



City of Winooski

Vermont's Opportunity City

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Winooski City Council Meeting

Monday, October 2, 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 6:01pm

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

Officers Present: Elaine Wang, City Manager; Ray Coffey, Community Services Director; John Audy Jr, Fire Chief; Eric Vorwald, Planning and Zoning Manager; Jenny Willingham, City Clerk; Sarah Greenberg, Assistant City Clerk; Nathan Eddy, Library Director.

Others Present: Taliah Bennett, Library Committee Youth Member candidate; Jessica Wignall; Michael Monte.

II Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes: led by Councilor Thomas Renner

III Agenda Review

Minutes: No adjustments to the meeting agenda

IV Public Comment

Minutes: none

V Consent Agenda

- A. City Council Minutes of September 18, 2023
- B. Payroll Warrant September 3 - September 16, 2023
- C. Approval: Accounts Payable September 27, 2023
- D. Approval: Justice Assistance Grant Application

Minutes: Items A through D on the Consent Agenda were presented by Council for approval

Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Oakleaf, seconded by Councilor Hurd. Voted and passed 4-0.

VI Council Reports

Councilor Thomas Renner: Gave council an update on meeting last week with Downtown Winooski Executive Director Melissa Corbin where they discussed future upcoming events including a possible lighting ceremony for the rotary tree, and the holiday pop-up shop. Blingo will continue on the first Tuesday of every month and on October 3rd Blingo will be at Monkey House at 6:00 PM. Downtown Winooski is looking for pumpkin rotary celebration volunteers (go to the Downtown Winooski website for more information <https://downtownwinooski.org/>).

Mayor Kristine Lott: Provided to Council an update on last week's orientation with new commissioners. This was hosted by Mayor Lott and is recorded. An update on the monthly housing round-table meetings with Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVEO) and the Winooski School District's (WSD) multilingual program staff to deliver tenant education workshops in Winooski per a specific recommendation from the City's equity audit. This will be available in (3) three language groups. Gave an update on attending the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission: the state is setting state level targets for housing needs, and the commission will set both regional and municipal targets anticipated by next fall. Gave an update on Deputy Mayor Renner and Mayor Lott meeting with Winooski state representatives to check in on the status of Winooski state legislative priorities.

Councilor Bryn Oakleaf: Gave an update on the next meeting of the airport commission which is meeting this Wednesday the 4th. They are hoping for an update from public meeting this past month on noise exposure and sound insulation. Gave an update on the next joint Municipal Infrastructure and Finance Commission meeting on October 19th at the Myers Pool to talk about capital budget priorities coming up in FY'25. This is a hybrid meeting where people can join via zoom or in person. Gave an update on the previous meeting where the improvements to the Lafountain/Dion Street area were discussed, and anticipates a public update/input meeting either late this month or next. Gave an update on the very well attended (almost 100 attendees) public meeting of the Winooski/Burlington Bridge project. The next public meeting will hopefully be in January, to be held in Burlington, since Winooski hosted this recent one. The smaller Winooski bridge advisory committee will continue to meet at least monthly; please bring any questions of that committee to Councilor Oakleaf, and watch the Winooski website for bridge project updates.

Councilor Aurora Hurd: Gave an update on the next meetings of the Safe Healthy Connected People committee which will be meeting next Tuesday October 10th at 6:30 pm, and the Inclusion and Belonging committee meeting on Thursday October 12th at 6:00 pm. Agenda for the Inclusion and Belong meeting is addressing the bullet points from the City equity audit, and how to make these meetings more accessible in general.

Councilor Charles Judge: Gave an update on the Winooski Housing Commission meeting on Tuesday September 26th: General housekeeping item such as introducing new members and orienting them to their new roles. Gave an update on the first discussion and overview of the Housing Director's work addressing short term housing rental restrictions and provisions, and reviewed possible changes to the Interest Rate Buydown policy. Councilor Judge reminded those attending that the next meeting of the Winooski Housing Commission will be on October 24th at 6pm.

