

**BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL
CITY HALL, CONTOIS AUDITORIUM *OR*
REMOTE MEETING WITH CALL-IN
BURLINGTON, VERMONT
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 29, 2024
DRAFT**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Karen Paul
Joan Shannon
Ali Dieng
Zoraya Hightower
Sarah E Carpenter
Mark Barlow
Joe Magee (via Zoom, then in person at 5:48 PM)
Gene Bergman
Ben Traverse (via Zoom, then in person at 5:57 PM)
Tim Doherty
Melo Grant (via Zoom)
Hannah King

OTHERS PRESENT:

Miro Weinberger
Katherine Schad
Jared Pellerin
Kim Sturtevant
Samantha Sheehan
Lori Olberg
Brian Pine
Samantha Dunn
Eric Farrell
Meagan Tuttle
Andy Montroll
Nancy Stetson
Kelly Stoddard Poor

1. CALL TO ORDER and AGENDA

The meeting was called to order by City Council President Paul at 5:27 PM.

MOTION by Councilor King, SECOND by Councilor Doherty, to amend and adopt the agenda as follows:

- **Note removal of item 2 (per Chief of Staff Redell).**

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

2. COMMUNICATION: MAYOR MIRO WEINBERGER, RE: SOUTH END COORDINATED REDEVELOPMENT PREDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT (VERBAL)EXPECTED EXECUTIVE SESSION** AGENDA ITEM REMOVED****

2.1. Communication: Mayor Miro Weinberger, re: South End Coordinated Redevelopment Predevelopment Agreement (verbal)**expected executive session** AGENDA ITEM REMOVED**
No discussion.

3. WORK SESSION REGARDING CAMBRIAN RISE

3.1 Work Session Regarding Cambrian Rise

CEDO Director Brian Pine, Assistant Director Samantha Dunn, and developer Eric Farrell spoke to this agenda item, which focused on the proposed amendment to the agreement related to the Cambrian Rise project.

Director Pine noted that the City created a development agreement pertaining to this development project that would ultimately end up with the City having control in perpetuity of about one third of the Cambrian Rise property. He noted that this agreement was originally entered into 8 years ago between the City, the Vermont Land Trust, and Farrell Real Estate. He said that the first phase of the project focused on the full refurbishment and development of the St. Joseph's Orphanage building, the second phase involved Champlain Housing Trust and Cathedral Square constructing 140 units of permanently affordable housing, and the third phase focusing on Mr. Farrell continuing to proceed with the remaining private market rate homes. He said that 12 acres of the land are conserved in perpetuity to provide access to the community gardens and recreational trails.

Director Pine said that this proposed amendment is focused on the requirement in the development agreement for a cap on the number of housing units. He said that since this was put in place, the City has seen an exacerbated shortage in housing supply. He noted that the cap was increased in 2020 from 750 units to 950 units, but that now they are seeking an amendment to remove the cap altogether and have the developer secure approval from the Comprehensive Development Ordinance and the Development Review process to govern how many units can be built there.

Mr. Farrell began by noting that the original cap was increased by 180 units, largely through excluding commercial space. He noted that by shifting this focus from commercial to residential space, the anticipated traffic impacts were not as large as originally anticipated, and said that with this proposed removal of the cap and the additional 100 units he would seek to propose, the traffic impacts should continue to be minimal. He said that if they pursue these additional units, they would continue to decrease space for commercial uses, by eliminating plans for a 64-room hotel and reduce proposed additional office space and restaurant space. He said that the underlying zoning doesn't limit density, but that density is governed by the floor area ratio. He said that they have enough acreage where they would not come close to the density limits within the ordinance. He showed renderings of what the final project would look like. He noted that with units coming online in June and later this fall, they have completed construction of about 500 units, or half of the entire proposed project (if the additional 100 units from tonight's proposed amendment are approved). He asked that the City Council eliminate the cap, and said that they will still need to go through the entire Development Review approval process.

Councilor Bergman confirmed that these 100 units would not result in the construction of additional buildings, and Mr. Farrell confirmed this. Councilor Bergman asked about building height and Mr. Farrell replied that the unbuilt buildings are already approved for the maximum

height allowed (6 stories), and that additional units would be accommodated by changing the building's footprint. He said that these units would be offered for homeownership and would be sized accordingly. Councilor Bergman asked if any of these units are earmarked for inclusionary housing. Director Pine replied that the required percentage of inclusionary zoning on the development for the previous zoning requirements has already been met through the Cathedral Square and CHT units. He said that he will be working with the developer on how to meet the new IZ requirements moving forward. Councilor Bergman asked if this would result in changes to designated parking areas. Mr. Farrell replied that no, they will not modify the levels of parking or parking area.

Councilor Shannon asked about the ratio of homeownership to rental housing both currently built and to be build. Mr. Farrell replied that when the two buildings that are nearing completion are done, out of the 567 units, they will comprise 38 homeownership units. He said that once totally completed, there will be a total of 450 homeownership units (out of 1,050 units) at Cambrian Rise.

Councilor Carpenter asked about the difficulty of developing homeownership units, given that the Council receives a number of questions about why more homeownership apartment units aren't being built in the City. Mr. Farrell replied that in today's climate, it's much more difficult to build anything, given high construction costs and high interest rates. He said that another challenge is that banks are willing and eager to finance apartment units, given Burlington's low vacancy rate, but that it's more difficult to finance homeownership units in this market. Councilor Carpenter asked for an update on the path to the waterfront, noting that part of that would be a Council-financed healing garden in memory of the St. Joseph's Orphanage children. She also asked for an update on what is anticipated for commercial space and nonresidential amenities at this development. Mr. Farrell replied that the redevelopment of the park is 95% complete and that this proposed amendment commits him to having the path built by the end of this year. He said that there is currently a 3,500 square foot space for a café-style restaurant, space for some service businesses in certain buildings, and a 4,000 foot co-working space. He said that the neighborhood will largely be residential, but that there will be some services and amenities.

Councilor Magee expressed appreciation for Mr. Farrell's willingness to engage early on in this process. He said that he had raised concerns about capacity issues with wastewater and increased demand on public safety services. He said that he looks forward to these questions being answered through the development review process. He asked about the total number of CHT units. Mr. Farrell replied that Cathedral Square developed 70 units of affordable senior housing, CHT developed 76 units of affordable family housing (rentals) and that the building that CHT will construct a year from now will be 30 units of affordable IZ units for homeownership and 40 additional IZ rental units.

Councilor Grant asked if there is an updated summary sheet for the Council of the number of buildings and units already built and the number that are proposed, with a breakdown of the mixture between rentals and homeownership. Mr. Farrell replied that they can develop a one-pager on this for the Council.

