



Special Board of Finance Meeting, Monday, June 13, 2022, 5:00 pm **Bushor Conference Room, Room 102, 1st Floor, City Hall OR remotely via ZOOM 6/13/2022

BURLINGTON BOARD OF FINANCE

REMOTE MEETING WITH CALL-IN NUMBER

OR

CITY HALL, 1ST FLOOR: SHARON BUSHOR CONF. ROOM

SPECIAL MEETING: FY23 BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

BURLINGTON, VERMONT

MINUTES OF MEETING

June 13, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Paul

Ali Dieng

Zoraya Hightower

Joe Magee

Miro Weinberger

OTHERS PRESENT: Katherine Schad

Rich Goodwin

Jordan Redell

Sarah E Carpenter

Gene Bergman

Jon Murad

Lise Veronneau

1.0 CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA

Mayor Weinberger called the Board of Finance meeting to order at 5:08 PM.



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

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2.0 PUBLIC FORUM (VERBAL)

2.01 Verbal Comments

Sharon Bushor spoke about the amount of money that is available for schools to bond and the gap of money between bond dollars and the cost of the new structure. She asked if the City and school administration have gone to the State to request funding to help fill this gap. She said that the State applied a contamination level that is much more stringent than the EPA and have now realized that it is unachievable, which caused a shutdown of the school, a relocation of students, remote learning, and a more expensive rebuild due to increased cost. She said that the State cannot undo the harm done to students who have been affected by this, but believes that reasonable discussions could make the State make some amends. She requested that the City and administration take this recommendation into consideration. She additionally asked if the City is considering holding special meetings on the topic of redistricting, saying that it would be beneficial to move the discussion forward. Mayor Weinberger replied that there have been conversations with the State regarding education and said that those will continue.

Public forum closed at 5:13 PM.

3.0 CHANGES TO THE BPD BUDGET

3.01 Changes to the BPD Budget

Mayor Weinberger opened the discussion up for Councilor questions regarding the BPD budget and changes.

Councilor Hightower asked about the current CSL configuration and how those resources have been split between the Community Justice Center (CJC) and the Burlington Police Department (BPD). Mayor Weinberger replied that the initial CSL position was created in 2020 and funding was available for 2 more positions, which were created in August 2021 (and those are BPD employees). He noted that the resolution creating those positions also expressed a desire for connection with the CJC. Acting Chief Murad replied that the BPD has a CJC employee (a victims' advocate) who sits at the BPD most of the time, and the 3 CSLs were hired by BPD. Councilor Hightower said that she sees value and supports more connections and collaboration between BPD and CJC. Mayor Weinberger replied that the administration will explore possibilities for further collaboration and strengthened relationships between the BPD and CJC.

Councilor Hightower asked whether the crisis management response team is fully funded. Mayor Weinberger replied that the City received RFP responses in April, but bids were more than twice as high as the budgeted amount. He said that the



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City has discussed the possibility of matching funding from the State, and have received significant interest from the State's Agency of Human Services (AHS). He said that those conversations remain ongoing.

Councilor Magee asked about the \$750,000 in carryover funding from BPD's Fiscal Year 2022 budget and whether it is included in the materials currently being reviewed. Chief Administration Officer Schad replied that a portion of the funding will be used for BPOA contract enhancements (such as cost-of-living increases) and other items, but that the funding has not been assigned to line items yet.

City Council President Paul suggested that the sources should be categorized as committed fund balance or assigned fund balance, if they're looking at a multi-year budget. Mayor Weinberger said that he is envisioning the creation of a new reserve account to include the FY22 savings and unspent recruitment and retention incentives and that it would be made explicit what could be spent out of that reserve.

Councilor Hightower expressed support for the contract enhancements, but wondered whether the recruitment firm or incentive line items could be modified. She said that one of their goals is to fund items that would reduce the demand on the BPD and suggested at looking at some of these items and determine whether their funding could go toward funding the crisis management response team and the CAHOOTS model. Mayor Weinberger said that he will take this feedback into consideration.

Councilor Dieng asked how much higher the crisis response team bids came in than the budgeted amount (which was \$400,000). Mayor Weinberger replied that the bids came in at around \$1 million, which would present a challenging gap in funding. He said that there are State funds potentially available for this. He also discussed the difficulty of developing a budget proposal for the City during union contract negotiations. Councilor Dieng said that crisis response should be prioritized for funding, since it would help ease the budget on the BPD workforce. He asked whether an additional \$600,000 could be allocated toward this, rather than prioritizing other areas such as a recruitment firm or incentive bonuses. Mayor Weinberger said that he will not put forth a budget that does not put support toward the BPD workforce, which is significantly understaffed in terms of sworn officers.

Councilor Magee pointed out that the Fire Department is responding to a higher volume of medical calls and facing high attrition rates and noted that the crisis-response team will help address some of the strain.

City Council President Paul noted the significant amount of public support and work over the last two years for bringing the CAHOOTS model online. She said that the City should absolutely pursue other sources of funding for this model, but that if other sources of funding are not available then the City should fund the model itself. She said that the program would be an excellent way to respond to calls for mental health services and could be a model program for the rest of the State. Mayor Weinberger agreed. He noted that there have been instances where the City has stepped into what is traditionally the State's role in rolling out programs (such as its street outreach model) which other municipalities have then taken and adapted it to their own local needs.



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Councilor Bergman asked if the street outreach team funding is being doubled and where that funding would be put in terms of the budget. Mayor Weinberger said that the funding isn't being doubled but is now fully funded to increase to 6 employees. He said that beyond the increase in City funding there isn't other funding for the street outreach team in this budget.

4. OTHER DISCUSSION ON THE GENERAL FUND (GF) BUDGET

4.01 Other Discussion on the GF Budget

Mayor Weinberger noted that the budget will be presented to the City Council for consideration at its June 27, 2022 meeting.

5.0 ADJOURNMENT

5.01 Motion to Adjourn

With no further business and without objection the meeting was adjourned at 6:09 PM.

RScty: AACoonradt