



Minutes of the Burlington City Council Meeting Virtual Meeting 9:00am – Tuesday, January 12, 2021

The City Council of the City of Burlington held a regularly scheduled meeting remotely beginning at 9:00am on January 12, 2021. Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, this meeting was convened remotely via Zoom Webinar platform.

Mayor Ian Baltutis presided.

Council Members Present:

Mayor Ian Baltutis
Mayor Pro Tem Kathy Hykes
Council Member Robert Ward

City Manager Hardin Watkins
City Attorney David Huffman
Interim City Clerk Beverly Smith

Staff Present:

Council Member Harold Owen

Council Members Absent: Council Member Jim Butler

City Staff Present:

Jessica Arias, Scott Bibler, Peter Bishop, Jaime Joyner, Todd Lambert, Morgan Lasater, Tony Laws, Jay Mebane, Mike Nunn, Bob Patterson, Peggy Reece, Beverly Smith, Jeff Smythe, John Vernon, Russell Williams, Brian Long, Melanie Hawn, and Louisa Sholar

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Ian Baltutis

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Baltutis at 9:01am.

WELCOME & REVIEW OF TODAY'S AGENDA: Hardin Watkins, City Manager

City Manager Watkins welcomed and congratulated our representatives on the election. He opened the floor for Council Member introductions.

Introductions of City Council Members:

Mayor Ian Baltutis and Council Members present briefly introduced themselves and congratulated our representatives.

**Introductions of North Carolina General Assembly – Alamance County Representation
2021-2022 Session**

The state representatives provided brief introductions and shared the following messages:

Senator Amy S. Galey expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet with City of Burlington. She stated she was a former Alamance County Commission Chair prior to her election to Senator. She stated the committees appointed to her are the judiciary committee, education, state and local government, and appropriations for judiciary.

Representative Ricky Hurtado stated he was recently elected to House District 63 with no committee appointments yet but once assigned will share that with City of Burlington. He shared local government is a passion of his and a large portion of his grad school career was dedicated to focusing on urban policy

and planning. He stated he was excited to be a part of this exciting time in Burlington and Alamance County as it continues to grow.

Representative Dennis Riddell shared this term is his fifth, 2-year term elected and expressed enjoyment for the eight years of service thus far. He provided his career background, family, and stated his current committee assignment is renewing his chairmanship of the House Regulatory Reform Committee. He stated he's asked to be returned to the House Appropriations, House Elections, House Energy and Public Utilities, and Education K12 committees.

Introductions of Senior City Staff

The following senior leadership for the City of Burlington provided formal introductions.

City Attorney David Huffman
Assistant City Manager Rachel Kelly
Assistant City Manager Nolan Kirkman
Animal Services Director Jessica Arias
Information Technology Director Scott Bibler
Economic Development Director Peter Bishop
Human Resources Director Jaime Joyner
City Engineer Todd Lambert
Community Engagement Manager Morgan Lasater
Recreation and Parks Director Tony Laws
Fire Chief Jay Mebane
Director of Planning and Transportation Mike Nunn
Water Resources Director Bob Patterson
Director of Finance & Risk Management Peggy Reece
Interim City Clerk Beverly Smith
Police Chief Jeff Smythe
Public Information Officer John Vernon
Director of Inspections Russell Williams

TOPICS:

Assistant City Manager, Administrative Services Rachel Kelly provided an overview of past successes and collaborations with the state and reported on the following projects made possible with NCGA assistance:

- North Park Pool Renovation & Expansion - (seed money \$200,000 from NCGA – proposed by Senator Gunn)
- City Park Creek Remediation – Legislation passed (SL 2020-1406) that allocated \$837,755 of state funds (from old PFAS Recovery Fund) to pay for dissolving of the conservation easement for the creek. This means City will be able to remove overgrowth and restore it to a manageable condition for a public park. Senator Gunn also shepherded Jordan Lake Rules changes (a couple of years ago) that allowed a public safety exemption that enables work in the buffer if deemed necessary by law enforcement executive. The Department of Water Quality staff continues to work through all the intricate details with City staff to implement this much-needed action.

