



Winooski City Council Meeting

Tuesday, September 5, 2023, at 6 PM

Attend in person: Winooski City Hall ([27 W Allen St](#))

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

Attend by phone: 1 646 558 8656

Webinar ID: 843 6484 9328

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM

Members Present: Mayor Kristine Lott, Deputy Mayor Thomas Renner, Councilor Bryn Oakleaf, Councilor Aurora Hurd and Councilor Charles Judge

Officers Present: Elaine Wang, City Manager, Jon Rauscher, Public Works Director, Eric Vorwald, Planning and Zoning Manager, Paul Sarne, Communications Director, John Audy, Fire Chief, Ray Coffey, Community Services Director, Jenny Willingham, Clerk, Jesse Acri, Human Resources Director, Angela Aldieri, Financing Director and Jazmine Hurley, Housing Initiative Director

Others Present: Joseph Perron, Abby Bleything, Sean Bleything, Karol Cannon, Shaun Gilpin, Ryan Smith, Kristin Lawson, Maarten van Ryckervorsel, Sarah van Ryckevorsel, Britta, Mike O'Brien, Terry Zigmund, Dominique Collins, Charlie Glassberg, Evan Gould, Mcponey and Ryan.

II. Agenda Review

Minutes: None

III. Public Comment

Minutes: None

IV. Consent Agenda

- A. City Council and Liquor Control Board Minutes of August 7, 2023
- B. Payroll Warrants July 23 - August 5, 2023, August 6 - August 19, 2023
- C. Accounts Payable August 21 and August 30, 2023
- D. Adjustments Related to Code Enforcement Department Change
- E. Commission Appointments: Housing, Municipal Infrastructure

- F. Vermont League of Cities and Towns, Property and Casualty Intermunicipal Fund, VLCT Employment Resource and Benefits Trust - Annual Meeting Voting Delegate
- G. Estoppel Certificates, Amendment to PILOT Agreement for 25 Winooski Falls Way, Unit 2
- H. Modification to Housing Trust Fund: Changes to the Down Payment Assistance Program
- I. Lot 7D – Winooski Falls East Agreement Authorization
- J. Winooski Pride Event Permit Application

Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Hurd and seconded by Councilor Judge to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. Voted and passed 4-0

V. Council Reports

Mayor Kristine Lott: The Finance Commission met last month to review the proposed sidewalk changes that were presented by staff to Council earlier this year. This will be discussed further in tonight's agenda.

The Planning Commission continued discussion on the new Design Review District and Commission which would add a layer to the project permitting process focused on retaining historic buildings and structures. A district would be established in Winooski where all proposed renovation, demolition or new construction would be reviewed by the new design review commission. The Commission would advise on any design changes to historic or culturally significant structures. The Commission has been looking for a location in Winooski where to implement a district based on known historic locations.

Deputy Mayor and Mayor attended events at the Winooski School District to welcome new teachers and staff to kick-off the start of the new year. This is a continuation on efforts to strengthen the partnership with the school and the city.

The Housing roundtable group had their monthly meeting in August. This group included Winooski Housing Authority, Champlain Housing Trust, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, Winooski School District and UVM Health. The roundtable was able to hear from the Housing Initiative Director to share workplan and insight on priorities.

Deputy Mayor Thomas Renner: A reminder from Downtown Winooski of the upcoming Winooski Pride Celebration on September 9th at 4:00 PM. Also, another event by Downtown Winooski is Blingo which will be held on September 12th at Grazers at 6:00 PM. In addition, Winooski Wednesdays is tomorrow, September 6th at 5:00 PM.

Councilor Aurora Hurd: Councilor Hurd and three (3) staff liaisons as part of the Safe, Healthy, Connected People Commission met to establish a workplan until March. In addition, developing a structure where other Commissions can join to discuss specific items or issues.

Inclusion & Belonging Commission Council Liaison, Interim Staff Liaison and Interim Chair met with two (2) applicants interested in being Members. These two (2) appointments will be on the September 18th Agenda. There are still two (2) Alternate positions available at this time. The rescheduled August 24th Inclusion & Belonging Commission discussed the updated Stipend Policy Plan along with ways to recruit members in the future as well as share information on the Equity Audit in a more accessible formatting.

Councilor Bryn Oakleaf: The Airport Commission will meet tomorrow Wednesday, September 6th at 4:00 PM. The Airport Commission meets on the 1st Wednesday of the month. The meeting is a hybrid where attendance in person is at the Wright Room at the Airport or on-line. The Regular items covered are sound insulation progress as well as noise complaints. An additional item for discussion will be the noise exposure map update. In addition, there will be a Public Hearing on September 14th at Chamberlin Elementary School. The bulk of the agenda will include reviewing some proposed park improvements around the airport along with possibly preliminary public feedback from the noise exposure update.

