



Racial, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Tuesday, July 21, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)

Held in the Sharon Bushor Conference Room, Ground Floor City Hall

OR

via Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/96324562039>

Meeting ID: 963 2456 2039

Or Use Phone number: 305-224-1968

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1. Call to Order

2. Approve Agenda & Minutes

Subject	2.1. June 2026
Meeting	July 21, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, July 21, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	2. Approve Agenda & Minutes
Department	Racial Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging (REIB)
Type	
Recommended Action	

3. Public Forum

4. REIB Office Updates

5. Committee Mission Statement & Meeting Agreements (action to approve)

6. State-Level Immigration Policy Updates and Local Implementation Planning (Guest: Erin Jacobsen, Vermont Asylum Assistance Project)

7. Police Chief Hiring Process Update

8. Aging Council Update

9. Adjournment

Subject	9.1. Motion to adjourn
Meeting	July 21, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, July 21, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	9. Adjournment
Department	Council and Board
Type	
Recommended Action	

10. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements

Subject	10.1. This agenda is available in alternative formats upon request. For more information on access, call Lori Olberg, Licensing, Voting and Records Coordinator (802-865-7136)(TTY 802-865-7142). Persons with disabilities who require assistance or special arrangements to participate are encouraged to contact 802-865-7000 (voice) or 802-865-7142 (TTY) at least 72 hours in advance so that proper arrangements can be made. This meeting will also air on Town Meeting TV the Wednesday after the meeting, starting at 8:00 pm and repeating at 1:00 am and 7:00 am the following day. The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status, crime victim status or genetic information.
Meeting	July 21, 2026 - REIB City Council Committee Meeting - Tuesday, July 21, 2026, 5:30 PM, Racial, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (REIB)
Category	10. Informational and Non-Discrimination Statements
Department	Council and Board
Type	

Minutes taken by Vicky Luciano

Attendees:

Christian Berry, Communications and Community Engagement Manager REIB (in person)

Councilor Laura Sanchez-Parkinson (in person)

Richard Hillard (in person)

Alexander (in person)

Erin Jacobsen (in person)

Kelli Perkins, Director REIB (online)

Loan Nguyen (online)

Tiffanie Katsuva (online)

Councilor Melo Grant (online)

Councilor Sarah Carpenter (online)

Maryan Maalin (online)

Mona Tolba (online)

- **Call to Order**

- Meeting Called to order at 5:40 pm

- **Approve Agenda & Minutes**

- Councilor Grant moved to approve the agenda and the minutes and Councilor Carpenter seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- **Public Forum**

- Richard Hilliard spoke about recent federal immigration policy changes regarding adjustment of immigration status. He shared his own experience and expressed concern over reports that many individuals may now be required to complete immigration processing outside the United States.
 - He noted that many affected individuals come from countries without U.S. embassies or consulates, creating significant barriers.
 - Encouraged the committee to consider both the humanitarian impacts and potential municipal planning implications for Burlington.
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson acknowledge growing uncertainty among immigrants, visa holders, and green card holders due to changing federal immigration policies. She noted that the scheduled presentation from the Vermont Asylum Assistance Project would provide additional context later in the meeting.
- Alexander, a Burlington resident, father, first-generation American, and longtime human services worker, shared concerns regarding unsafe housing conditions.
 - He described ongoing construction at his rental property that has disrupted daily life and created unsafe living conditions. He reported working with City inspectors, tenant organization, Legal Aid, and other agencies but felt he had been repeatedly referred between organizations without resolution.
 - He shared that the property had been declared unfit for human habitation and expressed concern about retaliation from contractors after reporting code violations.
 - He discussed the emotional and financial toll the situation has placed on his family and highlight broader concerns about housing insecurity.
 - Councilor Grant offered to work directly with the resident and requested follow-up information regarding the property and landlord.
 - Councilor Grant committed to contacting Permitting and Inspections to better understand the situation and identify possible protections.
 - Committee housing concerns affect many Burlington residents.
- Loan Nguyen shared a citizenship issue a community member is having with the Department of Homeland of Security. She expressed the community member is afraid to leave their house due to the current enforcement.
 - Erin Jacobsen directed Loan to the Vermont Asylum Assistance Project's website to submit a legal help request and mentioned some upcoming naturalization clinics being planned.
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson noted the need for a more streamlined and accessible way for community members to find resources and reach the right support. She noted the Trusted Community Voices program (TCVs) plays a key role in bridging community members to these resources.

