



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT
CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT &
NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
c/o Community & Economic Development Office
City Hall, Room 32 • 149 Church Street • Burlington, VT 05401
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Councilor Brian Pine, Chair, Ward 3

Councilor Adam Roof, Ward 8

Councilor Karen Paul, Ward 6

Attendance: Committee Members: Chair Brian Pine, Councilor Karen Paul, Councilor Adam Roof; Councilor Dave Hartnett, Councilor Jane Knodell; City staff: Noelle MacKay Stephanie Morse, Brian Lowe and Ian Jakus; Consultant, VB5: Sherry Carlson; Public: Katy Wallace, Charles Winkleman, Laura Hale, Katie Jickling, Kyle Dodson, YMCA,

Thursday, April 26th, 2018

5:30 –7:00 PM

Burlington Public Works Department- Conference Room - 645 Pine St.

Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order a 5:45 PM.

1. Review Agenda (5 minutes)

Adam Roof moves to adopt the agenda, Brian Pine seconds.

2. Public Forum (10 minutes)

Chair Brian Pine asked for a point of clarification about the role of CDNR in the Early Learning Initiative (ELI).

Noelle MacKay explained that we hope to get CDNR's input and feedback on grant guidelines before posting.

Katy Wallace a resident of Ward 5 and a board member of the Janet S Munt Family Room a parent/child center in existence for 30 years. The organization helps with children Birth to 6 many of whom have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACES). The Family Room is to provide this treatment for families not able to access full time child care, including parents who are learning English and there are no fees. Katy explained that this service is extremely important in mitigating the negative impacts of

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ACES down the road that the city will pay for one way or the other. Katy explained that under the current criteria the Family Room is not able to apply; they cannot even hire one staff person for \$50,000.

Charles Winkleman is a former preschool teacher in Burlington, and currently works in Winooski. He requested this grant does not get voted out of committee. He explained there is a significant labor shortage in the childcare field in Burlington and that qualified people are leaving. He does not believe the concerns of the early childhood community have been adequately included in the ELI. He would like to see in the grant proposal something that would address sustainability in early childhood education so that staff don't leave the city and can establish long term relationships with the families.

Laura Hale has spoke to many childcare providers and most want only to talk off the record because they are also in need of funding. What came up repeatedly is that the challenges that childcare providers are facing is more than just expansion Sarah Adams Kollitz Director of the Burlington Children's Space and Lisa Pollander Director of Sara Holbrook Community Center both spoke on the record. She stated that CCFAP childcare subsidies are stuck at 2008 market rates, causing programs to make up the difference of the actual cost of care. Most providers do not have a healthy ratio of full tuition paying families and most programs she spoke with said there was no way they could consider expanding at this time. The cost of doing so is near \$25,000 per child so a \$50,000 grant to expand is not enough. The providers she spoke with were asking for year over year funding for operational costs as well as advocacy for more child care subsidy from the state. Laura then read a written statement from Sarah Adams Kollitz who could not attend (Included as a separate document posted online) See link: <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/Agendas/SupportingDocuments/4.26.18%20Statement%20from%20BCS.pdf>

3. Early Learning Initiative – Update and discussion of the next funding round. Presentation by CEDO and VB5.

Noelle MacKay Director of CEDO introduced Brian Lowe who has transitioned to the Chief Innovation Officer for the City but will continue to work on the project and Stephanie Morse from CEDO who will be supporting the project and Sherry Carlson from VB5. Didi Harris is the lead for VB5 on the project but could not attend the meeting.

Brian Lowe responded to the public comments explaining that the \$50,000 threshold being too low is good criticism and that we might consider raising that, and agreed there should be more advocacy for increased funding from the state. He addressed the fact that the goal was for strategic investments to leverage additional funding and that down the road scholarships to help fill the gap in funding between CCFAP and the true cost of care would have a similar effect as operational funding. He clarified that the public funding for ELI was only allocated in the FY 18 budget; the money from the Permanent Fund and an anonymous donor did not go through the City and funded the majority of the work to date.

Noelle MacKay discussed the background of the effort over the past year and that it was intended for the initial focus on expansion to be followed on by the scholarship model. Based on past experience with grant programs she expressed concern that programs become dependent on operational funding, which is then only available on a limited basis and may not address all the needs in the of providers.

Sherry Carlson from VB5 discussed why they applied to work on the ELI, based on their past work for the state with the Make Way for Kids program. That program with similar criteria to the ELI created 400 new slots for childcare through a range of strategies such as examining tuition structures, coming together with other small programs to reduce overhead, and working with employers to get support, either

scholarships for their employees or other program support. Sherry expressed an understanding for the difficulties in operational budgets that are so prevalent, and believes a well-developed scholarship model will help fill the gap but also want to recognize that it's really hard to wait when the needs are urgent.

