

Remote Winooski City Council Meeting

Monday, April 20, 2020 @ 6 PM

- Attend online: <https://zoom.us/j/411567807>
- Attend by phone: +1 253 215 8782 US
- Meeting ID: 411 567 807
- Password:000285
- Watch the live-stream via CH17: <https://www.cctv.org/live>

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

I. Call to Order

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Agenda Review

IV. Public Comment

V. Consent Agenda

- Approval: City Council & Liquor Control Minutes of April 6, 2020
- Approval: Accounts Payable Warrant ending 4/17/20; Payroll Warrant ending 3/22/20-4/4/20 and Subsequent to Payout ending March
- Approval: Hickok Street – Sanitary and Storm Sewer clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF) application – Step 3 (Construction)

VI. Council Reports

VII. City Updates

VIII. Regular Items

- Approval: Urban Chicken Permits – E Vorwald
 - Heather Demers – 22 Whitney St.
 - Maggie Luckhardt -170 West Allen St.
- Approval: Winooski Small Business Loan Awards (WSBL) Committee Covid – 19 Relief Loan Application Recommendation – H Carrington

IX. Public Hearing 6:15 p.m.

- Discussion/Approval: Chapter 21 – Sewer Ordinance and Industrial Wastewater Review – J Rauscher

X. Regular Items:

- Introduction/Approval: Resolution for a Chapter 30 Emergency Ordinance to Alleviate Financial Pressures as a Result of Covid-19 – J Baker
- Approval: Unified Land Use and Development Regulations Amendment – Parking Waiver – Set Public Hearing – E Vorwald
- Discussion: Working Communities Challenge: Planning Grant Update – J Baker
- Discussion: Goal Update: Municipal Infrastructure – J Rauscher

XI. Adjourn



MINUTES

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. Deputy Mayor Colston led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Members Present:

Mayor Kristine Lott

Council Members: Amy Lafayette, Mike Myers, Hal Colston, James Duncan

Officers Present:

Jessie Baker, City Manager; Carol Barrett, City Clerk; Angela Aldieri, Finance Director; Heather Carrington, Community and Economic Director; Eric Vorwald, Planning/Zoning director; Jon Rauscher, Public Works Director, John Audy, Fire Chief

Others Present:

Maggie Luckhardt, Paul Rabidoux, Meredith Bay-Tyack, Winooski Downtown Executive Director

III. Agenda Review – None

IV. Public Comment – None

V. Consent Agenda

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

VI. Council Reports

Councilor Colston – said he is sharing the growing frustration with the unemployment system. There has been a contract initiated and the new call center has been trained and should be on line in the next few days.

Councilor Duncan – None

Councilor Myers – He and J & J's market decided to do a Winooski Food Shelf Challenge. For every \$25.00, spent J & J's would add \$5.00. Mr. Myers said last week's total was \$845.00 and that they are extended it until the end of May.

Councilor Lafayette – She would like to lift up a website newamericansinvt.com. They are doing a great job translating COVID19 materials in many different languages. Beyond COVID19, they have



different information about transportation, food and a section for small businesses. Again, that is newamericansinvt.com

Mayor Lott – I'm reporting that we continue to have our weekly leadership meetings with community leaders throughout Winooski. I do want to share publicly; I charged each member of the Council with connecting with their commission that they are liaison to, also chair and staff to have some discussion about what or if we should consider bringing commission contact back to remote meetings. We will discuss this at our May 4th meeting. We also have to be considerate about how we move forward given our situation and the capacity to do real public engagement entering this crisis period. I also wanted to share since our last meeting the Resolution we signed has been distributed to State Legislature to our Representatives in the State House as well as our Congressional delegation, the Coalition of Mayors. We are having some discussion amongst the Mayors Coalition about doing some joint advocacy.

