



Winooski City Council Meeting

Monday, January 23, 2022, at 6 PM

Attend online: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84364849328>

Attend by phone: 1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 843 6484 9328

Attend in person: Winooski City Hall (27 West Allen Street)

I. Call to Order

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Agenda Review

IV. Public Comment

V. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval: City Council Minutes of 1.17.23
- B. Approval: Accounts Payable Warrant 1.19.23

VI. Council Reports

VII. City Updates

VIII. Regular Items

A. Discussion: Public Hearing to Receive Comment on the Proposed FY24 Budget and Capital Plan Across All Funds – E Wang, City Manager

B. Discussion/Approval: FY24 General Fund Budget and Capital Plan to Present to Voters – E Wang, City Manager

C. Discussion/Approval: FY24 Town Meeting Warning – E Wang, City Manager / J Willingham, City Clerk

D. Discussion: FY22 Audit Report - A Aldieri, Finance Director

E. Discussion: Quarterly Treasurer's Report - J Fenney, City Treasurer

F. Discussion/Approval: Proposed Changes to Sidewalk Use - E Vorwald, Planning and Zoning Manager

G. Discussion/Approval - Winooski Police Department K9 Program - R Hebert, Chief of Police

H. Discussion - Strategic Vision Area Goal Update: Safe, Healthy, Connected People - R Coffey, Community Services Director / J Audy, Fire Chief / R Hebert, Chief of Police

I. Discussion/Approval: Information Sheet for Voter-Backed Charter Change Proposal for Just Cause Eviction - E Wang, City Manager, P Sarne, Communications Director

J. Discussion/Approval: City Manager Review Process - Mayor K Lott

IX. Executive Session Pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313 (3), the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee, provided that the public body shall make a final decision to hire or appoint a public officer or employee in an open meeting and shall explain the reasons for its final decision during the open meeting.

X. Adjourn

Minutes

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Deputy Mayor Duncan led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present:

Mayor Lott

Deputy Mayor Duncan

Councilors: Bryn Oakleaf, Thomas Renner, and Aurora Hurd

Officer's Present:

Elaine Wang, City Manager; Paul Sarne, Communications Director; Angela Aldieri, Finance Director; John Audy, Fire Chief; Rick Hebert, Police Chief; Jon Rauscher, Public Works Director; Eric Vorwald, Planning/Zoning Manager; Jenny Willingham, City Clerk; Ray Coffey, Community Services Director; Angel Lane, Assistant City Clerk

Other's Present:

Connor Daley, Margaret Bass, Mary H, Meredith/Downtown Winooski, Laura Wade, Indra Acharya, Town Meeting TV

III. Agenda Review – Mayor Lott stated that since the auditor was not able to be present tonight to table item D. Discussion FY22 Audit Report.

MOTION: by Councilor Oakleaf second by Councilor Renner to table item D. Discussion FY22 Audit Report as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

IV. Public Comment - None

V. Consent Agenda

a. Approval: City Council Minutes of 1.17.23

b. Approval: Accounts Payable Warrant 1.19.2323

MOTION: by Councilor Oakleaf second by Councilor Renner to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

VI. Councilor Reports

Councilor Hurd – On Wednesday 1/25 Councilor Hurd will attend the 2nd in person meeting of Ideal VT. Inclusion & Belonging Chair Parker Silver will also attend.

Councilor Oakleaf – The Infrastructure Commission met last Thursday. New officers were elected. There was discussion over the workplan for the new fiscal year, capital projects were also discussed. The next meeting will be Thursday 2/16.

Mayor Lott – Mayor Lott expressed heartfelt thanks to Janet Brouard for her 32 years of service to the City of Winooski. The Mayor stated that Janet Brouard will be missed.

Councilor Duncan – Councilor Duncan attended the Airport Commission that met last Wednesday. They reviewed capital projects and discussed the noise reporting system. Councilor Duncan also attended the Housing Commission where the Housing Chapter Ordinance in chapter 9 was discussed. Some of the items included defining short term rentals, reviewing/defining minimum room size requirements and defining trash and discussing enforceability of trash violations. Also, the fact sheet for Just the Cause Eviction Charter change was discussed.

Councilor Renner – Councilor Renner attended the most recent Downtown Winooski meeting along with Eric Vorwald, Planning and Zoning Manager to discuss/present the proposed changes to sidewalk use.

