



## Memorandum

**To:** South Burlington City Council and Community  
**From:** Jessie Baker, City Manager  
**Date:** April 15, 2026  
**Re:** After Action Reports following the ICE event on March 11, 2026

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On March 11, 2026, the Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) division of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) executed several actions along Dorset Street in South Burlington. Their actions put many in danger – the residents of 337 Dorset Street, the traveling public (including students and families arriving at school), the protesters on site, the public safety professionals, and the surrounding community. These actions did not need to happen. They pitted local Vermont law enforcement between Federal agents and the community we serve every day, and they harmed our community, eroding the critical public trust between local government and our neighbors.

**Process to Date and Documents Provided:** As with all significant emergency events, the City followed after action best practices. This included an immediate review of the South Burlington Police Department's (SBPD) actions against established policies, a complete review of all data available, and a series of After Action Review discussions.

The National Police Foundation and the Community Oriented Policing Services of the US Department of Justice offer the following definition:

*An after action review is a team-based process following a particular training exercise or an event that affords all participants the opportunity to reflect, provide their perceptions and observations, and identify promising practices and lessons learned that can be applied to enhance future responses to similar scenarios.<sup>1</sup>*

In the spirit of shared learning and growth, and as a step toward repairing harm, included in this packet are the following documents and data sources:

- *After-Action Emergency Management Summary of Incident Command* as written by the South Burlington Emergency Management Director
- *Review of Response and Actions of March 11, 2026* as written by the South Burlington Police Chief and including cited body worn camera footage
- The complete body worn camera data from the events
- *Message and Updates from the City Manager on the Events of March 11* as published on March 20, 2026

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<sup>1</sup> [How to Conduct an After Action Review](#)

**Key Findings:** While I encourage the Council and community to spend dedicated time with these materials, I'd like to call your attention to the key findings outlined below. These findings (and the related "next steps") will be used to hone our skills and invest in the public's safety for the weeks and months to come. Through this high-level summary (and the detail provided in the included documents), we hope to improve a shared understanding of the events of March 11, 2026.

- Chief Breault assigned South Burlington Police Department (SBPD) staff to the area of 337 Dorset Street at approximately 9:00 am to ensure the protection of first amendment rights, to ensure neither protesters nor agents were being physically harmed, and stressed to all that they were not to be involved in ICE enforcement but were present solely for the safety of all.
- Throughout the day on March 11<sup>th</sup>, South Burlington Police Chief, Bill Breault, the Vermont State Police, other local law enforcement partners, representatives from Homeland Security and the FBI focused on the local public safety of those on Dorset Street and worked diligently to convince ERO to stop the execution of civil and criminal warrants, call off their actions, and remove themselves from Dorset Street. ERO/ICE refused.
- Once it was known to SBPD officials that there was a child in the home, efforts were made to safely remove that individual from the home.
- When the US District Court Judge in Vermont approved a criminal warrant for an individual believed to be inside 337 Dorset and a Search Warrant for the location, ICE made it clear they would execute the warrants using any means necessary. As a result, Chief Breault made the decision to place local and state law enforcement officers between ICE and the neighbors on scene for the sole purpose of ensuring the safety of the community and in the hopes of limiting physical harm.
- The South Burlington Police Department (SBPD) had no lawful authority to stop or prevent ICE from carrying out the enforcement activity or serving the warrant.
- During the ERO/ICE action to execute the warrant, individuals in the crowd physically interfered with the execution of a lawful warrant violating several sections of State law.
- No incidents of SBPD officers using excessive force were found.
- SBPD has an affirmative duty to intervene when they witness another officer using excessive force. Body-worn camera footage confirmed that, throughout the day, South Burlington officers proactively positioned themselves between federal law enforcement personnel and members of the crowd when interactions appeared to be escalating. No instances were observed in which personnel from other agencies intervened due to the actions of South Burlington officers.
- The SBPD and the South Burlington Fire Department provided and attempted to provide medical assistance to members of the crowd on numerous occasions throughout the event.
- SBPD actions were found to have been in compliance with the SBPD and state mandated *Fair and Impartial Policing Policy*. They were present solely to ensure public safety (imminent risk of physical injury to subject, officer, or third party). SBPD officers repeatedly advised ICE officials that they would not enforce, or assist in enforcement, of a federal immigration administrative order.

- The crowd of neighbors who convened over the course of the day varied drastically from those who were witnessing, to those engaged in peaceful protests, to those who identified themselves as protectors and described future vigilante actions.
- Vermonters have valued the ability to peacefully protest for generations. Members of the SBPD firmly believe in the constitutional right to disagree and peacefully protest government actions. However, we cannot, do not and will not condone violence, intentional violations of law, or harm inflicted on others based on ideology or political belief.

**Next Steps:** The following is a summary of lessons learned and improvements that need to be made over time. These reflect the lesson learned following a dynamic and evolving public safety incident in which federal and local/state law enforcement entities had competing goals. Following a review of all the available data, the performance of our SBPD agency and individual public safety leaders is not in question. Rather these improvements reflect the need to continue to learn and grow as a City as the nature of public safety events in our community changes. These improvements will take staff time, community partnership, and financial resources to achieve.

#### **Incident Command System (ICS)**

- Increase training for all relevant City staff who may be involved in emergency events in the future.
- Establish a structure for ICS response within City staff for prolonged events in the future.
- Once training is complete, conduct periodic tabletop exercises to test and improve knowledge.
- Develop relevant protocols and provide training for elected officials who involve themselves in incidents.
- Improve connections between City leadership and community partners outside of emergency incidents to ensure improved communication and shared expectations over time.

#### **Emergency Operations Center (EOC)**

- Review and implement needed technology and workflow layout in the City's EOC.
- Develop EOC management policies.
- Develop improved processes for handling high-volume public records requests following activations of an EOC.

#### **Operational Steps for the Future**

- Develop plans to increase local/state law enforcement personnel at future similar incidents to ensure separation between differing parties. Doing so would limit criminal actions, limit the likelihood of avoidable force, and increase the safety of all present.
- Intentionally focus on a unified operational command structure in an Emergency Operations Center and on site based on the specifics needed of an emerging event.
- Develop plans and acquire resources for body worn camera battery backup.
- Ensure readiness for first responder basic needs to be met during prolonged incidents.