

Ordinance Committee
Thursday, May 21, 2026
Bushor Conference Room, City Hall
or Remote via Zoom. Burlington, Vermont
DRAFT MINUTES

Members Present: Councilor Bergman (Chair), Councilor Barlow, Councilor Carpenter

Staff Present: Kim Sturtevant (Assistant City Attorney), Erik Ramakrishnan (Assistant City Attorney), Kara Alnasrawi (Interim Chief of Staff), Traci Isham (DFA), Lisa Gerlach (Chief of Staff)

Public Present: Sharon Bushor, Councilor Grant

Meeting called to order at 4:32 PM.

1. Adopt the Agenda

1.1 Adopt the Agenda

Motion to Adopt Agenda.

Motion by Councilor Barlow, Seconded by Councilor Carpenter.

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous

2. Adopt Draft Minutes

2.1 Adopt Draft Minutes from April 23, 2026

2.2 Adopt Draft Minutes from May 1, 2026

Motion to adopt both sets of draft minutes from April 23 and May 1.

Motion by Councilor Barlow, Seconded by Councilor Carpenter.

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous

3. Public Forum

Sharon Bushor: I looked at the gross receipts tax ordinance change. It is a modest increase and while our businesses are hurting, this change will not make a big difference for them. The revenue is very important for the City.

4. Gross Receipts Ordinance Discussion.

Councilor Bergman said he found a drafting error in the ordinance and the error would actually do the opposite of what the ordinance change intends. He added that he has posted on CivicClerk an updated draft ordinance labelled with GB that has changes to lines 8, 23, and 28 to correct the drafting error.

Councilor Barlow said he has been working with Council President Traverse on this ordinance. He continued that they propose to eliminate the gross receipts tax on admissions and amusements which would be striking sections 2D and 2E. Chief Administrative Officer Schad estimated that this elimination would reduce revenues by \$115,000 for FY27. He also proposed further review to other ordinances that would ease conditions and fees for promoters to use Waterfront Park.

Councilor Barlow continued that he is proposing setting aside 10% of collected rooms and meals and related taxes to create a fund to help businesses through increased events, security, and marketing. CAO Schad estimated that this would set aside an estimated \$621,000 for FY27 for this purpose. The City already does spend money on these items each year and this fund would cover such expenses.

Attorney Ramakrishnan said that some of the expenses discussed that would be covered by the 10% of gross receipts ordinance change are covered by non-General Fund funds.

Councilor Bergman said he does not agree with eliminating gross receipts tax on admissions and amusements and losing an estimated \$115,000 in revenue. He added that he is favor of looking holistically at the local taxes to promote events and business, but that this ordinance is not the place to do it.

Councilor Carpenter asked for a breakdown of how a potential Vitality Fund would have its funds allocated based on what the City is already doing.

Councilor Bergman said the idea of a Vitality Fund is underprepared and not a good idea to create so late in the budgeting process.

Councilor Barlow said that there has been discussion of the lowering of the admissions and amusements tax for months, and only recently did it evolve into the elimination of the local option tax.

Motion to refer the draft ordinance back to the full City Council as amended, including eliminating sunset, increase gross receipts to 2.5%, removal of admissions gross receipt tax, and keeping other undisputed changes, for second reading.

Motion by Councilor Carpenter, Seconded by Councilor Barlow.

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous

Attorney Sturtevant said she would make the changes and circulate the draft so each change is approved.

5. Any Other Committee Business

None

6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Bergman, without objection.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 PM.