City Council President Paul opened the discussion up to the public.

The following public comments were received:

- Solveig Overby said that early on in the development there was a lot of excitement about the co-working space, saying that it was very well-received by the community. Mr. Farrell replied that 3 to 4 years ago there was a group that approached him to pursue a co-working space similar to Hulu (but on a smaller scale), but that this group has since dissolved. He said that they would like to pursue a form of co-working space (4,000 feet of it), potentially with a membership arrangement, but said that this is several years into the future.
- Keren Sita asked whether any Cambrian Rise apartments are being marketed as luxury apartments. Mr. Farrell replied that they haven't built anything that they have called luxury apartments.

- Sharon Bushor (via Zoom) noted that when Mr. Farrell began this project, he invited all City Councilors to engage and review his plans, which she took advantage of [as a former City Councilor] and said that she has been extremely supportive of this entire project. She said that this is an appropriate site to add housing and she is excited that there will be so much homeownership. She asked whether the new buildings will have shared amenities similar to the amenities offered in the original St. Joseph's building, since that building had really wonderful features and amenities. Mr. Farrell replied that the new rentals and homeownership units will include common spaces in the buildings and outside, including common rooms, a pool room, verandahs, pet washes, bike washes, bike racks, and storage. Ms. Bushor said that she hopes the fact sheet requested by Councilor Grant will be also be part of public record, since it would be helpful for the public to have these summary statistics as well.

4. PUBLIC FORUM: **TIME CERTAIN – 7:00 PM**

4.1 Verbal Comments

Forum opened at 7:05 PM.

COMMENTS:

Burlington residents (in person):

- Brett Gates spoke about encouraging the Council to work toward establishing a more systematic and transparent framework for determining when a non-binding popular initiative should or shouldn't appear on the ballot, given the events of the prior City Council meeting. He said that guardrails for determining what to put on or keep off a ballot should be clear and consistent and applied uniformly. He said that this would protect against potential personal biases of Councilors when making determinations about whether popular initiative ballot measures are appropriate.
- Solveig Overby spoke about the audit report from Fiscal Year 2023, saying that she puts together a summary of findings and would like updates on the audit findings on how the City managers its capital project accounting. She said it will be critical for voters to know about this information. She also expressed concern about the proposed \$3 million cuts in the non-public safety operating budget. She also noted a previously earmarked \$800,000 for removal of Burlington Telecom equipment from the basement of Memorial Auditorium, and asking whether that equipment has been removed.
- Romeo van Hermann expressed strong support for item 8.5, which marks a significant step for urgently needed action on sustainable practices in the City for commercial and industrial sectors. He advocated for a community forum related to item 8.6, if possible, to discuss the pros and cons.
- Kathy Ohwell spoke about the neighborhood code item that will be voted on tonight. She asked the Council to give the citizens 45 days they have asked for prior to bringing them to the board. She said that the NPA in Ward 1 would have liked to discuss this with their representative Councilors prior to it going up for a vote at the City Council. She said that they have not seen the final change, and that it would affect Ward 1 deeply. She asked for a delay for 45 days until the NPAs have the chance to talk about this.
- Karen Long said that neighborhood code does not address parking, runoff, or the desirability of attracting and providing suitable housing opportunities for young families in the neighborhoods near the downtown and university. She said that these are glaring omissions, and the greatest opportunities for increasing density are in the neighborhoods that there are larger lots and buildable area opportunities. She expressed concern that the significantly increased density allowance would completely change many of the neighborhoods in Burlington.
- Michael Long spoke about neighborhood code, saying that density is good but that extreme density is destructive. He said that the proposed neighborhood code would increase density and lot coverage beyond reason. He said that this would increase standard 8 units per acre to an astounding 80 units per acre. He said green space loss, runoff increase, and the missed opportunity to build also stand out as shortcomings of this proposal. He said that the wealthier neighborhoods and lots with more room for growth would

remain as they are, but the smaller and denser lots would lose what greenery they have and become even more dense. He said that this proposal is deregulating to the point of not regulating at all.

- Sandy Wynne said that the demand for more off-campus student rentals is strong, which puts pressure on the City's housing market. She said that the rents offered to students guarantees that they are at a level that no working family can compete with. She said that the neighborhood code proposal is a misnomer, and rewards investors, landlords, and contractors at the expense of certain neighborhoods near UVM while sparing other neighborhoods that are equally close to campus, which is discrimination. She urged the City to stop protecting areas like the Hill Section and golf course, at the expense of her own neighborhood in Ward 1. She said that to guarantee equity, the City should eliminate all RL zones everywhere, not preserving some while modifying others.
- Gordon Dragoon said that cheaper housing and more density are the solutions to many problems in the City, saying that more density makes places more walkable and more bikeable, and allows for more revenue for the City to fund initiatives. He said that this neighborhood code proposal deserves the Council's due consideration.
- Nick Persampieri asked the Council to support the ballot measure to improve the carbon impact fee and extend it to all fuels and energy systems that increase greenhouse gas emissions. He said that this is needed for the fee to work properly; otherwise, it would incentivize non-fossil fuels that still contribute to emissions, such as advanced wood heating, liquid biofuels, and renewable gases. He noted that the fee applies only to new systems, and that it is clear that the best solutions for new systems are electrification. He also asked for support for the neighborhood code proposal.
- Rye Sherman spoke about the urgency around climate change policies, and that elected officials must stand up and lead the public toward action that makes real impacts on the climate crisis. He urged the Council to vote yes on the resolutions that allow Burlington voters to weigh in on ballot items that take real action toward climate change, and no on the resolution that avoids action with spending 10 months to generate and new proposal. He said it is important to put fees on fuels that emit CO2 pollution, rather than falsely treating them as zero-emission fuels.
- Emma Shaw spoke about how her peers and her are forced to consider things such as how their diets, university choices, and jobs will impact the earth and what cities will be livable by the time they finish their education and settle down. She asked the Council to treat this issues with the same level of understanding she is seeing around her all the time. She asked the Council to vote yes on the proposal to put a fee on clean polluting fuels such as wood and renewable natural gas, as well as the proposal that would put climate decisions on the ballot on August.
- Ashley Adams urged the Council to support the Town Meeting Day 2024 carbon pollution impact fee ballot question sponsored by Councilors Bergman and King. She noted that many residents have spoken against the false climate solutions in the deeply flawed carbon impact fee ordinance that went into effect this month. She also respectfully asked the Council not to support the resolution proposed by Councilors Barlow and Traverse.
- Jak Tiano spoke about the neighborhood code proposal, saying that the residents who are appalled at the proposal do not understand it. He said that as a housing advocate, the proposal does not go remotely far enough and that the City needs to be building at least a thousand units per year to maintain a healthy housing market, when they are barely building 200 of them. He urged the Council to support this proposal.
- Karen Vastine spoke as the senior community relations officer at the University of Vermont Health Network. She said that they strongly support the City's net zero goals and have demonstrated a commitment to do their part to reduce the UVMHC campus's carbon footprint. She spoke about UVMHN's intense participation in the carbon impact fee ordinance that was implemented recently. She said that the speed in which the proposed carbon impact fee ballot items arose after the November 20th implementation of the prior fee significantly erodes the Health Network's confidence in the durability of decisions made by this body. She also noted that achieving the City's net zero energy goals requires collaboration and teamwork, and noted that the current ballot items as proposed remove an important avenue for the type of partnership needed to address the climate crisis.