VII. City Updates

The City Manager gave the following updates:

- DRB hearing last week Thursday on four requests. They will be deliberating this week.
 - Project Review Committee today
 - School Project
 - 355 Main Street development
 - Please remember to lock your vehicle. We are seeing some reports of folks going through unlocked cars.
 - Reports from the CBD extraction facility on Elm Street.
 - We have seen the complaints on FPF and heard from the Councilors
 - We are figuring out our next steps and the authority we may have to work with them.
 - At this point, we do not believe it is a public health hazard but a nuisance complaint.
 - Covid-19 Update
 - Continue to maintain essential services and all who can are working from home.
 - In order to mitigate the financial impacts on the City (86), we have furloughed 19 staff as of 4/26:
 - 12 of those will be fully involuntarily furloughed.
 - An additional 7 will be partially furloughed.
 - So, 19 employees will be impacted by the involuntary furlough or 22% of our staff
- A number of those employees are part time employees so when you do a similar analysis by hours:
- Our total weekly scheduled hours of work = 2,689



- After these involuntary furloughs, the weekly scheduled hours of work = 2,282
- Or 407 hours will be furloughed every week or 15% of hours worked for the Winooski residents.

Others may request a voluntary furlough

- We are also starting to plan for the recovery portion of this pandemic, how we bring staff back, and plan for the long-term impacts. This will include a full review of the 2019-2020 Priorities and recommendation for moving forward.
- Later in the agenda you will hear more about the Small Business Loan awards and capital project impacts
- Resources at winooski.vt.gov/covid-19
- What's going on at the City as well as resources listed by
 - Businesses and Employees
 - Families and Childcare
 - Federal/State/Local Support
 - Food Security
 - Health and Safety
 - Multilingual/Translation
 - Seniors & Older Vermonters
 - Volunteering

VII. Regular Items

a. Approval of Chicken Permits – E Vorwald

Mr. Vorwald said we have two residents looking for approval of chicken permits. This is a process to keep chickens goes before Council; however, the structure to keep chickens in goes before zoning. Both property owners have applied for a zoning permit to construct a chicken coop. Both applications have been review and are consistent by our current zoning regulations and no issues.

Maggie Luckhardt said they moved to Winooski from Boston and I always dreamed of having chickens and grew up on a small farm. Looking forward to being able to do that again.

MOTION by Councilor Myers seconded by Councilor Colston to approve the chicken permits to Heather Demers – 22 Whitney St and Maggie Luckhardt – 170 W. Allen St. as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

b. Approval: Winooski small Business Loan Awards (WSBL) Committee Covid-19 Relief Loan Application Recommendation – H Carrington



Ms. Carrington said as you recall at your meeting on April 6 the City Council approved use of the WSBL funds for \$200,000.00 for COVID-19 relief loans to Winooski businesses, which have faced mandatory closures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The loans are structure to assist businesses with cash flow issues and provide leeway as they recover from extended closures and are offered up to \$10,000.00 with deferred payments for the first four months and 0% interest through a City buy down using the funds for the first two years. After that, these loans go up to the standard Opportunities Credit Union business loan rate.

Two loan applications eligible for the COVID-19 relief funds were received in the first week that we promoted this. We held a small business loan evaluation committee meeting on April 16, since that time we have had three more applications come in. We just considered those first two at the April 16 meeting and the committee is pleased to provide evaluation recommendation to the City Council.

Laura Wade is also here to give us some background.

Laura Wade owns Misery Loves Co with Husband Aaron and we have been in Winooski for almost eight years. We are proud to be part of this business community as a vibrant community. I'm excited to get back to work; I'm excited to hire back my staff. This loan will help us get on our feet again; currently we are not doing any business. Our bills, rent are still adding up and this will bridge the gap.

Ms. Carrington announced the two applicants:

Application 1

Big Red Presents, LLC dba Misery Loves Co.

46 Main St.

Loan Amount \$10,000.

Loan Term 60 months

Application 2

SWJ Hospitality dba Mule Bar

38 Main St

Loan Amount \$10,000.

Loan Term 60 months

Both applications scored well and committee recommends approval. Ms. Carrington also said if the City Council votes to approve both these two loans as recommended by the committee the COVID-19 relief will retain \$180,000.00 for future applicants.

