

THE WORK SESSION OF THE CITY OF BURLINGTON COMMON COUNCIL, COUNTY OF BURLINGTON, STATE OF NEW JERSEY, WAS HELD ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2025, AT 7:00 PM, IN THE CITY HALL, 525 HIGH STREET, BURLINGTON, NJ, PURSUANT TO THE OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT.

This meeting was called pursuant to the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Law. This meeting of September 9, 2025, was included in a list of meetings notice sent to the Burlington County Times and the Trenton Times on January 6, 2025, and advertised in said newspapers on January 10, 2025, posted on the bulletin board in the Municipal Building on January 6, 2025, and has remained continuously posted as the required notices under the Statute. In addition, a copy of this notice is and has been available to the public and is on file in the office of the Municipal Clerk.

Cindy A. Crivaro, RMC  
Municipal Clerk

The Municipal Clerk advised the public of the location of the two fire exits: one on the left after exiting the Council Chamber and the other being the entrance to the building.

Governing Body Members present: Dave Ballard, Dawn Bergner-Thompson, George Chachis, Timothy Hutton, Geneva Rijs, Richard Spaulding, Suzanne Woodard (7:05pm).

Also present: Mayor Barry Conaway, Administrator Johanna Conyer, Municipal Attorney Stuart Platt, Director of Housing Bill Harris, Director of Public Works Bill Curry (7:05pm), Police Chief Ryan Elbertson, City Engineer Bill Kirchner.

### **SALUTE TO FLAG**

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mary Wirth, 460 Locust Avenue – Noted belief that City Council has limited familiarity with the Faulkner Act and provided copies of it to the Council via the Municipal Clerk.

Harry Heck, 116 E. Union Street – Praised the City Police and Police Works for their excellent work during the well-attended Wood Street Fair, highlighting effective traffic management and the event's success.

Phil Augustyn, 307 High Street – Echoed Mr. Heck's praise for the success of the Wood Street Fair and thanked City Council for addressing a problematic slumlord in Burlington.

Ernestine Brown, 36 E. Federal Street – Expressed frustration over recent disrespectful comments aimed at the Business Administrator. Expressed concern over complaints at recent meetings.

Claudine Conaway, 110 James Street – Stressed the importance of putting notices in writing to ensure clarity and accountability, suggesting that verbal communication can be ignored. Advised the Council to stand firm against bullies, and that not all public comments should be taken into consideration.

Frank McDonell, 41 Pinewald Lane – Spoke of the rights of the residents to freedom of speech at Council Meetings voicing their opinions. Referenced the First Amendment.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilman Spaulding expressed disappointment over the lack of discussion on the Audit report, urged a comprehensive review (good, bad, neutral) at the next work session. Suggested to return the practice of posting the full Council Meeting agenda on the website, advocating for transparency. In response to public comments, emphasized Council's role in representing all citizens, questioning the Administration to ensure accountability, and stressed the importance of asking the right questions to the right people at the right time.

Councilman Chachis inquired about the target date for the new EV charging stations. (A: An ordinance is expected for first reading on September 16, 2025, per BA)

Councilwoman Woodard responded to an earlier public comment regarding the Faulkner Act, given Council's extensive experience serving as the governing body. Called for an investigation into leaks of confidential information disclosed from the closed session.

Councilwoman Rijs praised those involved with the Wood Street Fair, thanking the Police and Public Works departments for their efforts. Noted the successful start of City's Recreation Soccer program and encouraged community support. Thanked the City for paving Wall Street. Supported Councilman Spaulding's right to question, highlighting the Council's duty to be well-researched, responsive to residents, and compliant with the Faulkner Act while following their intuition.

Council President, Bergner-Thompson expressed gratitude to the Colonial Burlington Foundation for the successful efforts coordinating the annual Wood Street Fair, highlighted the upcoming Hops and Rocks 5k and Burlington Food Bank's upcoming events.