The Winooski Bridge Committee had its' first kick-off meeting last week. The next Public Hearing meeting will be on September 19th from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the O'Brien Community Center.

The Municipal Infrastructure Commission met on August 17th and welcomed the new members. The bulk of the meeting was the Lafountain/Dion Street scoping & improvements. The short-term & long-term improvements were discussed. The meeting primarily focused on the short-term recommended proposed improvements. The next meeting is September 21st and please look for announcements & agenda on the City website.

Councilor Charles Judge: The Housing Commission met last month. The Commission would like to thank Robert Millar for his service. Robert stepped down as the Chair and replaced by Jessica Bridge as the Chair.

The Commission reviewed the Directors' workplan for 2023 and moved on to begin to work on the first three priorities. The Commission discussed the possibilities of Winooski Home Improvement Plan and and Housing Improvement Plan Fund could work together to have the most impact for our residents. The Commission approved the requested language change, after the last meeting for the Down Payment Assistance program to allow multiplexes beyond two units for qualifying participants. The Housing Director provided an extensive packet on the short-term rental market in Winooski along with possible solutions and incentives around the various impacts of the STR(Short-Term Rental) model.

VI. City Updates

Winooski River Bridge Replacement Project 1st Public Meeting - As you may have heard, the Winooski River Bridge Replacement project has been announced. This partnership between the Vermont Agency of Transportation and the cities of Burlington and Winooski aims to begin the reconstruction of the Winooski River Bridge that connects our communities in 2027. Until then, lots of public input opportunities will be available, starting with the first public meeting on Tuesday, September 19th, 6 PM at the O'Brien Community Center here in Winooski. Learn more about the project, ask questions, and get involved in the process Interpretation will be provided in Nepali, Somali, Arabic, Swahili, and potentially Mai Mai (still looking to book this language). A virtual attendance option, light refreshments, and limited childcare will also be provided. For more information, you can visit the project page at burlingtonwinooski.vtransprojects.vermont.gov or on our website at winooski.vt.gov/news

Street Sweeping in Winooski The Department of Public Works began a city-wide street sweeping effort on August 22nd that will take place every Tuesday – Friday for the next 30-45 days. 'No Parking' signs and traffic cones will be deployed along curb-line greenbelts and sidewalks on the day before DPW intends to perform the street sweeping work. Once in place, street parking is prohibited from 6 AM – 2 PM. Residents and visitors are asked to keep an eye out for these signs when parking on the street. Thanks to everyone for your patience while we work to improve your municipal infrastructure. For more information on this project, please visit our website at winooski.vt.gov/news.

And in related news, the contractor who provides Winooski with line striping has begun their scheduled work and while this is weather dependent, they're aiming to have this project completed by the end of the fall season.

Winooski Pride Event - Join your neighbors this weekend for the annual Pride Event on Saturday, September 9th, starting at 4:30 PM in Rotary Park. This family-friendly event is free and open to all and includes performances, musical guests, food vendors, an educational story hour, and much more - for details, visit downtownwinooski.org/pride-2023

Now Hiring - We've got some exciting employment opportunities on our jobs page right now - including a Pre-Certified Police Officer, a Part Time Code Enforcement Officer, and a Part Time Fire Inspector/Firefighter. Learn more and apply at winooskivt.gov/jobs

Join a City Commission - The City of Winooski is seeking engaged and dedicated residents to serve on our advisory commissions. These opportunities are an excellent way to get involved in the public process. Applicants with related experience, skill sets, and interests are encouraged to apply. Council and staff welcome diverse voices. If you've never served, we will do our best to support you. Current vacancies include the Finance Commission (focused on the City's finances and economic vitality, for example budgets, financial policies, grants, and loan programs), the Inclusion and Belonging Commission (focused on equitable policies and best practices for inclusion in municipal government), and the Safe, Healthy, Connected People Commission, which focuses on many Community Services and Public Safety aspects (such as Recreation and Parks, Police, Fire, and more). To learn more and apply, visit winooskivt.gov/news.

2023 Myers Memorial Pool Season - The 2023 Myers Memorial Pool Season has officially ended and I'd like to take a moment and thank our Recreation and Parks and pool staff, our lifeguards, and everyone who made this one of our best and busiest years to date. Over 1000 kids passed the swim-ready test required to get into the pool this year and we were delighted to see people of all ages enjoy the facility. We're looking forward to the 2024 season!

Donate Blood at the Senior Center on September 15th - Our upcoming blood drive at the Senior Center is right around the corner and donations are always in critical need. Help save a life - visit winooskivt.gov/news to sign up for your appointment - time slots are available from 12 - 5 PM. Participants can receive a unique Red Cross tee when you give blood or platelets while supplies last.