VII. City Updates – E Wang, City Manager

- As you know, we're continuing the Fiscal Year 2024 budget meetings tonight with the final budget vote. Be sure to keep an eye out for our official Town Meeting Day announcements which will include all of the budget, meeting, and election info you need. We'll have a joint budget presentation and community with the Winooski School District, sponsored by the Winooski Partnership for Prevention on February 9th at the O'Brien Community Center, and the annual Town Meeting Day presentation at the Winooski School District on March 6th. If you have questions, feel free to call or email: 802 655 6410 / budget@winooskivt.gov. You can also reach out to any City Councilor or staff by visiting winooskivt.gov/contact.
- Interested in running for local office on Town Meeting Day? The deadline to file paperwork is 5 PM on Monday January 30. There are two City Council seats up for election and 3 School District seats up for election. The two City Council seats are for 2-year terms, The School District seats are the Treasurer for a 3 year term, and two School District Trustee seats, one for a 3 year term and the other for a 2 year term. To appear on the ballot, you must be a Winooski resident and file a Consent of Candidate form, and a petition with a minimum of 30 signatures, to the City Clerk's Office, again by 5pm January 30. If you have any questions about this, contact the City Clerk's Office at 802 655 6410, clerk@winooskivt.gov, or come into City Hall at 27 W Allen St.
- As a reminder, the Vermont Department of Health will be closing all state-run, walk-in vaccination clinics by January 31st. Local health offices will continue help vaccinate anyone who does not have a provider or local pharmacy. If you need COVID-19 Test kits, they are available for free at City Hall, the library, and the Senior Center during regular hours.
- ~~The City of Winooski was sent a press release today by the Vermont Air National Guard who will be performing night flying from Tuesday, January 17 to Friday, January 20 and from Tuesday, January 24 to Friday, January 27 with two takeoff and landing periods scheduled between 1:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. There are no scheduled morning flights – their press release was shared on our City channels.~~

VIII. Regular Items

a. Discussion: Public Hearing to Receive Comment on the Proposed FY24 Budget and Capital Plan Across All Funds – E Wang, City Manager

Mayor Lott opened the Public Hearing. E Wang, City Manager shared the process thus far. On December 5, 2022, the City Manager presented an overview of the FY24 proposed budget to the Council. Since that meeting, the Council received presentations from each Department. Council discussed cuts and adds at the January 17th meeting and approved on a 4 to 1 vote the following adjustments to the City Manager's recommended budget:

- Increase Housing Initiative Director from 30 to 40 hours per week.
- Maintain the Youth Interventionist at 28 hours per week.
- Include mediated community voice/engagement funds at \$8000.00.
- Reduce supply budget for recreation programs by \$4000.00.
- Use \$409,000.00 of fund balance.

Winooski resident Indra Acharya spoke sharing his concerns regarding the lack of an Equity Director at this time. Mr. Acharya expressed his concern over the city's perceived lack of commitment to equity. Councilor Hurd shared a note that she had received from the NAACP. There was no other public comment. Mayor Lott closed the Public Hearing at 6:21 pm.

b. Discussion/Approval: FY24 General Fund Budget and Capital Plan to Present to Voters – E Wang, City Manager.

On December 5, 2022, the City Manager presented an overview of the FY24 proposed budget to the Council. Since that meeting, the Council received presentations from each Department. Council discussed cuts and adds at the January 17th meeting and approved on a 4 to 1 vote the following adjustments to the City Manager's recommended budget:

- Increase Housing Initiative Director from 30 to 40 hours per week.
- Maintain the Youth Interventionist at 28 hours per week.
- Include mediated community voice/engagement funds at \$8000.00.
- Add interpretation at quarterly meetings and at the polls at \$5600.00.
- Reduce supplies budget for recreation programs by \$4000.00.
- Remove the second library circulation assistant.
- Use \$409,000.00 of fund balance.

Some discussion ensued. Councilor Hurd wanted to make a motion to include the Equity Director position and salary on the Ballot. Councilor Renner suggested wording the motion so that not actually listing a position to be added but rather the funds to be spent on equity work. Creating positions and hiring is the responsibility of the City Manager. Mayor Lott expressed concern that this just created the same situation with the same problems. Councilor Hurd stressed that she cannot support this budget. Councilor Duncan stated that trying to make a motion to include the Equity Director and salary on the ballot were problematic. Councilor Oakleaf offered some input on the possible wording of the motion.

MOTION: by Councilor Hurd second by Councilor Renner to increase the budget by \$200,000.00 coming from reserve funds. Voted 2-3 motion failed.

Another motion was suggested by Councilor Hurd to place an advisory item on the ballot to seek to find out if the City would like to prioritize having an Equity Director. Point of order was called by Councilor Duncan stating that an advisory item would be better discussed under Item C.

MOTION: by Councilor Oakleaf second by Councilor Hurd to take \$200,000.00 from reserved funds to be used for the Language Access Plan and to identify 3 self-funding sources to fund the Equity Director position.

At this point Mayor Lott intervened and looked to staff to see if it could even be possible to identify 3 self-funding sources to fund the Equity Director. There was some further discussion on this item not being specifically warned.

MOTION: by Councilor Oakleaf second by Councilor Duncan to withdraw the previous motion regarding taking \$200,000.00 from reserved funds to be used for the Language Access Plan and to identify 2 self-funding sources to fund the Equity Director position. Voted and passed 4-0.

MOTION: by Councilor Duncan second by Councilor Renner to approve the FY24 General Fund Budget and Capital Plan as presented and place on the warning for Town Meeting Day. Voted and passed 3-1. Councilor Hurd opposed.

c. Discussion/Approval: FY24 Town Meeting Warning – E Wang, City Manager/J Willingham, City Clerk

The City Manager presented the item. Discussion ensued. Councilor Hurd expressed the desire to add an advisory item to the ballot. More time was needed to draft the language.

