



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

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**Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee of the City Council**

**Tuesday, March 23, 2021 5:30 PM**

**–Minutes–**

Councilor Attendees: Franklin Paulino, Jack Hanson, Jane Stromberg

**Meeting called to order by Councilor Paulino and started at 5:34 PM.**

**1. Agenda**

- **FP** Motion to adopt agenda
- **JH** Second to adopt
- All in favor, agenda passes

**2. Minutes of 1/26/2021**

- **FP** Motion to approve minutes
- **JH** Second to approve
- All in favor, passes

**3. Public Forum**

- There was one public comment made.
  - o **Michael Nedel** – Neighborhood greenway planters and quickbuild bumpouts look bad with wear and tear, peeling paint, graphite, accumulated garbage from lack of street cleaning. These require better maintenance or permanent build outs.

**4. Consolidated Collection**

- **Director Chapin Spencer:** Staff is here to seek the committee's input and questions this month and the committee's recommendation at the April meeting for future City Council consideration. Maintenance Division Director Lee Perry will provide overview.
- **Lee Perry** summarized key points from memorandum. Staff evaluated a municipally operated consolidated collection plan which includes staff resources increased to support program, new facility, new vehicles, equipment, billing structure.
- **CS** our initial projections indicate that municipally operated model is relatively cost competitive to a franchised model (less so on the opt out scenario). Upfront capital costs for a new facility, expanded billing capacity and additional new full-time employees drive costs for this model. We need to determine if this is a priority for the City as establishing such a large and capital intensive enterprise would not be easy and would likely impact other City priorities. There continues to be a strong appetite for additional public services but the City struggles with constrained funding – especially these days. Today we are seeking your input and questions.
- **FP** Sees as good news and not cost prohibitive. Great opportunity to control cost, provide jobs, increase staff flexibility. Unique program to Burlington.

- **JH** Appreciates analysis. Exciting opportunity. Seems feasible. What impact would it have on other operations such as negative impact on transportation initiatives? Hesitant to make decision today.
- **FP** only informative tonight. Decision in April. Just show support tonight and prioritize.
- **CS** looking to better understand TEUC's perspective to eventually make recommendation for full Council approval. No additional report will be provided.
- **FP** if there was money does DPW think realistically this could be done?
- **CS** Recognizing Burlingtonians will likely want option to opt out, this increases municipal cost to customers more than franchise model. Needs further public input, more detailed review and evaluation of different billing options if committee wants to seriously consider this model.
- **JS** what would option be if opt out?
- **LP** self drop off at a CSWD drop off center.
- **JS** where did 25% threshold come from?
- **LP** based on consultant GBB survey of City residents.
- **CS** 25% allows for conservative model.
- **JS** do we need to allow opt out?
- **CS** this is a policy decision by Council. Would lower cost without opt outs, but does not give option to residents.
- **JH** why not 15% comparison? Could the City easily run this model? It would be helpful.
- **LP** the 15% numbers from franchise were adjusted to show 25% comparison.
- **JH** Cost is worth it for benefits. Jobs going to unionized, well paid, local employees rather than large corporation.
- **JS** agrees with JH
- **Gene Bergman** Resident pleased with Councilors' comments and initial DPW work. In favor of municipal option.
  - o Chart on page 5 shows Flynn option is within \$0.13 of franchise option.
  - o Even conservative plan shows it is feasible.
  - o Comparing 15% to 15% for municipal and franchise would be good.
  - o Significant benefits with municipal model. Strengthens City's middle class. City workers paid well and unionized. City's responsibility to ensure strong middle class.
  - o There is revenue stream from this. Franchise puts profit in public hands.
  - o Municipal option adds capacity to DPW staff.
  - o No backing that private haulers could sue City.
  - o No basis for private haulers not needing to expand facilities to take on Burlington market.
  - o Skeptical that the municipal program would hinder other City operations.
  - o Cost for monitoring franchise option is not considered.
  - o S Burl considering franchise system could increase monopoly potential.
  - o We are in good position to run this self-sufficient program proposed. More privatization of public services is not in public interest.
- **Kia Mikkil Forline** – 20 year Duplex owner in Burlington. Owner occupied and rented. In favor of municipal option.
  - o Statewide monopoly potential if private.
  - o Cost are up 20% over past 4 years for his private curbside service.
  - o Bi monthly collection helps reduce cost. DPW should show this option.
  - o Trash pickup is much less needed with composting and recycling in place. Could reduce cost this way.
  - o Current waste hauler accesses backyard to get waste. This is a nice service and would like to see this continue.
  - o Offer different volume containers as ways to reduce cost.

- Separate concern with single collection of all recycling types. Separate recycling is done elsewhere in VT and would like to see this option here.
- **FP** moves that the City should prioritize running a consolidated collection system.
- **JS** Supportive of giving this direction, seconds motion.
- **JH** comfortable with this motion knowing there will be bigger conversation next month and that this is just a general motion indicating overall support of consolidated collection.
- Motion passes unanimously