VII City Updates

Parking Garage: Yearly maintenance on the parking garage on Cascade Way is tentatively set to begin Tuesday October 10th and will continue through the fall season weather permitting. The garage will still be fully operational and accessible for parking while work areas of the parking garage are cordoned off temporarily as work progresses. Please watch for detour signs about the garage as work ensues. Parking pass holders that are unable to park in their assigned space or level are welcome to park on the upper levels at no additional charge.

Police Department Chief Search: The city has received 7 bids for the search contractor firm that will help pursue and secure the next police chief, and those bids are currently under review. Contracts should be extended to the finalists in the next week or so. Please keep an eye out for public input opportunities to give voice to what qualities are desired in the next Winooski Police Chief.

VIII Regular Items

A. Discussion/Approval: Appoint Winooski Memorial Library Committee Youth Member, Taliah Bennett - Ray Coffey, Community Services Director

Minutes: Library Director Nate Eddy introduced WSD student Taliah Bennett, the potential Library Committee youth member candidate. Mayor Lott and the Council warmly welcomed Taliah and is excited for her interest. Mayor Lott asked for a motion to be made to approve the appointment of Taliah to the committee.

Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Oakleaf, seconded by Councilor Hurd. Voted and passed 4-0.

B. Discussion/Approval: Appoint Finance Commission Member, Maggie Hazard – Angela Aldieri, Finance Commission

Minutes: Finance Director Angela Aldieri spoke on Small Business Economic Vitality potential new commission member Maggie Hazard, who was unfortunately unable to attend this meeting, but is excited to accept the new position. Mayor Lott asked for a motion to be made to approve the appointment of Maggie Hazard to the Finance Committee.

Motion: A motion to approve the appointment of Maggie Hazard to the Small Business Economic Vitality commission was made by Councilor Renner, seconded by Councilor Oakleaf. Voted and passed 4-0.

C. Discussion: Public Hearing on Amendments to Municipal Code of Ordinances Chapter 17 Public Building Registry-John Audy, Fire Chief

Minutes: Fire Chief John Audy introduced a small recommendation from legal counsel to add a minor part to section 17.08 – D “Issuance of Certificates in Terms of Inspections” to connect the definition of a dwelling unit to match that which is in Chapter 9. The added text is:

“10. For any Public Building that contains a Dwelling Unit, as that term is defined in Chapter 9 of the Winooski Municipal Code, is determined to have violated Minimum Housing Standards of said Chapter 9.”

The public hearing then commenced and opened to public comment. There was no comment,

and the hearing was closed.

D. Discussion/Approval: Adopt Amendments to Municipal Code of Ordinances Chapter 17 Public Building Registry-John Audy, Fire Chief

Minutes: Fire Chief Audy & City Manager Elaine Wang advised moving forward with the amendment. Mayor Lott asked for a motion to be made to approve the discussed amendment(s) to the Municipal Code of Ordinances.

Motion: A motion to approve the amendment(s) was made by Councilor Hurd, seconded by Councilor Renner. Voted and passed 4-0.

E. Discussion/Approval: O'Brien Community Center Update - Ray Coffey Community Services Director

Minutes: Community Services Director Ray Coffey discussed working with the Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) about the ongoing development of O'Brien Community Center (OCC) parcel, and then turned over discussion to Michael Monte from CHT. Michael Monte provided an update on the potential renovation of the OCC including expanded a new clinic space for the Community Health Center and Vermont Dental Clinic as well as construction of a new City Library and space for a new event hall and community kitchen. An overview continued on financing and design development, amongst other items.

F. Discussion: Strategic Vision Area Goal Update - Safe, Healthy, Connected People- Ray Coffey, Community Services Director

Minutes: Ray Coffey, Community Services Director gave a first quarter update. Things are moving along as expected with no significant red flags, and Council and the Mayor were then asked if they had any questions, and the following points were put forth:

Councilor Bryn Oakleaf: Raised concerns about future plans for the Senior Center and how they will dovetail with the updates being done at the O'Brien Community Center. Director Coffey informed Council that the opportunity for overlapping programming between the Senior Center and the OCC exists. Councilor Oakleaf then raised concerns about transportation to the Senior Center vs the OCC. Director Coffey mentioned conversations with the CHT, the existence of the City van, and that transportation options should certainly be thought about. City Manager Wang then made sure to mention that no moving of senior programming should be undertaken without solid input from the affected community, to which Councilor Oakleaf heartily agreed, and Director Coffey duly noted.

