



**POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY OF BURLINGTON**

Burlington Police Department Statement Regarding the Release of the CNA Assessment
Friday, October 01, 2021

Having seen the final “[Functional and Operational Assessment of the Burlington Police Department](#)” prepared by CNA, the BPD is eager to address many of its recommendations.

The assessment affirms several issues for BPD. At 68 officers, we are understaffed, and “alarm bells,” as the assessment says, are not unwarranted. It approves of both the [Public Safety Continuity Plan](#) that I created with Mayor Weinberger’s support and the [Priority Response Plan](#) that the BPD has had to implement. And it approved of the [use-of-force directive](#) that I wrote in June 2020, after direct community input from the Committee to Review Policing Practices.

The assessment also provides many recommendations that the BPD is eager to address. It strongly recommended that the BPD adopt a [Crisis Intervention Team](#), or CIT, model such as that endorsed by NAMI. This is a measure of which I am very much in favor. And there are also many useful recommendations for enhancing our existing [department directives](#)—as well as ideas for including our neighbors in the process of revising them. Among these, in particular, are needed reviews of our directives about citizen complaints and internal investigations.

There are also places where I do not agree with CNA’s assessment of BPD. Many of these are articulated in [my response to the draft version](#) of the CNA assessment. Among them is CNA’s appraisal of our training. Vermont’s mandated [“Rule 13” training requirement](#) is robust, and the BPD goes far above and beyond the state requirement. We have records of more than 18,500 training sessions since 2014 to demonstrate that, and will be making many training materials or overviews publicly available forthwith.

I also believe that reassigning our Domestic Violence Prevention Officer seems ill-advised given the fact that domestic incidents are down from last year’s record but are nevertheless higher than any of the previous five years. Similarly, the BPD’s continued involvement in the Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations, or CUSI, which investigates sex crimes and crimes against children and the elderly, should not be reduced.

My executive staff and I also strongly believe that the workload analysis, which only calculates “time on scene,” is incomplete. It does not accurately account for the amount of time an officer not only spends on the initial call but also puts into casework, from routine paperwork to follow-up interviews to court time. More can be found in the BPD’s [notes regarding the draft](#) of the assessment, including an appendix analysis by Deputy Chief of Administration Matthew Sullivan.

With regard to instances in which BPD uses force and transparency around them, I introduced an additional layer of oversight and review this year, in conjunction with the independent [Police Commission](#). The BPD now promulgates [a monthly use-of-force summary report](#), created by Deputy Chief of Operations Wade Labrecque. Additionally, Police Commissioners have the ability to review body-worn camera video of any use-of-force incident. Furthermore, it is my hope to be able to share BWC footage of all such incidents publicly sometime in the coming calendar year, once we have hired a redaction specialist. To my knowledge, no other department in America pursues such a transparent practice around use of force.

While I do not believe this assessment is a final blueprint for public safety in our community, it does contain many recommendations that the BPD can use to improve our policies and operations. I’m grateful for its insights and I’m committed to using parts of it to drive further improvements of our department. My goal, as always, is to continue to meet our mission of keeping people safe, with and for our neighbors, and also to continue to transform our department to meet our community’s shared vision for public safety.



Jon Murad
Acting Chief of Police