

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF FINANCE
FY24 BUDGET PRESENTATIONS
BUSHOR CONF. ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, CITY HALL *OR*
REMOTE MEETING WITH CALL-IN NUMBER
BURLINGTON, VERMONT
MINUTES OF MEETING
DRAFT
May 22, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Karen Paul
Ali Dieng
Joe Magee
Mark Barlow
Miro Weinberger

OTHERS PRESENT:

Katherine Schad
Jordan Redell
Cindi Wight
Hannah King
Sarah Carpenter
Brian Pine
Todd Rawlins
Sarah Russell
Michael LaChance
John Vickery
Kara Alnasrawi

1.0 CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA

Mayor Weinberger called the Board of Finance meeting to order at 5:59 PM.

MOTION by Councilor Magee, SECOND by Councilor Barlow, to adopt the agenda.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2.0 PUBLIC FORUM (VERBAL)

2.01 Verbal Comments

Bruce Wilson spoke about an art project that his organization is working on near the Moran Frame by the waterfront. He invited the Council and community to participate in the creation of the project as well as a dialogue around building community.

Sharon Bushor noted that under the regional programming budget, the VNA is not funded and asked why, and also asked whether the funding for the Boys & Girls Club could be increased. She also asked what the drivers of the budget deficit are overall. She asked whether there is a plan for stabilizing Memorial Auditorium. She expressed concern about reallocation of funding for the Open Spaces initiative and whether the City should go back to the voters, if the change is significant.

3.0 BURLINGTON PARKS, RECREATION, AND WATERFRONT

3.01 Burlington Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront – Cindi Wight

Director Wight began by speaking about the mission of Burlington Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront (BPRW). She noted a focus on equity in Parks & Recreation, and spoke about BPRW's departmental values of accessibility, integrity, dependability, health and wellness, teamwork, inclusivity, and stewardship, noting that the department will focus particularly on inclusivity and accessibility for FY24. She spoke about the revenue areas for the waterfront, which include campground sites, marina slips, parking, and concessions. She noted the expense areas for the department, which include personnel, operations, and other costs. She noted challenges and concerns, including around hiring seasonal staff, such as lifeguards, deferred maintenance to parks and buildings, and lack of enforcement support for parking revenue. She spoke about highlights, including Penny for Parks, bond park projects, greenbelt capital projects, open space/conservation legacy programming, the bike path maintenance and improvement fund, and facilities maintenance.

Councilor Grant asked whether the City could quantify how much is spent when Parks employees have to do things outside of their normal scope, such as cleaning up discarded drug paraphernalia or trash. Director Wight replied that a lot of that work is in their scope, and added that they are tracking the time that they spend doing various activities.

Councilor Barlow asked about resource constraint around maintenance for parks other than City Hall Park. Director Wight replied that those parks need a level of care that BPRW doesn't have the bandwidth to provide, unfortunately.

Councilor Dieng asked for more detail about grants received by BPRW, and Director Wight provided more background and summary, as well as details. Councilor Dieng asked about donations. Director Wight replied that generally, donations BPRW receives are smaller in scale.

Councilor Bergman asked about the Parks Foundation grants and asked about grants specific to the Community Garden program. Director Wight replied that those grants can be found in the City's capital budget. She provided detail around where donations for the Community Garden program can be found within the budget.

4.0 MAYOR'S OFFICE

4.01 Mayor's Office – Jordan Redell

Chief of Staff Redell provided an overview of the Mayor's Office budget for FY24. She outlined the expenses within the budget, which include personnel costs, operating expenses, and discretionary spending. She noted that the Mayor's Office has three exempt employees and one non-exempt employee.

