



City Council - Organization Day - Monday, April 6, 2020 - 7:00 pm - Remote and Virtual 4/6/2020

BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

ORGANIZATION DAY

CITY HALL

BURLINGTON, VERMONT

MINUTES OF MEETING

April 6, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Paul

Max Tracy

Chip Mason

Joan Shannon

Ali Dieng

Brian Pine

Jack Hanson

Franklin Paulino

Perri Freeman

Jane Stromberg

Sarah E Carpenter

Zoraya Hightower

OTHERS PRESENT: Miro Weinberger

Katherine Schad

Eileen Blackwood

Amy Bovee

Jordan Redell



City Council - Organization Day - Monday, April 6, 2020 - 7:00 pm - Remote and Virtual 4/6/2020

1. CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA

The meeting was called to order by Chief Administrative Officer Katherine Schad at 7:06 PM.

MOTION by Councilor Mason, SECOND by Councilor Pine, to approve the agenda with the following amendments:

- **note revised version and co-sponsors for agenda item 6.01 Resolution: Waiver of Penalties and Interest on June 2020 Property Tax Payment for Taxpayers Who Meet Certain Criteria (Councilors Paul, Carpenter, Pine, Shannon, Tracy, Mason and Paulino)(per Councilor Paul).**

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2. OATH OF OFFICE

2.01 Swearing In Of Newly Elected and Re-elected City Council Members

Mayor Weinberger swore in elected Councilors Zoraya Hightower, Max Tracy, Brian Pine, Sarah Carpenter, Chip Mason, Karen Paul, Ali Dieng, and Jane Stromberg.

3. STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

3.01 Mayor Presents State of the City Address

Mayor Weinberger opened his State of the City address noting that Burlington is going through unprecedented times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has impacted the entire community on many levels. He stated that his entire address would pertain to the COVID-19 emergency. He outlined four key areas of discussion, including the current state, the challenges in the next 12-18 months, work that the City government is currently undertaking and will continue to undertake to react to the pandemic, and a shared vision for how Burlington can emerge as a strong and just community.

Mayor Weinberger outlined the current state, noting that the city is approaching the crest of the public health emergency, believing that it will peak at some point this month. He thanked the residents of Burlington and Chittenden county for their commitment to flattening the curve of the disease's case rate.

Additionally, Mayor Weinberger stated that the next 12-18 months will unfold broadly in three phases: the first is the current phase, in which social distancing measures will continue until the state reports a sustained decrease in cases for at least two weeks. He noted that the second phase will involve planned, phased-in reopening of sectors of society and the economy, and that with each newly-opened sector, the City will need to be vigilant about potential outbreaks and maintain



City Council - Organization Day - Monday, April 6, 2020 - 7:00 pm - Remote and Virtual 4/6/2020

strict hand hygiene and disease-reduction protocols. He added that an outbreak could lead to a reversion to phase one interventions, like strict social distancing measures. He finally stated that phase three will involve a gradual return to normalcy.

Further, the Mayor detailed the work that the City government is undertaking to respond to the pandemic at a local level, including the activation of the emergency operations center and the virtual COVID-19 Resource & Recovery Center (RRC). He additionally spoke of initiatives the City is undertaking including supplying masks to members of the community, the work of the RRC to connect individuals to resources if they need help, and a resolution for the City Council's consideration tonight to grant residential and commercial property taxpayers additional time to pay quarterly tax bills. He noted that several of the City's goals will need to be delayed, but that Burlington will continue to focus on inclusion, belonging, and combatting the climate crisis.

The Mayor outlined a shared vision for how Burlington can emerge as a strong and just community, by building on current work to decrease homelessness, translating more essential information into additional languages spoken in the community, and continuing to use technology in innovative ways to expand public accessibility to government.

The Mayor finally spoke of gratitude for the City Council and its work for the citizens of Burlington and welcomed newly-elected City Council members.

3.02 Verbal Comments

Public forum was opened at 7:50 PM.

COMMENTS:

- Michael Nedell spoke about bike bump outs on Peru Street, stating that they have been in disrepair for almost a year and that this has been reported several times.

Public forum was closed at 7:56 PM.

1. ELECTION OF CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

i. Election of City Council President

Chief Administrative Officer Schad called for nominations for City Council President.

MOTION by Councilor Pine, SECOND by Councilor Stromberg, to nominate Max Tracy as Council President. There were no other nominations. **VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.**



City Council - Organization Day - Monday, April 6, 2020 - 7:00 pm - Remote and Virtual 4/6/2020

Max Tracy is City Council President and assumed facilitation of the meeting.

