



**CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT**  
**CITY COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION, ENERGY & UTILITIES COMMITTEE**

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**Councilor Maxwell Tracy, Chair**, WARD 2  
**Councilor Tom Ayres**, WARD 7  
**Councilor William “Chip” Mason**, WARD 5

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**Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee**

**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES:**

**Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup> - 2014 at 4:45 PM**

**Burlington Police Department – Community Room  
1 North Avenue – Burlington, VT**

Members present: Chair, Maxwell Tracy (TEUC)  
Tom Ayres (TEUC)  
Chip Mason (TEUC)

Others present: Pat Buteau, DPW  
Guillermo Gomez, DPW  
Liam Griffin  
Phil Hammerslough  
RJ Lalumiere  
Nicole Losch, DPW  
Bill McGrath  
Tom Moreau, CSWD  
Jon Olin, Hoyle Tanner & Associates  
Tony Redington  
Paul Sisson  
Chapin Spencer, DPW  
Charlene Wallace, Local Motion

Chair Tracy called the meeting to order at 4:53 pm.

**1. Agenda**

Chair Tracy moved to approve the agenda. All in favor.

**2. Public Forum**

**3. Minutes of 7/1/14**

Councilor Ayres moved to approve minutes from 5/28/14. All in favor.

#### 4. Downtown Parking Initiative – Pat Buteau (DPW) & John Olin (Hoyle Tanner & Associates)

*See supporting documents for this meeting for the Executive Summary of the Garage Assessment Report*

Buteau: I want to introduce you to Jon Olin, who is with Hoyle Tanner, representing the consultant hired to do the garage assessment for the City. He will introduce some of the key findings from the study.

Olin: Thanks. I am with Hoyle Tanner & Associates. We recently completed the garage assessment for the City. Our approach to this project was to assess and understand the needs for repairs on the garages and classify and price all these needs. We classified the repair list depending on the urgency of the work needed into the following categories:

- Immediate repairs
- Short term repairs (1-2 years)
- Mid-term repairs (2-5 years)
- Long-term repairs (10 years)

We also helped identify an annual maintenance plan.

In the College Street Garage we found poor lighting and structural deficiencies. Repairs are mostly at the floor level.

The Lakeview Garage, being the newest, has significantly less needs, mostly preventive work.

Buteau: We are looking to finance the repairs. We will shuffle around some of the repairs. We will need to borrow money in two stages. We will borrow once to get us through the next five years (immediate, short and mid-term repairs), and then once again for the long term repairs identified. We will be pledging part of the increased revenue from the parking rate increase for repayment.

Tracy: Will the increase bring enough revenue?

Buteau: This increased revenue will be good for the short term and the debt service.

Tracy: What is the timeline?

Olin: Preliminary engineering for the immediate repairs should start as soon as possible, with construction starting in the next construction season.

Buteau: Construction will depend on how long the engineering takes.

Olin: Replacements are repairs for each garage.

Buteau: We will be replacing components.

Mason: How did we get to where we are right now?

Buteau: It's a combination of factors. On one hand we have deferred maintenance from lack of funds. On the other hand, we have an inherited garage that the City got from the private sector.

Mason: Do garages support themselves with the parking fees collected?

Buteau: They will after the rate changes.

Tracy: Jon, from your experience doing work in other places, how do we compare? Are there things being done elsewhere that we could be doing?

Olin: In things like the Electronic Vehicle charging stations, Burlington is definitely leading.

Tracy: We want to improve the customer experience, but we also need to look at more things.

Olin: Garages are inherently expensive structures. They have to sustain unique uses and environmental factors. This is why planning for maintenance is really important. It might seem expensive at the beginning, but we will save in the long run if we invest in the maintenance of our garages.

Spencer: As next steps, the CAO and CEDO are looking to see if there is any interest in redeveloping any of the existing parking garage structures, before making any major investments. The information from this Garage Assessment will be included in the Parking Study.

