



City Council With Mayor Presiding Meeting - Monday, May 14, 2018, Contois Auditorium, City Hall 5/14/2018

BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

CONTOIS AUDITORIUM, CITY HALL

BURLINGTON, VERMONT

MINUTES OF MEETING WITH MAYOR PRESIDING

May 14, 2018

APPROVED

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kurt Wright (Council President) – Ward 4

Jane Knodell – Central District

David Hartnett – North District [left at 9:08 PM]

Joan Shannon – South District

Richard Deane – East District

Sharon Foley Bushor – Ward 1

Max Tracy – Ward 2

Brian Pine – Ward 3

Karen Paul – Ward 6 [arrived 7:44 PM]

Ali Dieng – Ward 7

Adam Roof – Ward 8

MEMBERS ABSENT: William "Chip" Mason – Ward 5

ADMINISTRATION: Miro Weinberger, Mayor

Beth Anderson, CAO

Rich Goodwin, DFO

Eileen Blackwood, City Attorney

Brian Lowe, Mayor's Office



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Jordan Redell, Mayor's Office

Lori Olberg, C/T

Amy Bovee, C/T

John Vickery, City Assessor

Brandon del Pozo, BPD

OTHERS PRESENT: Yaw Obeng

Joanna Grossman

Christine McConnell

Donna Walters

Monique Fordham

Mayami Cornell

1.0 CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA

Mayor Weinberger called the meeting to order at 7:44 PM on May 14, 2018.

1.01 Agenda

MOTION by Councilor Knodell, SECOND by Councilor Hartnett, to approve the agenda as presented. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

2.0 DELIBERATIVE AGENDA

2.01 Renew Charter 130 Hardship Extension: School Superintendent Yaw Obeng

MOTION by Councilor Knodell, SECOND by Councilor Hartnett, to waive the reading and adopt the resolution granting renewal of the hardship extension to Superintendent Yaw Obeng.

DISCUSSION:

- Councilor Knodell pointed out the city charter provides for granting extension of the period of time for certain city position holders to become legal voters of Burlington and if there is personal hardship. Request was received to extend the time period due to personal hardship and that was extended to Dr. Obeng three years ago. The hardship falls under the criteria of an appointee currently residing in Chittenden County and certifying that becoming a legal voter of Burlington would present personal hardship. The request is reasonable and it would be a poor decision for all not to grant the request.
- Councilor Shannon agreed it was reasonable to grant the waiver the first time when Dr. Obeng was becoming a Burlington citizen, but Dr. Obeng chose to purchase a house in South Burlington. The only need now for a waiver is criteria not met with the previous waiver.



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- **Dr. Obeng said he was not fully aware of the residency requirement when he accepted the position and did not realize there was a major expectation.**
- **Councilor Hartnett said it would have been helpful to get the questions answered by Dr. Obeng before the process. The Chair of the School Board supports the waiver. City Council has granted waivers for other department heads based on hardship. The situation is bigger than City Council and the charter. It is about the school district and the students. It is time to come together and talk about how great Burlington schools are.**
- **Councilor Tracy said he did not support extending the hardship waiver in the past and must be consistent across the board to be fair. It is a privilege to live in the city and feel the pleasures and pains directly.**
- **Councilor Bushor said the hardship was more narrow, such as having children in school, and then the definition got broadened. The waiver could be granted until Dr. Obeng's children are out of high school.**
- **Councilor Pine pointed out nine of 22 department heads do not live in Burlington. What is best for Burlington, the school district, and the children should be considered, and the waiver should be granted.**
- **Council President Wright said the hardship does not fit the rationale. There have been other superintendents who did not live in Burlington. The School Board is recommending the waiver be granted.**
- **Councilor Dieng said the hard work and great results of the school district are appreciated. School choice should be considered.**
- **Councilor Paul said there are circumstances with Dr. Obeng beyond what is in the charter. The relationship of the school and city and extenuating circumstances makes the situation different than that with other department heads. Each situation should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and not to be consistent just to be consistent.**
- **Councilor Deane said waivers have been extended to others in other circumstances and it would be unfair to not have that available to someone so critical to the success of the school.**
- **Councilor Shannon asked if there is a conflict of interest with Councilor Dieng who works for the school district. Attorney Blackwood advised the fact that Councilor Dieng is employed by the school district does not create a conflict of interest situation.**

VOTING (by roll call): Councilor Bushor – nay, Councilor Deane – aye, Councilor Dieng – aye, Councilor Hartnett – aye, Councilor Knodell – aye, Councilor Paul – aye, Councilor Pine – aye, Councilor Roof – aye, Councilor Shannon – nay, Councilor Tracy – nay, Council President Wright – aye, Mayor Weinberger – aye (9 ayes, 3 nays)[Councilor Mason absent]; motion carried.

3.0 ADJOURNMENT

With no further business and without objection the meeting was adjourned at 8:27 PM

RScty: MERiordan