BURLINGTON BOARD OF FINANCE
BUSHOR CONF. ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, CITY HALL *OR*
REMOTE MEETING WITH CALL-IN NUMBER
BURLINGTON, VERMONT
MINUTES OF MEETING
DRAFT
January 22, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Karen Paul Ali Dieng (via Zoom) Joe Magee Mark Barlow Miro Weinberger
OTHERS PRESENT:	Katherine Schad Jared Pellerin Jordan Redell Nicole Losch Chapin Spencer Matt Dow Megan Moir Tony Berrty

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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 4:54 PM.

MOTION by Councilor Barlow, SECOND by Councilor Magee, to adopt the agenda.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2.0 PUBLIC FORUM

2.1 Verbal Comments
Michael spoke about a report about TIF financing from the State Auditor and expressed concern about a previous report from the auditor that was critical of the City's handling of TIF accounting. He noted that a more recent report that is also critical of the City's handling of TIF accounting was just released, and asked whether this is a pattern. Mayor Weinberger said that they don't have time to fully address it tonight, but that the audit notes that there was a marked improvement on the areas that were cited as risks during the previous audit.

Sharon Bushor spoke about the proposed City tax increase. She said that the cumulative impact of school tax and City tax is devastating for the average person. She said she recognizes that they have no control over the school's budget, but said that the impact of the CLA needs to be acknowledged. She said that as taxes go up, this plays a big factor in the affordability of all housing, and said that having the City and schools come forward with increases runs the risk of the budgets being voted down.

3.0 CONSENT AGENDA

3.1 Motion to adopt the consent agenda and take the actions indicated
3.2 January 8, 2024 Board of Finance Meeting Minutes, Draft – approve the minutes.
3.3 Request for Approval of a $331,500 Budget Neutral Amendment to the FY 2024 Patrick Leahy Burlington International Airport – Airport – approve and recommend that the City Council approve a budget neutral amendment in the amount of $331,500 to the Fiscal Year 2024 Patrick Leahy Burlington International Airport budget by increasing the accounts as described in the affiliated memorandum.
3.4 Request to Execute a Ten Year Lease Extension with HG Burlington JV (Hudson News) – Airport – approve and authorize Mayor Miro Weinberger to execute a ten year lease amendment with HG Hudson JV.
3.5 Request to purchase MB 4 Rotary Plow (snow blower) through Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) funding – Airport – approve and recommend that the City Council approve and authorize a purchase from M-B Companies, Inc. in the amount of $826,579.
3.6 Sponsorship Agreement for nuwave's Black Experience 2024 – REIB – approve and recommend that the City Council approve and authorize the Director of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging and/or Chief Administrative Officer to execute the following agreements for grants of City funds to sponsor the Black Experience 2024 event, for a total authorized grant amount of $75,000, provided that execution of both such agreements shall be subject to the review of the City Attorney's Office: 1. A sponsorship agreement with nuwave Equity Corporation for the production and management of the Black Experience 2024 event in an amount not to exceed $35,000; and 2.) a sponsorship agreement with the Flynn Center for Performing Arts associated with the Black Experience 2024 in an amount not to exceed $40,000.00.

MOTION by Councilor Magee, SECOND by City Council President Paul, to adopt the consent agenda and take the actions indicated for items 3.1-3.6.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

4.0 PRESENTATION REGARDING GRANT SUPPORT – C/T

4.1 Presentation Regarding Grant Support – C/T
Chief Administrative Officer Schad began by noting that about 18 months ago, the C/T Office created a small grants management team, which was in large part responding to large federal grand opportunities in the wake of Covid and Covid recovery. She said that because this is a new function, they would like to report to the Board of Finance on a regular basis on current activity.

Grants Director Losch provided an overview of grants awarded to the City in 2023 through the C/T Office, noting that the total award amount was $24.1 million. This includes grants for reconnecting Bank & Cherry Streets, downtown workforce development, Champlain Street Park, development of a neighborhood equity index, a Main Street Traffic Study pilot, phase 1 of the Fire Station 1 Windows, work related to the South End Innovation District Neighborhood, and various transportation planning grants. She showed how much of a share of each project the grants covered. She noted two pending announcements of grants related to the Railyard Enterprise project and the Lake Street Shared Use Path Railroad Crossing. She spoke briefly about opportunities and challenges, noting that the Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act of 2021 created a number of grant opportunities, as did congressionally directed spending and interdepartmental "matchmaking" success, while certain challenges, such as limited opportunities for funding where it is needed most (fleet, facilities, and public health) and limited local match for capital construction, persisted. She spoke about 2024 priorities for grant funding, which include the Railyard Enterprise project, the North Beach overpass, the Queen City Park Road bridge, the Main Street Great Streets project, and South End coordinated redevelopment. She noted several projects with very limited grant opportunities, which include the Gateway Block and Memorial Auditorium, granting funding for the City's fleet, facilities investments, and community spaces.

Councilor Magee asked about what "regional" means in the context of some of this federal funding, given that Vermont doesn't necessarily have the county system that some other states do. Grants Director Losch replied that some of the grant funding is available if Burlington can make the argument that the investments made through the grant funding would have regional importance, which often relates to transportation-related projects.

Councilor Dieng asked if the grants received all come from the same source. Grants Director Losch clarified that only the projects listed as transportation planning, which come from the Regional Planning Commission. She said that many of the others come from the Department of Transportation at the federal level, as well as smaller grants from other agencies. Councilor Dieng asked why the re-envisioning of North Avenue wasn't included on this list. Grants Director Losch replied that it is included, but not specifically listed in the presentation. Councilor Dieng asked about the methodology used to prioritize projects in today's presentation. Grants Director Losch replied that they highlighted the projects that the C/T Office took the lead on and that were successful awards.

Councilor Grant expressed concerns about the City's situation regarding its fleet and asked whether the City has a strategy for addressing the issues around fleet. She said it is interesting that it takes several years to receive and pay for a fire truck or ambulance if it is ordered, and asked whether those types of vehicles could be ordered now, if there is an anticipated need for them in future years. Chief Administrative Officer Schad replied that the C/T Office has tried to look for fleet grants, but that they are virtually nonexistent. She said that current fleet issues are extremely important to the Fleet Committee, and that the City is working with a consultant on a sustainable fleet financing plan, which it hopes to share with the Board of Finance and City Council. She pointed out that the City more often than not has to pay for vehicles prior to receiving it.

5.0 FOR APPROVAL AND RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL

5.1 Creation of Wastewater Operator Position – DPW – Water Resources/HR
Director Spencer began by saying that this position's creation is in response to the need for minimal levels of staffing at the City's aging plants. He said that the main plant can no longer reliably be unstaffed during wet weather storm events. He noted that the creation of this position does not impact the General Fund, and that it will come from the Enterprise Fund. Wastewater Facilities Manager Dow said that wastewater has turned into a more labor-intensive job during storms and that this position would help to maintain coverage.

Councilor Magee spoke about the importance of safe staffing across the City.

MOTION by Councilor Magee, SECOND by Councilor Barlow, to recommend that City Council approve the creation of Wastewater Plant Operator, Regular, Full-time, Non-Exempt, AFCSME, Grade 17, role in the Department of Public Works.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries (City Council President Paul abstained).

6.0 ADJOURNMENT

6.1 Motion to Adjourn

With no further business and without objection the meeting was adjourned at 5:18 PM.

RScty: AACoonradt