Mayor Lott said she is excited for us to be able to push this money out so quickly, but was surprised that we only had two applicants thus far and I'm glad to hear more are in the pipe line. Ms. Carrington said part of the reasons we haven't seen so many applications to this point is because a lot of them have been in business less than three years and so that requires a full credit analysis through Opportunity's Cred Union, so these ones the credit analysis maybe taking a little longer.

Meredith Bay-Tyback said the fact there is local opportunity is incredibly important to our



community.

MOTION by Councilor Duncan seconded by Councilor Myers to approve the two loan applications, Big Red Presents LLC dba Misery Loves Co and SWJ Hospitality dba Mule Bar as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

IX. Public Hearing 6:15 p.m.

The Mayor called the Public Hearing to order at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Rauscher gave an overview of the Chapter 21 Sewer Ordinance and Industrial Wastewater to include language that better regulates and clearly defines industrial wastewater uses. This also includes for reference a draft industrial user rate formula. The rate structure adds a surcharge fee for the strength of wastewater being conveyed to the treatment plant. Mr. Rauscher said he has met with businesses and not a lot will be impacted. Four Quarters has more concerns about the rate structure. Twincraft not impacted so much because they clean their water before it goes in. Four Quarters is still moving forward with their application. There was not public comment and public hearing closed at 6:34 p.m.

There was some discussion concerning the rate structure and if any safety risk. Mr. Rauscher said we are refreshing the ordinance, no safety risk or concerns. The businesses are more concerned about the rate structure.

MOTION by Councilor Duncan seconded by Councilor Myers to approve Chapter 21 Sewer Ordinance and Industrial Wastewater Review as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

X. Regular Items

a. Introduction/Approval: Resolution for a Chapter 30 Emergency Ordinance to Alleviate Financial Pressures as a Result of Covid -19 – J Baker

The City Manager introduced a Resolution for a Chapter 30 Emergency Ordinance to alleviate financial pressures as a result of COVID-19. This Resolution will be in effect for 30 days and we will reenact as needed. See attached Resolution

Discussion ensued amongst the Council concerning, cash flow, interest due, and having to make the school whole. The Mayor stated that she was happy to offer flexibility to some folks. We can also revisit this at our next meeting and waiting for legislation.

MOTION by Councilor Lafayette seconded by Councilor Duncan to approve the Resolution – Emergency ordinance – COVID -19 Pandemic Municipal Charters and Tax Relief as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

b. Approval: Unified Land Use and Development Regulations Amendment – Parking Waiver – Set Public Hearing – E Vorwald

Mr. Vorwald said this is a continuation of your March 16 City Council Meeting. We held a public hearing to consider comments on a draft amendment to the Unified land use and Development regulations regarding a parking waiver. It was decided that a second hearing should be conducted. No date was set for the second hearing, was scheduled at



that time. Mr. Vorwald is recommending that a public hearing be set for June 1. Discussion ensued amongst the council on whether to hold off until July or August. If we pushed, it out we could have more public input. Mr. Vorwald also said the 150 days is set in statute. Adding more hearings will not change. The City Manager said this is also a tool that developers could use.

MOTION by Councilor Duncan seconded by Councilor Myers that the Public Hearing be set for June 15 concerning the Unified Land Use and Development Regulations Amendment – Parking Waiver as presented. Voted and passed 4-0.

c. Discussion: Working Communities Challenge: Planning Grant Update – J Baker

The City Manager gave an overview of the Working Communities Challenge. She said part of the planning grant processes; the intention was to have a sense of all day meetings with the stakeholders at the table to do work together as a community to come out with this implementation grant proposal. As of March 13, the grantor had put a 4-6 week freeze on planning activity. We had a call with them last week and they have been extraordinarily flexible and creating a learning culture with the grantee's. We have an opportunity to realign how we initially built that \$15,000 budget. We don't have any immediately plans to do that because we are still interested in doing the planning phase that we had applied for. However, we do think that many of the lessons that we are learning as the result of this pandemic specifically, some of the connections between are local leaders that are being built as a result of the crisis. The weekly Winooski leadership briefing calls that I mention at the beginning of the meeting. I think it will be key forwarding this work together and also some of the resources that Amy mentioned. I think while we are losing time in the grant time line I actually think we are making big leaps in the work in our community to better serve our residents.