### **PRESENTATION**

Request for vacation of paper road between 300 Conover and 340 Ellis Street - Joe Pennise

#### Council Comments

Councilwoman Rijs inquired about the garage's history (A: 300 Conover Street was purchased first, but after learning that the garage was part of the 340 Ellis Street property, that was later purchased, per Mr. Pennise). Asked if the public was notified about vacating the alley, (A: Yes, through ordinance and formal notice, per Solicitor. Neighbors agreed to vacation, per Mr. Pennise). Asked for clarity on alley's length and whether only a portion of the alley would be vacated (A: Entire alley is over 100 feet in length. Neighbors do not want to additional 4 feet added to their lot, so only portion maintained by Pennise, roughly 30 feet, would be vacated, per Mr. Pennise). Questioned whether the tax map would be updated (A: Yes, per BA).

Councilman Ballard sought clarification on the alley's length, with Pennise confirming a length of approximately 180 feet.

Council President Bergner-Thompson asked whether City Officials/various departments agreed with vacation (A: No objections, per BA) and proposed an unofficial vote to advance the ordinance for a future agenda, which was moved by Councilman Chachis, seconded by Councilman Ballard. Thanked Mr. Pennise for coming and noted that Administration would follow up.

### **EXPLANATIONS**

#### **Construction and Code Enforcement Summary Reports – Administrator Conyer**

BA Conyer distributed the subject report:

#### **Council Comments**

Councilman Chachis asked if the data reflects a backlog from COVID-related delays (A: There's no backlog, clarifying that inspections any inspections that were not conducted during that period cannot be retroactively done; The City simply moves into a new inspection cycle, per BA). Inquired about staffing needs, noting BA's mention of needing three (3) employees. (A: New hires have come on board, but due to civil service constraints and lack of experienced candidates there are challenges, per BA).

Council President Bergner-Thomspon asked if unmaintained properties affect residents' flood insurance, referencing a letter from CME. (A: Unrelated to community rating system and does not impact flood insurance, per BA).

#### **Letter from CME & Associates RE: Notice of Application to the NJDEP for Permits related to the US Pipe Redevelopment Project –Administrator Conyer**

#### **Council Comments**

Councilman Chachis praised the Business Administrator for contributions to Brownfield Development, noting that the public may not fully understand its impact and what the Business Administrator has brought to help the City progress the project along.

Council President Bergner-Thomspon asked for clarification for the public on understanding of the Brownfield Development Area (BDA) (A: The City will receive \$5million/yr until the BDA is complete as well as receiving funding for other projects in connection such as site remediation and investigation... anticipate getting the entire project done with public dollars, per BA). Asked if the City is getting help with the development of Commerce Square (A: Yes, and there are discussions about the former Burlington Mart site, per BA). Highlighted receiving a survey and being on the committee in connection with the BDA.

Councilwoman Woodard requested clarification of acronyms, which BA provided and also made mention of plans to demolish two buildings at the US Pipe site, noting the Mayor's invitation to speak at the DEP quarterly roundtable.

Councilman Hutton expressed appreciation for the Business Administrator’s knowledge and contributions, while acknowledging the importance of enforcing the City codes and laws. Expressed pride in serving with the Council and focusing on positive progress for the City.

**REVIEW/UPDATE**

City Hall Roof Project – Mayor Conaway and Bill Kircher, City Engineer (ERI)

Council Comments

Councilwoman Rijs asked if the HVAC system involves splits (A: No, per Engineer). Asked if ventilation was being added (A: Yes, per Engineer).

Councilwoman Woodard noted that for the last 20 years, one side of the building has been either too hot or too cold. Inquired about the roof’s warranty since its last replacement (A: Warranty unlikely to have significant value after 20 years, per Engineer). Mentioned hearing that the building was poorly designed, (A: Modern designs would differ, per Engineer)

Councilman Hutton supported adding ventilation and replacing dormers, some of which serve no purpose a fact confirmed by the City Engineer. Asked If the HVAC is the original system (A: Like Frankenstein, per Director of Public Works, Bill Curry).

Council President Bergner-Thompson requested an evaluation of the HVAC system. Highlighted uncomfortably hot conditions in the building and stressed the need for good working environment for employees.

**SUBMISSIONS**

To-date Employee Hiring Report

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon the motion of Councilman Chachis, seconded by Councilwoman Woodard, this meeting of September 9, 2025, was adjourned.

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Cindy A. Crivaro, RMC  
Municipal Clerk

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Dawn Bergner-Thompson, President  
Common Council