- Burlington Arboretum at Willowbrook Park (PARTF funds) – partnership with New Leaf Society for an amazing community facility upgrade – intended to be a regional draw
- Paramount Seat Replacement (included in Legislature-adopted budgeted but got lost in veto)
- Baseball in Burlington - MLB – Affiliated baseball remains in Burlington (letters of advocacy) Appalachian League partnership with Major League Baseball & USA Baseball

Ms. Kelly reported on the following future priorities on the horizon for Council and City priorities:

- Maple Avenue Corridor – Applied unsuccessfully for Federal BUILD grant funding in 2019 and 2020. Will apply in 2021 – firm commitment and participation from NCDOT would strengthen application
- Citywide Greenway buildout continues (walkability/ bicycling improvements are a priority)
- Burlington-Alamance Airport Development/ Support – ongoing needs for road improvements at 62 & Anthony Road (intersection & leveling out hill on Anthony Road)
- Economic Development Site Readiness – priorities are advance work and infrastructure investments in Site #2, Site #3, and Keck Estate
- Old City Landfill on Anthony Road – working with state on remediation of pre-regulatory landfill – believe this land will contribute positively to development potential of Keck Estate and airport prospects
- Broadband Improvements – Downtown, East Burlington, North Burlington have needs
- PFAS Monitoring – ongoing concern (threatened lawsuit) by Haw River Assembly – letter of agreement exists now – involves effluent into Haw River (especially at the East Burlington Wastewater Plant) and land application of sludge onto farm fields in the region
- City Occupancy Tax – would like to seek permission to increase tax by 3% in line with other communities along I-85 corridor to help fund tourism-related improvements in Burlington. City is willing to work cooperatively with other Alamance cities but would like to establish a separate TDA to ensure funding that aligns with city goals and priorities.
- Moorefield Building Renovation/Paramount Expansion – although this is lower on the priority list, there was past legislative interest in the Paramount Theater funding and support. If arts and culture capital funding is available, the City would be interested in pursuing assistance with renovations to the old floral shop as usable public space attached to the Paramount lobby.

Council Member Owen stated the City Occupancy Tax is critical to the City of Burlington and the Alamance Road widening and expansion to the south which is helpful to economic development with benefits to Burlington and corporate limits to Graham.

Senator Galey inquired conversations had been pursued with the TDA for use of Occupancy Tax dollars to be used for the Paramount expansion and suggested the funding source possibilities for the support of cultural arts. She requested additional information on broadband improvements to north Burlington area.

Assistant City Manager Nolan Kirkman responded to the broadband improvements and challenges for the installation and costs per month to businesses downtown and noted a shared broadband service would be

ideal. He explained there may be limitations statutorily, potential streetscapes projects needed in the downtown area, and the need for shared broadband network that doesn't include underground connection.

Mayor Baltutis commented on a recent visit by he and Mayor Pro Tem Hykes to the Town of Salisbury where they saw a public-private partnership and expressed interest in that for the 21st century Burlington and as a benefit to the county/region.

Mayor Pro Tem Hykes stated one of the issues is allowing cities to start their own systems, which is currently prohibited, and not certain how Salisbury got around that, but would like to see additional options to allow cities to do better jobs with broadband would be very helpful.

Representative Hurtado stated he is familiar with broadband discussions overheard in Wilson, NC and is curious to learn more about what was learned from Salisbury.

Mayor Baltutis stated the City is looking for collaborative opportunities to move forward with broadband with all areas of our region.

Representative Hurtado inquired about the City's efforts on PFAS monitoring.

Water Resources Director Bob Patterson addressed the City's efforts in identifying PFAS and response to reach an agreement with the Haw River Assembly to monitor and test influent and effluent, expanding that to seek potential sources so the City can work with our industries on contributors to find a replacement chemical in hopes of reducing PFAS at the source.

