

**Winooski City Council Meeting**  
**Monday, April 6, 2020**  
**6 PM ([meeting held remotely via Zoom](#))**

Mayor Kristine Lott - [klott@winooski.vt.gov](mailto:klott@winooski.vt.gov)  
Councilor Hal Colston - [hcolston@winooski.vt.gov](mailto:hcolston@winooski.vt.gov)  
Councilor Jim Duncan - [jduncan@winooski.vt.gov](mailto:jduncan@winooski.vt.gov)  
Councilor Amy Lafayette - [alafayette@winooski.vt.gov](mailto:alafayette@winooski.vt.gov)  
Councilor Mike Myers - [mmyers@winooski.vt.gov](mailto:mmyers@winooski.vt.gov)  
Jessie Baker, City Manager - [jbaker@winooski.vt.gov](mailto:jbaker@winooski.vt.gov)

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. Agenda Review**
- IV. Public Comment**
- V. Consent Agenda**
  - a. Approval: City Council & Liquor Control Minutes of March 16, 2020
  - b. Approval: Payroll Warrant 3/8/2020 to 3/21/2020 & Accounts Payable Warrant ending 4/1/2020
  - c. Approval: St Stephen's Lease – R Coffey
  - d. Approval: City Manager's Review – K Lott
- VI. Council Reports**
- VII. City Updates**
- VIII. Regular Items**
  - a. Approval: Arbor Day Resolution- J Rauscher
  - b. Approval: FY20 Audit Engagement Letter with RHR Smith – A Aldieri
  - c. Discussion/Approval: COVID-19 Operations Update, Financial Impact, and Policy Options – J Baker  
Possible Executive Session per 1 V.S.A § 313 (1)(B) that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage as it relates to labor relations agreements with employees
  - d. Approval: Revision to Winooski Small Business Loan Program – Tier 4 Emergency Loans – H Carrington
  - e. Approval: Annual Approval of Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) – J Audy
  - f. Discussion: Goal Update: Housing – H Carrington
  - g. Discussion: Annual Gentrification Monitoring Report – H Carrington
- IX. Adjourn**

**Minutes**

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm. Deputy Mayor Colston led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Members Present**



Mayor Kristine Lott

Council Members: Hal Colston, Amy Lafayette, Jim Duncan and Mike Myers

**Officers Present**

Jessie Baker, City Manager; Janet Brouard, Sr Asst City Clerk; Angela Aldieri, Finance Director; Heather Carrington, Community and Economic Development Officer; Jon Rauscher, Public Works Director, John Audy, Fire Chief, Rick Hebert, Police Chief; Ray Coffey, Community Services Director, Paul Sarne, Communications Coordinator; Eric Vorwald, Planning/Zoning Director, Phoebe Townsend, Human Resources Manager.

**Others Present**

Meredith Bay-Tyack, Winooski Downtown Executive Director

**III. Agenda Review – None**

**IV. Public Comment – None**

**V. Consent Agenda**

**MOTION** by Councilor Lafayette seconded by Councilor Colston to approve the consent agenda as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

**VI. Council Reports**

Councilor Lafayette – none

Councilor Duncan said he attended the online Tree Board meeting. They discussed the adjustment to Arbor Day for May 15<sup>th</sup>. He also wanted to point out that Winooski has been designated as a Tree City. Very few in the State are, and that's a huge accomplishment for Winooski.

Councilor Myers said he has been working with the Winooski Food Shelf and JJ's Corner Market getting donations. The Food Shelf has had a large than normal demand in the past few weeks, and their supplies are dwindling. He said he is putting out a challenge to all Winooski residents to go to JJ Corner's Market, buy Twenty-Five dollars' worth of food and JJ's will donate an additional Five dollars. This promotion will run for the month of April, possibly be extended in to the month of May.

Councilor Colston urges all to contact him if they have any concerns or issues at the State level. He is our Representative and is here to have our voices heard.



Mayor Lott said she has been meeting with the City Manager on a weekly basis getting updates. She has also been meeting with the State and Governor Scott getting updates as they come in. She along with the City Manager held a Facebook Live Event on Friday. She said it well quite well. They received a lot of views after the fact. She wanted to reiterate Governor Scott's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Policy. She said this is working and encourages everyone to do their part to see this through.

## **VII. City Update**

The City Manager gave the following updates; She said she will leave her updates regarding the COVID-19 to later in the agenda.

- We were awarded a Municipal Planning Grant to move forward the City's historic preservation goals. Heather issued an RFP and this has been awarded to VHB.
- Community Justice Center Planning – As many of you know, Eli left the City a few weeks ago. With this transition, we are working with DOC and our regional partners to figure out the most cost-effective way to maintain restorative justice practices in Chittenden County. This may include a future MOU with another community.
- Maintaining essential services. Also planning for how to move forward other planning efforts remotely in the next few weeks. More to come.

## **VIII. Regular Items**

### **a. Approval: Arbor Day Resolution – J Rauscher**

The Mayor said this Resolution is something we have to sign each year. This year we are designating May 1<sup>st</sup> as Arbor Day. Councilor Duncan spoke briefly on the importance and that this has been happening for over 100 years.

**MOTION** by Councilor Duncan seconded by Councilor Colston to approve the Arbor Day Resolution as presented. Voted and passes 4-0.

### **b. Approval: FY20 Audit Engagement Letter with RHR Smith – A Aldieri**

Ms. Aldieri said a request for proposal was issued in February 2019 for audit services for the fiscal year ending 6/30/19 with two additional years to be potentially awarded. The contract was awarded to RHR Smith. Per the City Charter, the Council appoints the auditors each year, Ms. Aldieri said they performed our audit last year and did not see any



issues and they currently have the potential for 2 more years. She recommends approving the FY20 Audit Engagement Letter for the Fiscal year 2020.

