



## Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

### MEMORANDUM

To: City Councilors  
From: Mayor Miro Weinberger  
Date: June 12, 2013  
Re: Appointment of Public Works Director

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I respectfully submit for your consideration and approval Chapin Spencer as the next Director of the Department of Public Works (DPW). I am requesting City Council approval of this appointment at your June 24, 2013 meeting.

Before putting Chapin's name forward formally today, I consulted with numerous people – engineers, a past DPW Director and other individuals intimately familiar with the department's workings, past and present City Councilors, and, of course, the Public Works Commission – and have found broad support and excitement for this appointment.

For the department to fulfill all that Burlingtonians expect of it, the next director must be a proven leader and manager, an excellent communicator to stakeholders both within and external to the organization, an advocate for the department, trusted and respected within the community, and committed to a vision of Burlington that is greener, more vibrant, and a better place for walking and biking than it is today. I believe Chapin has all of these attributes and is uniquely qualified and experienced to meet the needs of Burlington and DPW right now.

#### **Track record as a dynamic, effective leader and manager**

Chapin has achieved stunning success creating and leading a complex organization. In the year 1999, when Chapin founded Local Motion, the organization was simply an idea. Thirteen years later, he now leads one of the country's most successful bike and pedestrian advocacy organizations – the largest among similarly sized cities. Local Motion operates with an approximately \$1 million annual budget that supports 10 programs, is powered by 12 employees, 1,000 members, and 400 annual volunteers, and has transformed the way our region thinks about active transportation and recreation issues. Chapin's effective leadership stems from qualities that the DPW Director needs and that will transfer to an organization of a larger scale:

- **Strong communication skills** – The public and the Public Works Commission are looking to DPW to significantly improve the department’s communication and responsiveness. Senior leadership within the department desires a leader who can effectively advocate for resources and other critical support. Chapin is an excellent communicator and advocate, experienced at articulating policy proposals and delivering presentations to a wide array of audiences, as well as sustaining regular and effective communications with a large number of organizational stakeholders.
- **Proven ability to partner with key agencies** – Effective local governance today requires extensive collaboration with other departments, agencies, and organizations. In his current role, Chapin has worked successfully with many of the groups central to DPW’s success, including: the Vermont Department of Transportation, neighboring municipalities, the State Legislature and executive branch, Chittenden County Transport Authority (CCTA), Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, Burlington Neighborhood Planning Assemblies, the Burlington Business Association, and the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce.
- **Successful project management experience** – Chapin has successfully managed complex public-private projects including: the development of the Causeway Bike Ferry; the coordination of Chittenden County’s Safe Routes to School pilot program; and the orchestration of The Big Fix campaign to assist communities in funding the repair of the Island Line Trail after extensive damage during the 2011 floods.

### **Vision and commitment to help Burlington achieve long-term goals**

The Department of Public Works is our most complex department, responsible for a wide and growing array of responsibilities. Not only must the department execute many of the City’s long-standing basic and essential services – snow removal, street maintenance, water and sewer service, and more – but also DPW is increasingly at the center of the new initiatives critical to fulfilling our collective vision of Burlington’s future. Our vital goals of a cleaner Lake Champlain, a more vibrant downtown and waterfront, a City infrastructure that better supports biking and walking, and a City that has less impact on the environment are in large part DPW’s responsibility to achieve.

In nearly two decades of service to our community, Chapin has shown himself to be both a visionary who can push the community forward and a pragmatist who can deliver on-the-ground progress. This combination of attributes will be critical as he helps the City realize the future Burlingtonians deeply want to see.

### **Demonstrated commitment to maintaining our infrastructure**

As a City Councilor 12 years ago, Chapin successfully championed for additional funding for our streets and sidewalks. More recently, he successfully advanced ballot items for funding the maintenance and enhancement of the City’s bike path. Chapin understands how to engage diverse constituencies, build a case for needed investment, and work various strategies to obtain the funding necessary to preserve the City’s infrastructure.

**Passionate commitment to the community**

There are very few individuals who have given more to Burlington over the last two decades than Chapin. You likely are aware already of his prior service to the community as a Ward 1 City Councilor from 1998 to 2002 and his current role as one of Burlington's two CCTA Commissioners, a position he has held since 2001. However, you may be surprised at the breadth and depth of Chapin's many other contributions to the City – *I urge you to closely review the Leadership Activities and Awards listed on his attached resume.*

One credential not listed on Chapin's resume is an engineering degree. While the current DPW Director also is the City Engineer, the City Charter allows for these positions to be assigned to different individuals. If Chapin is confirmed as the next DPW Director, I will take steps to appoint a new City Engineer before Chapin begins serving as Director on August 26, 2013. Current Director Steve Goodkind has agreed to continue to serve in both roles until successors are named. I am very grateful to Steve for his support during this transition and his more than 30 years of service to the City.

Further details of Chapin's career can be found in his attached resume. If confirmed, Chapin would be appointed at Step 1 and receive a starting annual salary of \$88,845. Chapin has lived in Burlington for the past 18 years.

Thank you for your consideration of Chapin Spencer as the next Director of the Burlington Department of Public Works.