Assistant City Manager Rachel Kelly and City Manager Hardin Watkins provided an overview of the NC League of Municipalities goals submission and shared the following key City goals and priorities of interest to the City of Burlington:

- A. Grant local governments authority to build broadband infrastructure in order to partner with private providers (COVID impacts have demonstrated need – slow and unreliable service hampers educational and professional opportunities)
- B. Expand incentives and funding for local economic development (flexibility)
- C. Revitalize vacant and abandoned properties with enhanced legal tools and funding
- D. Increase state & federal funding for affordable housing
- E. Create a permanent & adequate funding stream for local infrastructure needs
- F. Ensure state funding for any new, state-mandated benefits for municipal employees
- G. Improve state-wide funding and support to Law Enforcement Officer training focuses on use of force, mental health, and de-escalation skills.
- H. Extend notification timeline for any changes to sales tax revenue disbursement
- I. Reduce pressure on property taxpayers by expanding locally controlled options for revenue generation.
- J. Increase in state funding to support public transportation development operations)

Representative Riddell mentioned the representation in Raleigh from the league and stated they are very knowledgeable, very competent, and stated what is presented can be readily presumed that it's been well vetted and enforced. He stated the league has a good, and well respected, presence in Raleigh.

Review of City Priorities and NC Association of Chiefs of Police Goals

Police Chief Jeff Smythe explained the following goals for the City's police department:

- A. Support permitting of automatic license plate readers in state right of way. They are currently allowed on City right of way and private property with permission.
- B. Delay required certification of police telecommunicators to July 1, 2022 due to COVID impacts.
- C. Oppose 10 proposals from Governor's Task Force
- D. Support 5 proposals from NCACP, NC Sheriff's Association, and House Select Committee
- E. Oppose proposals from PBA and/or FOP regarding "Police Officer Bill of Rights," "whistleblower" protection concept, dedicated seat on Criminal Justice Standards Commission, and their request for repeal on state prohibition for local governments to recognize and bargain collectively under the NLRB with public employee unions.

Representative Hurtado requested the detailed explanation of the NC Association of Chiefs of Police Goals.

Chief Smythe responded he would email that to Representative Hurtado.

Chief Smythe announced recent notable awards received. He shared Lt. Katkowski was recognized by PERF, Lt. Balog was recognized as the Police Executive of the Year in 2020, and in 2017 the Bureau of Justice Assistance under the Department of Justice recognized the Burlington Police Department as the very best police department in America for officer safety and wellness.

Mayor Baltutis commented on the City's involvement with the Metro Mayors Coalition.

Senator Galey inquired about the automatic license plate readers and who uses those as well as the cost associated with the readers.

Chief Smythe responded its dependent upon the system of the cars, costs are approximately \$20,000 for a fixed site, and there are several cities around North Carolina that have them.

Council Member Owen expressed appreciation for the time our representatives spent with City of Burlington.

Senator Galey expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet with the City of Burlington.

Representative Riddell commented on the representation for the City of Burlington and stated he's well aware Burlington lost two favorite sons through Senator Gunn's retirement and Representative Ross not winning re-election and knows we've always had a sense of having strong advocacy in Raleigh because of that. He stated, Amy with her experience as a County Commissioner and Chair of the Commission, has certainly developed relationships with Burlington and across other municipalities in Alamance County and with himself having an eight year relationship that we will continue to build upon that's been very good and he wanted to thank the City for the good information. He continued that one of the things that probably is the most daunting in the job as a state representative, is sifting through all of the information that comes to you. He stated that he knows when he sits down with people from Burlington it's going to be fact based, evidence based, evidence driven and that's kind of the coin to the realm in Raleigh; good; sound information. He asked the City to keep up with the good information flow like this morning and

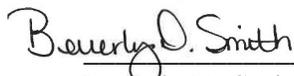
commented on the dramatic difference between the North Park Pool before & after and expressed he's glad they were able to assist in a small way and hopefully can do more things like that throughout the county. He said "thank you" for the good working relationship we've had, and we will continue to make it stronger in the two years ahead.

Representative Hurtado expressed appreciation for the information and opportunity to meet with City of Burlington. He recognized how excited people are about the City of Burlington and he is looking forward to being an advocate for Alamance County. He echoed Senator Galey and Representative Riddell on the excitement in the Burlington community. He commented on the challenges over the past year as a community, state and as a nation and hopes we can take the lead as a county in honoring all of those diverse perspectives and really recognize that diversity makes us stronger.

Senator Galey commented on the vaccine distribution and expressed appreciation to the City of Burlington for the collaboration and cooperation with Alamance County and she stated she really appreciates the support from Burlington.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17am.



Beverly D. Smith, NCCMC
Interim City Clerk

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