

## I. Call to Order

Members Present: Mayor Kristine Lott, Ali Nagle, Margaret Bass, Sean McMannon, Phoebe Townsend, Ray Coffey, Yasamin Gordon, Justin Huizenga

Call to Order by: Kristine Lott

Meeting Start Time: 5:16 PM

Minutes Recorded by: Phoebe Townsend

## II. Public Comment

None

## III. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Approved

## IV. Interview Questions Review & Discussion

Mayor Lott: what are the questions we want to ask our potential candidates so we know what we need to know for the decision making process? Hoping for tonight's meeting to select questions we want to use. We should really be focused on what we want to ask to learn what we need to learn.

Yasamin Gordon: Looking at questions 1 and 2, make them a little less broad thinking about especially #2. Rework that question: how would you define equity and inclusion as it relates to their interpretation?

Sean McMannon: Suggest adding a strengths based question -instead of #1. Do some research. They would be able to have a good articulation of what our strengths are and what they choose to share. Opportunities might be more project oriented? Keep things broad and open ended.

Mayor Lott: I follow that difference between opportunity and strength.

Margaret Bass: Remove #4 under Equity or put it somewhere else. Underlying assumption that in matters of equity inclusion and culture there is an assumption of conflict. Sean McMannon: It could fit under leadership and management.

Ray Coffey: I really like question #5 there and would help to paint a picture of how deep that understanding of the ways these systems are challenging access. How these can be changed and addressed.

Yasamin Gordon: I agree with what Ray was saying, see similarities to that in #3. Someone is able to articulate ways they have made those changes in the past and articulate that coming in to this position.

Mayor Lott: I did receive an email from one of our city councilors wanting to ask a question about energy and sustainability. Maybe fit in the list with potential written interview question #1.

Ali Nagle: That is a great point and a valid question to bring up. I think it is going to be more and more important as we continue on. Mayor Lott: There is some connection there between climate change and clean energy. And financial management: What can we do to improve the way we're looking at climate change or environmental as a city as a whole?

Sean McMannon: I wonder if there's a way to tie that into the current events around big change for the future. To see if they identify that as one of the big policy initiatives. 20-30 years down the road. What are some of the big policy initiatives related to opportunities in the next 20-30 years?

Hal Colston: The whole conversation needs to connect with the issue of equity. 20-30 years out we will be more of a black and brown community. Important component.

Ray Coffey: Good point – the type of thought process we're looking to draw out. Not only focus on experience. What are opportunities you see in these areas. This person is thinking green infrastructure, thinking about equity. We may not have a climate expert. Opportunity question vs. experience question.

Yasamin Gordon: Written question #2 – think about combining #2 and #4 to make it a bit more specific? Expand or deepen that.

Phoebe Townsend: We could use that question to get at more targeted Winooski issues, like environmental justice.

Mayor Lott: We do need to ask a question on how to leverage outside resources towards these future goals that we have.

Yasamin Gordon: Fostering a safe environment -formulate more around how do you support your staff? What is your personal philosophy around supporting staff members when they do take risks and are uplifted and encouraged to do so? Take us through how you supported them. A little bit deeper.

Ray Coffey: I love that suggestion, Yas, and #5 could be flushed out. Curious about #6. Working with a team with variety of styles and competencies. Unique leaders from a lot of backgrounds. Seek to diversify our workforce. Getting a sense from this potential leader on how they manage that and evolving complexity of diversifying workforce.

Sean McMannon: Looking under financial and risk management. Kind of a setup for #2. Always a good representation of expectation. We want you to review this and hear your analysis. Please review the annual budget and the latest audit and be prepared to give us your perspective on financial health, capital projects and risk management.

Phoebe Townsend: We can think about some of the narrative and context for setting up these interview questions, add that in where needed too.

Justin Huizenga: Looking at #6 in regards to public safety. I think getting someone's raw opinion is super important. Tell us about their experiences and thought processes and what they think about public safety in general. What can they tell us about our police department and the PD in the city collaboratively going forward? Our PD is so different from other police departments. What is your vision for police reform or your vision for public safety? And what have you discovered about Winooski PD, specifically and about community strategy. Could roll into another question we already have or have it be stand alone.

Ali Nagle: I can see it tying in when talking about the leadership and management #6. Including working with a staff team and public safety. Finding out if this person has experience working

together with police and public safety folks. Wouldn't want to lose it in the mix.

Ray Coffey: How many pre-written questions? Really important topic especially moving into the next few years. What do you envision the future of public safety in Winooski to look like? Get a richer response vs. an in person response. I would advocate that's an important subject to call out separately.

