



Special City Council Work Session - Monday, April 8, 2019, 6:30 pm - 7:30 pm, Conference Room 12, City Hall 4/8/2019

BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

CONTOIS AUDITORIUM, CITY HALL

BURLINGTON, VERMONT

MINUTES OF WORK SESSION

April 8, 2019

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

Perri Freeman – Central District

Franklin Paulino – North District

Joan Shannon – South District

Jack Hanson – East District

Sharon Foley Bushor – Ward 1

Max Tracy – Ward 2

Brian Pine – Ward 3

William "Chip" Mason – Ward 5

Karen Paul – Ward 6

Ali Dieng – Ward 7

Adam Roof – Ward 8

ADMINISTRATION: Miro Weinberger, Mayor

Beth Anderson, CAO

Eileen Blackwood, City Attorney

Jordan Redell, Mayor's Office

Olivia LaVecchia, Mayor's Office

Lori Olberg, C/T

Amy Bovee, C/T



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Chapin Spencer, DPW

Megan Moir, Water Resources

OTHERS PRESENT: Catherine Carter, Raftelis

1.0 CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA

Council President Wright called the work session to order at 6:35 PM on April 8, 2019.

1.01 Agenda

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

2.0 WORK SESSION: Water Resources Organizational Assessment & Recommendations

Water Resources Director Moir reported a consultant was hired to help with the assessment that looks at water, sewer, and storm water issues. The FY18 Water Resources infrastructure work, Clean Water projects, increasing efficiencies, addressing a backlog of maintenance work, and addressing ever changing regulations were reviewed.

The consultant with Raftelis, Catherine Carter, reviewed strategies to decrease risk such as preventative maintenance, meter to billing system, infrastructure, compliance program, having staff resources consistent with reaching goals.

Recommendations for staffing are to add three crew dedicated to meters and a customer care position, create a policy and program team, add a staff engineer and a waste water operator in training position. The impact of the 4.5% rate increase is about \$3 per month for a user of 600 c.f. of water. About half the increase is due to the staffing changes.

Councilor Pine suggested discussing a tiered rate structure and adjustment to the franchise fee to ensure institutions are helping shoulder the costs. Water Resources Director Moir said staff is looking at both items.

Councilor Bushor expressed concern for the increase especially when the bond is drawn down, and asked if thought had been given to cross training employees and having the engineer tech on board sooner which could mean all the requested staffing may not be needed. Water Resources Director Moir said staff is trying to be as efficient as possible with the staffing requests.



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Councilor Roof asked about the rate impacts and the customer experience. Water Resources Director Moir said the first step is to try to reduce risk and have highly accurate meters. Staff has been involved in the conversations.

Councilor Dieng suggested transforming the Water Resources Division into its own department, and looking at other cities that compare to Burlington. Catherine Carter confirmed other cities were reviewed with Water Resources Divisions within DPW. The cities have similar challenges as Burlington. For staffing, utilities that compare were reviewed.

Councilor Mason asked about future planning. Water Resources Director Moir said the goal is to get the people in place now and then do plans and policies for the future.

Council President Wright asked about the impact of not taking action on the requests. DPW Director Spencer said any of the risks identified could impact the city. Staff needs to manage high strength waste coming into the treatment plant to avoid another upset. Without a robust asset management program in place replacements or preventative management will not be done to assets most in need of repair. The department does not want a repeat of the billing error that occurred and wants to decrease the potential of this happening. There is the concern of staff burnout if there is inadequate staffing or the risks that have been identified are not addressed. This is an investment in Water Resources human resources and capital.

Councilor Hanson asked about the franchise fee. Water Resources Director Moir said the fee ends in FY20 and should be looked at.

Councilor Bushor requested the next presentation address the right size of department, right number of staff members, and how to get to the right number in terms of moving people around.

Councilor Dieng asked what two positions would be chosen if only two were allowed. Water Resources Director Moir said the policy and programs position and the enrichment of utility billing administrator, but the technical positions are needed to support them.

Staff will have the first stage of recommendations at the April 15, 2019 Board of Finance meeting.

3.0 PUBLIC FORUM

There were no comments from the public.





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4.0 ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Councilor Roof, SECOND by Councilor Pine, to adjourn the meeting. VOTING: unanimous; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

RScty: MERiordan