- **REIB Office Updates**

- Director Kelli Perkins shared updates on REIB initiatives and ongoing work since the committee's previous meeting.
 - She informed everyone that two Trusted Community Voices liaison positions are currently posted on the city website: one for the Spanish-speaking community, one for the Bosnian community. Interviews are scheduled for early August.
 - Katie Greene departed July 9th to work with the State of Vermont.
 - Due to a 45-day posting restriction in the passed budget, the Community and Belonging Manager role cannot be posted until end of August.
 - Director Perkins let everyone know nearly all proposed slate of appointees for the Aging Council, except a representative for the New American community
 - Christian Berry added the Language Access policy and procedure are being revised and the implementation plan is being mapped out but an assessment will need to be started across the city.
 - A culture survey has been administered to city employees. Executive summary is being developed and will be ready to be shared out in early August.
- Councilor Grant flagged that COTS is planning a Back-to-School Bonanza and recommended outreach to Mr. Hartnett and his foundation about possible funding support for a second event closer to the start of school.
 - Christian Berry noted that the Back-to-School supply event was a TCV originated idea last year and that there is some IDEAL grant funding remaining. A meeting with the mayor on August 4th will include a discussion about funding and resourcing. Any additional funding sources would be welcome.

- **Committee Mission Statement & Meeting Agreements (action to approve)**

- Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson presented the third and final revision of the committee's mission and purpose statement, incorporating feedback from the June and prior meetings. Refer to the video.

- **State-Level Immigration Policy Updates and Local Implementation Planning (Guest Erin Jacobsen, Vermont Asylum Assistance Project)**

- Erin Jacobsen presented on immigrant rights victories from the 2026 Vermont legislative session and priorities for the upcoming 2027 session (beginning January 2027). Refer to the video.
 - The presentation included information on recent state legislation intended to strengthen protections for immigrant communities, guidance on responding to immigration enforcement, providing resources for immigrant families, asylum seekers, and service providers.
 - She shared they are developing informational guidance documents to help agencies implement new legal requirements.
 - Tiffanie Katsuva and Maryan Maalin expressed the importance of presenting directly to refugee and immigrant communities with interpretation.
 - Erin Jacobsen agreed.
 - Councilor Sanchez-Parkinson voiced the REIB's continued commitment to serving as a source for community engagement on these topics and will explore opportunities to co-host forums.

- **Police Chief Hiring Process Update**

- Councilor Grant provided updates on the national search for Burlington's next Police Chief.
 - The hiring process remains on schedule and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) is assisting with recruitment and candidate screening.
 - Community engagement informed the recruitment profile, including stakeholder meetings and a public survey with more than 600 responses.
 - Committee members requested additional analysis of survey responses from younger residents to better understand youth perspectives.

- Fifteen applications were received, with four candidates advancing to the interview stage. Interviews began during the week of the meeting.
- Candidates are responding to standardized interview questions and completing a written scenario exercise.
- The committee is evaluating candidates based on leadership experience, commitment to community engagement, and ability to balance departmental leadership with community needs.
- Finalists will be forwarded to the mayor for additional interviews and background checks.
- The goal is to announce a new Police Chief by September to allow for an overlap and transition period with Chief Burke before his departure.
- Recruitment materials, committee membership, and the hiring timeline remain publicly available.
- **Aging Council Update**
 - Director Perkins noted that the updates regarding the Aging Council had already been provided during the REIB Office Updates.
- **Adjournment**
 - The meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.