



**BURLINGAME CITY COUNCIL**  
**Approved Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting on February 3, 2020**

**STUDY SESSION**

**a. DISCUSSION OF A POSSIBLE LOCAL MINIMUM WAGE ORDINANCE**

Mayor Beach thanked everyone for coming to the study session. She asked the Council if they had any questions for staff.

Vice Mayor O'Brien Keighran asked what type of outreach the staff did for the businesses in Burlingame. City Manager Goldman stated that the Economic Development Specialist sent an email to those on the Economic Development Subcommittee agenda list and to the individuals that submitted their emails at the Burlingame Talks Shop event. Additionally, notice was put in the enews and on Nextdoor. She noted that she believed that Mayor Beach reached out to members of the business community.

Vice Mayor O'Brien Keighran stated that Council received an email from Ken Putnam concerning the minimum wage discussion and asked if any other businesses had reached out to the City. City Manager Goldman stated that she wasn't aware of any other emails.

Mayor Beach stated that she had reached out to several businesses in Burlingame and could share the list with her colleagues.

Councilmember Colson asked if Mayor Beach had collected data from the businesses. Mayor Beach explained that her outreach included extensive conversations with the businesses and that she invited everyone to be a part of the study session.

Councilmember Colson asked if the staff surveyed the local businesses. City Manager Goldman replied in the negative.

Mayor Beach opened the study session up for public comment.

Unite Here 2 representative Cynthia Gomez thanked the Council for having the study session and urged the Council to raise the minimum wage. She discussed related issues including irregular scheduling, unmanageable workloads, and limited sick days that Council could regulate.

Jose Esquiuel stated that he had worked at the Marriot for three years and had a second job at the Convention

Center in San Francisco. He urged the Council to raise the minimum wage and asked them to look into regulating irregular work hours.

Manuel Choy stated that he has worked for the Marriot for 22 years. He urged the Council to raise the minimum wage because the current rate is not enough to live on.

Mike Dunham stated that he learned that a community can support a local minimum wage that is equal to 50% of the local median income. He noted that per his calculations, the City could support a \$24 minimum wage, and therefore \$15 was more than doable.

Liz Scully stated that she was a childcare provider and that an increase in the minimum wage would negatively affect her childcare business.

Elana Lieberman urged the Council to raise the minimum wage and stated that it was necessary to assist those facing rent increases.

Cynthia Cornell urged the Council to increase the minimum wage. She stated that the increase was needed as a result of rental increases and the high cost of living.

San Mateo County Central Labor Council representative Erin Chavez urged the Council to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by July 1, 2020, with annual CPI increases beginning in 2021. Additionally, she asked that the ordinance include strong enforcement and education outreach.

San Mateo County Central Labor Council representative Julie Lims urged the Council to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour by July 1, 2020, with annual CPI increases, strong enforcement language, strict penalties, and a robust public information campaign.

Senior Community Health Planner Belen Seara stated that access to adequate income is one of the most important predictors of health. Ms. Seara encouraged the Council to increase the minimum wage.

Laura Hinz voiced her surprise that anyone would pay under \$15 an hour. She noted that she believed this was an ethical matter.

Burlingame United Methodist Church Pastor Holly Hillman discussed the people that come to the church to avail themselves of supplemental food. She urged the Council to increase the minimum wage.

Alice Larios voiced her support for increasing the minimum wage to \$15.

Kent Lauder discussed the importance of unions and urged the Council to increase the minimum wage.

Mayor Beach closed public comments.

Councilmember Brownrigg stated that he understood the hardship on small businesses when the minimum wage is increased. However, he noted that he couldn't in good conscience leave the minimum wage where it

is in Burlingame. He stated that the minimum wage is a way of ensuring people have livable wages. He explained that he believed there should be a transition period, and that the new minimum wage should start January 2021.

Mayor Beach stated that she scheduled the study session because she thought it was an important conversation for the City to have. She discussed how the City has been a leader in terms of creating market rate and affordable housing. She noted that while creating housing is an important piece of the puzzle, there is also a need to pay individuals livable wages.