## **5. Consolidated Collection – Tom Moreau, CSWD**

*See supporting documents for this meeting for the Consolidated Collection Info Sheet and Timeline*

Moreau: CSWD has the mission of dealing with waste in an economic and efficient way. One of the things we are looking at right now is consolidating the collection of waste in the County. There are currently five trucks from five different companies that collect waste in my street. This situation replicates all over Chittenden County. I pay approximately \$34 a month and get the trash collected every two weeks.

CSWD is looking into consolidating collection in order to reduce cost to residents and businesses, reduce the environmental impact of excessive truck traffic and increase the level of recycling.

Currently, ten private haulers provide trash collection services in Chittenden County. The City of Burlington used to provide trash collection services, but this service went private in the 1950s. In Burlington, there are currently six companies offering the service. Countywide, approximately 90% of the waste is collected by the top 3 haulers. Our current mode of waste collection is used in less than 15% of the municipalities in the country. Other municipalities typically provide collection service directly or contract a private hauler to provide the service.

Estimated cost savings from consolidating collection are about \$4.4 million in savings in overall collection costs over the current system (Countywide). Consolidating commercial collection would add \$1.6 million to the savings. These savings do not include those related to reduced emissions, noise and road maintenance. CSWD is currently recommending that only households in structures with less than five units be included in a consolidated collection system. Cost savings reflecting this are currently in the works.

Some of the concerns people have about having a consolidated collection system include:

- Customers will have no choice of who provides the service
- Smaller haulers might be negatively affected, unable to compete with larger haulers.
- Some haulers believe they will lose customers to Drop-Off Centers.
- Haulers may lose the ability to grow for the term of the contract
- Some people believe that government should not interfere with the operations of private enterprises.

CSWD developed a list of questions that come from haulers, staff, board members and municipal governing boards to get a better picture of how the implementation of a consolidated collection system would look like. (See supporting documents for the list of questions and answers).

There will need to be a public process in order to move this forward (see supporting documents).

Spencer: I am the representative for the City of Burlington. I voted in favor of continuing the exploration of Consolidated Collection.

Moreau: If CSWD goes forward with this, each town will decide whether to send this item to vote. Towns can also group together.

Ayres: From an economic stand point, is this model more efficient?

Moreau: On a regional level the answer is not clear. There are pros and cons. There will be efficiencies from consolidating, but the tradeoff is less choices.

Mason: How do you bid this out?

Moreau: You bid out specific routes. CSWD would structure the routes, and then routes would be advertised for bid.

Sisson: Has this been vetted by attorneys?

Moreau: Yes. Municipalities have the right to regulate trash collection. It has to be proved that we are doing a verifiable public good. It is a privilege, not a right for haulers to provide this service to municipalities.

Sisson: Would it be charged in the property tax or separately?

Moreau: It could be charged through the property tax.

Griffin: When I moved to Burlington I found it mind-blowing how fragmented the trash collection service is.

Moreau: The biggest impact this model has is in the collection of recyclables.

Griffin: Where I used to live, trash collection was charged in the property taxes.

Lalumiere: I am also frustrated. There is no organics collection. Everything is done on different days, and I find the service expensive.

## **6. North Avenue Corridor Study – Nicole Losch, DPW**

*Nicole Losch from DPW presented with an overview of the Corridor Study. See supporting documents for this meeting for a PDF of the presentation.*

Ayers: If a pilot doesn't work, what is the cost of the removal?

Losch: Depends on many factors. Grinding and repainting markings can be done under \$30,000. North Avenue will be repaved in a few years. If the timing is correct, the repaving of the street could take care of this.

