



City of Winooski

Vermont's Opportunity City

27 West Allen Street
Winooski Vermont 05404
802 655 6410
winooski.vt.gov

Winooski City Council Meeting

Monday, May 18, 2026, 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

Members Present: Mayor Thomas Renner; Deputy Mayor Bryn Oakleaf; Councilor Elsie Goodrich; Councilor Al Turkos; Councilor Eli Ogilvie

Officers Present: Elaine Wang, City Manager; Paul Sarne, Communications Director; Jon Rauscher, Public Works Director; Ray Coffey, Community Services Director; Angela Aldieri, Finance Director; Jazmine Hurley, Housing Initiative Director; Ravi Venkataraman, Director of City Planning; John Audy, Fire Chief; Jenny Willingham, City Clerk; Adam Hoffnung-Warantz, Assistant City Clerk

Others Present: Michelle Wheeler; Abby Bleything; Sue O'Brien; Mike O'Brien; Josh Olund, HNTB; Bob Klinefelter, State of Vermont; Christian Chorba, Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC; Eric Furs, Right of Way Agent V, Vermont Agency of Transportation; Rosa Benoit, ROW Appraisal Chief, McManus & Nault Appraisal Co., Inc.; Kevin A. McManus, Vice President, McManus & Nault Appraisal Co., Inc.; Andrea Proulx, Plans & Titles Supervisor, Vermont Agency of Transportation; Jen Berger; Ruth Steinmetz; Melissa Corbin, Executive Director, Downtown Winooski; Shaun Dempsey; Zoom Username "hhuessy"

I. Call to Order at 6:01 PM

II. Agenda Review

Minutes: No changes were made.

III. Public Comment

Minutes: There was no public comment.

IV. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval: Liquor Control Board Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2026, City Council Meeting Minutes of May 4, 2026 and May 11, 2026
- B. Approval: Payroll Warrant April 26 - May 9, 2026
- C. Approval: Accounts Payable Warrant May 13, 2026
- D. Approval: Subsequent to Payout Warrant March 2026
- E. Approval: Winooski Farmers Market Event Permit Application - Ray Coffey, Community Services Director
- F. Approval: Annual Approval of Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) - John Audy, Fire Chief
- G. Approval: Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) Fiscal Year 2026 - 2027 Budget Presentation - Elaine Wang, City Manager



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Minutes: Council had no concerns with the agenda.

Motion: Motion to approve Consent agenda made by Councilor Turkos and seconded by Councilor Goodrich. Motion passed 4-0.

V. Council Reports

Mayor Thomas Renner: I was unable to participate in the Planning Commission meeting which is why Deputy Mayor Oakleaf participated; thank you. I want to remind folks that we are open for applications for commissioners and are seeking members of the community to help us and to advance our goals for the community. If that is something that would be interesting to you, I recommend going to the City website. There are concerns that it could take up a lot of time, and there is some homework, but meetings are usually about an hour and happen once a month. The Planning Commission meets twice a month, and many are looking for ways to work with the community and there are ways. Give it a try and talk to a member of City Council about the time commitment, as we'd be happy to discuss. The application may be found on our website.

Deputy Mayor Bryn Oakleaf: On May 12th the Safe, Healthy, Connected People Commission met. The primary focus of that meeting was to review the short-term public art policy which we be on the agenda tonight. There were a lot of great comments and questions that will help build on the discussions for a longer-term policy moving forward in the near future. No significant concerns from the group and generally as a straw poll everyone supported the short-term policy as presented with minor changes that Ray will go over later this meeting.

On May 14th the Planning Commission met and the primary conversation that evening was the Equity Housing Needs Assessment. The conversation related to Phase 2 was presented by Michael Moser, with the University of Vermont and took the lead. There are a handful of other scheduled conversations upcoming, with the Housing Commission meeting tomorrow with similar discussion with a few more wrapping up before moving onto Phase 3. A report on the discussions will be coming shortly and recommendations on the report will be coming out in the fall.