**MOTION** by Councilor Lafayette seconded by Councilor Myers to approve the FY20 Audit Engagement Letter with RHR Smith as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

**c. Discussion/Approval: COVID-19 Operations Update, Financial Impact, and Policy Options – J Baker**

The City Manager said on March 13, 2020 the Governor issued a State of Emergency related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, the City has taken a number of emergency steps to ensure the public's health. She said we will continue to provide updates on municipal operations, our outreach efforts, potential financial impacts, resources shared by the Mayor, and potential resolution for the Council to consider. The City Manager outlined her memo to the Council, which included our response to the Governor's "Stay home Stay Safe" plan as well as what we as a City plan to do to maintain critical services, highlighting what actions have been done to maintain safety to all. See attached memo from the City Manager. This raised concerns on how various areas will be affected, pool construction shut down, closing of parks, Meals on Wheels program. Discussion ensued. The City Manager assured the Mayor and Council we all are doing what we can to protect the citizens while not putting our employees at risk.

Ms. Aldieri, Finance Director put together a projection of the City's finances during this pandemic. She said the model was created to show what could happen with negative impacts to our revenues, no changes to operations and the additional costs associated with COVID-19 not being offset by other funding sources. She said this model anticipates the largest impact to be Property taxes. This raised concern to the Mayor & Council. Long discussion ensued over the impact to both the City and the taxpayers. She said some areas she agrees have been projected to be high, but that will give us a buffer. She also wanted to point out that we have put into place tracking mechanisms for all COVID-19 related expenses and are reviewing opportunities to be reimbursed through FEMA, the State of Vermont, the Department of Justice and other State and Federal partners. The Mayor said it sounds like we are all in agreement that we are doing what needs to be done. With that she would like to entertain a motion to the Resolution set forth regarding our COVID-19 Response.

**MOTION** by Deputy Mayor Colston seconded by Councilor Myers to approve the Resolution-Winooski COVID-19 Response. Voted and passed 4-0.



The Mayor called a two-minute recess.

**d. Approval: Revision to Winooski Small Business Loan Program – H Carrington**

Ms. Carrington said in response to the profound impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Winooski business community, staff recommends adapting the Winooski Small Business Loan (WSBL) to provide businesses with emergency loans to assist them in bridging this difficult time. The Winooski Small Business Loan Memorandum of Understanding with OCU gives the City the ability to provide interest rate by-downs for businesses, and the new Tier 4 addendum to the MOU allows for the City fund to cover principal payments for the first four months. This proposal cost to the WSBL will allow businesses leeway while they remain under mandatory closure orders. While the proposed loan program will result in costs to the WSBL fund, business assistance is critical to the ongoing economic vitality of our community. Ms. Carrington outlined the structure of the program; funds being made available, loan terms, interest rate, max loan and finally criteria for qualifying. There were some questions by Council but all in all it was unanimous that we need to get this program up and running soon.

**MOTION** by Deputy Mayor Colston seconded by Councilor Myers to approve the revision to Winooski Small Business Loan Program as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

**e. Approval: Annual Approval of Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) – J Audy**

Mr. Audy said this is the annual adoption of the LEMP. This is basically the same as last year with the only change/update is to City Staff; the overall plan did not change. Once this is adopted it goes to CCRPC and then on to Vermont Emergency Management (VTEM) to be approved. Mr. Audy said the most important aspect of these approved plans is the ability to receive both logistical and financial assistance during Federal/State disaster declarations. This is extremely important with the current COVID-19 pandemic. In respect to this current pandemic, the City Manager said there is one minor change that we need to make and that is where notices are posted. During this current pandemic, City offices are closed to the public, so notices are posted on the exterior doors to the building rather than on the bulletin board and outside the vault in the clerk's office. The City Manager wanted to acknowledge Chief Audy for not only this document but the outstanding work and countless hours he has put in the last few weeks as our Emergency Management Coordinator.



**MOTION** by Councilor Myers seconded by Councilor Duncan to approve the Local Emergency Management Plan with a minor text change regarding posting notices as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

**f. Discussion: Goal Update: Housing – H Carrington**

Ms. Carrington presented the third quarter update. There's not a ton to report. She has put every on proceeding but slow to achieve. She said there wasn't a Housing meeting in March due to COVID-19. The Mayor had one question about Firehouse data. One concern by the commission, the complaints numbers seemed low. They wanted to make sure to find a way to make people feel comfortable to report any complaints in the future. Chief Audy was to attend the March Housing meeting to discuss such needs. He will be re-schedule to a future meeting

**g. Discussion: Annual Gentrification Monitoring Report – H Carrington**

Ms. Carrington said she is going to keep this short and sweet. Certainly, will take any questions. She said that the 2016 Winooski Housing Needs Assessment called for the City to invest in monitoring potential gentrification indicators. Staff developed a monitoring methodology and completed the first full analysis of gentrification indicators in 2017. Which serves as a benchmark for ongoing monitoring. The 2020 draft annual report provided to City Council in the third update to the original report. Ms. Carrington said based on the 2018 census data, the City of Winooski once again does not mee the criteria for gentrification. With that, she recommends ongoing monitoring on an annual basis.

**IX. Adjourn**

**MOTION** by Councilor Duncan seconded by Councilor Lafayette to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 pm. Voted and passed 4-0.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Asst City Clerk

