

Sanders Announces for Fourth Term, Says He Has 'Energy and Enthusiasm'

By JAMESE. BRESSOR
and DEBBIE BOOKCHIN

BURLINGTON — Less than a month after he finished third in the race for governor, Bernard Sanders Monday launched his bid for re-election to another two-year term as mayor of Burlington.

Sanders, the self-proclaimed socialist mayor, said Burlington's progressive coalition would hold its convention Saturday to nominate a candidate for mayor.

"I intend to seek that nomination and will be asking for the support of the progressive coalition for a fourth time," he said. The election will be held in March.

"Like every other city in America, especially with the federal cutbacks, we have our share of problems," Sanders said. In almost every area, he continued, "we have been successful in making Burlington city government more responsive to the needs of the people and opening up the political process to all the people."

"We have accomplished much. But much more remains to be done," said Sanders.

Sanders again will face opposition from the city's Democrats. Democrat Caryl Stewart has announced her candidacy and may face Alderman Paul Lafayette, D-Ward 5, for her party's nomination. Lafayette was expected to announce his intentions Tuesday. Stewart, former Burlington City Democratic chairman, is an investment broker with Dean Witter Reynolds.

The Republicans have not fielded a candidate yet.

Sanders, who was decried by close associates as tired of being mayor during the period before his



Mayor Bernard Sanders

gubernatorial bid, said he had thought about whether he had the "energy" to be mayor for two more years.

"Right now I feel very alive politically," he said. "If we are not capable of running the city with as much vigor and enthusiasm and joy as we have in the last six years, then we should not be running again, and that is a consideration."

"I did sit down and talk to myself and have to determine, do I have the energy ... I would not have made this decision unless I felt I had the energy and enthusiasm to go forward in a very positive way," he said.

In his last run, Sanders defeated

Brian Burns, a former lieutenant governor.

In announcing for a fourth term, Sanders listed the accomplishments of his administration:

"In terms of taxation, it is my desire to see the city of Burlington continue to lead the state in attempting to break our dependency on the regressive and unfair property tax that funds educational and municipal services," he said, sounding a theme he often used during his gubernatorial campaign.

Burlington residents have not seen a general property tax increase over the past five years because the city has sought other means of raising revenue, such as excavation fees on utilities, a gross receipts tax on hotels and restaurants, and a fire protection fee from the University of Vermont.

Burlington has also become a state leader in economic development, he asserted. The city's unemployment rate is one of the lowest in America, partly because of the healthy economic climate in New England, he said.

"But there is no question hundreds of new jobs in Burlington are directly attributable to the hard work of the city's Economic Development Office in securing federal grants and working with the small business community," Sanders said.

"Six years ago the city streets and sidewalks were in horrendous condition. There was no plan on how to rebuild them and there was no money to rebuild them," he said. Today, he said the city has reconstructed almost every major artery and many side streets, and within three or four years, all streets will be up to stan-

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dard.

During his tenure as mayor, the city has also begun rebuilding its antiquated sewer system, developed innovative housing programs to help keep property affordable and worked to preserve the environment through park improvements, height limitations on buildings and tree plantings, Sanders said.

.. Burlington voters first elected Sanders mayor in 1981. In that four-way race, Sanders topped five-term incumbent Gor-

don Paquette by 10 votes. Before that election, Sanders had run a series of unsuccessful campaigns as a member of the Liberty Union Party and never received more than 7 percent of the votes cast.

In last month's voting for governor, Sanders finished third with 14.5 percent behind Gov. Madeleine M. Kunin and the Republican challenger, Lt. Gov. Peter Smith.

But in Burlington; after nosing out Paquette in 1981, he's had no problem winning re-

election twice by wide margins.

Sanders denied that the mayor's position was important simply as a stepping stone to higher office.

"Issues, to me, are not easily separated," he said. "I did not turn my back on the people of Burlington. I fought for them in that process," Sanders said of his failed gubernatorial bid.

He said issues facing Burlington residents, such as high property taxes, face the state as a whole.

"As a result of my campaign, there will be more discussion on

that issue" in the Legislature, he predicted.

The three-term mayor would not rule out a race for governor in the future, saying public officials have the right to seek higher office.

Sanders credited both his Democratic opponents, Stewart and Alderman Lafayette, with being "very, very strong opponents."

At the same time he said he was not concerned about his poor showing in Burlington in the governor's race in which he lost every ward to Gov.

Madeleine M. Kunin, also a Burlington resident.

Sanders said Kunin was clearly popular in Burlington as governor, but he said he did not believe the outcome of the governor's race reflects his popularity as mayor.

He said he had not yet picked a campaign manager, nor has he figured how much money he hopes to raise. Sanders raised about \$4,000 for his first bid for mayor, \$30,000 the second time around and close to \$30,000 during his third bid.