

Resolution Relating to

RACIAL EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

RESOLUTION _____

Sponsor(s): Councilors Dieng, Pine, Hanson, Tracy, Roof, Bushor; Paulino, Mason, Shannon, Freeman, Paul

Introduced: _____

Referred to: _____

Action: _____

Date: _____

Signed by Mayor: _____

CITY OF BURLINGTON

In the year Two Thousand Nineteen

Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

1 That WHEREAS, we, the Burlington City Council, recognize that what makes Burlington unique and special
2 is a forward-thinking environment that fosters a healthy community dialogue and acceptance of all people; and

3 WHEREAS, we recognize that diversity is a gift and is our future, and this diversity encompasses people
4 of color, people with disabilities, older people, LGBTQ, people of different faiths, beliefs and cultural views
5 and more; and

6 WHEREAS, Vermont became a refugee resettlement state in 1981 and welcomed refugees from many
7 continents; and

8 WHEREAS, based on the Burlington School District data, over 48 languages are spoken by students in
9 Burlington schools; and

10 WHEREAS, on July 16, 2012, with the full support of Mayor Weinberger, the Burlington City Council
11 unanimously adopted a resolution to create a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to facilitate the
12 development of a Diversity and Equity Strategic Plan; and

13 WHEREAS, the Diversity and Equity Strategic Plan has proposed the following three main achievable
14 goals:

- 15 ● Eliminate race-based disparities across all city departments
- 16 ● Promote inclusion and engagement of all community members
- 17 ● Eliminate race-based disparities in the greater Burlington community; and

18 WHEREAS, people of color are stopped, arrested, convicted and incarcerated at disproportionate rates
19 in Vermont; and

20 WHEREAS, significant racial disparities in Vermont's criminal justice system exist: Blacks stopped by
21 traffic police at a rate that is 60% greater than would be expected given their population share; Blacks are
22 arrested at twice the rate of whites, subsequent to a traffic stop; Blacks are searched in traffic stops at twice the
23 rate of white drivers; and Blacks are 8.5% of Vermont's incarcerated population, despite being only 1.8% of
24 the state's population; and

25 WHEREAS, the Vermont Attorney General and the Human Rights Commission Task Force, Act 54,
26 (2017) Racial Disparities in State Systems Report (Act 54 State Systems Report) indicated that “In addition,
27 and likely related to the income disparities, racial disparities have been documented in each of the areas
28 identified in Act 54 (education, labor and employment, housing, healthcare and economic development);” and

29 WHEREAS, last year Vermont adopted Act 9, a law creating a Racial Equity Director (and Panel) with
30 cabinet level authority. The stated legislative intent of the General Assembly is “to promote racial justice
31 reform throughout the State by mitigating systemic racism in all systems of State government and creating a
32 culture of inclusiveness;” and

33 WHEREAS, the Act 54 State Systems Report explains, “Addressing these issues also furthers other state
34 goals. To the extent that People of Color are the fastest growing demographic in the state, taking steps to be
35 more inclusive in all aspects of our state systems will further economic growth in a time when our workforce
36 is rapidly aging. In other words, equality of opportunity is good for everyone, White, Black and Brown;” and

37 WHEREAS, Burlington, the largest city in Vermont with the largest number of people of color, is faced
38 with a unique responsibility to take decisive steps to dismantle systemic disparities and aggressively respond
39 to all forms of overt racism and discrimination;

40 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Rule 4 of the Rules and Regulations of the City
41 Council shall be amended to add a standing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to oversee the
42 implementation of the City’s Equity Strategic Plan, as follows:

43 **4. Committee Assignments.**

44 (a) No later than the second meeting following the election of the president, the president shall appoint
45 standing committees on licenses, ordinances, institutions/human resources, charter changes,
46 community development and neighborhood revitalization, public safety, parking and
47 transportation, energy and utilities, parks, arts & culture, ~~and~~ tax abatement, and diversity, equity
48 and inclusion; and

49 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in addition to overseeing the implementation of the Equity
50 Strategic Plan, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee is tasked with the exploration of the creation of
51 a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission and shall report recommendations to the City Council within 90
52 days from the time the Committee is established; and

53 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Burlington shall create a senior, full-time position,
54 responsible for overseeing, managing, and advising other senior officials on the City’s diversity, equity and
55 inclusion initiatives; the position will report to the Mayor, be part of the City’s leadership team, and have
56 citywide responsibilities and authority; and

57 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council respectfully requests that the Administration, in
58 consultation with the City Council Institutions/Human Resources Committee, develop a job description and
59 seek Council approval for the proposed position on or before September 23, 2019, and seek to fill the position
60 on or before January 1, 2020.

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64 lb/EBlackwood/Resolutions 2019/City Council – Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

65 7/11/19