5.0 REGIONAL PROGRAMS

5.01 Regional Programs – Jordan Redell

Chief of Staff Redell provided an overview of the Regional Programs budget for FY24. She noted that this is an annual budgeted allocation to fund various nonprofits and organizations that work with Burlington. She noted that the budget is consistent with past years in terms of

funding and allocations. She noted that the regional programs are managed through the Mayor's Office. Chief Administration Officer Schad noted that the Board and Commission Compensation line was adjusted down from \$150,000 to \$100,000 for FY24, as not all board and commission members are accepting compensation for their roles. She also noted the Expanded Mental Health line item, which is in this budget for now but will be transferred to another departmental budget in future.

6.0 RACIAL EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING

6.01 Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging – Kim Carson

Director Carson began by defining REIB's mission and goals, which are to ensure that all Burlingtonians can fully embrace the everyday joys of life, free from discrimination and marginalization. She noted that the department provides strategic guidance, training, technical assistance, and support to departments and community partners to address structural racism. She noted how the department addresses systemic racism through a public health lens, through focusing on the economy, social and human development, community and belonging, the physical environment (housing), and health. She provided an overview of the FY24 proposed budget, which includes salary and benefits, professional and consultant services, cultural events, programming, planning, and a general operating budget. She noted that the FY24 budget is decreasing by \$1.8 million from the FY23 budget. She noted \$150,000 in rollover funds from FY23. She spoke about the department's fiscal sponsored events from 2022 and 2023. She spoke specifically about direct BIPOC community investment in FY23, noting that it totaled approximately \$435,000. She provided detail on the 2023 Juneteenth event, which the department leads the planning for. She spoke about the department's plans for FY24, which include planning for building the Burlington Neighborhood Equity Index, the expansion of cultural events, a BIPOC Homeownership Program, further educational content for City employees, and the unveiling of an Embrace & Belonging monument, which will be a permanent structure. She then spoke about a proposed department reorganization, which will encourage upward mobility, ensure staff retention and that all staff have the same benefits and opportunities as other City employees, and will promote recruitment and retention.

Councilor Dieng noted that the proposed reorganization would decrease the number of staff from 14 to 9 and asked whether there were staff who were leaving voluntarily or were let go. Director Carson replied that a number of staff left to pursue other opportunities and that the reorganization would convert more limited service positions to permanent positions and hopefully help with staff retention by providing stability.

7.0 CEDO

7.01 CEDO – Brian Pine

Director Pine began by providing the history of the CEDO department as well as its mission. He provided an overview of the organization of the department, which has a housing, grants, and finance team, a Community Justice Center, a community works team, a community engagement, neighborhoods, and workforce development team, and the initiative to end homelessness. He provided highlights from work done in FY23, which includes community works around completion of the first phase of the Moran Frame, Memorial Auditorium stabilization, and negotiation of a South End MOU to create a new mixed-use neighborhood. He spoke about highlights around addressing homelessness, including the opening of the Elmwood Community Emergency Shelter, funding for the Community Resource Center, Permanent Supportive Housing Tenant-based rental assistance, operating the Extreme Cold Weather Shelter, and over \$100,000 in CDBG funding for various initiatives around combatting homelessness. He spoke about efforts around creating new affordable and safe housing. He spoke about initiatives in the CJC, in workforce development, in diversity, equity and inclusion, and in business assistance. He spoke about plans for the upcoming year in each of these areas. He noted expenses and revenues of approximately \$11.4 million. He noted that there have been two vacant positions for a number of years and that CEDO is proposing to not fund or fill those two positions in recognition of a difficult budget year. He spoke about the importance of General Fund support for CEDO, given the significantly reduced backbone funding through grants

from HUD at the federal level. He noted that in FY24, CEDO will work to find solutions for more sustainable funding, which could include capturing added tax revenues created by projects that were implemented by CEDO, as well as aggressively searching for non-GF sources.

Councilor Barlow asked about CEDO's level of confidence in securing non-GF funding for the initiatives and projects that are slated to sunset in FY24 or FY25 due to lack of funding. Director Pine replied that his staff can put together this information. He noted that CEDO is currently pursuing funding for the Elmwood Shelter and the Community Resource Center. He said that the State is very committed to ensuring the continuation of the Champlain Inn shelter. Assistant Director Russell noted that the State has committed funding to rehabilitate the property.