Councilor Al Turkos: The Winooski Farmers Market is back! It returned yesterday and will run every Sunday through early fall at 20 Winooski Falls Way from 10 AM–2 PM. Yesterday, we had more than 100 people waiting for the Market to open. Four years ago we had 200 people over the entire 4 hours. It's really wonderful to see this growth and support of the Winooski Farmers Market. Thank you to Sarah Brunkhorst who helps to manage and support vendors at the Market. Winooski Wednesdays are also returning next month in Rotary Park. Save the date, the first block party of the season is Wednesday, June 17th at 5 PM. You can find more details on the Downtown Winooski website. Finally, the Downtown Winooski Board has its monthly board meeting this Wednesday at 6 PM. Housing Director Jazmine Hurley and I recently met with the team at Leahy-BTV Airport to get a thorough briefing on the Sound Mitigation Process; it was an incredibly informative conversation. I'll be sharing a fuller update with the community soon, most likely via Front Porch Forum, so keep an eye out for that. In the meantime, construction on sound mitigation for Winooski homes has already begun, and more information is available at BTVsound.com. Our next Airport Commission meeting is Wednesday, June 3rd at 4 PM. The next Inclusion and Belonging Commission meeting will be in June and will be a joint session with the Safe, Healthy, Connected People Commission to discuss background check policies for commission members. We are finalizing whether that meeting will be held on June 9th or June 11th. We'll keep the public posted as soon as that's confirmed.



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Councilor Elsie Goodrich: The Winooski Finance Commission met last Tuesday, June 12th to discuss the Comprehensive Purchasing and Proposal Solicitation Procedure, an internal policy, and they will meet next month to discuss the composition of the commission as we have lost a chair, and the role of the commission in general.

Councilor Eli Ogilvie: The Municipal infrastructure commission has a meeting this coming Thursday, 6/21 at 6:30 PM at the Myers Pool Community Room. We will be discussing and reviewing the outcomes of the Winooski- Burlington Bridge meeting that occurred on April 29th. We'll also be discussing/presenting an upcoming Brisson-Cedar Street stormwater improvement project. We hope to see folks there and looking forward to your questions.

VI. City Updates

Elaine Wang, City Manager, gave the following updates:

Save the date – everyone's invited! The Winooski Mosaic campaign continues with the **Main Street Community Parade** on Saturday, June 6, 2026. The parade starts at the Winooski School District at 12 PM and will be followed by a community lunch at the Winooski Senior Center. Keep an eye out for the announcement this week – we need volunteers to march in the parade with banners that promote businesses (provided by the campaign). Sign up and learn more later this week at downtownwinooski.org/mosaic.

Winooski Board, Commission and Committee terms are expiring on June 30, 2026 - residents with relevant experience, skills, interests, or a willingness to engage are encouraged to apply for these incredible opportunities and participate in local government. Groups include the Development Review Board, Finance Commission, Housing Commission, Inclusion and Belonging Commission, Local Resources Advisory Board, Municipal Infrastructure Commission, Planning Commission, Safe Healthy Connected People Commission, and the Winooski Memorial Library Committee. The City Council and staff welcome a diversity of voices, and if you've never served on a board, commission, or committee before, we'll do our best to support you! To learn more and apply, visit winooskivt.gov/news.

Please note that the **Sugar House Hotel and its contractor will install a temporary, fenced-in construction staging at the lower Casavant Nature Area starting this week**. The staging area will remain in place until work is completed, from late August to mid-September 2026. Work includes: Removal of gravel road access, improved access via boardwalk, and wetland restoration. Visitors are asked to steer clear of the staging area.

Our annual leash law reminder was sent out on all City channels this month! Residents and visitors are encouraged to review the update and to please always keep your dogs on their leashes in Winooski. The only off-leash area in the city is at the West Allen Street Dog Park! Remember, not everyone feels comfortable around dogs, and keeping them leashed ensures everyone's safety, including your dog's.

The City of Winooski Department of Public Works has begun hydrant flushing around Winooski. This is routine, annual maintenance which helps the City's water distribution system, ensures adequate flow for Fire Department use, and improves the water quality for residents by clearing out mineral deposits. Residents and businesses may experience low water pressure and temporary water discoloration during this process. Although the water remains safe to use, we recommend running a cold water tap for several minutes until the water clears before using it for drinking, cooking, or laundry. Please avoid using hot water while discoloration is present, as sediment may enter your hot water heater.



