



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

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Councilor Mark Barlow, Chair, North District
Councilor Gene Bergman, Ward 2
Councilor Karen Paul, Ward 6

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Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee of the City Council
Tuesday, November 22, 2022, 5PM

Chair Barlow started meeting at 5:04 PM

–DRAFT MINUTES–

1. Agenda

Councilor Bergman moved to approve agenda. Seconded by Chair Barlow. All in favor passed unanimously, Councilor Paul not present.

2. Minutes of 10/22/22

Councilor Bergman requested to change minutes in the Councilors' Updates section, to say, "funding information" and to say, "airport emissions and expansion information from GMT" in the second sentence. He then moved to approve the minutes. Seconded by Councilor Barlow. All in favor passed unanimously.

3. Public Forum

Public comment from Pike Porter:

PP: To manage emissions, I would like the airport to seek ACI level 4 accreditations. Additionally, I request that the airport monitor VTANG CO2 emissions in its emissions scoping. Moreover, the airport must set specific emissions reduction goals of at least 70,000 tons CO2 annually. Also, the airport must cap total airport emissions, including aircraft emissions, at 2010 levels. Carbon off-set programs are ripe with fraud and accountability issues. Any off-set programs the BIA might seek to engage with will first be put through a public input process. Additionally, city council should require 3rd party verification of any carbon off-sets purchased. Finally, city council should require all airport tenants to calculate and report their emissions to the airport director Nic Longo.

Ashley Adams public comment:

AA: An ever-expanding airport and ever-increasing flights will lead to ever-increasing emissions. Wind generators and solar panels do not stop aviation emissions. Burlington's net-zero plan is a lie because it excludes airport emissions. Nic Longo is seeking to bring more flights and partners to the airport. This contradicts his desire to make the airport one of the most sustainable in the nation. The airport director must be committed to reducing atmospheric CO2. I am imploring this body to do the following:

- Stop the airport director's efforts to expand flights
- Include aviation emissions from all sources including civilians and military in Burlington's greenhouse gas inventory
- Actively reduce aviation emissions from all sources at the airport

Michael Arnold public comment:

MA: I am asking you to consider how our transportation funding should change during an affordability crisis. What tangible steps is the city taking to expand bus services? I ask that you take small investments to reduce transportation operating costs. Maximize GMT bus stops.

Dan Castrigano public comment:

DC: I support everything Michael said. We have to go against centuries of capitalism, decades of the aviation industry, and fossil fuels. Endless growth must stop. We must stop burning fossil fuels. I cannot believe aviation is still expanding. I am an educator focused on climate change. We have to measure emissions and we must reduce them. All emissions must be lowered including aviation emission. It has to be fast and bold. We can follow the Dutch model for airports. A lot of people are not going to like this, but it is the right thing to do.

James Leae public comment:

JLA: It is essential that we stop airport expansion, measure emissions, and then reduce emissions. Let's take a serious look at the military and its flights from the airport. The military adds nothing to the economy. F-35 from the airport would not only slash the airport's greenhouse gas emissions but will also greatly lower the airport's noise level so desperately needed housing can be restored on the now-vacant 44 acres facing the airport and housing could be created where military aircraft is stored.
~~We could house more people if we weren't storing aircraft~~

Dan Kirk public comment:

DK: Changing solar setbacks on roofs. I understand that these setbacks exist for the fire department for fire safety. Can we make these setback standards looser? This would increase my motivation to add solar panels to my real estate.

Robert Herendeen public comment:

RH: Net zero energy program stays away from air emissions. Can we improve air emissions on a short timescale? We have improved automotive emissions. Can we do the same for airplanes? Until that time, we must reduce air traffic.

Dan Batton (Save Public Forests) public comment:

DB: Immediate action is needed now to reduce aviation emissions. We must cap the number of flights from BTV.

Jak Tiano public comment:

JT: I want to speak from an engineering perspective. What technology are we going to be used to reduce emissions? Is this a realistic expectation? The airline industry is pushing to switch to sustainable aviation fuels. I want us to be skeptical of this. Biofuels emit the same amount of carbon into the air. Even though they come from renewable sources, we would be depleting carbon from soils when using biofuels. Biofuels still rely on the petroleum industry.