Councilor Dieng spoke about the importance of continuing to strengthen workforce development initiatives.

8.0 FIRE

8.01 Fire – Michael LaChance

Fire Chief LaChance provided an overview of the Fire Department, noting that they have 96 personnel, 3 engines, 2 ladders, 1 tower, 3 ambulances, and 1 battalion chief. He noted that the Fire Department operates from 5 fire stations, has an administrative division staffed with 4 personnel, a training division with 1 staff, a fire prevention division with 3 staff, and an EMS division with 1 staff. He noted that the department received approximately 9,900 calls in 2022 (an approximately 20% increase from 2021), as well as increases in the number of structural fires and medical incidents between 2021 and 2022. He spoke about the budget allocation for the department, which include salaries, benefits, utilities and services, and operations. He noted that the revenues within the budget are largely from EMS services. He spoke about accomplishments in FY23, many of which centered around workforce recruitment and retention. He noted that the FY24 budget will sustain and increase of 34 FTEs and a 20% increase in the EMS supply budget to account for increased costs. He noted new fire trucks scheduled for delivery in 2024, as well as station upgrades, new radio systems, and fresh staffing in key leadership roles.

9.0 CITY ASSESSOR

9.01 City Assessor – John Vickery

City Assessor Vickery began by speaking about the mission of the Assessor's Office, which is to establish equitable property values so the distribution of the tax burden is fairly levied. He also spoke about the office's activities, which include maintaining the property database for public access, conduct valuation of real estate and business property, hold appeal hearings, conduct market analyses, and determine the Level of Appraisal for the State's education funding formula. He provided an overview of the staffing of the City Assessor's Office in FY24, noting that the budget supports 4 full-time staff. He noted that the goals for FY24 include increasing the volume of property reviews and inspections, fully integrate the new Patriot AP5 and Axiomatic software, and review all properties that transfer. He also spoke about efforts to update the website to be in more languages, to increase access and equitability.

Councilor Carpenter asked about how the City Assessor's Office is moving forward with the report produced by the ad hoc committee on reappraisals. City Assessor Vickery spoke about H.480, which was a bill at the State level related to tackling re-valuation at the State level, rather than having each individual municipality do it. He noted that the bill may change how many reappraisal activities are conducted, and may change how the City takes up the recommendations from the ad hoc committee. He spoke about looking to implement some of the recommendations that didn't have associated costs.

Councilor Barlow asked about some of the other educational recommendations in the report, which are also low-cost. He asked if those could be budgeted for this year, if Assessor Office resources are available, since that kind of information is important. City Assessor Vickery said that the Office has some internal capacity to do this type of work currently.

10.0 BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

10.01 Business and Workforce Development – Kara Alnasrawi

Director Alnasrawi said that the Business and Workforce Development Department has three components, which include the Church Street Marketplace (an enterprise fund that does not receive GF funding), Business Development, and Workforce Development. She spoke about FY23 highlights in areas including the Early Learning Initiative, economic recovery, business development, and around the Church Street Marketplace. She spoke about upcoming activities in FY24. She noted that the department does not anticipate staffing changes in FY24, and that they have slightly decreased expenses.

Councilor Barlow asked whether the graffiti removal programming is included in this budget. Director Alnasrawi spoke about how she helped use ARPA funding to help arrange for seasonal staff hiring around graffiti mitigation. She noted that the City needs to work more with private property owners to get them involved in maintaining their facades if graffiti is an issue. She noted that the Church Street Marketplace manages its own graffiti removal.

Councilor Dieng asked about any help from the Burlington Business Association around graffiti. Director Alnasrawi replied that the BBA is providing funding to private property-owners to help with graffiti removal, as well as providing education on graffiti removal and the best products to use for that.

11.0 ADJOURNMENT

11.01 Motion to Adjourn

With no further business and without objection the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

RScty: AACoonradt