- Jack Hanson said the lack of action or inadequate action is disheartening. He said that the City needs to do better and that ballot measures are the best way to bring people in to this conversation. He said he would love to see the Council take more leadership to push the community forward on the climate conversation and progress.
- Chris Gish urged the Council to allow the voters to vote on the carbon pollution impact fee ballot item, which would allow the City to close the loophole in the current carbon pollution impact fee ordinance and assess the fee on other fuels that increase climate change. He noted that all biofuels available to Burlington have serious environmental impacts, at least compared to their fossil-fuel equivalents. He said that wood emits more CO2 than any fossil fuel and that it takes many decades to reabsorb that CO2 as more particulate emissions than any other fuel. He said that letting the public vote on this is just the start of the process.
- Lizzie McCullough expressed support for allowing the voters to vote on the carbon pollution impact fee ballot item, saying that all voters should be allowed to weigh in on it because it impacts everyone. She expressed concern for the existing loophole for pollution from biofuels and that the current City policy incentivizes these fuels. She noted that she attended the symposium that the Council hosted on these fuels and said that she thought the verdict from scientists at this event was pretty clear and straightforward that these fuels cause emissions that contribute to the climate crisis.
- Richard Hillyard urged the Council to allow consequential decisions to go through 45 day cycles of communication back to the NPAs that those decisions greatly affect. He said that specifically in this instance he's referring to the vote on the neighborhood code.
- Clare Bradley said that her generation is consistently confronted with the fact that future generations will not look like past generations with regards to the impact of climate change, and urged the Council to act aggressively to reduce the climate catastrophe. She urged the Council to support the Town Meeting Day ballot item as well as the carbon pollution impact fee. She urged the Council to vote no on the climate policy review and next steps resolution because we don't need to waste time generating a report given that we know what we're facing.
- Lena Greenberg noted that the fossil fuel industry has been delaying climate policy for decades, given that delaying climate policy is the same as not doing anything at all because it causes irreversible damage to the planet, to communities, and to the future. She said that the item that would ask for a 10 month study on the thing that the Burlington Electric Department doesn't want is the same thing as losing, since climate policy change is urgently needed now. She said that Burlington needs to be a place of refuge from other areas' climate disasters and that the community needs to be allowed to vote on the climate policy that it agrees that it needs.
- Colin Palmer said that all carbon emissions need to be taxed as soon as possible. He said that seeing Waterbury and Montpelier flooded over the course of this year and the fact that it was not declared a disaster broke his heart, and that it will keep happening if people continue to keep delaying meaningful climate policy.
- Dan Castrigano spoke about how Burlington's winters have warmed up incredibly fast—nearly 8 degrees since 1970. He agreed with previous speakers who said that climate delay is climate denial, since there is an urgent need to get to net zero emissions as quickly as possible. He urged the Council and public to vote yes on 1 and 2, and vote no on 3. He said that the City does not have 10 months to delay. He urged the Council not to listen to corporate or special interests when making this decision.
- Harry Doerr spoke in support of the changes to the neighborhood code, noting the housing crises faced in Vermont and Burlington.
- Lee Morrigan thanked the Council and administration for making them, as a trans person, feel safe in this room, regardless of what others who speak during public forum might say or stand for. They spoke about being a happy trans person and that this is one of the most dangerous and effective forms of resistance for them, and that they feel welcomed and loved in their community.

Burlington residents (via Zoom):

- Mitzi Batay spoke about the previous Council meeting's decision regarding Palestine, speaking about the current conflict and saying that the facts will not change because they offend some in the community. She said that negating the suffering of others to appease the citizens of this City is disgusting and appalling.

- Michael Chaucer spoke in support of the changes outlined in the proposed neighborhood code. He said that he works in residential architecture and development and that in his professional opinion, the proposed changes will not only help ease the housing crisis but will positively impact the walkability of the City. He said that he would like the Council to consider removing the explicit density limits from the zoning ordinance altogether, since those limits nullify many of the proposed changes in the RM district.
- Rex Euden spoke on the racist equity programs being used in city ordinances and on the restriction of free speech being done across the nation at the behest of the anti-defamation league. He noted that affirmative action was just struck down after damaging many peoples' lives over race. He asked what equity means other than stealing from white people and what inclusion means other than excluding white people.
- Scott Mason said that the Gaza and Palestine conflict is troubling and people don't understand what is going on and the U.S. is funding the Israeli government. He said that people need to know all of the facts.
- Christie Barry spoke about how the western world is pushing the LGBTQ narrative and that we need to stand against the pedophilic degenerate cult. He said that transgenderism is delusional.
- Alex Johnson spoke about the diversity in the Council and around the room tonight, but expressed concern about a lack of diversity in the President's cabinet, given that it is heavily Jewish, which isn't representative of the country as a whole.
- Evan Gould spoke in support of the neighborhood code, saying that Burlington is very underbuilt and would still be underbuilt even with the adoption of the proposed neighborhood code. He said that the number one carbon emitter in Vermont is vehicular travel, and asked why housing isn't being built near where the jobs are.
- Arista Haverback spoke about questionable passages in the Talmud.
- Sharon Bushor spoke about the development of the neighborhood code proposal. She asked that Burlingtonians should know what is being proposed and that it should go back to the NPAs for their feedback.
- Jake Schuman said he will continue to come to meetings until the Council adopts a resolution saying that the Burlington community is against gun violence, racism, and hate. He spoke about previous commenters' racist sentiments.
- Colin Larson spoke about the neighborhood code proposal, saying that there was a lengthy engagement process and that the City's zoning needs to be changed now, and this proposal would remedy that and increase development in the future. He said he does support up-zoning the entire City to Residential Medium (RM).
- Nolan Rogers spoke about putting the carbon fee on the ballot, saying that all greenhouse gas emitting fuels should be included in the ordinance and that the space threshold for the buildings should be lowered from 50,000 square feet. He spoke in support of the neighborhood code proposal.
- Bob Duncan encouraged the Council to move the neighborhood code proposal forward, saying that he has been wanting zoning changes like this since the 1970s.
- Martin King spoke in support of the free speech being heard today, saying that all views are valuable. He spoke about how corporations and banks are corrupt and purchase carbon credits and leave everyone else to suffer. He also said that that far left and far right have more in common in terms of climate activism than people realize.
- Bill Cooper spoke about national murder rate statistics from the FBI National Incident Based Reporting System by race and gender, noting that black females, males, and Hispanic males commit the most murders. He said that this makes him opposed to diversity.

