



Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging  
149 Church Street  
Burlington, VT 05401  
M: 802-503-2513

**REIB City Council Committee**  
**February 22, 2023 5:00pm – 7:00pm**  
**Sharon Bushor Room, 149 Church St, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor City Hall, Burlington VT**

### Minutes

**Attendance:**

Sydney VanTassel, Kim Carson, Ali Dieng, Emiliano Void, Belan Antensaye, Mohamed Jafar, Katie Greene, Ines Castro, Maea Brandt and Perri Freeman.

**Link to Meeting Recording:**

[https://zoom.us/rec/share/QCf-OHOdoupwGCiTK\\_vEfr2i65RnI\\_bv8Ghm1QNK6BkMzYSc36aes9jbGILUPGh.opISv2KeVIG6R3U8](https://zoom.us/rec/share/QCf-OHOdoupwGCiTK_vEfr2i65RnI_bv8Ghm1QNK6BkMzYSc36aes9jbGILUPGh.opISv2KeVIG6R3U8)

**Passcode:** u129n\$!j

**Start Time:**

5:11 PM

1. Motion to approve the agenda  
Ali Dieng motions to approve agenda, Perri Freeman seconds.
2. Motion to approve the meeting minutes [January 17, 2023](#)  
Ali Dieng motions to approve minutes, Perri Freeman seconds.
3. Public Forum  
Ines Castro introduces their role as Board of Health member.  
Melo Grant introduces herself.
4. REIB Department Update  
Kim Carson shares about how the REIB Office continues to work on the Strategic Road Map and the reorganization of the office. Ali Dieng asks about the work of the Reparations Task Force and Kim Carson describes how the task force is honing in on the scope to identify individuals to support the work for the task force at the next meeting. Ali Dieng asks about department budgets, and Kim Carson shares that during the month of March and April, the office will be working on the budget.



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#### 5. The Black Experience Discussion

Ali Dieng asks about changes in the composition of the Black Experience and shares that he brought this up at Board of Finance. He describes feelings of lack of representation of other black people in the event.

Emiliano Void shares how the Black Experience project outline and information has been shared since November 2022 and how conversations have been going on for months. Emiliano Void questions motives and concerns about the Black Experience and asks about why the concerns weren't shared earlier.

Ali Dieng describes communications last year and lack of representation from the New American community. Emiliano Void shares that moving forward, they will be working to celebrate different groups of people. Void shares that each year the lineup for community organizations is different and asks about Ali Dieng's prior involvement in the programming. Void shares preference of communication through conversations, emails, and phone calls rather than the REIB CC meeting three days prior to event.

Ali Dieng asks about programming for the Black Experience, and Emiliano Void describes the components of the day, including healthcare, transportation, free participant cost, 1,000 people registered, food, and performers. Void shares that the interaction they have had with the City has been problematic and have experienced pushback last year and this year.

Perri Freeman asks about Angela Davis and Maea Brandt asks about pushback. Discussion about role of public city officials, community members, and city councilors. Emiliano shares that interactions with city council have been about who the performers are and are not. Perrie Freeman shares appreciation of the work Void's done.

Ali Dieng clarifies that requests should come through the REIB Committee and after, the REIB Department would request funding from BOF. Kim Carson provides clarification about the Black Experience and its connection to Black History Month, as well as concerns with Alice Walker and Angela Davis. Carson explains the fiscal sponsorship agreement. Maea Brandt asks what Emiliano Void about support and suggests press support. Kim Carson clarifies there has been press coverage of this event.



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Perri Freeman describes past challenges with pitting black New American communities against black Americans. Freeman describes she has observed how Ali Dieng has brought this up before and is unsure how to navigate the conversation of the broader issue of the culture of white supremacy.

Kim Carson describes programming with OKAY!!OKAY!!, the Black Experience, and the REIB team. This includes Juneteenth, MLK Day, Black History Month, and looking at all federal and state holidays, as well as working with communities in a way that they see fit. Kim Carson would like to change line item for Juneteenth in REIB Budget to Community Events in FY 24.

Mohamed Jafar shares about youth empowerment committee aimed at involving New American youth. Emiliano Void describes working together in the future and inclusivity. Ines Castro shares that she has learned from this conversation and the culturally expansive work. Melo Grant shares about issues with the City of Burlington and communication with everyone in Burlington. Grant shares about the A\_Dog Day observance and paying tribute to the BIPOC Burlingtonian's contribution to this community. Kim Carson shares about the process of getting information from different communities and moving forward, the REIB Office should be seen as the first stop to programming and events.

#### 6. REIB Committee Mission Statement- Discussion

Ali Dieng introduces the draft of the Mission Statement, quoted below.

"The Mission of the Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee is to promote Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in all aspects of our municipal government in collaboration with the Office of REIB, all city departments of the City of Burlington and our community partners via *genuine intentional* community engagement, dismantling any barriers to a sense of belonging, and policy creation for a just, fair and inclusive city for all."

Together, city councilors and the REIB Director and staff gave suggestions, including the following:

- 'through its support of the REIB office' to...



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- Provides voice and agency through community engagement...
- Direct access to city government.
- Language about Inclusion from Annual Report

Committee discusses reviewing the draft mission for the next REIB Council Committee meeting in March.

Ali Dieng discusses Parks and Recreation programming for BIPOC residents. Kim Carson shares that the REIB Office will have a vetting process for programming in the future to be shared with all department heads. She shares about working with city departments to collaborate with BIPOC specific programming.

Ines Castro shares that the Board of Health calls themselves as an advisory group for their mission. Ali Dieng shares the difference between boards, committees, and commissions.

7. Appreciations for Councilors Freeman and Brandt, for their service to the city and the REIB Committee

Ali Dieng gives thanks to Councilor Freeman and Brandt. Ali Dieng also thanks Belan Antensaye for her service with the City.

8. Community Forum  
No Comment

Ali Dieng discusses the retention of BIPOC city employees and concerns around that. Kim Carson shares about her work with the HR Department to talk about barriers and experience, as well as training.

Next meeting is March 21<sup>st</sup> 2023 in the Sharon Bushor Room at 5:00 PM

Next agenda should include: Mission Statement, REIB Updates, and Sparks to talk about violence targeting students of color in schools.

Ali Dieng asks about Board of Health's resolution for policing. Ines Castro shares that



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Jennifer T. and Selia Bird are the subcommittee and created that solution and Castro would be happy to facilitate that connection.

9. Motion to Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Dieng, Brandt seconds.

**End Time: 6:32**

**Minutes by Sydney VanTassel**