



City of Winston

Economic Development Committee — Meeting Minutes

Date: June 10, 2026

Location: Winston City Hall

Attendance

Members Present:

- Craig Wilson
- Steve Johnson
- Valynn Currie

Members Absent / Status Noted:

- Dave Carton
- Mike Schneider —out of town
- Lucy Tripp — appointed/approved but has not attended any meeting since appointment
- Kem Todd — resigned from the committee (resignation not yet formally reflected in prior minutes; staff to confirm and document)

Staff/Guests Present:

- Thomas McIntosh— City Manager, gave committee report
- Valynn Currie — Chair, conducted roll call
- Additional community members in attendance

Note on Quorum: With only three of six seats represented, the Committee did not have a quorum. As a result, no minutes were approved, and no motions or formal actions could be taken. The meeting proceeded informally for reporting and discussion purposes only.

Call to Order & Roll Call

The Chair called the meeting to order and conducted roll call. Present: Craig Wilson, Steve Johnson, and Valynn Currie. The Committee discussed the status of vacant/non-participating seats, including confirming that Kem Todd has resigned and that Lucy Tripp, though approved and appointed, has never attended a meeting. Staff agreed to verify whether Kem Todd's resignation has been recorded in prior minutes.

Public Comment

No public comments were offered.

Approval of Prior Minutes

Minutes from the previous meeting were not available for review and, in any case, could not be acted upon due to lack of quorum. Approval was deferred to a future meeting.

Staff Report, Thomas McIntosh

Development Applications

- Limited new applications have come in; staff focus remains on processing approvals for existing projects.
- Brockway and 42 (Mike Kelly) — large-scale development application is progressing through ODOT review to obtain concurrence; appears to be nearing that step. Given the complexity of this application, the City may seek planning assistance from the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG). LCOG would assist with planning only — infrastructure work remains the responsibility of the developer/City per jurisdictional breakdown.

Housing Needs / Subdivisions

- A prior housing needs analysis (via the Planning Commission) projected a need for 732 additional housing units by 2042 — roughly 28–32 new lots per year, a pace the City (like most cities) has not kept up with.
- Two active subdivisions with approvals: a 57-lot and a 23-lot development (Tokay/Johnson area). These will continue over time.
- The previously approved 91-lot Safari development has stalled and its approval has expired. The stall was caused by an internal/civil dispute among the original property owners (associated with Joe Russi), which was resolved through the courts. The property is now owned by three investors who are not developers and wish to sell. Staff have met with them and provided potential strategies; the property also has some wetland constraints. The property remains inactive for now.

Property Near Hwy 99 / Lookingglass (Tribal Property)

- There has been surveying activity on tribal-owned property near the corner of Hwy 99 and Lookingglass. Staff confirmed they are aware of conceptual interest but were asked by the property owners to keep details confidential at this stage so as not to discourage other prospective buyers/investors. Staff committed to sharing more information when appropriate.

Wastewater (Sewage Capacity)

- If significant new development proceeds, current sewage/wastewater capacity is uncertain. The City is commissioning a facilities plan to better understand capacity constraints (e.g., aeration basin/digester needs) and identify concrete engineering solutions, not just capacity percentages. Any plant upgrades would be the City's responsibility, not the developer's.
- Utility rates were recently raised by \$3 out of necessity; encouraging development. More ratepayers/taxpayers) is viewed as the best long-term way to manage utility costs.

Water Supply

- Questions were raised about water supply capacity (e.g., purchasing additional water from Berry Creek/Galesville) and the possibility of a moratorium due to water shortages. The Winston-Dillard Water District operates as a separate entity; the City coordinates with them on development matters but does not manage their operations directly.
- Staff believe the water district is in reasonable shape, citing new reservoir tower construction (soil from this project has been deposited on a member's field with permission).

Chamber of Commerce / Events Report

- The Chamber is “plugging along” through some current difficulties, with a resolution expected soon.
- Newsletter: performing well; circulation will expand from 2,600 to about 3,600 copies starting in August (an increase of roughly 1,000+).
- The Chamber lacked a quorum at its last board meeting (several members out of town); however, a regular Chamber meeting was scheduled for the evening of June 10.
- No Chamber-sponsored events are currently on the horizon. A possible speaker presentation opportunity was mentioned, but follow-up is pending with Megan.
- Concerns were raised about communication: Chamber members report not receiving meeting notices or agendas despite paying membership dues. The Committee discussed converting/duplicating the Chamber's mailing list to include email distribution and calendar invitations (similar to the City's 108-recipient email distribution list maintained by Cindy for board/commission meetings), to improve attendance and engagement.
- A request was made to invite the Chamber board president/chair to a future meeting; staff noted she works a regular daytime job (with HODOT) and attendance may depend on meeting timing. Staff (Steve) will ask Megan about availability for the next meeting.
- The City's newsletter is currently distributed only by postal mail to every mailbox in town (reaching residents who may not be online, an estimated 40% of the community); it is also posted on the City website. Staff will look into adding an email distribution option in addition to print, while recognizing some duplication with existing distribution.