Burlington property-owners or organizations (in person):

- Elizabeth Dolce spoke on behalf of the University of Vermont as the Director of its Office of Sustainability. She spoke about UVM's carbon neutrality goal that aligns with the City's net zero energy goal. She spoke in support of the currently implemented carbon impact fee, and spoke about concerns about the resolutions on tonight's agenda. She said that they would like to work on the operational implementation of the current policy that was passed.

- Neil Lunderville spoke as the president of Vermont Gas Systems, saying that VGS welcomes robust partnership with the City to meet its net zero energy goals, and urged the Council to oppose the resolution for a revised carbon impact fee on tonight's agenda.
- Keren Sita spoke about potential Mayoral candidates and their sexual orientation, as well as how certain of them are deceptive and problematic.

Forum closed at 8:30 PM.

5. CLIMATE EMERGENCY REPORTS

5.1 Verbal Reports

None.

6. PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY EMERGENCY UPDATES

6.1 Verbal Reports

Councilor Doherty spoke about item 7.11, a letter from the Fletcher Free Library Commission, drawing attention to a violent incident that took place at the library recently and asking the Council to direct its attention toward the Library and public safety issues related to the library.

Councilor Grant extended her thanks to the Fletcher Free Library, who continue to work hard to make that space welcoming and safe for the community, noting that part of their jobs now entail engaging in community safety in ways that they had not previously had to do. She additionally noted item 7.10 in the consent agenda, a letter regarding a resident's experience in policing and police oversight. She additionally noted that the Public Safety Committee meeting that occurred on the 24th entailed full reports from Fire Chief LaChance and Police Chief Murad on 2023 activities, data, and challenges. She said that this meeting was extremely informative. She spoke about attending the latest Ward 8 NPA meeting, in which she presented on public safety and misinformation regarding the drug crisis, as well as what the police can and cannot do for the community and how the community plays a role in its own safety.

Councilor Carpenter requested that the Public Safety Committee review the letter from Amy Mellencamp and the Fletcher Free Library Commission and give it some consideration.

Mayor Weinberger updated the public on the extension of the motel program. He said that one event that put more pressure on the Library was the closing and ending of the Statewide motel voucher program. He said that the State's Agency of Human Services (AHS) is again proposing to sunset this program on April 1 and that the City is in opposition to this. He noted that the full House vote to extend the motel program through June, and that it is going to the Senate next week.

Councilor Magee noted that he and Councilor Grant checked in with the owner and staff of T. Ruggs Tavern after the hostage event that took place last Monday, expressing gratitude for the public safety officers who responded to it, as well as to the members of the community involved in the event who stepped up to care for each other.

Councilor Dieng noted that there were two public safety forums that occurred earlier in the winter that were well-attended by the community. He noted that many residents are asking about the next steps from those public forums, saying that it would be disappointing and a bad use of resources if there were no actions that came out of those public forums. He said that one next step could be the creation of a task force or ad hoc committee to continue the work. City Council President Paul replied that the idea behind the community forums was to educate the

community on what they are able to do and not able to do. She said that they were also intended to be an opportunity for residents to come together with suggestions and ideas for the City to improve public safety.

Councilor Grant said that the City still needs to make sure it is responding to every individual comment and question that was submitted as a result of those two public forums. She noted that those forums were also an opportunity for people to speak about their own personal experiences in addition from hearing from Burlington business employees and employees of the City. She said that there should still be a deeper dive into educating the community on harm reduction as it relates to the current drug crisis, and that she is working on putting together a third public forum with this topic as the focus. She spoke about the event at T.Ruggs, saying that community actions resulted in a safe resolution to that situation.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

- 7.1 Motion to adopt the consent agenda and take the actions indicated
- 7.2 Communication: C/T Office, re: Accountability List – waive the reading, accept the communication, and place it on file.
- 7.3 Creation of a Wastewater Operator position – DPW-Water Resources/HR - approve the creation of Wastewater Plant Operator, Regular, Full-time, Non-Exempt, AFCSME, Grade 17, role in the Department of Public Works.
- 7.4 Request for Approval of a \$331,500 Budget Neutral Amendment to the FY 2024 Patrick Leahy Burlington International Airport - 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.
- 7.5 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.
- 7.6 Request to purchase MB 4 Rotary Plow (snow blower) through Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) funding – Airport – authorize a purchase from M-B Companies, Inc. in the amount of \$826,579.
- 7.7 Communication: Kyle Berkshire, re: Thank You – waive the reading and place the communication on file.
- 7.8 Communication: Submitted as Part of Public Comment by Ashley Smith, re: Documenting Israeli Apartheid - waive the reading and place the communication on file.
- 7.9 Communication: Romeo von Hermann, re: Public Forums - waive the reading and place the communication on file.
- 7.10 Communication: Kevin Walters, re: Police Oversight proposals - waive the reading and place the communication on file.
- 7.11 Communication: Amy Mellencamp, Chair, Fletcher Free Library Commission, re: Letter from the Fletcher Free Library Commission - waive the reading and place the communication on file.
- 7.12 Communication: Bradley Wiltfong, re: Protect the Bike Infrastructure on Pine St - waive the reading and place the communication on file.
- 7.13 Communication: Steven Toth, re: Charter vote 1/21/24 - waive the reading and place the communication on file.
- 7.14 Communication: Jak Tiano, re: Critique and Analysis of Burlington-Winooski Bridge - waive the reading and place the communication on file.
- 7.15 Communication: C/T Office, re: October 10, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes, Corrected Version, Draft – waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file and adopt the minutes as corrected and received at the January 16, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting.
- 7.16 Communication: C/T Office, re: October 10, 2023 Local Cannabis Control Commission Meeting Minutes, Draft - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file and adopt the minutes as received at the January 16, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting.
- 7.17 Communication: C/T Office, re: October 10, 2023 Local Control Commission Meeting Minutes, Draft - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file and adopt the minutes as received at the January 16, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting.
- 7.18 Communication: C/T Office, re: October 23, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes, Draft - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file and adopt the minutes as received at the January 16, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.19 Communication: C/T Office, re: October 23, 2023 City Council With Mayor Presiding Meeting Minutes, Draft - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file and adopt the minutes as received at the January 16, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.20 Communication: C/T Office, re: November 6, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes, Draft - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file and adopt the minutes as received at the January 16, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.21 Communication: C/T Office, re: November 20, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes, Draft - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file and adopt the minutes as received at the January 16, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.22 Communication: C/T Office, re: November 20, 2023 Local Cannabis Control Commission Meeting Minutes, Draft - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file and adopt the minutes as received at the January 16, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.23 Communication: C/T Office, re: November 20, 2023 Local Control Commission Meeting Minutes, Draft - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file and adopt the minutes as received at the January 16, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.24 Communication: C/T Office, re: December 11, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes, Draft - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file and adopt the minutes as received at the January 16, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.25 Communication: C/T Office, re: December 18, 2023 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes – Draft - waive the reading, accept the communication, place it on file and adopt the minutes as received at the January 16, 2024 Regular City Council Meeting.

