

## Resolution Relating to

JUST ECONOMY CHARTER CHANGES

**RESOLUTION**\_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor(s): Councilor Freeman

Introduced: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred to: \_\_\_\_\_

Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Mayor: \_\_\_\_\_

## CITY OF BURLINGTON

In the year Two Thousand Twenty .....

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

1 That WHEREAS, the current COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergency has exposed the rampant  
2 inequality in the United States and the threats to people's very lives due to that inequality; and

3 WHEREAS, COVID-19 has underscored the precarious nature of the lives of working people, the  
4 elderly, renters, people of color, people who are disabled, gig economy workers and locally based small scale  
5 producers; and

6 WHEREAS, COVID-19 has exposed the fragility of local governments' finances, which are currently  
7 funded in large part by regressive taxes and fees that fall most heavily on these same vulnerable communities;  
8 and

9 WHEREAS, COVID-19 has revealed specific vulnerabilities facing tenants, who make up 60% of  
10 Burlington residents and of whom over half are severely cost-burdened, according to the City's 2018 Equity  
11 Report, and can be evicted for no cause at all under current statutes; and

12 WHEREAS, COVID-19 has revealed the weak bargaining position of working people, especially  
13 essential workers who are not represented by unions or people in the service industry who do not have  
14 sufficient control over their schedules, in getting just compensation and fair working conditions because they  
15 are afraid of losing their jobs if they seek higher pay for doing dangerous work; and

16 WHEREAS, COVID-19 has revealed that the minimum wage, even the one that will go into effect on  
17 January 1, 2021, is not high enough to enable people to pay Burlington rents and other essential costs, as  
18 evidenced by the severe cost burden suffered by tenants, and the high number of people making under  
19 \$25,000, with some 16% of non-college residents living in poverty-- 50% higher than the national average,  
20 according to the City's 2018 Equity Report; and

21 WHEREAS, COVID-19 has revealed how important mutual aid, community self-organization and  
22 involvement in all levels of governance, including the city's finances, is to the well-being of all; and

23 WHEREAS, COVID-19 has revealed that the City's finances are insufficient without new sources of  
24 revenue generated from those people who are best able to pay it, people making over \$125,000 per year, who  
25 make up some 12% of the city's population according to the City's 2018 Equity Report; and

26 WHEREAS, responsible governance requires that all levels of government strengthen their systems to  
27 make them more resilient by doing all that they can to end or lessen these inequalities and frailties, including  
28 taking bold steps to create a just economy;

29 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that, for the purpose of placing Just Economy charter change  
30 questions before the voters as follows:

31 1. For purpose of holding a special election to be held at the same time as the November 3, 2020 general  
32 election in order to place a charter change question before the voters, the City Council hereby refers  
33 the following question amending City Charter § 48 to its Charter Change Committee for review and  
34 recommendation to the full City Council by the Council's August 10th meeting:

35 "Shall the Charter of the City of Burlington, Acts of 1949, No. 298 as amended, be further amended to  
36 allow for the adoption of "Just Economy" ordinances by adopting and adding a new § 48(66) as follows: To  
37 provide by ordinance (1) for protections for residential tenants from evictions without just cause and (2)  
38 prohibiting the wrongful discharge of employees without just cause; and

39 2. For the Annual City Election in March 2021, the City Council hereby refers the following question  
40 amending City Charter § 48 to its Charter Change Committee for review and recommendation to the  
41 full City Council by the Council's first meeting in November 2020:

42 "Shall the Charter of the City of Burlington, Acts of 1949, No. 298 as amended, be further amended to  
43 allow for the adoption of "Just Economy" ordinances by adopting and adding a new § 48(67) as follows: To  
44 provide by ordinance for (1) creating a municipal income tax for residents making \$125,000/year or more,  
45 and (2) creating a municipal luxury sales tax on residential and commercial property sales in excess of  
46 \$500,000; and

47 3. For the City Council's first meeting in March 2021, the City Council hereby refers the following  
48 questions amending City Charter § 48 and § 157 to its Charter Change Committee for review and  
49 recommendation to the full City Council:

50 "Shall the Charter of the City of Burlington, Acts of 1949, No. 298 as amended, be further amended to  
51 allow for the adoption of "Just Economy" ordinances by adopting and adding a new § 48(68) as follows: To  
52 provide by ordinance for: (1) setting a minimum wage for all workers in the city of Burlington, (2) setting  
53 minimum standards for employers in the city to provide their employees with a written, good faith estimate of  
54 the employee's work schedule; and

55 "Shall the Charter of the City of Burlington, Acts of 1949, No. 298 as amended, be further amended by  
56 amending § 157 to allow for the adoption of a "Just Economy" ordinance on "participatory budgeting" in  
57 order to authorize citizen participation in the development of the city's budget by the mayor as follows:

§ 157 Preparation and submission of budget.

The mayor shall, with the assistance of the other members of the board of finance and citizens participating in a participatory budgeting process adopted by ordinance, annually prepare an estimate of the necessary appropriations to cover the expenses of each department and branch of the city government for the next fiscal year, to be known as the "budget," and shall submit said "budget" to the city council for its guidance and action in making the annual appropriations and the tax levy for such next fiscal year. The mayor shall submit the "budget" to the city council on or before June 15 of each year and the city council shall make the annual appropriations and the tax levy no later than June 30 of each year. The city council may reduce the items of such budget, but shall not increase them except by two-thirds vote of said city council. Wherever any appropriation, annual or otherwise, shall be made to any department or branch of the city government, for any specified purpose, no part of such appropriation shall be expended for any purpose other than the one specified, unless authorized by resolution of the city council or by written permission of the board of finance. Nothing herein contained shall authorize the board of finance to transfer any appropriation, or any part of any appropriation, from one department or branch of the city government to another?