Justin Huizenga: I agree and look at it getting someone's raw perspective and their initial feeling and directive. Equally important that they do know about our specific department and what our goals are.

Sean McMannon: We could go with 1 or 2 in the written – the bulleted ones are kind of complicated, get through resume and reference checks. Whatever we ask them to provide in writing is symbolic of what our priorities are. We're asking them to review analyze and write about it. 3,4,5 all equity related. How can we somehow combine something, and give them backup information?

Yasamin Gordon: Thinking about those last three questions, I actually would prefer if the questions focused on equity asked as a written response focused more around personal experience. Asking them in the moment., whether they have a true understanding and whether they understand pedagogy or easily do a google search, it's organic when someone can speak to it and understanding what the issues are. Situational equity questions.

Margaret Bass : I don't know how we can do this and not be mindful of the context. Coming out of the pandemic, people fiercely divided and people are in the streets. That matters, we are part of the nation. Equity, culture and inclusion means something in Winooski it doesn't mean anywhere else in Vermont. Can you just ask the candidate tell us what you know about Winooski, the community? And then talk about what it is about this community that would be, could be particularly challenging for the person who holds the position of City Manager? If they leave out all of these things like equity, culture and inclusion then we know what we need to know. How do you apply what you know about Winooski to this position? Culture, class, and if all of that is not in a candidate's response without embracing all of this. Written question or not. I want to hear what it means to be a City Manager here in Winooski. What's the constituency here – what are the challenges? What do they have to learn? Recovering from the pandemic brings specific challenges, how do you make these kinds of transitions. Policing is extremely important here. The person needs to know and say in context of Winooski what policing means and what policing ought to be. Telling us what they know, understanding us. An intellectual understanding of the community. Solid approaches to dealing with this community that is unlike other communities in the state of Vermont.

Justin Huizenga: Written questions – how would you work to reimagine public safety?. Or do we want to have a broader question and see if they bring up all of these issues that are important to us?

Margaret Bass: This comes with expectation of certain level of awareness – community of refugees, not just diversity and inclusion. Highly populated brings specific kinds of challenges that I need to know. What it means in school, police department. Doesn't have some commentary on the makeup of authority figures in the city.

Hal Colston: I echo what Margaret is saying. Is the candidate serious? Are they prepared and do they want the job? Even more important. You'll convey that in the interview response. Interesting way to frame it. Telling response if it's done well.

Yasamin Gordon: To add on that, really important for us to consider saving the equity questions

for the in person interviews. Not research and regurgitate. In a situation where you are being vetted by city leadership is powerful. We will know right away whether we want to them move on, keep those to in person interview.

Mayor Lott: I want to push back on the idea of what they know about Winooski. Set someone up for success. They could get off track, forget portions of what they want to share. If we are saying we value policing, concerned about equal access to housing, we can make sure they have done the research that matters. Concerns about being too broad.

Sean McMannon: The first question we ask at the school is why Winooski? Gives them an open door and gives us incredible insight what they're thinking about us, as a city and people when we leave it wide open.

Hal Colston: What I am curious to know is what is their vision; part of broader questions - what are they excited about? Why us? Thought enough about this job that they can convey some sense of a vision, see us doing something 10 years from now. How to pursue the follow up question. Is this person excited about this?

Margaret Bass: Why Winooski? The answers are the same. Mayor Lott: We don't want to determine we want to see XYZ in the candidates.

Yasamin Gordon: Anything we ask a pre-written questions should be about personal philosophy. Written question should be for the second round. Person has to make an effort to dig into that information. Show the person's initiative.

Sean McMannon: It depends on purpose of written. Information about something in particular - Please review the Winooski Policing Strategy. How would you reimagine public safety considering our community strategy?

Phoebe Townsend: We are looking for policy and analysis. Mayor Lott: and someone has strategy too.

Yasamin Gordon: Those are questions I answered as a final round. Haven't applied for a job with written question in the first round. Further along in the process.

Ray Coffey: To the point of using written questions: curious about the budget as a focus. Touches on all the areas of the work that we do. Conversation around funding of police and public safety – publically available. Either police element or budget element focus for written question. A lot of different ways a person needs to communicate with the person in this role.

Mayor Lott: There would be a public presentation for the second round leaning into analysis piece. Verbal communication with residents. The group did a ranking activity for groups of questions.

## **V. Interview Scheduling Process/Logistics**

Overview of dates of interviews to be scheduled by Phoebe Townsend.

## **VI. Check-in About Next Steps**

Phoebe will send updated interview questions to the Committee for review at 5/24 meeting.

## **VII. Adjourn**

Meeting end time: 6:40 PM