7.26 FIO Document – for information only.

7.27 Ordinance: ELECTIONS—Rank Choice Voting Implementation BCO Sec. 2-9 (Councilor Traverse) – waive the reading, suspend the rules and place the ordinance in all stages of passage.

MOTION by Councilor Traverse, SECOND by Councilor Barlow, to adopt the consent agenda and take the actions indicated for items 7.1-7.27.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

8. DELIBERATIVE AGENDA

8.1. Ordinance: ZA-24-02 Neighborhood Code (Office of City Planning, Planning Commission, Council Ordinance Committee)

MOTION by Councilor Traverse, SECOND by Councilor Carpenter, to waive the reading, suspend the rules, and warn for a public hearing.

DISCUSSION:

- Councilor Traverse provided opening remarks on this ordinance proposal, speaking about the extensive process with the public, Planning Commission, and Ordinance Committee, noting that 9 joint meetings took place related to it. He said that this item arose from state legislation that was passed requiring municipalities to pursue certain up-zoning measures and increase density. He spoke about how increasing density helps the City meet its affordability and climate goals. He said that the proposal was the result of a careful deliberative process, and allows for growth in the residential-low and residential-medium neighborhoods.
- Planning Commission Chair Montroll noted that this proposal is coming to the Council with unanimous support (minus one absent member when vote was taken), and that it seeks to align Burlington's code with new state law on housing issues, align with the City's Comprehensive Plan, and solve some of the City's housing issues.
- Kelly Stoddard Poor, Associate State Director of the AARP, said that AARP Vermont supports the neighborhood code, as it supports missing housing types that are more desirable or useful for older adults, such as duplexes, triplexes, and four-plexes. She said that too many adults are forced to move out of Burlington if they want to downsize, and that this proposal helps address this issue.

- Director Tuttle began by reminding the Council about the goal of the neighborhood code, which is to encourage housing types generally seen as the “missing middle” housing types (duplexes, triplexes, four-plexes, two freestanding buildings on one lot, cottage courts, townhouses, and other small, multi-unit developments). She also spoke about how this would bring the City into compliance with the HOME Act of 2023 (passed by the state legislature) in four major areas, including minimum residential density requirements of 5 units per acre, allowing duplex and single-family with ADU lots to be treated same as single-family without ADU lots, allowing 3-and-4 unit buildings where residential uses are allowed, and clarifying standards so that DRB decisions don’t limit density, building footprint, or height, or require large lots or more parking than what is otherwise allowed in ordinance. She spoke about how this translates into the current proposal. She said that the core recommendations are to create flexible dimensional standards, regulate building mass instead of density, and modify residential districts and boundaries to ensure that all neighborhoods have opportunities to access new housing types being proposed by the code. She said that the notable changes to existing standards through this proposal would be changes to eliminate the minimum lot size requirements, change the minimum lot coverage requirements for RL and RM, and new standards that would regulate the overall size of buildings in terms of footprint and height.
- Senior Policy & Data Analyst Stetson spoke about the changes that would be implemented to the City’s residential zoning districts. She noted that currently there are 5 residential zoning districts (residential low density, waterfront low density, medium density, waterfront medium density, and high density). She said that these proposed recommendations would combine the waterfront low density and low-density zones and combine the medium density and waterfront medium density zones, and rezone five areas from residential low (RL) to residential medium (RM). She noted that this last change would align some areas more closely with what is on the ground, particularly related to lot size and coverage, to address high levels of non-conformity. She then spoke about the creation of the residential corridor zone, which would allow for greater flexibility for these housing types along high-transportation-oriented areas such as North Avenue, Colchester Avenue, Shelburne Road, and Saint Paul Street.
- Director Tuttle noted other changes, which include the elimination of the large lot overlay zone, and the elimination of the RH high density bonus overlay. She also spoke about how the proposed standards for the residential corridor zones would allow for a range of neighborhood-serving commercial uses in order to expand the potential for mixed-use within walkable areas near all neighborhoods.
- Senior Policy & Data Analyst Stetson spoke about the outreach and engagement activities that occurred between August 2022 and January 2024.
- Director Tuttle spoke about how this is the initial set of recommendations related to the neighborhood code, but that other proposals will come forward as a result of this work as well. Some of these include standards related to cottage court type developments and planned use development standards, figuring out implementation for flag lot or other unique small lot configurations, non-conforming building expansion for units, and ensuring compatibility of the proposal with residential bonus and IZ requirements.
- Councilor Bergman acknowledged the need for more housing in the City. He asked about the timeframe for implementation of this proposal. Director Tuttle said that the Joint Committee wanted the Council’s feedback on this, and that tonight’s action would warn a public hearing for potentially next month, which would allow for more feedback from members of the community and would allow for amendments and a second public hearing by the Council. Councilor Bergman asked why the entire City wasn’t up-zoned. Director Tuttle replied that the initial proposal was to look at how all properties Citywide could be allowed to have up to a four-unit building, and that the determination to rezone certain areas had to do with existing conditions on the ground, such as existing lot coverage, impermeable surface area, and how much available land there is to add units. Planning Commission Chair Montroll added that the Committee was split

on whether to up-zone the entire City to RM, but that they ultimately recommended this proposal because it focuses on opportunities for new housing. Councilor Bergman requested responses from staff about concerns that have been brought forth already, with specific sections of the proposal cited, noting that many relate to stormwater runoff issues in already-dense areas of the City. He also said that consideration should be given to maximizing solar panel opportunities on rooftops.

