

I. Call to Order

Members Present: Mary Hussmann, Courtney Blasisus, Yam Basnet, Amanda Goldstein

City Staff Present: Ray Coffey, Rick Hebert, John Audy, Aurora Hurd (Council Liaison)

Guests Present: Bryn Oakleaf

Call to Order by: Mary Hussman

Meeting Start Time: 6:32 PM

Minutes Recorded by: Ray Coffey

II. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Decision: Approved

Motion by: Courtney Blasisus

Second: Mary Hussmann

III. Public Comment

None

IV. City Council and Department Updates

Councilor Hurd shared that Council recently approved a budget to be sent to the voters for consideration on Town Meeting Day. They also shared that there was a voter-proposed item on the ballot for Town Meeting Day for a City Charter change that would enable Council to adopt Just Cause Eviction Policy in the future. More information is available at www.winooskivt.gov/justcause.

Ray Coffey shared that the Community Services Department has been extremely busy launching registration for summer programs (including the pool), and that registration has been strong thus far.

Chief Hebert shared that the Police Department has begun the hiring process for anticipated openings.

Chief Audy shared that his team is on-boarding a new per diem staff member. He discussed that efforts are underway to coordinate demolition of 72 East Allen Street, a property severely damaged by a recent fire. He also shared that the recent fire at the corner of Main and Stephens Street displaced 3 businesses and 12 residents, and that two of the three building were likely to be torn down due to significant damage from the event. Chief Audy also shared that he has been working closely with the Housing Commission around an ordinance update.

V. Inclusion and Belonging Commission Liaison Updates

While our Liaison (Abdi Mohamed) was not in attendance, Aurora shared that several members of the City (including Aurora, Abdi, Councilor Renner, Elaine Wang and Ray Coffey) participated in a focus group for the Superintendent search for Winooski School District. They also shared that the I&B Commission would be reviewing the Equity Audit at their February meeting, with hope of identifying next steps for addressing issues raised in the Audit.

VI. FY24 Budget Update

Ray Coffey shared a basic overview of the proposed budget (including impact to taxpayers) and then staff walked through the proposed changes (adds, reductions, and increases in revenue) that were included in the budget approved by City Council. More information is available at www.winooski.vt.gov/townmeeting

VII. Community Services Program Need/Interest Survey Plan Review

The Commission reviewed the survey questions from the 2019 version, and had the following recommendations/questions:

- Be sure to consider the survey's length, and try to make it as concise as possible to ensure responses
- In an effort to consolidate, try to group programs into broader categories vs. having a laundry list of each individual program (i.e. Group Fitness Classes)
- There was a discussion of whether or not to do a written translation of the survey:
 - Ray Coffey shared that the current plan was not to translate the written survey, but instead to work with interpreters from the various language groups to administer the survey verbally in non-English Languages.
 - Mary Hussmann recommended connecting with the Winooski News, which has started translating all their stories into multiple languages.
 - Yam Basnet agreed that focusing on using interpreters vs. translating written materials made the most sense. Amanda Goldstein echoed Yam's suggestion.
- Several programs that were recommended to be added to the survey included disc golf, volleyball (including indoor options), Cultural/Nepali Dance, Dungeons and Dragons/Role Playing Games, Karate
- There was discussion of the community's need for Teen Center as well, and staff will consider how to add that to the survey.
- Mary Hussmann recommended that instead of asking which months respondents would prefer programs, that instead we focus on seasons (which would tie more closely to the current program cycle anyway).
- The Commission also asked about whether O'Brien Center/public space rentals would be included on the survey, and Ray said he'd explore if there's a good way to include that. Ray shared that he'd met the day before this meeting with Barb Pitfido and Robin Merritt from the Community Services Team, and that he would incorporate feedback from that meeting and the Commission into a second draft of the survey, which he'd bring back to the Commission in March. Due to the time, the group tabled review of Focus Group questions to the March meeting.

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VIII. In-Person vs. Virtual Meetings

The group briefly discussed whether to hold in-person vs. virtual meetings moving forward, and there was some interest in intermittent in-person meetings. Ray and Mary said they would look at the slate of agendas for the next 6 months and propose a couple meetings to host in person. The group generally agreed that hybrid meetings were not a desired option at this time.

IX. Adjourn

Motion by: Courtney Blasius

Second: Yam Basnet

Meeting End Time: 8:07 PM

DRAFT