Closes at 5:38 PM

4. Burlington International Airport

- Nic Longo
- Marie Friedman
- Donny Goris-Kolb
- Larry Lackey
- Shelby Losser

See presentation.

Councilor Bergman:

- We need to make large scale systematic changes
- What are the differences between the scopes?
- Requests report in March to the committee to more directly speak to emissions
- He is happy that he is seeking accreditation
- He wants to know if the airport is aspiring to level 6 accreditation and what is their timeline
- He wants the airport to address emissions more directly
- No more harm to the neighborhood, wants a report on community engagement

CB: What AIC level is the airport seeking?

Nic Longo:

NL: Tier 3

CB: What is the difference between the different scopes?

NL:

- Scope 1: airport operations emissions on a small scale
- Scope 2: indirect emissions
- Scope 3: indirect and optional emissions

CB: Is your goal to hit ACI level 6?

NL: Ultimately yes. Current level the airport is seeking is level 1.

CB: In March, can we see a written report on these matters? We need to address climate change now. We have talked about small changes, but how are you setting big goals and targets? Small changes are insufficient.

NL: Via the bilateral infrastructure bill, we have 1 million dollars set aside for our sustainability actions.

CB: Are we grappling with difficult truths? We need to study aviation emissions. I am very compelled by the public comment tonight. We need to integrate this into our conversations.

NL: I appreciate how you have described this. Reducing the number of flights is a huge challenge for airports. In fact, may be an FAA violation. This is something we need to look at creatively. Maybe we can partner with new technologies such as electric aviation.

CB: We need to look into this. If the FAA is a problem, we need to identify this problem and push to have it fixed. It is not okay to not understand these impediments. I hope your report will take this into account.

Chair Barlow:

CHB: This is the beginning of a conversation and we will have you back in March. I do wonder if this isn't a topic for a special meeting.

CB: Sure.

CHB: Can you expand on what level of accreditation the airport is currently pursuing?

NL: Current level the airport is seeking is level 1. Very few airports in the world are above level 4. You can find this information from ACI. This is challenging for airports, as it should be.

CHB: It is good that there are global standards here. How are you coordinating with the Vermont National Guard?

NL: The VHG and our other tenants have a great relationship with us and is in tune with the conversations we are having about these topics.

CHB: Are you coordinating with other airports in the region? If we were the only airport in the region and we reduced the number of flights that could make an impact. But we are not. So, it seems to me that this has to be a regional conversation. Reducing flights also doesn't have to mean we fly less people. Rather it could be that we fly more people on fewer aircraft.

NL: Within a two-and-a-half-hour radius of our airport there are about 2.5 million people flying. We do compete with other nearby airports for their flights. And we do coordinate with these other airports. Small companies work with large companies to lease their aircraft. And these small companies can push to use larger aircraft to reduce the number of flights.

CHB: For the sake of time, we do not have time for further public comment. You may continue presenting.

See presentation.

CB: I want to see no more harm to the neighborhood near the airport. We need to see you working with the public on this issue.

CHB: Is there public engagement on this issue?

NL: Yes, we are partnering with Intervale, various schools, and some neighbors.

AA: I am a neighbor and I am not part of that conversation.

NL: Not all neighbors, but the subcommittee of the resilience task force. And there will be the opportunity for public meetings in the future.

CHB: Wants to see good public engagement with the neighbors. Because we have given an hour and forty minutes to this topic, which is longer than we usually grant to topics at this meeting. We will not accept more comments at this time. I would like to close this item.

Public Comment from Zoom Chat:

Bob Atchinson (he, him, his) 06:12 PM

If you expand the capability of the airport, then are you not inviting more polluting flights? I.e. build it and they will come?

Also, it is VERY important that you carefully assess the upstream and downstream impacts of "sustainable" aviation fuels. When you create biofuels from something, such as soy oil, then you upset the food chain, and spread the impacts worldwide.