Main Street Holiday Lighting Project

- The City is planning a downtown holiday lighting initiative for the light poles on Main Street (referred to informally as “Main Street Decorations”), featuring large decorative displays (approx. 30 feet by 40 inches).
- To reduce cost, the project will be developed locally: Steve and a neighbor will build a prototype fixture, leveraging in-house engineering expertise to create plans. The prototype will then be handed off to the Douglas High School metal shop class (instructor Mr. Alvey) to duplicate. Staff and Steve planned to meet with Mr. Alvey immediately following this meeting.
- The plan is to start with 10–12 fixtures and expand in future years.
- An electrician will need to be hired to wire outlets on the light poles before string lights can be installed.
- The project will be funded through the City budget rather than a grant; a donation drive/fundraiser was considered but the Festival Association cannot be officially associated with the City or Council for fundraising purposes.

- Staff noted the project started too late last year to execute properly; planning began earlier this year to allow adequate time for budgeting and coordination with the high school.

General Fund Budget Update

- The City's general fund is facing serious budget pressure and, without changes, is projected to be insolvent (“go broke”) within a relatively short timeframe.
- The primary driver is rising law enforcement personnel costs (salary increases stemming from a police union negotiation roughly 3–4 years ago, benchmarked against comparable cities), not fuel or state funding reductions. Expenditures are outpacing revenues by a significant margin.
- New revenue sources identified include a 3% tax on licensed dispensaries (estimated \$60,000–\$70,000 annually), bringing total new revenue to approximately \$128,000 — not enough to offset an approximately \$220,000 increase in police department expenditures alone.
- All general fund program areas (Parks, Community Center, Administration/Non-Departmental, and Police) were effectively defunded for discretionary programs/spending this year. Staff emphasized this is not a targeted cut to police — it reflects the overall budget reality.
- No layoffs are planned for this fiscal year; the City will instead cut back on programs to avoid layoffs in future years. Staff noted that without further changes, the FY2027-28 budget situation will be considerably more difficult, potentially affecting staffing.
- The City did lose one position this year — a Planner — which was not refilled due to budget constraints. Staff indicated this mainly increases workload for remaining staff rather than directly affecting near-term revenue or growth.
- Police union contract terms were discussed: officers called in on a day off receive a minimum four-hour call-out at time-and-a-half, plus holiday pay if applicable on a holiday.
- The Committee discussed how Douglas County addressed similar pressures by introducing fees for some (but not all) parks and facilities (e.g., Winchester Bay RV improvements) to generate additional revenue while keeping core/free parks available.
- The City currently avoids charging for park access/parking at its three parks (a common approach for small communities) but does charge — and is increasing — fees for reserving community center rooms and pavilions. The current public safety fee is \$8.
- The budget is balanced for the upcoming fiscal year, consistent with legal requirements, but further cuts will likely be necessary heading into FY2027-28 if expenditure trends continue.

Festivals, Events & Public Safety Coordination

- Staff met with WAID and the Winston Festival Association (the nonprofit responsible for the fireworks event) the day prior regarding budget challenges; the Festival Association is reportedly behind on its own fundraising/budget.
- 4th of July: The City will continue to support festival events with law enforcement this year (approval already given), though this will mean additional overtime costs. Future-year support levels may need to be reevaluated.
- Melon Festival: Scheduled for the normal timeframe in September (third week). The City has given the Festival Association advance notice this year so they can recruit volunteers for tasks such as flagging traffic and street closures.

- Graffiti event: The City of Winston will participate and will provide law enforcement support, citing past incidents at other community parades nationally as a reason for maintaining a law enforcement presence at large public events.
- Mutual aid: Winston participates in long-standing reciprocal law enforcement support arrangements with neighboring agencies (Sutherlin, Myrtle Creek, Douglas County, etc.), sending and receiving officer support for events such as the county fair and other gatherings. This reciprocal arrangement was described as a net benefit to Winston.