The earliest an implementation grant would be due is July 15. They mentioned August 15 as well, as well as pushing it into the fall. This is currently where we are and do not need any action tonight.

Ms. Carrington said that they are being very flexible right now and recognizing the intended work or not, work is being done at this moment. Jessie is absolutely correct that we are building coalitions. I don't know that we would have built doing the planning grant.

Mr. Colston said we are meeting as a steering committee this Thursday, there may be an update coming out from that meeting with future plans.

The Mayor appreciated the update and look forward to hearing more.

d. Discussion: Goal Update: Municipal Infrastructure – J Rauscher

Mr. Rauscher provided a high-level overview of the infrastructure update. Good news is the projects that we have currently in design phase; we are not forecasting any scheduled delays due to COVID -19 impacts. Bad news – the one project that is in heavy



construction right now is the Myers Pool project, we are seeing a delay due to COVID-19. Right now we are projecting the construction schedule is due to March 25 closure due to the Executive Order. Our contractor Russell had to stop work. Based on the most current restart, which is May 15, they are projecting a July 24 construction end date. These changes daily. He said two people are now allowed on site for construction. There is some activity up at the pool this week. Hopefully more announcements coming out with less restriction.

We are not proposing anything on the operations on opening the pool at this point. There are many unknowns and we are not providing any recommendations at this point. The transportation impact fee – we didn't think this was the appropriate time to bring this to the Council for discussion.

Councilor Myers said when he read the addendum he thought it said two workers per location, meaning two workers could be inside, while two works could be outside pool house. They didn't say two workers per location. Mr. Rauscher said it is unclear to him and we are relying on Russell the contractor to make that determination. Chief Audy said he thinks the state is trying to clarify this every day. These same questions are coming up in the interpretations. Today, was the first day to return to work, so I think this week they will continue to provide more clarification and what that all means.

Councilor Lafayette asked if we heard any news about the DDI Exit 16 project. I'm assuming that's on hold right now. How does that impact Main St? Mr. Rauscher said last we heard from VTRANS is that they may do a minor project starting this season. It would have pre-limited impact, some electrical relocation. Last, I heard from VTRANS they are looking to start the project next season, which helps with Main Street coordinating in what we are doing on the north end potentially, if we phase it that way.

The Mayor said the decision to pause on the impact fees is smart for similar reasons about engagement. Its unfortunate the situation we are in with the pool and obviously, we do have to wait to see how the governor is opening of the spicket plays out and what that means. I do appreciate that you are considering not just opening for a short duration and what that will mean to the community. Having Main Street still be in a design phase and having our next update in in mid-June and not having to make that phasing decision yet because I think this is our biggest financial obligation projects and this gives us some time to see the impacts of the pandemic playout. The Mayor also inquired about the Hickok Street project. This potentially begins in June. If there is a two-person limit what does that do? Mr. Rauscher said the bid project goes out in May and starts in June. It could impact the schedule, but what concerns me are the pricing and bidding and the unknowns.

Mr. Myers asked if we notify that business owners to when the project will start. Mr. Rauscher said phase 1 had a public meeting with folks on West Lane and Hickok Street. We did door to door flyers and we have an onsite construction director that works for us. We also have public meetings through a list serve as long as we have emails.



Council Duncan asked if there was any update on Lot 7D
Ms. Carrington said she had a meeting last week with the developers. He identified it as being two weeks behind. There will be less availability at the state level to review projects. We may not have things move as quickly as we initially intended but we have seen what that impact is and we will be receiving from our development team this week or next a revised schedule.

XI. Adjourn

MOTION by Councilor Myers seconded by Councilor Colston to adjourn City Council meeting at 7:28 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

