



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT

**CITY COUNCIL Racial Equity, Inclusion, and  
Belonging Committee**

c/o Community & Economic Development Office

City Hall, Room 32 • 149 Church Street • Burlington, VT 05401

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Councilor Ali Dieng, Chair, Ward 7 (AD)

Council Chair Max Tracy, Ward 3 (MT)

Staff:

REIB: Director Tyeastia Green (TG)

Office of the City Attorney: Jared Pellerin (JP)

CEDO: Marcella Gange (Committee Staff)

Members of the public speaking – see below in ‘Open Forum Discussion’

**Tuesday July 20<sup>th</sup> 2021 5:30pm – 7:00pm**

**In- person meeting:**

**Bushor Conference Room – 1<sup>st</sup> Floor City Hall, 140 Church St, Burlington, 05401**

**Draft Minutes**

In person meeting called to order at 5.34pm

1. **Motion to approve the Agenda**, proposed MT and second AD – approved unanimous
2. **Motion to approve [Minutes 05/18/21](#)** tabled to next meeting as MT was not part of the May meeting
3. **Public Forum** –no members of the public spoke
4. **Exploration of REIB Commission** (City Attorney Office). JP spoke to the process that would be required to create a commission, including that this committee discuss and provide language to create a scope of work of any commission – the need, area of oversight etc. The CAO would provide an analysis of the proposal. Creation of a commission requires a charter change and JP outlined that process, including a ballot vote and subsequent action at State level. JP advised that an ad-hoc sub-committee could be considered. It might not have the same legal standing as a commission but it could still give guidance, recommendations, and drive considerations through the process from committee to city council to ballot.

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Contact Marcella Gange at [mgange@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:mgange@burlingtonvt.gov) or 802 865 7178

Discussion with committee members MT and AD on the background to this question and decision to have wider discussion at future meeting. No action today.

- 5. Update REIB Strategic Plan (REIB Director)** TG presented the strategic plan document, including the grounding values and budget allocation request. The plan is focused on changing culture, systems change, and targeted universalism.

Discussion between AD and TG on general public education for racial equity. This was not part of the contract for planning purposes. There is an internal staff training plan. There is a need for constituent support for the plan and for systems change.

MT: Has there been a consideration of broader diversity strategic plans issued by other cities and BTV's own earlier plan?

TG: This strategic plan is focused on racial equity, to really focus the work for systemic change and avoid the broadening that may have caused failure of other plans or projects. Recognizing intersectionality and having staff working on all areas of diversity is imperative. The contract and product was focused on racial equity, to do otherwise would be unfair to the consultant and recipient as too unfocused.

MT: The lower staffing and funding levels of earlier efforts was a critical factor but this seems to be a realistic level of support. Appreciative of work and effort and excited that we have the funds to staff and support the work. Is this being presented to City Council and have you identified short term wins – for a sense of urgency? Is engagement and collaboration with other departments foreseen?

TG: Important to engage Council regularly and plan to be presented to CC, shortly. The funding supports will need to increase considerably and CC will need to support increased funds to demonstrate support. REIB needs the support of other departments and wants to work with those who are passionate and able to do the work.

- 6. Open Forum Discussion**

Sandy Baird: Spoke to the need for BTV to support the upcoming resolution on solidarity with Palestine and reminded the CC that Burlington includes Bethlehem among its sister cities.

Wafic Faour: Presented on the background to the resolution of support and solidarity with the Palestinian people that will be introduced at the next REIB Committee meeting. (No copy provided) Made a statement on current Israeli Gov. action in Gaza and the impact of current and previous

action upon Wafic Faour and his family. Asked that Burlington recognize this injustice and vote in support of the resolution.

Mark Hughes: The Racial Justice Alliance stands in support of the resolution in solidarity with Wafic and the organization. Made a statement about that support, recognized the impact of systemic racism across the globe and urged Council members to support the resolution.

Christopher Helali: Not a Burlington resident but recognizes this could be a profound action on the part of Burlington, to support this resolution. Made a further statement of support and solidarity with the Palestinian people and requested that councilors take supporting action.

Ashley Smith: Burlington resident, thanked Wafic for the reminder of the Sisters of Mercy who stood up for social justice and called upon the Councilors to do the same. Applauded young Palestinian activists leading the way and reminded the councilors they too could be leading the way.

Hannah Rose: Made a statement that they did not consent to being filmed by Israeli media (TV camera present). This filming and occupation follows Hannah everywhere and has affected education and life. Called for support for the resolution and reminded Councilors of the support the resolution has within their constituencies.

7. Vote to Adjourn, proposed by MT, second by AD – unanimous  
Meeting adjourned at 6:50pm.