- Councilor Hightower thanked staff for the work they've done with both the Planning Commission and the Ordinance Committee. She expressed support for up-zoning. She spoke about how certain areas in the East End are already dense to the point of not being able to add additional housing, though she expressed support for up-zoning. She spoke about equity issues as they relate to areas with currently non-conforming lots that aren't able to implement certain of these changes because they'd have to seek approval from the Development Review Board (DRB) to do so, whereas other areas of the City don't have those restrictions. She spoke about the public engagement process, noting that it is often difficult to have meaningful public engagement until there is a product on the table for the public to react to. She said that allowing time for more public input on this issue is important, but thinks this Council can hold those public hearings and make decisions on this.
- Councilor Grant said that this is important for the City, but that she is disappointed regarding the impacts to certain areas of the City, saying that there are blatant equity issues. She said that the entire City should be up-zoned as RM.
- Councilor Doherty thanked staff for their work to bring this proposal forward, along with the Joint Committees. He expressed support for the goals of this endeavor, given the desperate need for more housing. He echoed Councilor Grant's concerns about equity, saying that the dividing line seems to be Main Street. He spoke as a representative of the East District, which for so long has been subject to incredible pressure that arises from the University of Vermont's students seeking off-campus housing. He expressed concern with the current timeframe for this proposal, saying that unintended consequences need to be considered.
- Councilor Magee said that this is an important step forward, and that medium density (RM) should be the floor in any of the City's neighborhoods.
- Planning Commission Chair Montroll spoke briefly about the difference between RM and RL zoning, saying that both of them were significantly changed and both allow for more density than what was under the existing zoning standards. He encouraged Councilors to examine these proposed standards more closely.
- Mayor Weinberger expressed excitement for this proposed neighborhood code. He said that he is sympathetic to sentiments that this is a lot to take in, but said that the formal public hearing process is essential to this. He urged the Council to take the steps that need to be taken so that this passes at the end of March. He said that the unintended consequences of this zoning can be mitigated, as ordinances are amended on a regular basis, and that more housing is not a negative impact.
- Councilor Shannon thanked staff and the Joint Commission for their work throughout this process. She noted that the decision at the beginning of this process was to fast-track it, which she opposed. She noted that the decision to up-zone certain neighborhoods to RM from RL came from the committee, as did the concept of having many more units per building than originally envisioned. She said that the concerns about how this would affect neighborhoods near the University are very real, as the University has added 1,000 students to off-campus housing within the City per year since 2019. She asked if staff could communicate on Front Porch Forum some of the changes to what was originally envisioned by staff and what has come out of the process. She also asked for more information on stormwater runoff and the effects of this zoning on water and sewer infrastructure. She said that she would support warning a public hearing, but also said that she would support working on it more, if public feedback warrants that.

- Councilor Carpenter suggested that a public work session occur to give the public more opportunity to ask questions about the implications of this proposal, so that the public understands this better than they do now.
- Councilor Traverse asked whether the Planning Office has the bandwidth for that kind of public work session that Councilor Carpenter is suggesting. Director Tuttle replied that this could be feasible between now and the warned public hearing. Councilor Traverse suggested warning this for a public hearing on February 26 and conducting a public engagement session prior to that.
- Councilor Doherty said that he is uncomfortable about the timing issue and level of public engagement, and said he will not support moving this forward.
- Councilor Grant said that RM should be the floor for zoning in the City. She also asked about the implications for the UVM MOU, and how it could be improved to address some of these concerns. She said that for the sake of equity, RM should be the floor for all districts.

VOTING (by roll call): Councilor Barlow – aye, Councilor Bergman – aye, Councilor Carpenter – aye, Councilor Dieng – aye, Councilor Doherty – nay, Councilor Grant – aye, Councilor Hightower – aye, Councilor King – aye, Councilor Magee – aye, Councilor Shannon – aye, Councilor Traverse – aye, City Council President Paul – aye (11 ayes, 1 nay); motion carries.

8.2 Resolution: Cambrian Rise – Development Agreement Second Amendment (Councilors Carpenter, Barlow, Dieng)

MOTION by Councilor Carpenter, SECOND by Councilor Dieng, to waive the reading and adopt the resolution.

VOTING (by roll call): Councilor Barlow – aye, Councilor Bergman – aye, Councilor Carpenter – aye, Councilor Dieng – aye, Councilor Doherty – aye, Councilor Grant – aye, Councilor Hightower – aye, Councilor King – aye, Councilor Magee – aye, Councilor Shannon – aye, Councilor Traverse – aye, City Council President Paul – aye (12 ayes, 0 nays); motion carries.

8.3 Resolution: Town Meeting Day 2024 Carbon Pollution Impact Fee Ballot Question (TEUC (Councilors Bergman and King))

MOTION by Councilor Bergman, SECOND by Councilor King, to waive the reading and adopt the resolution.

DISCUSSION:

- Councilor Bergman said that this resolution asks that the voters be allowed to decide whether to authorize the carbon impact fee on all fuel systems that emit carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, not just fossil fuel systems. He said that this closes a loophole in the currently-implemented ordinance. He said that this would also align with the state's clean heat standard that would likely go into effect next year. He said that this does not need to be an all-or-nothing approach.
- Councilor King thanked the young residents who came out to speak about this, saying that the world is in the midst of a climate crisis and that this should not be a controversial item.
- Councilor Barlow spoke about how the current ordinance was passed last November and that it kept renewable biofuels excluded from it, since they are tools to achieving the goal of eliminated the use of fossil fuels. He said that there is no loophole to close and that this was intentional. He said that the stakeholders affected by this ordinance are supportive of it, but that they need regulatory stability and predictability as they do capital planning. He noted their concern about changing compliance terms in the near-term. He said that he will not support this resolution.

- Councilor Magee noted that this doesn't tinker with the ordinance but would allow for the City to have the ability to include those fuels in the ordinance. He said that decades of failed policy have gotten us to this point, and that the voters should now be able to decide whether or not to support this.
- Councilor Grant said that this needs to be moved forward, and climate action cannot be delayed. She said that if anything, this would force large institutions to work faster to implement better climate measures.
- Councilor Carpenter expressed concern about the lack of data on who this would affect and what it would affect if it were implemented. She cited the tight turnaround between this proposal and voting day.
- Councilor Bergman said that the TEUC spent a long time focusing on the ordinance and that there is no surprise that this current item is coming before the Council.
- Councilor Dieng asked whether voters will have the opportunity to weigh in on the amount of fees upon passage of this proposed ordinance, and Councilor Bergman replied in the affirmative.

VOTING (by roll call): Councilor Barlow – nay, Councilor Bergman – aye, Councilor Carpenter – nay, Councilor Dieng – aye, Councilor Doherty – nay, Councilor Grant – aye, Councilor Hightower – aye, Councilor King – aye, Councilor Magee – aye, Councilor Shannon – nay, Councilor Traverse – nay, City Council President Paul – nay (6 ayes, 6 nays); motion fails.