Mayor Lott: Raised a question about the renovations of the firehouse seeking broad thoughts on a timeline, particularly how Staff wishes to proceed. Manager Wang then sketched out a rough order of events: a study of the facility, determining desired change plans, and then the bidding out of said plans. They have been holding off on beginning this process until after the Main Street project is awarded.

G. Discussion: Amendments to Unified Land Use and Development Regulations - Multiple Sections-Eric Vorwald, Planning & Zoning Manager

Minutes: Planning and Zoning Manager Eric Vorwald requested that City Council review the additional language amending the Unified Land Use and Development Regulations proposed at a previous meeting with the Planning Commission on September 14th. These changes

included implications of Act to determine if the proposed additional language will address their concerns, and asked council if they would like a separate meeting to address said amendments in depth; they proposed a Public Hearing on November 6th. Manager Vorwald also directed the Council's consideration of the draft regulation in regards to how the City will come into compliance with Act 47, particularly in regards to bicycle parking, and how it may impact future development. Council discussion ensued where the following points were put forth:

Mayor Lott: Asked if there was a timeline for beginning to review and possibly revise changes in the developer incentives in the December 24th Planning Commission (PC) draft changes. Manager Vorwald informed Council that the PC plans to review and begin to discuss possible revisions to comply with Act 47 at their second related meeting to be scheduled in late October. Mayor Lott turned Council's attention to a possible lack of equity of access in the wording of "car parking space per unit" vs "car parking space per bedroom".

Councilor Bryn Oakleaf: Expressed a desire for any city ordinances referring to lighting requirements to use the LED brightness unit of lumens vs the incandescent brightness unit of watts. Also noted their support for the PC's and Local Motion's (LM) recommendation of 1 parking space per dwelling unit.

Councilor Aurora Hurd: In reference to the parking space per dwelling unit vs per bedroom discussion, Councilor Hurd wondered if the data gathered by LM was germane to Winooski or if it had a more statewide scope. Public commenter Abby Bleything informed the Council that the original language chosen by the PC was taken from Burlington's bicycle parking ordinances and not from more rural communities, and that said language happened to comply with LM's recommendations, which they released after said language was proposed by the PC. Councilor Hurd also proposed returning to the original language for parking for the funeral home and industrial zones, and moving to the new language for the OCC as the bicycle parking there is often used.

Councilor Charles Judge: Pointed out that "parking space per unit" directly disincentivizes developers from building the type of housing that city constituents have said they need.

Mayor Lott asked for a motion to be made to set another public hearing on November 6th to continue the discussion, including all of the possible changes and suggested added language concerning lumens vs watts, excepting the multi-dwelling unit and community center/cultural facility/religious facility use.

Motion: A motion to set a public hearing meeting on November 6th was made by Councilor Oakleaf, seconded by Councilor Hurd. Voted and passed 4-0.

H. Discussion: Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Goal Setting - Angela Aldieri, Finance Director

Minutes: City Manager Elaine Wang asked the Council to set goals for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 ("FY25") to inform how staff develops the proposed budget over the next weeks and months. They put in front of Council four budgeting options:

1. A minimal tax increase budget
2. A level services budget
3. A 'catch-up' budget
4. A mix of service cuts and catch-up budget

Council discussion ensued where the general consensus was some form of catch-up budget, with a focus on municipal infrastructure.

Community Commenter Jessica Wignall: Was encouraged by the Council's discussion. Notes that we have a community that is really excited about what the future holds, but that we must continue investing in that community. They encourage the City to put funds towards what we are building with a mind towards long term sustainability, not just for the next fiscal year, but for years to come as well.

IX Adjourn

Mayor Lott thanked all City Staff and community members in attendance and made a request for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Renner, seconded by Councilor Hurd. Voted and passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:05pm.

Attest: _____
Sarah Greenberg, Assistant City Clerk