



Racial, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Tuesday, August 18, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Held in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room, Ground Floor, City Hall

OR

via Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96324562039>

Meeting ID: 963 2456 2039

Or Use Phone number: 305-224-1968

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1. Call to Order

2. Approve Agenda & Minutes

Subject	2.1. July 2026
Meeting	August 18, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 18, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	2. Approve Agenda & Minutes
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	
Recommended Action	

3. Public Forum

4. Office of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Updates

5. Draft Resolution: Recognizing the Contributions of Burlington's Latin American Community and Supporting Cultural Festivals - Draft Resolution

Subject	5.1. Cultural Festivals Resolution
Meeting	August 18, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 18, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Category 5. Draft Resolution: Recognizing the Contributions of Burlington's Latin American Community and Supporting Cultural Festivals - Draft Resolution

Department Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)

Type

6. Equity Impact Assessment: Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework For Safe Public Spaces And A Stronger Community

Subject 6.1. State of Vermont Impact Assessment Tool

Meeting August 18, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 18, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Category 6. Equity Impact Assessment: Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework For Safe Public Spaces And A Stronger Community

Department Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)

Type

Recommended Action

Subject 6.2. Burlington Forward Resolution

Meeting August 18, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 18, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Category 6. Equity Impact Assessment: Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework For Safe Public Spaces And A Stronger Community

Department Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)

Type

Recommended Action

7. Adjournment

Subject 7.1. Motion to adjourn

Meeting August 18, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 18, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Category 7. Adjournment

Department Council and Board

Type

Recommended Action

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, Licensing, Voting and Records Coordinator (802-865-7136)(TTY 802-865-7142). Persons with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate are encouraged to contact 802-865-7000 (voice) or 802-865-7142 (TTY) at least 72 hours in advance so that proper arrangements can be made. This meeting will also air

on Town Meeting TV the Wednesday after the meeting, starting at 8:00 pm and repeating at 1:00 am and 7:00 am the following day. The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status or genetic information.

Meeting	August 18, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, August 18, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	8. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements
Department	Council and Board
Type	

Minutes Taken By Vicky Luciano

Attendees:

Councilor Laura Sanchez-Parkinson (in person)

Councilor Melo Grant (in person)

Christian Berry, Communications and Community Engagement Manager REIB (in person)

Vicky Luciano, Administrative and Financial Coordinator REIB (in person)

Chris McGrath (in person)

Brian Clifford (in person)

Jorge Castillo (in person)

Reverend Mark Hughes (in person)

Dylan Pilcher (in person)

Councilor Sarah Carpenter (online)

Kelli Perkins, Director (online)

Hemant Ghising (online)

Loan Nguyen (online)

Sarah Russell (online)

Taylor Thibault (online)

Christine Hughes (online)

Dave Rapaport (online)

Allie Schacter (online)

Roy (online)

Mona Tolba (online)

Maryan Maalin (online)

Andre Clark (online)

- **Call to Order**
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm on August 18th.
- **Agenda and Meeting Minutes**
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson motioned to adopt the agenda and minutes. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Public Forum**
 - Brian Cliffords spoke in opposition to police-related measures included in the Burlington Forward resolution. He offered his technical and data analysis experience to assist the City in reviewing policing data and understanding racial disparities. Refer to the video.
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson thanked him for bringing the information forward and noted that the committee is considering a dedicated meeting focused on use-of-force and enforcement.
 - Dave Rappaport expressed his concerns regarding the policing data and the need for a sustained effort rather than a single meeting to address racial disparities in policing. He offered his time and expertise to assist with future work. He also offered to connect the committee with members of White Men for Racial Justice who might be interested in participating. Refer to the video.
 - Sarah Russell spoke about the housing and homelessness components of the Burlington Forward resolution. She raised concerns that the resolution may imply that alternatives to unsheltered homelessness are readily available when there is currently a significant shortage of shelter and housing resources. She expressed concern that policies involving more forceful enforcement approaches could disproportionately affect BIPOC residents experiencing homelessness. Refer to the video.
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson thanked Sarah Russell for providing this context and noted the importance of using current data and community information when developing solutions.
- **Office of REIB Updates**
 - Director Kelli Perkins shared updates regarding the REIB's ongoing work. REIB will bring recommendations for Aging Council appointees to the upcoming City Council meeting. She noted that recruiting volunteers for city committees and initiatives has been challenging and that some community members have expressed hesitancy about participating because of their feelings about the current administration and the City's work. REIB plans to conduct focus groups with Burlington residents who are older adults to gather feedback on where the City should begin implementing priority measures identified in the 2024 Age Strong Burlington report. Christian Berry continues to work on updating the City's Language Access Plan. REIB is identifying vital City documents that should be translated materials themselves. Staff are working toward a broader implementation plan for language access and plan to bring department leaders together for training and coordination. Director Perkins reported that the City employee culture survey received approximately a 30% response rate. REIB is completing department-level analysis and expects to provide the committee with a report-out at a future meeting. Director Perkins noted that the survey results can help REIB advise departments on creating a more equitable workplace where employees feel a sense of belonging and see opportunities for professional growth. REIB also reported that 168 backpacks had been collected for a school supply drive serving Burlington School District students. Refer to the video.
- **Draft Resolution: Recognizing the Contributions of Burlington's Latin American Community and Supporting Cultural Festivals- Draft Resolution**
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson introduced a draft resolution recognizing the contributions of Burlington's Latin American community and supporting cultural festivals. The resolution recognizes the importance of cultural celebrations and calls for development of a longer-term, sustainable strategy for cultural festivals in partnership with REIB, Burlington City Arts, and community organizations.
 - Councilor Grant expressed strong support of the Latin American Festival after attending the previous year. She emphasized that cultural events create positive activity in downtown

Burlington, bring families into public spaces, and help residents recognize and celebrate the contributions of different communities.

