



Public Information Hearing on the Public Questions re March 1, 2022 Annual City Election- Wednesday, February 23, 2022, 5:00 pm, REMOTELY via ZOOM 2/23/2022

BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC INFORMATION HEARING RE:

MARCH 1, 2022 ANNUAL CITY ELECTION BALLOT QUESTIONS

REMOTE MEETING WITH CALL-IN NUMBER

BURLINGTON, VERMONT

MINUTES OF MEETING

FEBRUARY 23, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Paul

Max Tracy

Jack Hanson

Mark Barlow

Joe Magee

Sarah Carpenter

Karen Paul

OTHERS PRESENT: David Kunin

Justin St. James

Jordan Redell

Lori Olberg

Chapin Spencer

Thomas Melloni

Brian Pine

Nathan Lavery

1. CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA



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The meeting was called to order by City Council President Tracy at 5:02 PM.

MOTION by Councilor Magee, SECOND by Councilor Carpenter, to adopt agenda.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

2.01 Approval Of School Budget For Fiscal Year 2023

Finance Director Lavery said that the ballot question contains the total amount for the school district as well as information on spending per pupil and the tax rate estimate. He noted that the school budget is increasing for the next Fiscal Year due to rising costs for wages and benefits, as well as funds associated with rental costs related to the Downtown BHS facility. He noted that recovery funding for the new school building and technical center is not included in the budget. He also said that there have been questions around the estimated impact on the tax rate. He said that the State's education fund had a significant surplus this past year, and could be used to hold down education taxes for future years, but that those decisions are being made at the State legislature. He said that estimates for the tax rate for BSD are based on current law.

2.02 Proposed Increase To General Fund Tax Rate

Chief of Staff Redell said that the City is proposing a \$0.04 increase on the City portion of the property tax (and noted that the City portion of property taxes is around 30%). She said that there are three drivers for this: inflation, incorporating recent equity investments into the structural budget, and pandemic-impacted revenue shortfalls. She said that these drivers have led to an approximately \$7 million increase in costs to the general fund budget.

2.03 Authorization To Issue General Obligation Bonds For Capital Projects

Director Spencer said that this is for \$23.8 million for capital bond projects to shore up the City's ageing infrastructure. He noted that this is reduced from the \$40 million capital bond that was on the ballot in the December special election, which failed. He said that the Capital Committee has estimated a need of around \$150 million for FY23-FY25 to reinvest in the City's general fund assets. He said that this bond request represents around 16% of that total need, and that the gap will be bridged through federal and state grants and triaging investments that can be delayed. He said that the bond is proposed to fund replacement of 3 new fire trucks, replacement of the City's aging communications system for police and fire, local match for grants to draw down federal and State dollars, \$2.7 million for sidewalk improvement, \$2 million for roads and bridges, \$1.5 million for transportation safety improvements (such as traffic calming), \$400,000 for project management, \$4 million for civic buildings, and \$2 million for improvements to park systems.

2.04 Pledging The Credit Of The City To Secure Indebtedness For Public Improvements Within The Downtown TIF District



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Director Pine said that this would request voter authorization to borrow up to \$25,925,000, which, if approved, would bring cumulative authorized to \$35,925,000 for the Downtown TIF. He said that this includes approximately \$5.4 million of already-completed projects. He said that the City is proposing to use the funds for extensive upgrades to Main Street and to relocate or otherwise upgrade the Ravine Sewer. He also noted that voters in 2015 approved using a portion of the \$10 million bond for the Downtown TIF to upgrade Main Street to Great Streets standards, which address stormwater infrastructure, significant widening of the sidewalk, installation of a tree belt, a dedicated bike lane, and a reconfiguration of parking which is intended to ensure that the right-of-way balances the uses of that public right-of-way. He said that this request would increase the area of improvements for those Great Streets standards. He said that there is also a request for \$1,470,000 in related costs, which would be expenses incurred and paid by the municipality that are related to the implementation of the TIF improvements. He noted that these related costs are paid for by the cash flow out of the TIF District, not from bonding.

2.05 Proposed Charter Change To Remove City Council Authority To Regulate Sex Workers

Attorney St. James said that this would be a charter change to eliminate the ability of City Council to regulate or create penalties for sex work in Burlington, but that it would not remove criminal statutes related to sex work.

3. ADJOURNMENT

3.01 Motion to adjourn

MOTION by Councilor Carpenter, SECOND by Councilor Magee, to adjourn the meeting.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

The City Council meeting adjourned at 5:26 PM.

RScty: AACoonrad

