

I. Call to Order

Members Present: Mary Hussmann, Courtney Blasius, Yam Basnet, Thomas Renner, Katherine Lowe, Hal Colston

City Staff Present: Ray Coffey, Nate Eddy, James Charkalis

Call to Order by: Mary Hussmann

Meeting Start Time: 6:35 PM

Minutes Recorded by: Thomas Renner

II. Public Comment

None

III. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Decision: Yes

Motion by: Thomas

Second: Katherine

IV. City Council Update

Hal not present. Ray informally let us know that the budget has been approved by council and it is now back to voters to vote on. City Manager candidate process is moving along with the hiring committee.

V. City and Department Updates

Ray Coffey gave a staffing update, covid has been going through the Rec department. Manager and Assistant manager resigned. Positions for life guards and pool directors and the Rec manager will be posted this week.

VI. Updated Winooski Police Department SWOT Analysis

James Charkalis introduced himself, lieutenant with the PD. James came to brief us on the SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity threat) analysis that the PD conducted, this is a process they do every 3 years. James shared a document that showed the SWOT analysis from 2019 and the updated one for this year. Many items from the 2019 opportunity section have now become department strengths. James explained the different sections of the SWOT analysis.

Thomas Renner asked for more information about the building needs. James explained that there are no concrete plans at the moment but it is known that it's needed.

Ray Coffey asked about the school resource officer and if that position was involved in these discussions. James said that conversations will open up about the position in 2023, the office would likely be in unmarked clothes and unmarked vehicle.

VII. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds Discussion

Ray discussed the feedback on the ARPA fund goals that was suggested last meeting. He presented to the commission the goals that got multiple votes from the committee. Hal let us know that today the VT house passed the childcare tax credit bill which is of interest to the committee as childcare is a top concern. Ray let us know that the finance commission is also discussing the ARPA funds. And a memo was circulated from city staff, Ray posed the questions in the memo to us, the intent of finding out what the public felt during the pandemic is to assure the funds are being used well: What are some of the biggest challenges you've had since the pandemic began?

- Thomas, lost one job due to the company going under due to the pandemic, an income loss occurred. And Thomas wonders, how many other people were in a situation where they lost a job and then ended up struggling with rent or food.

- Mary bored, frustrated. Her avenues of social life completely withdrew. Mary knows that any people are looking for things to do again, she noted that people even miss Bingo being in town. The pandemic continues to impede on peoples access to the community. Hal, would like to echo what Mary said, people are feeling so unconnected and he feels that is not normal and that it impacts our mental health. We need to do more to help with peoples mental health.

Yam, his son had to stay home due to school closed and not able to do anything, his son didn't have much to do besides sitting in front of the screen. Yam and his wife also were furloughed and that impacted his physical health as well as having concerns with rent. Courtney, COVID has really impacted the socializing as well as housing and getting out to exercise.

Katherine, echoing a lot of what other people have said. A lot of struggles with mental health and anxiety.

Ray, noted the burden on parents when the kids were really very locked up. What are the challenges you faced here in Winooski before the pandemic began?

Thomas, no challenges that I felt but many families benefitted from the child tax credit, the money enabled them to stretch food budgets, allow their kids to join activities with a cost.

Ray, continuing to move forward with the diversification of the work force and with elected and appointed seats What are some things that may have helped so far?

Mary, Winooski Mutual Aid has really upped their game the past couple of years. The food program with everybody eats was really beneficial to all.

Ray, tax credit was really helpful as a parent.

Hal, we can't assume that people know and understand the resources that exist. Ray thanked all for their appreciation to share, the more voices involved in this process the better.

VIII. Adjourn

Motion by: Courtney

Second: Thomas

Meeting End Time: 7:54 PM