Community Announcements

- Riverbend Live: The summer concert series begins June 26 and continues every Friday night through approximately July 31/August 1.
- Cowboy Poetry & Western Music Night: Scheduled for July 24 at Riverbend Live, featuring Andy Hedges, Dakota Robinson, Crystal Harris, and Jake Riley.
- Winston Public Library: Has a number of summer activities planned (details distributed separately).

Flag Day Volunteers Needed (Sunday, June 14):

- The City is required to display American flags throughout town for Flag Day — approximately 80–88 flags placed on business fronts and light poles, following a mapped layout.
- Flags must be put up at 7:00 a.m. and taken down at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 14.
- A staff member has been newly assigned to lead this effort (the VFW historically handled this but no longer does). Volunteers are needed, as several regular helpers will be unavailable (graduation weekend). Staff will also reach out to local veterans for assistance.

Old / New Business

New Business — Wiley Wagon

- A new mobile food business, Wiley Wagon (Indian tacos), was approved at the last City Council meeting. The business is owned by the husband of Karen Wiley, a City employee who has submitted her resignation in order to focus on the business full-time. The business has reportedly been very successful.

Small Business Development Center — Pitch Night

- The next “pitch night,” sponsored by the Small Business Development Center and its partners, is scheduled for August 13. The sign-up deadline was originally this week but may be extended by about one week.
- Eligibility generally requires at least one year in business, at least \$1,000 in revenue, and that the business not currently be for sale.
- Selected participants commit to coaching/training for their pitch and, depending on outcome, may gain access to a Ford Family Foundation-supported, nine-month Small Business Development class series — described as highly valuable for business growth.
- Aaron Larson (Small Business Development Center, Roseburg, operating through UCC on Jackson Street) is the point of contact and can provide full details.
- The Committee discussed a new local business (a spa opening behind the JM Market on Main Street, in the former Workman's Restaurant location in the strip mall) as a possible candidate to pitch and/or apply for facade grant funding.

Urban Renewal Area (URA) Facade Grant Program Update

- The City still has funds available in its Urban Renewal facade grant program for this fiscal year (closing out within the next couple of weeks).
- The facade grant program is being restructured: previously, applicants had to demonstrate \$20,000 in qualifying spend to receive a \$10,000 reimbursement (50%). Under the revised program, the reimbursement amount increases to \$20,000, with applicants only needing to demonstrate \$10,000 in spend — intended to make the program more attractive given that \$10,000 “doesn't get you very much” for facade improvements currently.
- Staff noted the City has a number of blighted areas that could benefit from increased participation in this program.

Mainstreet Program / Layered Funding

- The City has re-established a relationship with the “Mainstreet” program, which can provide qualifying businesses with up to \$400,000 in funding. URA facade grant funds can be used to cover required local match, allowing businesses to layer multiple funding sources.
- Staff noted that a key barrier is awareness — many businesses are unaware these programs exist. The City is working to improve outreach via its newsletter, a new website, and new social media presence (Facebook and Instagram).

URA Property Cleanup (Vehicle Storage Site)

- A previously cited property (used for vehicle/collectible storage) has been substantially cleaned up as part of URA efforts, and the surrounding fencing is more open. However, the Committee noted the owner appears to be bringing vehicles back onto the site; staff confirmed they are monitoring this.
- A suggestion to facilitate a property trade to relocate the owner was raised, but staff noted the City does not own a property that would meet the owner's needs. Staff can, however, connect the owner with private commercial property owners in the area.

Antique Mall / Commercial Vacancies

- The antique mall across the street remains largely vacant. The building has been repainted (replacing a previously unpopular blue color scheme) and signage has been cleaned up, improving its appearance, but it remains at risk of becoming blighted without tenants.
- The property owner recently engaged a seasoned commercial broker who is reportedly marketing the space aggressively. Commercial vacancy was described as a broader regional challenge (citing similar conditions at “Core properties” and reports from Century 21).
- A question was raised about whether the City maintains a list of available commercial vacancies; staff confirmed the City does not maintain such a list, as this is considered a private real estate matter. Staff noted they had hoped the Chamber of Commerce would take a more active role in promoting available commercial space but that the Chamber currently lacks the capacity/membership numbers to do so effectively.

Other Discussion

- Members discussed broader challenges with information flow to the community and Chamber members, including underuse of digital channels (website, Facebook) versus

the value of calendar invitations and direct email/postal reminders for driving meeting attendance.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Economic Development Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, July 8, 2026. The Chair noted a preference against canceling the July meeting, citing the importance of maintaining momentum and cohesiveness.

Adjournment

As the Committee lacked a quorum, no formal motion to adjourn could be made or voted upon. The meeting concluded informally.