VII. Regular Items

- A. Discussion: Public Hearing: Condemnation for Temporary and Permanent Rights for the Burlington-Winooski Bridge Project, Jon Rauscher, Public Works Director and Christian Chorba, Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC

Minutes: The public hearing opened at 6:12 PM. The Public Works Director gave a brief overview about the work related to the Winooski-Burlington Bridge when on March 24, 2026, VTrans submitted a letter to request condemnation proceedings for temporary and permanent rights for the Woolen Mill Associates at 20 West Canal Street. Christian Chorba, the City's condemnation attorney clarified the legal parameters and statutes that pertain to the temporary and permanent rights to utilize portions of this parcel. The focus of the public hearing is related to the necessity of condemnation as well as compensation.

Josh Olund gave an extensive overview due to the necessity component and need for temporary access and acquisition. The presentation gave a high-level overview of the project, considerations, scheduling and phasing, comparison projects, construction access, and fee acquisition. Discussion ensued with members of Council with questions being answered extensively.

Kevin McManus then presented an overview of the appraised value of the appraised plots, and its effects on this specific parcel. Extensive discussion ensued regarding the parcel appraisal and similar parcels and included approximate numerical values per acre. The discussion continued about the value of the land with Council asking questions. Michelle Wheeler gave public comments and questions related to the value of the land. In addition, Rosa Benoir shared insight on the processes taken related to this analysis and shared background information on the statutes and limitations.

Eric Furs then presented information related to an offer of just compensation and communication between the State and the property owners. Negotiations are currently ongoing but in their opinion, it is in a positive manner. Further questions were asked by Council with clarifying responses given by both the State and the City's attorney.

The Public Hearing will be kept open and continue this conversation on June 1, 2026.

Motion: A motion to open the Public Hearing at 6:12 PM made by Councilor Goodrich and seconded by Councilor Turkos. Motion passed 4-0.

Recess of meeting taken at 7:32 PM. Meeting resumed at 7:37 PM.

- B. Discussion: Public Hearing for Amendments to Unified Land Use & Development Regulations (ULUDR) - Character of the Area Considerations - Ravi Venkataraman, Director of City Planning

Minutes: The Director of City Planning started the hearing by reviewing the character of the area considerations and the possible removal of said language so that the City can be in alignment with state statutes. An amendment would remove language that could be considered arduous and capricious with Development Review Board's future approvals. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor both made remarks related to the work done so far and discussion ensued about the specific language in this amendment.



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Abby Bleything, a member of the Planning Commission, made comments related the work done on these amendments as the State no longer uses "character of the neighborhood". They requested that the Council take this language into account for new affordable housing developments.

Sue O'Brien also gave public comment related to elements of design and asked for consideration of specific language that Council could consider.

Michelle Wheeler made comments about the purpose of the amendments related to the City's Master Plan and requested to preserve scale character and value.

Jen Berger, from the Inclusion & Belonging Commission, asked for clarifying documentation for public consideration.

Mike O'Brien spoke about the work the Planning Commission has been doing to try to define this tricky language and hopes to make zoning regulations easy to understand.

Discussion and questions were raised by Council, and they shared their appreciation of comments made on behalf of the public.

Michelle Wheeler asked the Director of City Planning about differences between residential zones.

Ruth Steinmetz spoke about character language being problematic and questioned the intention of what is being addressed. They asked for more clarity on future applications as well as the Armory project and Champlain Housing Trust's application with clarifications provided by the Mayor and the Director of City Planning.

Abby Bleything once again spoke about specifics related to the design elements with land use regulations and wants to ensure the City is not going to take away public feedback with these possible amendment changes.

Further discussion with Council and City staff continued with no additional public comments.

Motion: A motion to open the Public Hearing at 7:37 PM made by Councilor Turkos and seconded by Deputy Mayor Oakleaf. Motion passed 4-0.

A motion to close the Public Hearing on amendments to the Unified Land Use and Development Regulations – Character of the Area at 8:29 PM made by Councilor Turkos and seconded by Councilor Goodrich. Motion carried 4-0.

C. Discussion/Approval: Approval of the Amendments to the ULUDR - Character of the Area Considerations - Ravi Venkataraman, Director of City Planning

Minutes: The Mayor allowed for further discussion related to the amendments and shared their appreciation with work from the Planning Commission. Character of the Area is very subjective and shared concerns about the future interpretation and current racial discrepancies with the current language. He praised Winooski as a beacon of change and the Planning Commission understands these concerns. Continued discussion with Council and the Director of City Planning continued and Council requested to see how other municipalities have incorporated their language.