Staff instructed this participant to follow up with councilors as there was no time to answer this question in person.

Closed at 6:41 PM

5. GMT Proposed FY24 Budget and Regional Funding

- Nick Foss, Chapin Spencer

Chapin Spencer:

CS: From the last meeting we started talking about FY24. We brought this forward to the committee because with the reduction of COVID funds we are facing a situation where GMT is proposing to reinstate fares. Nick has been great at providing information and data so that is why he has joined me today.

Nick Foss

NF: The proposed budget will be brought before the finance committee next month, hopefully for approval. Looking at Burlington's assessment, we take the most recent fiscal years ride count and our cost estimation and allocate that. We have seen incredible increases with SSTA. This fiscal year, we are projecting an increase in capital costs. Last year, Winooski faced a big hit and this year it appears to be Burlington. We are working on our assessment now and we want to work with everyone to create a fair solution.

See provided presentation.

CB: I am curious about the ADA increase. Is this an increase in the numbers of people?

NF: We do know that ride count is up. ADA numbers are even higher than pre-pandemic numbers. With changes to the Medicaid funding, our funding is reduced.

CB: I want to know what we can do to keep fare free in Burlington.

CS: My thought is that we request two things: one to initiate a reform to the ADA assessment and two to recommit to advancing state and regional funding.

CB: I feel that the utility fee is sensible. I think we can be acting faster on this.

CHB: The increases are based on last year?

NF: Based on FY23

CS: The members of the committee can sponsor this without approving it.

CB: Ask staff to assemble a resolution focused on funding

CS: Great

Sponsored by Councilor Bergman and seconded by Councilor Barlow

Closed at 7:05

6. CSWD Drop Off Center Strategy

- Chapin Spencer

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/Agendas/SupportingDocuments/Joint%20DPW%20CSWD%20Memo%20on%20195-201%20Flynn%20Ave%2011-18-22%20TUEC%20with%20attachments.pdf>

CS: We are seeking a 6-month extension on their current MOU with CSWD. There is interest in a parent alignment between our organizations for a purchase agreement. This will improve soil management. Burlington deserves a modern drop off center and this gives us time to negotiate a drop off center at Flynn Ave.

CHB: Are there any barriers to this happening?

CS: The cost is a potential barrier. We are having committee time for these negotiations

Approved by Councilor Bergman and seconded by Councilor Barlow.

Closed at 7:10

7. Boundary Line Adjustments for the Pearl and Prospect Intersection

- Phillip Peterson, Laura Wheelock

https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/Agendas/SupportingDocuments/TEUC%20Memo%20-%20Boundary%20Line%20Adjustments%20for%20the%20Pearl%20and%20Prospect%20Intersection_0.pdf

PP: This is looking at the intersection of Pearl and Prospect. This is a high crash location. It is the 25th worst in the state. We would like to get a signer on board and create a non-binding MOU to adjust the property lines between the city and UVM.

LW: On one side of the intersection, we are looking to sell, and on the other side we are looking to buy the land from UVM.

PP: It is not a "swap". We would be selling and buying. We are working with the attorney's office on this.

CHB: This would allow us to straighten out this intersection?

CS: Correct. This would create a safer intersection and a more efficient intersection. This is informational only. This is timed well with the University Place construction.

CB: Make sure you are prioritizing bike safety here.

PP: Certainly.

LW: We bring this to you because we may need to bring this to a Board of Finance meeting and want the TEUC to be informed.

Approved by Councilor Bergman and seconded by Councilor Barlow.

Closed at 7:18

7. Councilors' Update

CHB: Appreciative of completion of North Ave paving. Some puddling on North Ave where roadway meets driveways during first big storm but that appears to have been addressed afterwards with additional paving work.

Closed at 7:20

8. Next Meeting 12/19/22 before sundown

9. Adjourn

Councilor Bergman motions to adjourn. Seconded by Councilor Barlow. Passes unanimously. Meeting ends 7:26 PM.