

**From:** Jamie Feehan <[jfeehan@primmer.com](mailto:jfeehan@primmer.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 21, 2020 3:53 PM  
**To:** Jeanette White <[JWhite@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:JWhite@leg.state.vt.us)>  
**Cc:** 'Justin St. James' <[jstjames@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:jstjames@burlingtonvt.gov)>  
**Subject:** H.952 Burlington Charter

Hi, Jeanette,

Not sure if the Burlington charter change bill, H.952, is part of your agenda for tomorrow's discussion. The City of Burlington is hopeful there is still time left for the Senate to address this non-controversial bill. Thanks for considering.

Here are some additional details about Burlington's charter changes that provides some background. These were published on the City's website in the lead-up to the election.

#1- The Housing Trust Fund charter change would restore the fund to the level that voters authorized when they created the fund in 1990, and strengthen the fund to ensure that it stays at that level over time.

- In 1990, Burlington voters approved the creation of the Housing Trust Fund (HTF), and authorized the City Council to devote one penny of the general tax rate to affordable housing in Burlington.
- Since then, the HTF has become the City's largest source of municipal funding for affordable housing, and has supported the creation and preservation of 1,686 units of affordable housing and 117 beds. These projects have included new multi-family senior housing, adaptive reuse, co-ops, transitional housing, and individual residential sites. The HTF also has helped leverage significant additional resources for affordable housing in Burlington.
- Because of adjustments to the general tax rate, however, over time the portion of the general tax rate devoted to the HTF has eroded from one cent to just a half-cent.
- This charter change would restore the funding for the HTF to a full penny of every \$100 of assessed property value and ensure that it stays at that level over time.

#2- Election charter changes- This item would change elections procedures in order to allow early voting to begin at the same time for both State and Local elections for non-Town Meeting Day elections.

- This item would allow the City to avoid the election confusion caused when the City has to send early voters their two different ballots on different dates for certain elections.
- Beginning early voting at the same time for local as well as state elections will encourage greater voter participation in local elections, reduce election expenses, streamline absentee ballot processing, and decrease the potential for errors.
- Currently, a problem arises when state and federal elections occur on the same day as a local election. Ballots for state and federal ballots must be available for people to begin early voting at least 45 days before the election, but local ballots cannot be ready yet because the deadlines for petitions is closer to the election. This has resulted in early voters who complete and return their state ballots having to be sent a second ballot later when the local ballot is ready and local voting begins.

- This change will require local petitions to be submitted sooner, but it will provide voters with more time to vote.

In the event you or your committee have any questions, Assistant City Attorney Justin St. James is available. He is copied on this email. Thanks again and good luck in this final week.

Jamie

**James F. Feehan** | Government Relations Director  
PRIMMER PIPER EGGLESTON & CRAMER PC  
30 Main St, Suite 500 | P.O. Box 1489, Burlington, VT 05402  
Tel: 802 864 0880 | Fax: 802 864 0328  
[jfeehan@primmer.com](mailto:jfeehan@primmer.com) | [www.primmer.com](http://www.primmer.com)