## 5. Greenride Bikeshare Update (See Attachment)

- **Director Capin Spencer:** City is one of many partners developing this regional system. Close to launching.
- **Rob Goulding:** Last TEUC update about this was at the onset of pandemic, which disrupted this rollout.
  - E bikes highlighted in PlanBTV.
  - Wanted to make this as affordable as possible.
  - Local connection is built in with this agreement through things such as livable wage requirements.
  - Protections for City's interest built into this contract:
    - No financial cost to the City.
    - One year contract with option to not renew.
    - Key performance standards set.
    - Important community stake holder protections included.
  - GOTCHA is out of business and acquired by BOLT – a better capitalized company
    - They own and manage their own technology which addressed some concerns with GOTCHA
  - Staff sees this is a reasonable model. It is a very similar contract to the one we brought forward in 2019.
- **FP** would have been nice to have more E bikes during covid. In support of this. Drop off/Pick up options are great.
- **Brian Davis, CCRPC:** Here to support City and answer questions. RG provided overview of regional system.
- **Rick Sharp** – Burlington Segway's owner. Opposed to proposal with big out of state company. Would drain local bike stops. GOTCHA bikes were not used for point to point transportation but more for joy rides. Took rides out to Causeway and saw dozens of GOTCHA bikes out at the causeway. Buy local first. Suggestions:
  - Free vendor hub on the waterfront has to be removed and replaced with sign to direct users to local bike shops.
  - Geofence E bikes so that they can't be used on greenway or at a minimum beyond the Winooski bridge.
  - Personally rented out E bikes last summer showing a demand for use out to causeway.
  - Recommends keeping membership only model and eliminate pay as you go model.
  - Double the fee after one hour so it's more expensive to take E bikes out to Causeway so this business could still go to local bike shops.
- **JH** Concerns with pricing - previous contract didn't compete as directly with local bike shops by making first hour very cheap so it was attractive to take a point to point trip to displace trips not recreation. Do we have side by side of this pricing?
- **RG** Reference Attachment G – User Fees. Reported that City staff expressed strong desire to GOTCHA that we needed escalated pricing model to deter long rides. We have conveyed this message to BOLT. We don't yet have escalating pricing, but contract says this will be considered when partners consider contract renewal.

- **JH** concerned this was so much more affordable with previous proposal. This needs to be accessible and attractive to deter vehicle trips. Why has price increased?
- **RG** we want to strike right balance between not taking from local businesses and also making them accessible. We were disappointed in price increase but the industry has changed and GOTCHA went out of business. Is this the right system and price for Burlington? This could be determined after there is data to evaluate. BOLT is willing to work with us for equity concerns. Need to do a good job of attracting all types of riders for equity.
- **JH** short rides should be really affordable and we should press BOLT on this. No concerns with recreational use if this is made to be expensive to not compete with local businesses. Increase subsidies for low income. On membership access or pay as you go, subsidies need to be looked into or the issue of equity is not addressed.
- **JS** agrees. People will not use if expensive so this needs to be cheaper. Accessibility is number one. Don't want this to be an elite project. The more we promote cycling and other forms of transportation the more demand will increase so don't see it as competing with local businesses.
- **Zandy Wheeler** would love to see proposed rates. Interested in comments from JH and JS. Share the vision and desire to have connected and low emission community. Need to have escalated pricing. Promote this to the right groups in addition to price. Concerned about low monthly rate to then use as recreation.
- **JP Coseno** North Star worker. 90% of bikes aren't in areas where people are commuting from, they are downtown. Using E bikes on waterfront is concern. Tourists ask for rental price and then walk out and get E bike with no helmet. B Cycle reached out to ask me about what I knew about the local bike share and they expressed concerns about amount of trips used in one hub. They didn't see it as point to point system. JH was right by saying this should encourage people to do short point to point trips. Affordable long trips are the issue and takes single E bike out of commission for many other users. B Cycle didn't think it was viable as it was now, due to lack of people using hubs aside from waterfront. B Cycle said it needed more capital annually from other cities and more people using the system to work. I don't want it to be used as a rental system.
- **FP** agrees long term rentals should be higher price point. Next steps?
- **CS:** This item was meant as update today. 2019 Council approval enables our community to move forward with this contract. We have sought to respond to issues raised tonight. Limited to one year contract. No cost to regional partners. Escalated pricing is considered in contract renewal. College Street waterfront hub was removed. Doubled the number of bikes and increased hubs to make more accessible. Made clear to vendor that if they don't address these concerns in this first year of operation, we will find someone else. Input has been helpful. We are all trying to achieve the same goal of developing more sustainable transportation system. We hear your input about this system being transportation orientated and having escalating pricing. We will convey this to the vendor as we move forward.
- **JH** does not want to lose sight that this is exciting and amazing project. We need to push harder on these concerns. Recognize BOLT is for profit business so we need to negotiate on behalf of public. Next steps?
- **CS** we are less than 30 days from launch if all goes as planned. Bikes arrived in Burlington today. We will continue to push BOLT on the equity offerings and they have indicated a willingness to consider additional commitments on this front. Outside of this, we do not believe there is additional flexibility on the contract.
- **Brian Davis** – as FP said, adding bikes will change the dynamic for Burlington, So. Burl and Winooski and rebalance the system. Echoes concerns with equity and can push BOLT on this. We asked BOLT to consider escalated pricing and waiting to hear back.
- **FP** closes item.

## 7. Director's Report

- **CS** Defer until next month. Thanks FP for his service as a City Councilor and TEUC member.

## **8. Councilors' Update**

- **FP** been an honor to see into DPW and all that's done. Hopes to continue input into these types of issues. Great to be a part of this.
- **JS** thank you DPW for the work done and all that we do to keep things moving smoothly in a progressive healthy way for the City. Appreciation for FP and working with them.
- **JH** thank you to FP and whole team here. Hope to return to this committee and will do what I can to get back on for next term. Riding on S Winooski and wondering where things are with that south of Main St. Thought plan was to remove parking and add another bike lane.
- **CS** it was installed last fall but worn off by winter. Parking was removed on one side from S Winooski between Main and King. Once we restripe, hopefully in May, this bike lane will be restored.

## **9. Next Meeting**

## **10. Adjourn**

- Councilor Paulino moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Councilor Hanson.
- All in favor passed unanimously.
- Adjourned at 7:17 PM.