Mayor Beach acknowledged that it is hard to run a business in Burlingame, especially restaurants. However, she noted that it is even harder to be a low wage worker. She stated that this issue came to her attention after studying the school district demographics. She explained that 12.3% of Burlingame school students are on free or reduced lunch. To qualify for free lunch, a family of four is earning no more than \$33,475 a year; for a reduced lunch, the family of four is earning no more than \$47,638.

Mayor Beach stated that a few years ago, she spoke with an individual in Burlingame that was working for a major national company and was earning \$13 an hour. She stated that the individual told her that he hoped he could get a transfer to the company's San Francisco Airport location because he would earn \$17.66 an hour there.

Mayor Beach discussed the outreach that she conducted with coffee shops, restaurants, and retailers in Burlingame. She stated that many of them are already paying \$15 an hour. She noted that nearly 60% of the County is on an accelerated path to \$15 an hour. She explained that San Mateo hired an expert from the Northern California Small Business Development Center to assist restaurants in managing the minimum wage increase. She stated that she would like Burlingame to do something similar.

Councilmember Ortiz stated that he was in favor of studying this issue further. He noted that he did believe that increasing the minimum wage in one fell swoop would be difficult for a lot of businesses. He suggested phasing in the increase so that businesses could adjust to the new reality. He asked that staff review potential exclusions for family members and solutions for sales positions that are commission-based.

Vice Mayor O'Brien Keighran discussed an article that she read in the Mercury that stated that when Oakland raised their minimum wage, the majority of issues were in the childcare industry. She explained the article stated that low income individuals were unable to afford childcare as a result of the minimum wage increase. She asked for data on the childcare industry.

Vice Mayor O'Brien Keighran stated that she talked with the restaurants in Burlingame and overall they were okay with the increase but wanted a transition period. She noted that they did say that the increases would be passed along to the customers. She asked that staff provide information about whether other cities with \$15 an hour have had issues with businesses leaving and whether staff has been made part-time.

Vice Mayor O'Brien Keighran stated that staff would need to conduct extensive public education. She asked if the City would be implementing a penalty on businesses that don't increase their wages within a specified time period. City Attorney Kane stated that this is a policy decision for Council.

City Manager Goldman noted that Council would need to determine whether enforcement was the responsibility of staff or whether the City would hire outside management.

Vice Mayor O'Brien Keighran asked if the cities that implemented their own minimum wage laws incorporated any exemptions for small businesses. City Manager Goldman stated that some of the cities had transition periods that included different acceleration paths to \$15 an hour for nonprofit versus for-profit businesses.

Councilmember Colson stated that if you looked at the Economic Policy Institute's family budget calculator, to live in San Mateo County requires earning \$13,024 a month. She noted that if you put that into an hourly rate, it's almost \$80 an hour. She stated that small businesses would bear the brunt of increasing the minimum wage.

Councilmember Colson talked about enforcement and the amount of staff time it would take. She asked that staff review the possibility of aiding childcare facilities. She noted that the staff report discussed how an increasing minimum wage would increase the costs of the recreation programs. She explained that many families used the recreation programs for daycare. Therefore, she asked that staff not increase the costs and instead increase the General Fund support for these programs.

Councilmember Brownrigg asked staff to send Council information about how San Mateo enacted their minimum wage. He noted that the State would be increasing minimum wage to \$15 an hour on January 1, 2022, for large employers. Therefore, he stated that Burlingame should enact their increase prior to the State's for it to be effective.

Mayor Beach stated that she agreed with Councilmember Brownrigg about staying ahead of the State.

City Manager Goldman stated that Council expressed an interest in following the San Mateo model of escalating to \$15 minimum wage with annual increase of CPI at no limit. She noted that other jurisdictions have limited the CPI increase to 3% or 3.5%. She stated that Council also expressed an interest in contracting out enforcement.

Mayor Beach discussed Redwood City's ordinance and asked that staff review it. City Manager Goldman replied in the affirmative.

Councilmember Colson asked that staff review potential exemptions for family members. City Manager Goldman replied in the affirmative.