



City Council - Public Safety Committee

Public Safety Committee Meeting Agenda - Monday, October 2, 2023, 6:30 PM, Remote via Zoom Only

When: Oct 2, 2023 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Topic: Public Safety Committee Meeting

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1. Adopt the Agenda

Subject	1.1. Motion to amend/adopt agenda
Meeting	October 2, 2023 - Public Safety Committee Meeting Agenda - Monday, October 2, 2023, 6:30 PM, Remote via Zoom Only
Category	1. Adopt the Agenda
Department	
Type	
Recommended Action	

2. Public Forum

Subject	2.1. Verbal Comments
Meeting	October 2, 2023 - Public Safety Committee Meeting Agenda - Monday, October 2, 2023, 6:30 PM, Remote via Zoom Only
Category	2. Public Forum
Department	
Type	

3. Changes to Drug Crisis Resolution

Subject	3.1. Discussion of Changes to Drug Crisis Resolution
Meeting	October 2, 2023 - Public Safety Committee Meeting Agenda - Monday, October 2, 2023, 6:30 PM, Remote via Zoom Only
Category	3. Changes to Drug Crisis Resolution
Department	City Attorney
Type	

4. Adjournment

Subject	4.1. Motion to adjourn
Meeting	October 2, 2023 - Public Safety Committee Meeting Agenda - Monday, October 2, 2023, 6:30 PM, Remote via Zoom Only
Category	4. Adjournment
Department	Council and Board
Type	
Recommended Action	

Resolution Relating to

RESOLUTION _____

Sponsor(s):

DECLARING THE UNPRECEDENTED INCREASE IN
SUBSTANCE USE A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AND
TOGETHER WITH DRUG ACTIVITY IN OUR CITY TO BE OUR
TOP PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY PRIORITY, AND
AMENDING APPENDIX B RULES AND REGULATIONS OF
THE CITY COUNCIL TO ADD A STANDING ITEM TO EVERY
AGENDA

CITY OF BURLINGTON

In the year Two Thousand Twenty-Three

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

- 1 That WHEREAS, between January 1 and September 20, 2023, the Burlington Police Department (BPD) and
- 2 Burlington Fire Department (BFD) responded to a record 386 overdoses, far surpassing the prior year’s twelve
- 3 month total; and
- 4 WHEREAS, overdose responses increased by 75% between 2021 and 2022, and could increase as
- 5 much as 100% between 2022 and 2023; and
- 6 WHEREAS, across the City of Burlington, community members continue to struggle with substance
- 7 use disorder, lack of shelter, mental health challenges and other health concerns; and
- 8 WHEREAS, by every indication, we will lose a record number of Vermonters to accidental drug
- 9 overdose in 2023 and several counties in the State are experiencing considerably higher rates of overdose
- 10 death than Chittenden County, making this crisis a true emergency for the State; and
- 11 WHEREAS, Burlingtonians understand that substance use disorder is a disease and demands our
- 12 concern, compassion and support as a medical and public health issue; and
- 13 WHEREAS, since 2017 and earlier, this City Council has a long history of overwhelmingly supporting
- 14 ~~medically-assisted~~medically assisted treatments and harm reduction, and has vigorously advocated for
- 15 overdose prevention centers (OPCs) and done extensive work to establish a designated site in Burlington; and
- 16 this City Council continues to express concern and support about the wellbeing of all community members,
- 17 and
- 18 WHEREAS, the State of Vermont has not, since the end of the pandemic emergency in 2021, acted
- 19 with urgency to embrace harm reduction on a statewide level; and
- 20 WHEREAS, the Vermont Legislature took steps during the 2023 legislative session to remove barriers
- 21 to harm reduction and recovery efforts, but the governor vetoed H.728 a bill that would have studied overdose
- 22 prevention centers; and

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WHEREAS, that despite having available funds, the Vermont Department of Health has been slow to distribute the \$8.5 million in Opioid Settlement monies allocated in May 2023 as well as an additional \$15.0 million in State funds that needs to be allocated by the Legislature. While the City of Burlington has directly received \$220,000 through Opioid Settlement agreements and has intentionally committed those monies toward new and innovative tools to support community members struggling with substance use disorders; and

WHEREAS, the overdose crisis must be addressed with the highest call of urgency; and

WHEREAS, drug distribution activity in neighborhoods, public drug use, discarded syringes, and ~~general~~ discomfort and anger at the level of despair is a most challenging and important issue, one that must also be addressed with the highest call of urgency; and

WHEREAS, adding a standing item to the City Council agenda will ensure that attention is paid to the drug crisis issue at each and every Council meeting, which is likely to contribute to greater progress being made on the issue and will increase communication with the residents of Burlington informing them of resources being provided, data updates, legislative updates, law enforcement and other actions, ways residents can help; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that it is with the utmost urgency that the City Council declares the overdose crisis is our City and Vermont's top public health crisis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that it is with similar urgency that the City Council declares that the increase in crime associated with substance use that endangers the safety of our community is our City's most urgent public safety issue and must continue to be addressed by our law enforcement personnel and prosecutors; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the public safety and health approaches must go hand in hand, and are all part of the holistic approach to fully addressing this crisis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council, once again, reiterates and reaffirms its strong and unwavering support for of all evidenced-based harm reduction strategies, including overdose prevention centers and drug checking programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council reaffirms that assisting those who struggle from a medical disease requires medical treatment, just as those who suffer from any medical disease would be treated and supported in their journey to recovery; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council extends heartfelt gratitude to and expresses support for the staff of the City departments, including our first responders, members of the Police and Fire

