
121 ~~appropriation, but the rate shall not exceed one cent upon the dollar of the property grand list, except when a~~
122 ~~larger rate shall be authorized by the legal voters of the City. The tax shall not be included within the~~
123 ~~limitations of the amount of tax for City purposes prescribed in section 99 of this chapter.~~

124 b. — ~~There shall be a tax at the rate of five percent (5%), imposed in a like manner to the tax imposed~~
125 ~~pursuant to 32 V.S.A. § 9602, as the same may be amended or renumbered from time to time, upon the~~
126 ~~transfer of any residence (single family home or condominium) having a value at or above \$1 million. The~~
127 ~~term "value" in the previous sentence shall have the same meaning as set forth in 32 V.S.A. § 9601, as the~~
128 ~~same may be amended or renumbered from time to time, and the City Council may increase the \$1 million~~

129 ~~threshold set forth in the same sentence in a like manner as the dollar values set forth in Section 81(d) of this~~
130 ~~Charter. As used in this subsection, “homestead property” means that as of the next preceding April 1 prior to~~
131 ~~the transfer, the property was subject to the requirement to file a homestead declaration pursuant to 32 V.S.A.~~
132 ~~§ 5410, as the same may be amended or renumbered from time to time. The proceeds of the tax created by this~~
133 ~~subsection shall be dedicated to the same fund as the tax assessment described in subsection (a) of this section.~~
134 ~~Subject to the orders and ordinances of the City Council, the Chief Administrative Officer shall create~~
135 ~~regulations and forms necessary or convenient to implement this subsection.~~

136 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee is directed to continue its
137 review of a municipal property transfer tax and establishing varying tax values for different classifications of
138 property, with the goal of recommending any related charter change question for the March 2027 municipal
139 election, and the Tax Fairness Ad Hoc Committee shall consider that: (1) the public must have been provided
140 a full and fair opportunity to comment on any Committee recommendations; (2) any recommendations should
141 be supported by relevant policy experts; (3) City staff must be equipped with the ability to administer any
142 recommendations; and (4) recommendations should be best situated for success before the State Legislature
143 and Governor.

146 CN/ER/Resolutions 2026/Tax Fairness Charter Change
147 5/20/26