5. ELECTION OF BOARD OF FINANCE MEMBERS

5.01 Election of Board of Finance Members

Council President Tracy called for nominations for the Board of Finance.

MOTION by Councilor Hightower to nominate Councilor Paul to the Board of Finance. VOTING: unanimous; motion carries. Councilor Paul is a member of the Board of Finance.

MOTION by Councilor Shannon to nominate Councilor Pine to the Board of Finance. VOTING: unanimous; motion carries. Councilor Pine is a member of the Board of Finance.

MOTION by Councilor Hanson to nominate Councilor Dieng to the Board of Finance. VOTING (by roll call): Councilor Paul – aye, Councilor Mason – aye, Councilor Shannon – nay, Councilor Dieng – aye, Councilor Pine – aye, Councilor Hanson – aye, Councilor Paulino – aye, Councilor Freeman – aye, Councilor Stromberg – aye, Councilor Carpenter – aye, Councilor Hightower – aye, Council President Tracy – aye (11 ayes, 1 nay); motion carries. Councilor Dieng is now a member of the Board of Finance.

6. PROPERTY TAX RELIEF REPORT

6.01 Resolution: Waiver of Penalties and Interest on June 2020 Property Tax Payment for Taxpayers Who Meet Certain Criteria

MOTION by Councilor Paul, SECOND by Councilor Shannon, to waive the reading and adopt the resolution.

DISCUSSION:

- Councilor Paul noted that a resolution was passed by the City Council on March 23 that the Chief Administrative Officer would report to the City Council by April 13 with a plan that meets the following goals: allows taxpayers impacted by COVID-19 to postpone the June 12 municipal tax payment to August 12 without penalties (if they meet certain criteria), explore if that can be done with the education portion of the payment, allow a longer-term payment plan if needed, and ensure that any relief granted is passed on to tenants. She emphasized the tenant protection measures outlined in the resolution, that these changes can be made under the City's charter, and that the lack of revenue for the school districts will come from tax anticipation notes (see next set of resolutions).
- Councilor Hanson stated that these resolutions take an important step to help renters during this time, even though Burlington has limited legal authority on this issue.
- Councilor Paulino emphasized that this resolution is a responsible first step in a longer-term plan.
- Councilor Dieng expressed concern that the city may be borrowing from its future self and urged the Council to think about what the economic landscape will look like after COVID-19. Mayor Weinberger commented that the \$20 million asked for in tax anticipation notes represents two thirds of the total tax payments that are due, and he anticipated not needing the entire \$20 million to cover the shortfall. Chief administrative officer Schad added that this option for funding was chosen because it allows the City to draw down only what it needs and that it is low interest.
- Councilor Pine noted that if the average taxpayer takes advantage of this deferment, it will only postpone



City Council - Organization Day - Monday, April 6, 2020 - 7:00 pm - Remote and Virtual 4/6/2020

the current tax bill until August, at which time their tax bill will be twice as high. He emphasized the importance of engaging with the lending community to help borrowers with flexibility.

- Councilor Freeman stated that this is a good first step to providing relief to property-owners and renters, and that the City Council should continue to be more proactive in providing assistance in future to renters. Mayor Weinberger added that the RRC will be a resource to help renters find relief, but that renters' main relief is coming from other levels of government.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

7. TAX ANTICIPATION NOTES

7.01 Resolution: Authorization for Temporary Loans in Anticipation of Taxes for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2019

MOTION by Councilor Paul, SECOND by Councilor Pine, to consider Items 7.01 and 7.02 together, to waive the reading and adopt the resolutions.

DISCUSSIONS:

- Councilor Paul noted that the resolutions pledge the credit of the city in anticipation of tax revenue decreases, which will straddle the two fiscal years. She also noted that this is a short-term debt instrument enabling the City to borrow only what it needs, up to \$20 million.

VOTING (by role call): Councilor Paul – aye, Councilor Mason – aye, Councilor Shannon – aye, Councilor Dieng – nay, Councilor Pine – aye, Councilor Hanson – aye, Councilor Paulino – aye, Councilor Freeman – aye, Councilor Stromberg – aye, Councilor Carpenter – aye, Councilor Hightower – aye, Council President Tracy – aye (11 ayes, 1 nay); motion carries.

7.02 Resolution: Temporary Loans in Anticipation of Taxes for the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2020

Resolution 7.01 and 7.02 were considered and voted on together.

8. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Councilor Dieng, SECOND by Councilor Freeman, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.





City Council - Organization Day - Monday, April 6, 2020 - 7:00 pm - Remote and Virtual 4/6/2020

The City Council meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

RScty: AACoonrad