Sherry continued to summarize the efforts over the past year, through the grant application process which lead to the grant award to Full Circle Preschool that will add 4 infant toddler slots. She explained that there are many benefits beyond the grant that affect all 20 slots such as their application to the Vermont STARS program, they are working to be recognized as specialized care providers, and they are also working with VB5 to learn about the childcare assistance program. Sherry discussed some of the lessons learned and additional resources requested throughout the initial round; additional time was needed for expansion past one year, funds needed to support tuition scholarships, facility expansion planning, wage benefits, workforce recruitment and business planning for expansion projects. ELI has identified 3 or 4 projects on the horizon that could expand infant and childcare spots in the next few years. The strategy would look to provide funding to shore these programs up as they are looking to expand. This is similar to the strategy employed by The Reinvestment Fund in Philadelphia.

Brian Pine felt that if the money is not able to be utilized by organizations that are lacking stability that he is concerned the goal is only to setup to get more money. Brian doesn't believe this committee has authority other than to give advice. He pointed out that capacity money is something the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) has done for CHT in terms of support for core operating expenses so they could seek more funding. Brian stated he is not convinced that providing solid operational funding wouldn't help with this issue.

Laura Hale said because this is public money, the programs that serve the most vulnerable need public funding, and they especially cannot use the strategic funding dollars. Laura believes that some of the money should be set aside for the programs that cannot sustain themselves, and that it was completely fine if this operational support is in the form of scholarships.

Councilor Adam Roof summarized there are really three issues at play here - the issue of a mismatch between supply and demand (not enough slots), affordability (families cannot afford it), and organizations (a funding issue) with a small amount of money to address all of these issues. Councilor Roof provided his feedback that the \$50,000 minimum needs to be increased to at least \$100,000. He supported accelerating the scholarship phase as a way to address the affordability and funding issue. He suggested the strategic funding overlap with when the scholarship funding begins.

Sherry Carlson pointed out that the current grant application allows for amounts greater than \$50,000.

Councilor Karen Paul stated that if Burlington Children Space is barely hanging on then they can't grow. If they close, and we lose current positions, then we are trying to make up for positions that are lost. She expressed concern over the lack of adequate state funding and the need to make up that gap. She felt that the original group of stakeholders that was composed of various childcare providers should be reconvened.

Brian Lowe responded that there were differing opinions of the various stakeholders involved. The strategic investment model was selected because of the feedback the City Team received. It does feel like moving back toward the scholarship model might be the focus, even while keeping the capacity funding as an option. Brian clarified that the goal is to get back to City Council before FY18 closes to expend more of those funds before getting an allocation next year.

Charles Winkleman said he is concerned that phase 1 negatively affects phase 2. There seems to be many goals for phase 1 without a clear path to phase 2 that would be scholarship focused. He asked if the goal was to create spots for low income children or just creating spots for any children.

Councilor Karen Paul expressed concern about the funds not being spent, similar to Penny for Parks in the past, and that it should be made easier, at least for this year.

Kyle Dodson stated that for the YMCA they can subsidize the infant toddler care where other providers don't have the ability to do that. There is an opportunity there for the YMCA to utilize the ELI funds for expansion as they are planning for a new facility.

Jane Knodell stated that she is no longer on the board of the Family Room, so she has no conflict of interest and will be able to vote on this at City Council. She said the mistake made with ELI was that the goal was to create more slots and to be opposed to operating assistance. She stated that she will not vote for a budget that doesn't include provisions for the ELI to serve the most vulnerable people in our community because these are public dollars.

Kyle Dodson said that any funding for operational expenses should be sustainable and committed for some time. Often times pilot programs leave a huge hole when the funding ends.

Councilor Dave Hartnett said that we cannot allow the achievement gap to continue to grow and that there should be urgency in addressing it. Typically the children who will have ongoing difficulties and needs can be identified at a young age, and could be addressed earlier to the benefit of the schools. He said he supported ELI because it was strategic in nature. However we do it, this is public money and someone needs to be held accountable.

Adam Roof stated that the way that good programs come into existence is through iterative processes. It's completely reasonable to say that the first round went and there need to be adjustments. He suggested the administration define how the scholarship program will operate for the FY 19 budget.

Noelle MacKay responded to councilor Hartnett that we've only had a year to set up a brand new grant program. Whatever is not spent this year will go out with a scholarship model with a mix of some capacity and planning grants. She asked for understanding on the fact that CEDO and VB5 have only recently been involved.

Brian Lowe acknowledged that CEDO and VB5 just got this charge now, but that there was a much longer process. He said that he heard we should prioritize the scholarship model but not lose the capacity building aspect of the program. The city can't solve this problem but the goal is to mitigate the gap between state funding and the true cost of care. He stated that the earliest the recommendations for the next grant awards would be to bring it to the council would be June 18th.

Councilor Adam Roof moved that CDNR committee requests to prioritize a scholarship model that may help to address operational support and that the ELI provides a report for the CDNR committee in June.

Karen Paul seconded the motion with unanimous approval.

4. Plans for May Meeting (10 minutes)

Need to discuss Consolidated Plan in late May or early June. Date to be decided.
The meeting was adjourned at 7:40