

## **Winooski City Council Procedures for Remote Meetings**

April 1, 2020

As social distancing to preserve public health and safety continue to become standard practices, the City of Winooski is working to conduct public meetings via electronic methods whenever possible. With the State's passage of Act 92, the physical location requirements for public meetings is temporarily waived for the duration of the Governor's declared state of emergency. During this time, City Council meetings will be conducted solely electronically with options for public participation.

In an effort to help prepare the public for what to expect with a remote meeting, the following information have been prepared to identify how the City Council will conduct business and how the public can participate. If you have questions about any of this information please reach out to Jessie Baker, City Manager at [jbaker@winooski.vt.gov](mailto:jbaker@winooski.vt.gov).

### **How will I be able to participate in a remote meeting?**

The City of Winooski is using a program called [Zoom](#) to conduct remote meetings. Zoom allows participation via computer or telephone. If you participate via computer, you have the option of seeing the other participants, but also seeing the information that is being presented. The only requirements are that you have a reliable internet connection, a web browser (such as Chrome or Internet Explorer), speakers to hear the discussions, and a microphone if you want to speak.

Another option is to use your telephone and call in. A phone number and Meeting ID will be provided that allow interested persons to use a standard telephone to participate. This option will accommodate the audio portion of the meeting, however no visual information will be available. You can also use a smartphone, but may be required to download the Zoom app before it will allow you to participate. In this instance, you may be able to use the smartphone's built in camera, speakers, and microphone to see and hear the proceedings of the meeting.

When a Zoom meeting is scheduled, a website address, telephone number, and Meeting ID will be provided with the public hearing notice. This will allow any interested person to choose the option that best suits their needs for participating. Each time a meeting is held, a new website address and Meeting ID are generated and will be provided for public participation.



Whether you choose to use a telephone or computer, we ask that you join the meeting approximately **10 minutes** before the scheduled start time. This will allow for us to note who is participating, but also confirm your intent to provide testimony or not. This is also a great opportunity to check your equipment to make sure we can hear you, and you can hear us.

If you are only interested in watching the proceedings and not providing testimony, our meetings will continue to be live-streamed and archived via CH17 and can be viewed via your television or computer:

CH17 Live Broadcasts: <https://www.cctv.org/watch-tv>

Recorded Winooski Meetings: <https://www.cctv.org/watch-tv/municipalities/winooski>

### **What should I do if I'm interested in participating in a remote meeting?**

If you want to provide testimony or otherwise participate in a remote meeting, we ask that you take the following steps to assist us in making this process run as smoothly as possible.

1. Provide a notification to the City via email that you want to participate in the hearing. You can do this by sending your name and address to [jbaker@winooskivt.gov](mailto:jbaker@winooskivt.gov). This information will be used for a sign-in as proof of participation and will aid the Mayor in recognizing persons interested in participating. This information should be provided at least **4 hours** in advance of the meeting if possible.
2. When notifying the City, include the specific questions or discussion topics that you intend to address during the meeting. This will allow the Mayor and Council to discuss these issues at the meeting, but also ensure that if you are having difficulties connecting to the remote meeting, your questions or concerns can still be addressed. Additionally, this can help limit duplicate questions if multiple people are interested in the same topic.
3. If you have any documents or information you want to be included in the public record, provide that information via email to [jbaker@winooskivt.gov](mailto:jbaker@winooskivt.gov). This should be sent at least **4 hours** in advance as well and will allow for distribution to the Mayor and Council. Also, if the documents are provided in advance, staff will ensure that anyone participating in the meeting through visual means will have the ability to see the information.
4. When you join the meeting (preferably **10 minutes** before the start time) you will be asked to introduce yourself. If you previously indicated your intent to provide testimony, we will confirm your interest. If you did not previously indicate your intent to provide testimony but have since changed your mind, you can declare that intent when you introduce yourself.



Please note, failure to meet any of the above items will **not** limit your ability to participate in the hearing. Also, any questions or concerns provided in advance will not preclude you from asking additional questions when you've been recognized by the Mayor to provide questions or comments. This is simply being requested to help ensure an orderly meeting can be conducted since there will not be visual queues in a physical room for the Mayor to recognize persons interested in participating.

### **What can I expect at the meeting?**

These are new and challenging times for everyone. While there is no way to predict exactly what will occur at the meeting, we are hoping to have a format similar to what occurs when we all gather to meet in person and will be easy to follow. In general, we anticipate the meeting will go like this:

1. The Mayor will call the meeting to order and introduce the members of Council. The Mayor will also provide an overview of the items that are on the agenda indicating the order in which they will be heard.
2. If the item being discussed is not the one you are interested in, you can listen or watch patiently while the discussions occur. Your microphone will be muted by the moderator to limit unnecessary background noise while others are talking.
3. Typically, City Staff will provide an overview of each agenda item after it has been introduced by the Mayor. Documents that have been provided in advance will be shared by the moderator so anyone participating with a computer can see the documents. After the item has been presented, the Mayor will call for discussion among the members of Council. Next, the Mayor will call on members of the public to participate based on the order they submitted their intent. Otherwise, the Mayor will open the meeting to anyone interested in asking questions or providing comments.
4. Once the Mayor has recognized you to participate, the moderator will unmute your microphone and confirm that you can be heard. You are then free to provide your questions or comments. After you have finished, your microphone will be muted again. The Mayor will then call the next person to speak. You will be able to provide additional input, but only after the Mayor recognizes you again.
5. Before taking action on an item or moving to the next item on the agenda, the Mayor will ask for any last comments or questions. If you are on video, we ask that you raise your hand to be recognized. Once the Mayor has recognized you, your microphone will be



unmuted and you can speak. If no one requests to provide additional information, the Mayor will move on to the next item.

6. Be prepared for technical difficulties and lag in audio/video. Not everything works as planned, but we will do all that we can to ensure a complete record is created and everyone has an opportunity to participate.

### **What happens when the meeting is complete?**

When all the agenda items are complete and any actions have been taken, the Mayor will adjourn the meeting. Once the meeting is adjourned, no other business of the City Council will take place. As will all City Council meetings, minutes will be prepared and posted to the City's website and a video recording of the meeting will be posted to the City's website. All the normal requirements for City Council meetings will still apply. The City will work to ensure information is available and accessible in a timely manner to ensure the public has access to these records so they can be reviewed. If additional discussions are needed on any agenda item, they will appear on a future agenda where the public can participate and ask questions or provide comments.