- Director Perkins explained that REIB provided approximately \$5,000 to the Latin American Festival during each of the previous two fiscal years. She noted that REIB's Community Celebrations funding line has significant demand and that the office is using a rubric to evaluate requests as it works to distribute limited resources.
 - Councilor Grant encouraged funding requests be forwarded to City Councilors as additional funding may be available through the City Council initiative funds to support requests.
- Christine Hughes of the Richard Kemp Center described the organization's work as a cultural empowerment center focused on the experiences, history, and contributions of Black Americans. She discussed the Center's block parties, cultural empowerment summit, urban garden programming, and annual community trip to Washington, D.C. Christine Hughes shared that the Center experienced negative pushback regarding its block party this year and characterized the response as racist.
 - Councilor Grant noted that the Department of Public Works has generally been supportive of block parties and requested additional advance notice for future events to allow for appropriate planning and traffic management. She discussed facilitating a meeting between the relevant parties to address concerns directly and avoid miscommunication between community organizations and City departments.
- Rev. Mark Hughes discussed African Landing Day as a cultural empowerment activity and flagship initiative of the Vermont Racial Justice Alliance. He expressed interest in developing a more institutionalized relationship between the City and recurring cultural celebrations. He encouraged the committee to devote future meetings to the REIB Department's internal citywide work, including training and education, data collection, policy, HR functions, and strategic oversight
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson agreed that institutionalizing support for cultural celebrations could help make the work sustainable rather than relying on individual organizations or one-time funding. She also noted that the City's employee culture survey could provide an opportunity to begin a broader conversation about REIB's internal and citywide work.
- Committee members discussed the need for organizations to submit funding requests as early as possible because of limited City resources and the multiple steps required for Council initiative funding.
 - Requests may require review by Councilors, preparation of supporting materials, Board of Finance consideration, and City Council approval. The committee encouraged organizations to seek multiple funding sources and to communicate funding needs early.
- **Equity Impact Assessment: Burlington Forward: A Comprehensive Framework For Safe Public Spaces And A Stronger Community**
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson introduced the committee's discussion of the Burlington Forward resolution concerning public safety in public spaces. The resolution was introduced on August 3rd and referred to four City Council committees, including REIB. The committee is expected to provide recommendations to City Council, with September 14th identified as the anticipated date for returning recommendations.
 - Two additional special REIB meetings were scheduled for August 25th and September 1st to continue the discussion.
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson introduced Vermont's Equity Impact Assessment as a potential framework for evaluating the resolution. She noted that Burlington doesn't currently have a formal equity assessment tool for policies and resolutions.
 - Dylan Pilcher asked about the legal authority of City Council resolutions and whether the Mayor would be legally required to implement the recommendations contained in Burlington Forward.
 - Councilor Grant explained that City Council resolutions can sometimes express priorities without creating legally binding requirements.

- Councilor Carpenter explained that Burlington operates under a strong mayoral system and that resolutions generally function as recommendations rather than binding directives to the Mayor. She characterized Burlington Forward as a starting point for a larger conversation rather than a finished product. She emphasized the importance of obtaining additional input from departments, community members service providers, and other stakeholders before finalizing recommendations.
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson noted that the City Attorney has already reviewed the resolution and identified areas that would need to be addressed. She stated that legal review would continue as the committee develops recommendations.
 - Sarah Russell raised concerns that the resolution did not appear to be receiving discussion from other committees in the way she expected and emphasized the importance of transparent public engagement. She supported the use of an Equity Impact Assessment and emphasized the need to consider the combined impacts of policing disparities and the disproportionate representation of BIPOC residents among people experiencing homelessness.
 - The committee discussed the need for a more equitable process for developing future resolutions and policies.
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson identified several potential elements for a future City policy-development framework:
 - Legal review and feasibility
 - Use of current and appropriate language
 - Inclusion of people directly affected by proposed policies.
 - Engagement with service providers and other people working directly in the affected areas
 - Consideration of research and evidence
 - Evaluation of health and social impacts
 - Director Perkins emphasized that policy development should begin by clearly identifying and defining the problem. Refer to the video
 - Christian Berry emphasized the importance of centering people who are most affected by the policies being developed. She also emphasized the importance of centering people who are most affected by the policies being developed.
 - Councilor Grant reiterated that homelessness itself is not a crime and that police cannot solve the housing crisis. Refer to the video.
 - Andre Clark encouraged the committee to consider the impacts of Burlington Forward based on income and housing status. He shared observations regarding enforcement activity involving people experiencing homelessness and expressed concern about arrests and enforcement being used in situations where alternative approaches may be possible. He encouraged committee members to hear directly from people who use drugs, people experiencing homelessness, people in recovery, and mutual aid organizations. Refer to the video.
 - Councilor Grant provided additional context regarding low-level offenses, the State's criminal justice framework, and the Accountability Court.
- **Adjournment**
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson adjourned the meeting at 7:13 pm