

Resolution Relating to

RESOLUTION _____

REFERRAL TO PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE:
EXAMINATION OF SERVICE AND CARE OPTIONS
RELATED TO THE SUPPORT OF BURLINGTON’S
HOMELESS COMMUNITY ****revised version****

Sponsor(s): Councilors Roof, Moore,
Bushor, Paul, Knodell, Deane,
Shannon, Mason, Wright, Dieng
Introduced: _____
Referred to: _____

Action: _____
Date: _____
Signed by Mayor: _____

CITY OF BURLINGTON

In the year Two Thousand Seventeen

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

1 WHEREAS, for generations, state and local governments and community organizations across the
2 United States have endeavored to address homelessness, panhandling, street dwelling, loitering, trespassing,
3 and transience while also struggling to combat causal issues such as poverty, mental health, addiction, and
4 substance abuse; and

5 WHEREAS, these communities are often mislabeled, “otherized,” stereotyped, and generalized,
6 leading to further marginalization and a misunderstanding of how to intervene in the most effective manner;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, the terminology “homeless” and “homeless community” are imperfect, and are used
9 herein with the intention to be inclusive and refer to a diverse and complex community of people experiencing
10 a range of issues for a myriad of reasons; and

11 WHEREAS, data, best practices and case study research calls for nuanced, multi-pronged, evidence-
12 based strategies to support communities experiencing homelessness, poverty, and crisis; and

13 WHEREAS, not all interventions, legal, social, or otherwise, are created equal and the City of
14 Burlington and its partners should strive to understand the outcomes of our investments, interventions, and
15 policies; and

16 WHEREAS, concerns about the safety and wellbeing of the general public and members of the
17 homeless community have been increased in reaction to high-profile violent crimes among the homeless
18 community; and

19 WHEREAS, since May 2016, there have been 3 violent crimes that have occurred in Burlington
20 among the homeless community; and

21 WHEREAS, in May 2016, Amos Beede, 38, was fatally attacked at a Burlington homeless
22 encampment; and

23 WHEREAS, in March 2017, Louis Fortier, 37, was arrested for a fatal stabbing on Cherry Street; and

24 WHEREAS, in August 2017, Conner Lucas, 28, was arrested for the stabbing of two men in downtown
25 Burlington; and

26 WHEREAS, in response to these crimes members of the homeless community, particularly females
27 and LGBTQ members, have expressed concerns about safety; and

28 WHEREAS, Mark Mackillop, owner of Muddy Waters Café, during public comment of the June 5,
29 2017 City Council meeting, expressed to the Council safety and health concerns related to ongoing behavior
30 issues in the vicinity of his business and other businesses on the Main Street block between South Winooski
31 and Church Street.

32 WHEREAS, Mark Redmond, Executive Director of Spectrum Youth and Family Services, writing as a
33 private concerned citizen, wrote a letter to the City Council and Mayor, dated August 10, 2017, expressing
34 worry that members of our community who suffer from mental health and substance addiction issues are not
35 getting the care they need and are a risk to themselves and others; and

36 WHEREAS, Mr. Redmond urged City leadership to take action while recognizing additional support
37 from the State of Vermont is needed; and

38 WHEREAS, on August 17, 2017, a resolution was submitted to the City Clerk's Office titled "Referral
39 to Ordinance Committee: Ordinance Changes Concerning Quality of Life Issues in Downtown Core;" and

40 WHEREAS, this resolution, as submitted and if approved, "directs the Ordinance Committee to draft
41 an ordinance that creates a criminal penalty for repeat offenders of these type of violations;" and

42 WHEREAS, the City of Burlington has a responsibility to intervene when members of our community that
43 display concerning or dangerous behavior in order to promote public safety, health, and wellbeing, and so
44 such behavior does not become staggeringly recurrent; and

45 WHEREAS, investments in service and care to address underlying mental health and addiction issues
46 related to homelessness and behaviors of concern should accompany punitive measures to insure that only
47 those who commit criminal acts face criminal charges.

48 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council requests that the Public Safety
49 Committee convene a group of service and care providers, as well as other stakeholders, to devise a multi-
50 pronged, evidence-based strategy outlining options to better support Burlington's homeless community and
51 address the public safety and health concerns set forth in this resolution. Organizations to be included in this
52 conversation include, but are not limited to, the Howard Center Street Outreach Team, the Committee on

53 Temporary Shelter, Spectrum Youth and Family Services, Pathways Vermont, the Community Health Center
54 of Burlington’s Safe Harbor Clinic, the Burlington Police Department, the Burlington Community and
55 Economic Development Office, Community Justice Center, Champlain Valley Office of Economic
56 Opportunity, the Chittenden County State’s Attorney’s Office, the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, the
57 University of Vermont Medical Center, faith-based organizations, and members of the business community.
58 This strategy shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 59 1. Specific action options and any associated implementation costs.
- 60 2. A comprehensive report of services options that are currently available, both by the City and its
61 partners, as well as, if available, any recent staffing or budget changes that have impacted these
62 programs.
- 63 3. A recommendation on how to best engage partners at the State of Vermont for additional and
64 complementary support.

65 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the strategy should be informed by qualitative feedback from
66 members of the Burlington homeless community on what services are effective in their experience.

67 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Public Safety Committee will review the recommended strategy
68 and make recommendations to the City Council regarding actions options; and

69 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Public Safety Committee shall provide prompt feedback and
70 recommendations to any other City Council Committees working on related issues; and

71 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Public Safety Committee shall report back to the City Council
72 with recommendations no later than the City Council’s second meeting in November.

73

74 Assistant’s initials/atty’s initials/Resolutions 2017/Name Resolution

75 Date

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