

**BURLINGTON BOARD OF FINANCE
SPECIAL MEETING
BUSHOR CONF. ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, CITY HALL *OR*
REMOTE MEETING WITH CALL-IN NUMBER
BURLINGTON, VERMONT
MINUTES OF MEETING
DRAFT
October 10, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Karen Paul
Ali Dieng
Joe Magee
Mark Barlow
Miro Weinberger

OTHERS PRESENT:

Katherine Schad
Jordan Redell
Brian Pine
Sarah Russell
Michael LaChance

1.0 CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA

1.1 Motion to amend/adopt the agenda

Mayor Weinberger called the Board of Finance meeting to order at 5:06 PM.

MOTION by Councilor Magee, SECOND by City Council President Paul, to adopt the agenda.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries (Councilor Dieng absent for vote).

2.0 PUBLIC FORUM

2.1 Verbal Comments

Sharon Bushor spoke with strong support of the two items on the deliberative agenda. She spoke about the overdose response team pilot, saying that it is a measured and smart response. She said that the community has confidence in the Fire Department because it isn't the enforcement department. She agreed with potential concerns about redundancy but said she looks forward to the evaluation of the pilot. She then spoke about the warming shelter, saying she is thankful that the City has found a space to shelter these people. She asked about the timeline, noting that Vermont's climate gets colder before December 15, and asked whether the timeline to open the shelter can be moved up. She also asked about offering breakfast to the shelter occupants, noting that food insecurity is also a real issue in the community.

3.0 FOR APPROVAL AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL

3.1 Burlington Fire Department Community Response Team (CRT) – Fire

Chief LaChance said that this is in response to the continued opioid crisis and overdoses, and that it is a pilot to help alleviate the pressure on the Police Department to respond to overdose calls. He noted that this is a six-month pilot that will be staffed through voluntary overtime hours (not new positions). He said that will be run for 12 hours per day, 7 days per week.

City Council President Paul emphasized the need for concrete responses and new, innovative ideas, to tackle the opioid epidemic. She applauded this effort.

MOTION by City Council President Paul, SECOND by Councilor Magee, to approve and recommend that the City Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to make any and all necessary budget amendments to allocate the use of the assigned Opioid Money Fund to support the formation and associated costs of a Community Response Team operated within the Burlington Fire Department for six months with a budget not to exceed \$182,598.00.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries (Councilor Dieng absent for vote).

3.2 City of Burlington Seasonal Warming Shelter Project: Creation of (1) FTE position within CEDO; AHS Grant Agreement; Contracts; Lease – CEDO

Mayor Weinberger noted that this represents another example of the City's advancement of efforts to combat homelessness and keeping community members safe. He noted that the City received funding from the State to make this warming shelter possible. He noted that he has few concerns about the location of the facility, since the City has operated a warming shelter at a location very near here for a number of years with little complaint.

Councilor Barlow noted that there are concerns in the community that this will exacerbate some of the criminal activity occurring downtown. He asked whether there are plans to deal with some of the peripheral activity that may occur outside of the shelter. He asked whether the State funding is tied to this location. Special Assistant Russell replied that the funding is tied to this location and that the City is limited in where it has space to be able to open a warming shelter, and noted that the budget for this was created and presented to the State for this particular location. She said that in terms of security, there will be overnight security on this site (which is different than when a shelter was run at a location across the street in prior years), in addition to two social workers who will be on-call for this site. Director Pine also noted that this is operating as a shelter which may have a nightly turnover rate and that individuals are not guaranteed beds for an extended period of time. Mayor Weinberger noted that previous warming shelters did not impact the community negatively. He said that if there are issues, the City will address them. He said that the City has overwhelming complaints and concerns about unsheltered individuals sleeping outside in encampments, storefronts, church properties, and parking garages. He said that that visible, unsheltered presence isn't being caused by the shelters themselves, but by a lack of capacity in the shelters and other social services. He said that shelters are one of the only tools for addressing the problem of unsheltered, unhoused individuals sleeping outside. He then spoke about some of the State programs that the City is advocating for.

MOTION by Councilor Magee, SECOND by City Council President Paul, to recommend that the City Council approve and authorize: 1. The creation of (1) FTE position within the Community Economic Development Office; the Homelessness Initiatives Manager, a non-union, limited service, grade 18 position; 2. Approve the acceptance of SFY 2024 grant funds in the amount of \$590,023 from the State of Vermont Housing and Opportunities Program for the operations of the seasonal overnight shelter and authorize the Director of CEDO to execute all contracts and documents necessary to accept the funding

through the period of June 30th, 2024 including the retroactive approval for the period of November 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, subject to the final review and approval of the City Attorney's Office; Approve and authorize the Director of CEDO or their designee to create a project budget not to exceed \$590,023 for the development of a seasonal overnight shelter and to execute all contracts in furtherance of this initiative upon review and approval of the Chief Administrative Officer and City Attorney's Office; Approve and authorize the Director of CEDO to execute Maxim Healthcare Staffing contract and related documents with maximum limiting amount of \$340,990 for the time period of December 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024, subject to the final review and approval of the City Attorney's Office; and approve and authorize the Director of CEDO to execute VFW lease and related documents with maximum limiting amount of \$10,000 over a five month period (November 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024), subject to the final review and approval of the City Attorney's Office.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

4.0 ADJOURNMENT

4.1 Motion to Adjourn

With no further business and without objection the meeting was adjourned at 5:32 PM.

RScty: AACoonradt