8.4 Resolution: Implementation Of A Carbon Pollution Impact Fee (TEUC (Councilors Bergman and King))

MOTION by Councilor Bergman, SECOND by Councilor King, to waive the reading and adopt the resolution.

DISCUSSION:

- Councilor Bergman said that this resolution is closer to what was originally envisioned by the TEUC, but that it refers it to the TEUC to work through he details of the size of the buildings, the fees, and the fuel types. He said he is committed to trying to find a resolution that garners widespread support.
- Councilor Bergman made a friendly amendment to postpone this item to the February 12, 2024 City Council meeting.
- Councilor Traverse said that the next resolution also relates to this, and that the intention is to review these items, which includes the possibility of at least an expansion of the carbon fee. He said that there is an opportunity to work toward combining this resolution and item 8.5.
- Councilor Barlow acknowledged the willingness of Councilors King and Bergman to collaborate with him and Councilor Traverse on this.

VOTING (by roll call): Councilor Barlow – aye, Councilor Bergman – aye, Councilor Carpenter – aye, Councilor Dieng – aye, Councilor Doherty – aye, Councilor Grant – nay, Councilor Hightower – aye, Councilor King – aye, Councilor Magee – aye, Councilor Shannon – nay, Councilor Traverse – aye, City Council President Paul – aye (10 ayes, 2 nays); motion carries.

8.5 Resolution: Climate Policy Review And Next Steps Fore Existing Commercial And Industrial Buildings Less Than 50,000 Square Feet (Councilors Traverse and Barlow)

MOTION by Councilor Bergman, SECOND by Councilor Magee, to suspend the rules and complete the remainder of the agenda.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

MOTION by Councilor Traverse, SECOND by Councilor Hightower, to postpone this item to the February 12, 2024 City Council meeting.

VOTING (by roll call): Councilor Barlow – aye, Councilor Bergman – aye, Councilor Carpenter – aye, Councilor Dieng – aye, Councilor Doherty – aye, Councilor Grant – nay, Councilor Hightower – aye, Councilor King – aye, Councilor Magee – aye, Councilor Shannon – nay, Councilor Traverse – aye, City Council President Paul – aye (10 ayes, 2 nays); motion carries.

8.6 Resolution: March 5, 2024 Annual City Meeting—Increase In Public Safety Tax Rate For Fire And Police Purposes Authorized (Board of Finance)

Mayor Weinberger began by noting that tonight is the last night that the Council can act to put items on the ballot for Town Meeting Day. He noted that his administration is working to prepare a budget for FY25, though noting that a new Council and a new Mayor will ultimately be the ones to see that through. He said that the City is faced with a larger budget gap than in previous years (\$9 million), and that they have a proposed number of steps to take to close that gap by the time the budget needs to be passed in June. He said that one of those steps is a proposed tax cap increase, which must be approved to go on the ballot for Town Meeting Day (or in a special election between March and June) in order to be in place for the adoption of the SFY25 budget. He noted that special elections cost more now than they had in the past, so his recommendation is to put a 3 cent fire and tax cap increase on the ballot for Town Meeting Day. He said that this would entail a 3-4% increase on the 35% of the tax bill that residents see. He noted that the Board of Finance voted 3-1 that the Council take this action.

Chief Administrative Officer Schad provided a more in depth FY25 General Fund Budget Update presentation. She noted the numerous changing budget pressures since the last voter-approved tax increase in FY20, which were largely dealt with in the past through available federal one-time and emergency funding due to Covid, but that the sunset of this funding has resulted in a projected significant gap in the FY25 budget if no action is taken. She spoke briefly about the challenges the City has overcome since FY20, including responding to the Covid-19 pandemic by creating new public health services, dealing with a 17% inflation, rebuilding the Police Department after losing 40% of officers, creating new public safety resources in the CSOs, CSLs, and Urban Park Rangers, making substantial overdue investments in racial equity and justice, language access, and livable wage increases, launching an equitable economic recovery by providing support to workers and businesses, and opening three new shelters and the Community Resource Center day shelter and initiatives to respond to the more than 500% increase in homelessness after the motel evictions last June. She said that in the midst of these challenges there were also budget challenges, given that a property tax increase was voted down in FY23, that the one-time funding used to shore up the FY24 budget would not be available to do the same in 2025, that inflation has continued and that personnel costs have increased significantly. She spoke about the resulting \$9 million budget gap and the measures that the administration are proposing to take to close that gap for the FY25 budget. She said that these measures include capturing growth in grand list revenues and other taxes, reducing the City's operating costs through efficiencies in non-public safety departments, completing a review and increase of revenue driven by sources other than property taxes, extending the full phase-out of one-time funds by one more year, and requesting voter approval to increase the current Police and Fire Property Tax Cap by \$0.03 on Town Meeting Day.

Chief Administrative Officer Schad spoke about each of the proposed measures for closing the budget gap in more detail. She said that in terms of capturing growth in grand list and other taxes, this pertains to growth that would happen regardless of Council action, and is projected as \$300,000 in new property tax revenue and \$600,000 in increased gross receipts, local option tax, and franchise fees. She said that the City is conducting an operations efficiency study of the largest General Fund departments, with a goal of reducing non-public safety spending by at least \$3 million. She said that another measure to close the budget gap is to raise user fees (campground fees, boat slips, parking, etc), and that the City is engaged in a study to determine the appropriate level of these fees, when to increase them, and how often to increase them. She noted that special attention will be paid to ensure that youth scholarships and access remain available. She said that

they are projecting a 10% increase in user fees to reflect inflation since past updates, leading to an increase in revenue of \$1.3 million per year. She said that they are also increasing the hotel tax by 2%, which would raise approximately \$1 million per year. She noted the use of one-time ARPA funding, saying that careful management of this funding has made it possible to include an additional \$1 million of these funds in the FY25 budget while retaining current Unassigned Fund Balance levels.

Chief Administrative Officer Schad then spoke in more detail about the proposed measure to close the budget gap, which is to lift the Police & Fire Tax Cap. She said that this plan would fully fund the police and fire budgets (including projected increases in the number of officers in the department and a \$250,000 flexible response fund), given that police and fire costs have risen substantially since the last voter approved tax increase in FY20 and that the police and fire tax currently funds only one-third of the total Police and Fire Department costs. She noted that lifting the cap does not commit the Mayor and the City Council to implementing the tax increase but allows them the authority to do so. She said that the full utilization of this 3-cent tax increase would result in a 4% increase on the municipal portion of property taxes. She provided a summary of the increased public safety costs to the General Fund since the last tax increase in FY20, amount to a total increase of \$4.16 million. She noted that an increase on the tax cap would allow the City to fully fund its rebuilding plan by budgeting for 77 officers, continuing recruitment incentives, and continuing to offer competitive compensation for police officers. She said that it would allow for retention of new professional staff, including 11 CSOs, 6+ CSLs, the CAIP Assistant Director, the Urban Park Ranger positions, and the Recruitment Coordinator, Redaction Specialist, and Public Information Officer within the Police Department. She said that it would also allow for a \$250,000 flexible response fund, body camera upgrades, and training for EMS and mental health resources (the latter two within the Fire Department).