The Mayor called a recess at 7:12 pm to 7:17 pm

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 7:19 pm

It was determined by the Mayor to move onto item E. while Council waited for the City Attorney to be available to discuss the possibility of an advisory item being added to the ballot as suggested by Councilor Hurd.

Attorney Bob DiPalma was available to join the meeting via phone. Council sought his advice on the adding of an advisory item to the ballot. Councilor Hurd is seeking to add an advisory item to the ballot as to whether or not the City would like to create and fill an Equity Director position. Attorney DiPalma shared his concern with advisory questions as well as the Secretary of State's concern with giving the voters the impression that they have control over items that they do not have control over. Creating positions and filling those positions fall under the control of the City Manager. Mayor Lott expressed her concern that this action could mislead voters.

MOTION: by Councilor Hurd second by Councilor Renner adding an advisory item to the ballot asking, "Should the City create and fill an Equity position. Yes or No." Voted 1-2 Councilor Renner abstained. The motion failed.

MOTION: by Councilor Duncan second by Councilor Renner to approve the FY24 Town Meeting Warning as presented. Voted and passed 3-1. Councilor Hurd opposed.

d. Discussion: FY22 Audit Report – A Aldieri, Finance Director

This item has been tabled.

e. Discussion: Quarterly Treasurer’s Report – J Fenney, City Treasurer

City Treasurer, Jonathan Feeney presented the report to Council. There was some discussion. Council thanked Mr. Fenney for his time and effort.

f. Discussion/Approval: Proposed Changes to Sidewalk Use – E Vorwald, Planning and Zoning Manager

E Vorwald, Planning and Zoning Manager presented this item. At the regular meeting on January 17, 2023 staff presented information on draft amendments to Chapter 5 of the City’s Municipal Code. These changes primarily relate to the use of sidewalk space for businesses. This information has been shared with the business community in advance of the Council discussion, and specifically discussed at the January 18th Downtown Winooski Board Meeting. Meredith Bay-Tyack the Executive Director of Downtown Winooski was present and shared some questions and comments from the businesses in town. There was some discussion.

MOTION: by Councilor Renner second by Councilor Duncan to introduce the Draft of the Proposed Changes to Sidewalk Use at a Public Hearing on February 21, 2023, Voted and passed 4-0.

g. Discussion/Approval: Winooski Police Department K9 Program – R Hebert, Chief of Police

Chief Hebert presented the request to add a K9 program. The Winooski Police Department is proposing to bring one K9 into the department to do work like tracking and clearing building. The Chief is also requesting to use asset forfeiture revenues that will completely fund this program. There was some discussion.

MOTION: by Councilor Renner second by Councilor Oakleaf to approve the Winooski Police Department K9 Program as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

h. Discussion: Strategic Vision area Goal Update: Safe, Healthy, Connected People – R Coffey, Community Services Director/ J Audy, Fire Chief/ R Hebert, Chief of Police

Ray Coffey, Community Services Director presented this update. Councilor Renner stated that it was good to see “green”-meaning that progress is taking place. There was some discussion.

i. Discussion/Approval: Information Sheet for Voter Backed Charter Change Proposal for Just Cause Eviction – E Wang, City Manager/ P Sarne, Communications Director

Staff was directed to prepare an information sheet to aid consistent messaging regarding this voter-backed charter change proposal that by statute must be presented to voters on the next Town Meeting Day ballot. There was much discussion.

MOTION: by Councilor Duncan second by Councilor Hurd to approve the Information Sheet for Voter Backed Charter Change Proposal for Just Cause Eviction with changes as discussed. Voted and passed 4-0.

The discussion then went to outreach. Language outreach was specifically discussed. A hybrid meeting with recording on 2/26 and interpreters was discussed. Also, a bulk mailing was brought forth. It was preferred to use Language Link as they offer 11 languages.

MOTION: by Councilor Duncan second by Councilor Oakleaf to approve the outreach process for the voter backed charter change proposal for Just Cause Eviction to include a hybrid meeting on 2/26 (misspoken correct date is 1/26), translation into the 11 languages matching WSD, bulk mailing for Town Meeting Day and Just Cause Eviction, Interpretation on Saturday 2/4 by ALV and an email to the property owners listed in the Rental Registry. Voted and passed 4-0.

j. Discussion/Approval: City Manager Review Process – Mayor Lott

Mayor Lott reviewed the City Manager Review Process. Councilor Hurd volunteered to distribute the evaluation tool to Councilors and Leadership Team this week. The Mayor would like all the responses returned by the end of the month.

MOTION: by Councilor Renner second by Councilor Oakleaf to approve the City Manager Review Process as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

IX. Executive Session Pursuant to 1 V.S.A. §313 (3), the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee, provided that the public body shall make a final decision to hire or appoint a public officer or employee in an open meeting and shall explain the reasons for its final decision during the open meeting.

It was determined by Mayor Lott that there was not a need for the Executive Session tonight.

X. Adjourn:

MOTION: by Councilor Renner second by Councilor Duncan to adjourn the City Council Meeting at 9:19 pm. Voted and passed 4-0.

ATTEST: _____
Angel Lane, Assistant City Clerk