VII. Regular Items

- A. Public Hearing: Amendments to the Unified Land Use and Development Regulations - Multiple Sections

Minutes: Eric Vorwald provided a summary of the proposed draft amendments along with specific details regarding the proposed changes for the Unified Land Use and Development Regulations. These proposed amendments help to improve and clarify the interpretation of the regulations while aligning with City priorities. Also, a detailed summary of the proposed amendments to Section 4.12 related to parking requirements. Eric did raise concerns about the impact of newly adopted ACT 47.

The Public Hearing was opened at 6:30 PM for Public Comment.

- Abby Bleything - Planning Commission Member stated a great deal of effort has gone into writing the presented regulations. The entire process including Public Meetings to develop incentives for parking reductions, as well as transportation management in accordance with the Master Plan. This was a lengthy 2+ year public process with a lot of participation.
- Ryan Smith- business/property owner expressed his agreement with Abby Bleything and the standards & incentives for adding additional units as well as the parking requirements.

- Kristin Lawson- resident who supports the proposed requirements for bike, parking and incentives for larger units as well as the transportation options and incentives.
- Terry Zigmund- resident who reiterated the incentives included with parking reductions/standards

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:45 PM.

Discussion ensued from City Council members around bike access/requirements along with parking reductions. The Planning Commission will review updates and more discussion at the next meeting.

B. Discussion/Approval: Personnel Policy Manual - Police Longevity Bonus Addendum

Minutes: Human Resources Director Jesse Acri provided an overview on the proposed longevity bonus that applies for Non-Union Police Department Members. This Longevity Bonus provides incentives for officers assuming more managerial responsibilities. This single bonus would be acknowledging the service of a member who served more than sixteen (16) years shall be paid out with an eligible qualifying bargaining unit members' final check. Discussion ensued as to the budget for this bonus.

Motion: A motion by Councilor Renner and seconded by Councilor Hurd to approve the Longevity Bonus for Non-Union Police Department Members. Voted and passed 3-0 Councilor Oakleaf abstained.

C. Discussion: Proposed Changes to Sidewalk Use

Minutes: Eric Vorwald, Planning & Zoning Manager, gave an overview of the Sidewalk Permit Use proposed draft changes in Chapter 5 of the City's Municipal Code. In addition, the Finance Commission on August 8th discussed the proposed changes to Sidewalk use. A recommendation from staff is to have Sidewalk Permits reviewed by the Department of Public Works. This recommendation would streamline and improve the Seasonal Cafe Sidewalk Use (within the public right-of-way) with review and consistent enforcement mechanisms. Discussion ensued on some possible ways to address the Sidewalk use and potential liabilities that may arise from the current parking and the permitted Outside Consumption areas. The feedback provided by the Council & Mayor would be to collect more data on the proposed permitting process if the applications go through the Department of Public Works. In addition, there would be some engagement with the restaurants/businesses.

D. Discussion: Strategic Vision Goal Area Updates: All, Economic Vitality

Minutes: Elaine Wang, City Manager provided her quarterly report on 2023-2024 Policy Priorities and Strategies Update. The City of Winooski has a Master Plan with four (4) goals: Municipal Infrastructure, Economic Vitality, Safe Healthy Connected People and Housing. Council sets the policies, priorities and strategies for each area on an annual basis. The category "All" touches more than one area. Also, Staff sets their own operational policies, priorities and strategies on an annual basis around the same time. There were three (3) action areas in particular that are highlighted including: Integrating Equity Considerations, Continued work on a Language Access process and Community Engagement to tackle the Equity Audit findings in partnership with Winooski School District. Eric Vorwald, Planning & Zoning Manager gave examples on the outreach plan for the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. The Regional Planning Commission & their consultants focused on targeted areas for Outreach by attending or participating in local events. In addition, there were signs posted around the City to participate in a survey. This survey was available in nine (9) languages. At this time, there were

500 responses and 300 comments offered for concerns or policies.

Council expressed appreciation for the summary, the Vermont Office of Racial Equity, Councilor Hurd and Inclusion & Belonging Commission Interim Chair, Parker Silver.

E. Discussion: City Council Equity Update

Minutes: Mayor Lott provided an update of the priorities from the Equity Audit including Development of Affordable Housing through Research and Action Planning, Educate and Train Landlords and Renters, Changing Advertisement and Recruitment Practices to ones that are more effective at Diversifying the Workforce and Strengthening the Winooski School District and City collaboration to include shared priorities and more. Another highlight was the City Council codified a community access and engagement process identifying community groups to establish regular engagement opportunities. Comments from Councilors and City Manager Wang about the importance of highlighting the priorities.

VIII. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn by Councilor Oakleaf and seconded by Councilor Hurd at 7:55 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM

Attest: _____
Jenny Willingham, City Clerk