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53 Departments, ~~and~~ community organizations, and residents who continue to serve on the frontlines of the
54 overdose crisis doing this work every day; and

55 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council fully supports recruitment efforts to expand the
56 ranks of City employees, including our first responders, members of the Police and Fire Departments, and
57 community partners who dedicate their time and professional skills to this emergency; and

58 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the City Council joins and supports the Administration's ongoing
59 efforts to work in collaboration with neighboring municipalities and community partners to urge and implore
60 the Department of Health to immediately disburse the opioid settlement monies allocated during the 2023
61 legislative session, to work to improve the health and safety of our communities by providing care, support,
62 treatment and recovery and harm reduction interventions to people who use drugs, and addressing the root
63 issues; and

64 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council calls on State leadership to increase the
65 availability of prosecutorial resources and the judiciary in Chittenden County with the hiring of additional
66 Assistant State's Attorneys and Superior Judges, better addressing any recruitment and retention challenges in
67 our State's Attorney Offices, and designating and assigning retired members of the Judiciary to sit in
68 Chittenden County to address the backlog of cases and see that cases brought to the courts are addressed in a
69 reasonable response time; and

70 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council requests that the Public Safety Committee,
71 together with harm reduction, health, school, fire and law enforcement partners and the private sector organize
72 at least two public forums for community members to talk directly with and learn from harm reduction
73 specialists, medical personnel who have a keen understanding of this crisis, along with the Chittenden County
74 State's Attorney, the U.S. Attorney for the District of Vermont, law enforcement personnel, and members of
75 our Legislative delegation and leadership in the Governor's Administration, so the community can come
76 together and participate in conversation around the benefits of harm reduction in treating this disease, the
77 status of necessary enforcement and prosecutorial efforts against those engaged in the for-profit distribution of
78 controlled substances, and their perspective on this crisis and its impact on lives and our community by
79 November 2023; and

80 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in addition to the two public forums for community members, the
81 City Council requests that the Public Safety Committee organize a forum for City employees to meet with

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these same professionals so they may share their experiences and perspective on the work they do by November 2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council requests that in the interest of serving the public, each monthly police Chief's report include data on this crisis, including drug tip data, along with information made widely available to the community on how it can assist City employees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council requests that in the interest of serving the public, the Fire Chief continue to provide data related to their calls for service (including heat maps) and input on new strategies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, in the interest of serving the public and helping to ensure public safety objectives that the City Council shares with the Chittenden County State's Attorney's Office, the City respectfully requests that the Chittenden County State's Attorney's Office provide the City with quarterly reports setting forth the number of cases referred to it by law enforcement for certain categories of ~~illegal activity- crime~~ occurring within Burlington, ~~-including firearm violence, illegal distribution of controlled substances, burglary, automobile theft and retail theft, and~~ the number of prosecutions resulting from these referrals, ~~and~~ the current disposition of those prosecutions and the current number of backlogged cases; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council's Public Safety Committee hears from our fire, police and ~~CARES(?)~~ and community-based public safety personnel that the responses we are currently employing to the overdose crisis are not the solution and are not working, that we must try new approaches, pilot new responses, be bold and not be afraid to test these approaches, that we must acknowledge that these approaches may not be perfect at the outset and may need time in the field but we must get started now and any new approaches will give us needed experience and data from which to further build strong innovative programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council requests that all City employees, ~~and~~ community members, the state legislature, and the Governor work with us to find these innovative solutions and asks that development of these ideas be a part of the community and City employee forums; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the mayor and City Council invite the Governor and members of the Vermont legislature to the city of Burlington so that they may see the effects of the crisis, or that members of the City Council travel to Montpelier to speak to the Governor and members of the legislature; and

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110 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Council Rule 15(c) Rules and Regulations of the City Council,
111 Appendix B of the Burlington Code of Ordinances be amended to add a standing item entitled “Public Health
112 and Safety Emergency Updates” to the Council meeting agenda; and

113 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this agenda item is reserved for items of discussion related to the
114 public health and safety issues outlined herein that are not already on the meeting agenda such as: Updates
115 from the Mayor’s administration and Public Safety committee on progress towards addressing this crisis,
116 updates from Councilors on initiatives they are working on related to this crisis and requests that the Public
117 Safety Committee continue to prioritize this crisis and discuss further ways to encourage coordination of all
118 resources to make this our City’s top public health and safety priority.

119 *Resolution 2023/ DECLARING THE OVERDOSE CRISIS A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY AND TOGETHER WITH DRUG ACTIVITY IN*
120 *OUR CITY TO BE OUR TOP PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY PRIORITY, AND AMENDING APPENDIX B RULES AND REGULATIONS OF*
121 *THE CITY COUNCIL TO ADD A STANDING EMERGENCY ITEM TO EVERY AGENDA 8/20/2023*
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