Chief Administrative Officer Schad provided a summary of the impact of a proposed public safety tax cap increase on taxpayers. For a \$300,000 appraised value home, the resulting increase would be an additional \$90 per year, for a \$500,000 appraised value home, the increase would result in an additional \$150 pr year, and on a \$700,000 appraised value home, the resulting increase would be an additional \$210 per year.

MOTION by Councilor Barlow, SECOND by Councilor Magee, to waive the reading and adopt the resolution.

DISCUSSION:

- **Councilors Hightower noted that most departments were asked to cut their budgets by 2% and said that she does not have a good understanding of some of this, but does not want to put the next administration in a tough budget spot and will be supporting putting this on the ballot for voters to weigh in (though she noted that this is not an endorsement of the proposal).**
- **Councilor Dieng said that this tax increase is not timely or fair to Burlingtonians or could have been prevented. He said that there are bigger issues, such as that of education. He said that residents are being taxed out of the City. He spoke about the number of positions that have been reclassified and that the City needs to be more conservative and work within its means. He said that he will be supporting this to go to the ballot, but said that he is not supportive of this proposed tax cap increase.**
- **Councilor Bergman said that he supports putting this on the ballot, saying that this will give the City the opportunity to find other sources of revenue and other opportunities. He said that the City must fund its commitments and do so holistically.**
- **Councilor Barlow said he would prefer to have more clarity on where savings can be had, though he acknowledged that that information is not yet available. He said that this would grant the authority to increase the cap up to this proposed level, but said he hopes that they won't need to increase the tax that much.**

- Councilor Magee said he has heard concerns from constituents since he was elected about the affordability issues in Burlington. He said that he will support this tonight because it would be imprudent to remove this as a tool for the next Council and administration to shore up the budget. He said that this continues to call attention to the unsustainable property tax system in the City and state.
- Councilor Carpenter said that built into this is the \$3 million assumption that operational efficiencies will be achieved. She also emphasized the importance of advocacy with the state on the homestead tax credit.
- Councilor Shannon said that the City's taxes are unaffordable and that basic services are required and expected by the City's constituents. She said that this only funds one year of the public safety rebuilding plan and does not get the City to the 87 officers that are needed for staffing a health police department, and requires \$3 million worth of cuts. She said that this will be difficult with 17% inflation and a 4% tax increase since the last increase. She said that this is a reasonable proposal. She agreed with Councilor Dieng that a priority is educating the City's students, but she also said that the parents of those students have cited public safety as one of their top concerns and priorities.
- Councilor Dieng said that the number one priority in the City is affordability, and that this current problem was started in 2020 and now the City is facing the consequences of its action. He said that the focus should be on the future generation.
- Councilor Grant said that affordability is a huge issue and that she is loathe to increase taxes further, given that the school budget will increase taxes as well due to its bonding for a new high school. She also said that the City needs to be careful not to overpromise to the public in terms of the number of officers that this budget supports. She said that the budget includes 77 sworn officers because that is the pace at which they are able to recruit officers, currently. She said that the City is doing innovative things in terms of how it is envisioning community safety and how it addresses mental health issues. She said that the City needs to beef up its harm reduction and other strategies for dealing with the drug crisis. She said that she would vote for this to have the flexibility to continue these innovative activities, and that the voters should be allowed to weigh in on this.

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

9. COMMITTEE REPORTS

9.1. Verbal reports

Councilor Bergman noted that there will likely be a Tax Abatement meeting on February 12.

Councilor Hightower said that the Community Development and Neighborhood Revitalization (CDNR) Committee is meeting tomorrow to discuss updates on business and workforce development and youth appoints to the advisory board and shelter and transitional housing programs.

City Council President Paul noted that the Public Safety Committee met on January 24 and scheduled a date for meeting on February 15.

Councilor Magee noted that the Parks, Art, and Culture Committee met last week and heard a full presentation on various elements of the waterfront, including an update on wastewater and drinking water, an update on the Moran Frame, and an update from the Deputy Harbormaster, as well as an update on the April solar eclipse.

10. CITY COUNCIL – GENERAL AFFAIRS

10.1. Verbal reports

Councilor Dieng spoke about the Vermont New American Advisory Council and that it submitted its final report to the City on gun violence and its effects on New American youth, as well as recommendations for supporting New American families. He said that this report was comprehensive and had six concrete recommendations, and he suggested that time be scheduled to hear a presentation on the report at City Council. He also spoke about educational work with the Committee on resident voting in this community.

Councilor Magee said that he has heard from residents in his ward about accommodations at polling sites, given that some residents will be reporting to new polling stations and ward clerks may not be familiar with their individual accommodations and needs. He also noted for residents that people may be living in a new ward and to make sure they're aware of where they are supposed to go.

Councilor Grant noted a question from a community member about whether Burlington has ever had election observers, given some negative behavior at Wards 4 and 7 NPAs by an individual who is an election official and concerns about behavior during elections. City Council President Paul replied that staff from the Clerk/Treasurer's Office will follow up with Councilor Grant on this question.

11. CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT – COUNCIL UPDATES

11.1. Verbal reports

City Council President Paul noted that the Council will have an opportunity to discuss legislative priorities at the State level on February 12th, as well as an additional work session with the Burlington legislative team in March.

12. MAYOR – GENERAL AFFAIRS

12.1. Verbal reports

Mayor Weinberger spoke about the commencement of construction on the Main Streets Great Streets project, noting that the first major project is related to work on the ravine sewer. He noted that the project overall will span 3 construction seasons, and will rebuild the three blocks of Main Street from Winooski to Pine. He said that the benefits will include investments on those blocks from the private sector in housing and businesses, and will include upgrading the public infrastructure on those blocks. He noted that there will be impacts from this construction, but that the City is making every effort it can to minimize disruptions due to construction activities. He said that the City is focusing construction on the less-busy times of the year and will not be doing construction on weekends.

13. ADJOURNMENT

13.1 Motion to Adjourn

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

VOTING: unanimous; motion carries.

The meeting adjourned at 10:54 PM.

RScty: AACoonradt