

## **Mayor and Council Rules of Procedure**

Adopted: 03/07/2022

### **Article 1: Purpose.**

The Winooski City Council and its appointed Boards, Committees, and Commissions, are required by law to conduct meetings in accordance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law (1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314.) The authorities of the Mayor, City Council, and City Manager are established in the Winooski City Charter (24A V.S.A. § 19.)

### **Article 2: Application.**

This policy setting forth rules of procedure shall apply to the Winooski City Council, which is referred to below as “the body.” These rules shall apply to all regular, special, and emergency meetings of the body. While this policy is not directly applicable to Boards, Committees, and Commissions as appointed by the City Council, such bodies are subject to the requirements of the Vermont Open Meeting Law, 1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314.

### **Article 3. Organization of the City Council.**

- a. The Mayor shall serve as the Chair of the City Council. The Deputy Mayor shall preside over all meetings in the Mayor's absence. If both the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor are absent, a member selected by the body shall act as chair for that meeting.
- b. The Mayor or presiding chair shall preserve order in the meeting and shall regulate its proceedings by applying these rules and making determinations about all questions of order or procedure.
- c. A majority of the members of the body shall constitute a quorum. If a quorum of the members of the body is not present at a meeting, no meeting shall take place.
- d. No single member of the body shall have authority to represent or act on behalf of the body unless, by majority vote, the body has delegated such authority for a specific matter at a duly noticed meeting and such delegation is recorded in the meeting minutes.
- e. Motions made by members of the body do require a second. The Mayor or presiding chair may make motions and may vote on all questions before the body. A motion will only pass if it receives the votes of a majority of the quorum.
- f. There is no limit to the number of times a member of the body may speak to a question. A member may speak or make a motion only after being recognized by the Mayor or presiding chair. Motions to close or limit debate will be entertained.
- g. Any member of the body may request a roll call vote at any time.
- h. Members are allowed to attend a meeting electronically. Pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 312(a)(2), when one or more members attend a meeting electronically, a roll call vote is required for votes that are not unanimous. While allowed by State Statute or action, meetings may take



place fully electronically or virtually assuming that the meeting is properly warned and the electronic access to the meeting is included in the warning.

- i. Meetings may be recessed to a time and place certain.
- j. These rules may be amended by majority vote of the body, and must be readopted annually.

**Article 4: Council Meeting Agendas.**

- a. Each regular and special meeting of the body shall have an agenda.
  - i. Councilors, staff, or members of the public who wish to be added to the meeting agenda shall contact the Mayor or City Manager by midnight on the Wednesday prior to a regular meeting to request inclusion on the agenda. Requests for agenda items from the public must be put in writing to the Manager. The Mayor, in consultation with the City Manager, shall determine the final content of the agenda. If two or more Councilors request an agenda item, the Mayor and Manager must add it to the agenda.
  - ii. The agenda shall indicate the name of the official proposing the item and if the item is for discussion and/or approval.
  - iii. Each agenda may contain a "Consent Agenda" section. Items listed on the Consent Agenda may be voted upon collectively. Examples of such items are the minutes of prior meetings, routine approvals, approval items from past meetings, and other non-controversial matters. The request of a single Councilor will be sufficient cause to remove an item from the Consent Agenda and vote on it separately.
  - iv. Each agenda will contain an item on agenda review, public comment, City updates, and Councilor updates.
  - v. If meetings are to be held remotely or virtually, the log-in information for this meeting shall be included on the agenda.
- b. At least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting, and at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting, a meeting agenda shall be posted at the following designated public places in the municipality: City Hall, the Winooski School District, and at the Winooski Library. We will endeavor to also post at the Senior Center, TD Bank and the O'Brien Community Center. At least 48 hours prior to a regular meeting, and at least 24 hours prior to a special meeting, a meeting agenda and supporting materials shall be posted on [www.winooski.vt.gov](http://www.winooski.vt.gov). The agenda must also be made available to any person who requests such agenda prior to the meeting.
- c. All business shall be conducted in the same order as it appears on the noticed agenda, except that any addition to or deletion from the noticed agenda must be made as the first act of business at the meeting. No additions to or deletions from the agenda shall be considered once the first act of business at the meeting has commenced. Any other adjustment to the noticed agenda (for example, changing the order of business or postponing or tabling actions) may be made by a majority vote of



the body.

**Article 5: Council Meetings.**

- a. Regular meetings shall take place on the first and third Mondays of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Claire Burke Council Chambers at Winooski City Hall or remotely/virtually as allowed under State Statute or action.
- b. Special meetings shall be publicly announced 24 hours in advance by giving notice to all members of the body; to an editor, publisher or news director, or radio station serving the area; and to any person who has requested notice of such meetings in writing. In addition, notices shall be posted in the municipal clerk's office and at the following designated places in the municipality: O'Brien Community Center and the Winooski High School.
- c. Emergency meetings may be held without public announcement, without posting of notices, and without 24-hour notice to members, provided some public notice thereof is given as soon as possible before any such meeting. When practicable under the circumstances, members will be given at least 12 hours' notice. Emergency meetings may be held only when necessary to respond to an unforeseen occurrence or condition requiring immediate attention by the public body.
- d. A member of the body may attend a regular, special, or emergency meeting by electronic or other means without being physically present at a designated meeting location, so long as the member identifies him or herself when the meeting is convened, and is able to hear and be heard throughout the meeting. Whenever one or more members attend electronically, voting that is not unanimous must be done by roll call. While allowed by State Statute or action, meetings may take place fully electronically or virtually assuming that the meeting is properly warned and the electronic access to the meeting is included in the warning.
- e. In accordance with 1 V.S.A. §§ 313, the body may convene in Executive Session as needed.
- f. The Council shall follow the most recent version of Robert's Rules of Order when a particular action or procedure is not addressed by these Rules of Procedure or the City Charter.