Motion: Motion to adopt the amendments as presented by Deputy Mayor Oakleaf and seconded by Councilor Turkos. Motion passed 4-0.



D. Discussion/Approval: Overview and Introduction of Amendments to Unified Land Use and Development Regulations (ULUDR) – Gentile Infill - Ravi Venkataraman, Director of City Planning

Minutes: There was an extensive overview led by the Director of City Planning related to technical issues for allowances of gentile infill with numerous changes introduced to the ULUDR. The proposed amendments clarify language related to state statutes, include signage regulations that don't currently exist and establish language for sign installation. In addition, these included added flexibility for single family units and zoning standards. There was an extensive and in-depth overview of all of the updates as the Planning Commission wanted to work this out as quickly as possible.

Extensive discussion with City Council, the Director of City Planning, and the Housing Initiative Director continued related to specific language included in the amendments versus statutes as well as including potential additional language.

Michelle Wheeler made public comment giving their appreciation for language related to scale and architectural design with these new amendments.

Motion: A motion to introduce the amendments as presented with the two changes and set a public hearing for June 15, 2026, by Councilor Turkos and seconded by Deputy Mayor Oakleaf. Motion carried 4-0.

E. Discussion: Goal Update: Housing - Jazmine Hurley, Housing Initiative Director

Minutes: The Housing Initiative Director spoke about the Housing Needs Assessment forward progress as well as the Burlington Airport Sound Mitigation progress and working on coordinating a presentation. Short-term rentals only have two properties out of compliance with an overall rate of 96% compliance. Regarding the Armory, the Development Review Board's decision is still pending and currently the City has executed another addendum with the National Guard for purchase and sale through September 30th and is working with Champlain Housing Trust on an option agreement to mirror it as well. Lastly, there was a successful infill housing campaign event in Burlington with two presenters being from Winooski with another event happening on June 12th in South Burlington.

Deputy Mayor Oakleaf thanked the Housing Initiative Director regarding the updates and shared appreciation of the nice momentum.

Discussion: Goal Update: Safe, Healthy, Connected People - Ray Coffey, Community Services Director, Justin Huizenga, Police Chief, and John Audy, Fire Chief

Minutes: The Community Services Director commented there is great work for items on track with no additional comments on behalf of Council.

F. Discussion/Approval: Short-Term Public Art Policy - Ray Coffey, Community Services Director

Minutes: The Community Services Director commented that there has been good community participation and collaboration with both the Inclusion & Belonging Commission as well as the Safe, Healthy, Connected People Commission on this policy. Major changes from the previous presentation include teasing out a policy and procedure and feedback from commissions was taken into consideration with this update, specifically adding language that would allow staff to not participate due to administrative burden or cost to the City.

Deputy Mayor Oakleaf acknowledged the great discussion and appreciated the updates.



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Motion: A motion to approve the Short-Term Public Art Policy made by Councilor Goodrich and seconded by Deputy Mayor Oakleaf. Motion carried 4-0.

G. Discussion/Approval: Introduce Amendments to Winooski Ordinance Chapter 15 Parking and Set Public Hearing Date - Angela Aldieri, Finance Director

Minutes: The Finance Director spoke about updating the Parking Ordinance to include language related to operations management for the Abenaki Parking Garage on the City's behalf to a qualified third-party operator, with language including City Council having the authority to approve any agreements. Questions from City Council related to enforcement and complaint assistance were brought up and the Finance Director stated that contractually the third-party operator would facilitate both of those concerns. Deputy Mayor Oakleaf wanted to ensure that specific language is included for opting out of the possible contract for future consideration.

Motion: A motion to introduce amendments to Chapter 15 Parking and set the date of a public hearing to June 1, 2026, made by Councilor Turkos and seconded by Councilor Goodrich. Motion passed 3-0 with Deputy Mayor Oakleaf abstaining.

VIII. Adjourn

Motion: Motion to adjourn at 9:49 PM made by Deputy Mayor Oakleaf and seconded by Councilor Turkos. Motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Attest: _____
Adam Hoffnung-Warantz, Assistant City Clerk