Wallace: There is a great graphic that I have seen in other presentations, which shows the relationship between speed limit and traffic safety. The lower speed limit is a concern for some residents, so I think it would be useful if you could include this slide in the final presentation to help illustrate the safety impacts of reducing the speed limit. Also, an estimate of the increased travel time with the lower speed limit would be useful. I also want to point out how much a protected bike lanes attract many more users. There is a chart from studies done in Portland

that shows that there are lots of potential bike riders who don't use unprotected bike lanes because of concerns about their safety.

Hammerslough: People with visual disabilities take longer to cross a street. Estimates show that the people with visual disabilities will double in the next few decades. I would like improvements to be extended to all crossings. I have noticed that in Colchester Avenue there is no parking on either side. I don't think it would be such a hardship if parking was removed along North Avenue.

Sisson: I think one simple and cheap improvement that we can do is eliminating parking on the west side of North Avenue. The cross sections shown in the presentation don't show utility poles. I know it is expensive, but burying utilities would free up space. Additionally, ten foot setbacks should not be allowed in residential areas. I think there is a risk of increased traffic, especially in the morning if we implement the changes discussed. The public input process is flawed. All the meetings were held at the same time. If people were not able to attend the meetings, how could they give their input? I think there are some refinements that can be made on the corridor (crosswalks, lower speed limit), but I disagree with the elimination of one travel lane. We are lucky to have two great biking facilities (the Bike Path by the lake and the Route 127 bike path).

Griffin: I ride between the New North End and downtown. We have two bike paths, but they are not the most convenient way to travel between the New North End and downtown. I want to thank the committee for the work they have done. The slide that showed the accidents was very useful. I would like to know what effect the conversion would have on the number of accidents. I support the conversion, both as a driver and a biker.

Lalumiere: A high crash rate is reason enough to do this study and evaluate the implementation of some of these changes to the corridor. Whenever my wife rides, she goes way out of her way, avoiding the corridor just to feel safe while riding. One question that I have is if we implement a pilot for a year, would that be enough time to see a noticeable impact in the crash rate? Something else that I want to point out is the economic benefit of complete streets. Studies have shown that more inviting streets bring an economic benefit to adjacent businesses.

Redington: Regarding the reduction of number of lanes, from four to three, AARP has done studies where these lane reductions have taken place. These studies have shown that after two years, there is a reduction in the crash rate, and an increase in use of other modes of transportation (increase in bicycle ridership). All we are saying is "try before you buy". You can allow some changes as a pilot project, and if there is no acceptance for the pilot, we will find out. Also, a demo of a mini roundabout should be built soon. The community needs to see an example of a real roundabout before the one planned for Shelburne Road is built (scheduled for 2017). The changes that the city will experience if we implement these changes will be tremendous. Think of what our city would be like if projects like the bike path and the beltline never would have happened.

McGrath: I don't understand why the focus is here, when there are other parts of the city that have more serious issues. Shouldn't we deal with current serious issues before we do all this? All of the improvements in the study sound great, but if we don't deal with what we currently have, how can we embark in all these new projects? I don't have the answer, but I have questions. Where is the money for all this coming from? I think we should go slowly.

Lalumiere: I echo what you are saying, but I think North Avenue does have issues that we need to deal with. It is troublesome that I can't ride with my family to downtown in the most direct way.

Sisson: There are tractor-trailers coming out of Ethan Allen Shopping Center bringing supplies to Hannaford that already have difficulty maneuvering under existing conditions.

Ayres: Regarding throughput with the 4 to 3 lane conversion, would it be possible to get data from similar cases in the region?

Losch: We might be able to find other studies.

Sisson: Who determines if the pilot is or isn't successful?

Losch: The Public Works Commission would have some input, depending on the components of the pilot.

Tracy: The TEUC will be making a recommendation for the full City Council in September.

Wallace: It would be useful for the September meeting if you have answers to questions as to why we are doing each improvement.

Griffin: A slide with the potential costs of short-term, mid-term and long-term improvements would also be useful.

## **7. Councilors' Updates**

## **8. Adjourn**

Tracy moves to adjourn. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.