**Article 6: Public Participation in Council Meetings.**

- a. All meetings of the body are meetings in the public, not of the public. Members of the public shall be afforded reasonable opportunity to express opinions about matters considered by the body, so long as order is maintained according to these rules.
- b. The Mayor or presiding chair can limit the time of the public comment, or the time an individual is allowed to speak, to ensure the timely work of the body. It is the intention that at least ten minutes be allocated for public comment at the beginning of each meeting. This may be expanded if needed.



- c. At the end of discussion of each agenda item, but before any action is taken by the public body at each meeting, there must be time afforded for open public comment.
- d. Comment by the public or members of the body must be addressed to the Mayor (or presiding chair) or to the body as a whole, and not to any individual member of the body or public.
- e. Members of the public must be acknowledged by the Mayor or presiding chair before speaking.
- f. If a member of the public has already spoken on a topic, he or she may not be recognized again until others have first been given the opportunity to comment.
- g. Order and decorum shall be observed by all persons present at the meeting. Neither members of the body, nor members of the public, shall delay or interrupt the proceedings or the peace of the meeting or interrupt or disturb any member while speaking. Members of the body and members of the public are prohibited from making personal, impertinent, or threatening remarks.
- h. Members of the body and members of the public shall obey the orders of the Mayor or another presiding member. The Mayor or presiding chair should adhere to the following process to restore order and decorum of a meeting, but may bypass any or all steps when he or she determines in his or her sole discretion that deviation from the process is warranted:
  - i. Call the meeting to order and remind the members of the applicable rules of procedure.
  - ii. Declare a recess or table the issue.
  - iii. Adjourn the meeting until a time and date certain.
  - iv. Order the constable or police to remove disorderly person(s) from the meeting.
  - v. If virtual, may remove a participate from the meeting if behavior is disrespectful or unruly.

**Article 7: Constituent Relations.** As elected officials, members of the public will look to City Councilors as a primary point of contact for issues that concern the city or the community. When talking with constituents, Councilors must avoid speaking on behalf of the Council except to refer to an action previously adopted. Councilors must refrain from negotiating or giving the appearance of negotiating on behalf of the city without explicit Council delegation of authority. The City Manager is responsible for allocating resources, assuring services are provided, and staff management. Communication about these should be directed to the Manager.

**Article 8: Electronic Communications and Public Records.** All communication by a Councilor discussing City business is considered public and is subject to Vermont Public Records Act requests. The Mayor and Councilors are provided an email address from the City of Winooski. This email address should be used for all City business and is the property of the City. All messages



from and to this account must be saved. Email can be used to file a report or schedule a meeting. All discussion and debate should take place in an open session of the Council.

**Article 9: Media Relations.** Members of the media may contact Councilors for a quote or for perspective on an issue facing the City. Councilors must speak on the Council's behalf only if authorized to do so by the Council. The Council's policy perspective is usually publicly communicated by the Mayor. Questions and inquiries related to day-to-day operations, personnel, or legal issues should be directed to the City Manager.

**Article 10: City Staff.** The City Manager is the primary contact between the Council and City staff. To the extent that Councilors are reaching out to staff directly for information, the Manager should be copied on the communication. The Council cannot provide direction to staff. To the extent that Councilors have general questions, responses will be provided directly to the Councilor who asked the question. To the extent that Councilors ask questions about history, for details on operations, or other general implementation questions, this information will be shared with the full Council.

**Article 11: Emergency Response.** City staff are charged with responding to and managing the scene of emergency situations. During emergencies, staff's foremost concern is managing the situation and keeping the City and residents safe. In these instances, the Manager will be the primary contact between City staff and the Council. Should a situation escalate to the point of requiring an exceptional need for coordinated effort that cannot be managed at the scene, an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will open. It may become necessary to convene the Council in order to address needs or provide for a coordinated information process with residents and/or media. Should this occur, the Mayor will notify the Council.

**Article 12: Liaison and Commission Assignments.** Each Councilor will be assigned a Liaison role between the Council and Commissions. This role is designed to strengthen the policy relationship between the bodies. The Councilor shall work with the assigned staff and Commission Chair to ensure that policy work is aligned and supports the community's Strategic Vision. The Mayor, as a result of his/her position as Chair of the Strategic Planning process, shall always be the liaison for the Planning Commission.

**Article 13: Effective Date.** This policy shall become effective immediately upon its adoption by the Winooski City Council.



**City of Winooski**  
Vermont's Opportunity City

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**winooski.vt.gov**

**Approved by:**

City Council

/s/ Kristine Lott

Mayor Lott

/s/ James Duncan

Councilor Duncan

/s/ Aurora Hurd

Councilor Hurd

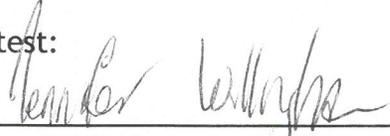
/s/ Bryn Oakleaf

Councilor Oakleaf

/s/ Thomas Renner

Councilor Renner

Attest:

  
Jennifer Willingham, City Clerk

