



CITY OF WINSTON

City Council Special Meeting

Meeting Minutes — June 22, 2026

Date: Monday, June 22, 2026
Time: 7:00 pm
Location: Winston City Hall, Winston, Oregon
Presiding: Mayor Knutson
City Manager: Thomas McIntosh

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Mayor Knutson called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was led for all in attendance. City staff member Thomas noted two adjustments to the agenda:

- Addition of a formal Roll Call (for transcription and future approval purposes)
- Addition of a Good of the Order section (Item B)

Members Present:

- Councilor Nick Wiggins
- Councilor Allen Hobson
- Councilor Dorie White
- Councilor Dave Cunningham (Council President)
- Mayor Christie Knutson

Members Absent:

- None — full council present

Others Present:

- Thomas McIntosh — City Staff / City Manager
- Onikka Driscoll, 290 SE Grape Avenue — President, Winston Area Independence Day Committee (WAID)
- Raeann Rutledge, 209 NW Glenhart, Apt. 15 — Vice President, WAID
- WAID Financial Secretary and three additional board members (present, not individually named in transcript)
- Members of the public

2. New Business

A. Funding Request — Winston Area Independence Day Committee (WAID) / Independence Day Celebration

Background:

At the previous meeting on June 15, 2026, a representative from WAID (Winston Area Independence Day) Committee had provided a preliminary presentation regarding the upcoming July 4th Independence Day celebration. The purpose of this agenda item was to continue that presentation, receive updated financial information, and allow the Council to deliberate and potentially make a funding decision.

Presenters:

- Onikka Driscoll, President, WAID
- Raeann Rutledge, Vice President, WAID

WAID Presentation Summary:

Ms. Driscoll and Ms. Rutledge outlined the current financial status and needs of the Independence Day celebration:

- Event goal: \$35,000 total budget
- Current funds raised: approximately \$22,000 (second payment pending)
- Shortfall: approximately \$13,000 with 13 days remaining before the event
- WAID requested a monetary sponsorship contribution from the City in addition to the existing fee waivers already granted

Event Highlights Noted by Presenters:

- One of the few venues in the region hosting fireworks on the actual July 4th date (fairgrounds and racetrack events scheduled for Friday)
- Expected attendance: several thousand community members
- Family-oriented event with new vendors, car show (returning), two live bands, and a children's pageant
- A county-wide parade with 4-H groups, riding groups, motorcycle clubs (Abate), and local car groups participating
- Weather forecast for July 4th: mid-80s
- Special significance: 250th anniversary celebration
- A dance group from Grants Pass confirmed to perform

Existing Sponsors / Fundraising Efforts:

- Outreach conducted to local businesses
- Application submitted to Pacific Power for funding
- Additional Roseburg-area businesses actively donating
- Note: A previously significant donor / venue partner (new property owner, Bob Stipe) declined participation; property management company sent a form for parade route use only. WAID had been attempting to establish a relationship since October

City's Existing Contributions to the Event (presented by Thomas):

- Police Department holiday/overtime pay: approximately \$7,900
- Fee waiver for park use: approximately \$550
- Total existing direct/indirect city contribution: estimated \$8,400–\$8,500

Available City Budget for Additional Contribution (presented by Thomas):

- Community Activities line item: approximately \$2,000 total budget; mostly expended (only a few hundred dollars remaining after contributions to the high school and one other matter)
- Transient Room Tax (TRT) fund: \$1,000/month contributed to the Chamber of Commerce; one more payment remaining this fiscal year; remaining available balance: \$5,895
- Approximate total available for discretionary use: \$5,895 in TRT funds

*Amended.
Councilor Cunningham*

Council Discussion:

~~Mayor Knutson~~ expressed strong personal support for the event and community effort, but voiced significant concern over the city's financial position:

- City finances are described as extremely constrained — operating at a 3% expenditure cap while inflation has exceeded 4%
- General fund carryover is at a historic low due to rising costs (labor, police vehicles, fuel, capital projects)
- Public Works has zero capital project funding
- A code compliance vehicle engine failure had just been reported at \$12,000 to repair or replace (2001 model vehicle)
- Mayor noted the city had already provided over \$8,400 in direct/indirect support and expressed concern about further expenditure, though acknowledged support for the event's value to the community

Council members acknowledged the fiscal difficulty but recognized the tourism and community value of the event. A compromise was sought between full support and fiscal prudence. Discussion included:

- Whether uncommitted TRT funds would roll over at fiscal year end (confirmed: any unspent funds would carry into the next fiscal year, though the general fund carryover is already diminished)
- Recognition that the city's general fund reserve stands at \$163,000 against a safe reserve target of approximately 20% of its \$4 million budget (~\$800,000)
- WAID President Driscoll indicated that if insufficient funds were available from the city, she would personally cover the remaining shortfall and may not be able to sustain the event in future years
- Thomas offered context that the event was very well received in 2026 and was family-oriented and professionally organized

Motion and Vote:

A motion was made by Wiggins and seconded by Hobson to contribute \$2,500 from the Transient Room Tax fund to WAID for the Independence Day celebration.

Motion: Contribute \$2,500 (from TRT fund) to WAID for the July 4th Independence Day Celebration

Moved by: Councilor Wiggins

Seconded by: Councilor Hobson

Vote: Councilor Wiggins — Aye | Councilor Hobson — Aye | Councilor White — Aye | Mayor Knutson — Aye | Councilor Cunningham — Nay

Result: Motion PASSES — 4 to 1

Notes: Councilor Cunningham indicated a preference for a lower amount (\$2,250) but voted nay on the \$2,500 motion

A prior informal discussion considered amounts of \$2,000 and \$2,500 as compromise figures. The \$2,500 motion prevailed. Remaining TRT balance after contribution: approximately \$3,395.

Sponsor Recognition Protocol (Post-Vote Discussion):

Following the vote, WAID President Driscoll asked about proper protocol for acknowledging the city as a sponsor. Direction from the Mayor and Council:

- Provide separate recognition for each contribution: (1) Police Department holiday coverage, (2) fee waiver, and (3) the monetary grant
- City of Winston logo may be used on promotional materials (flyers, social media/TikTok) when recognizing the city as a sponsor
- Staff will provide the logo to WAID if needed

3. Good of the Order

B. Public Facilities Safety — City Hall Building & Police Department

Discussion Initiated by: Councilor Cunningham (Council President)

Overview:

Councilor Cunningham raised concerns about the structural and health safety of two key city-owned buildings: City Hall and the Winston Police Department. This issue arose organically following an earlier URA-funded project to renovate the council chamber, which uncovered broader building concerns.

Police Department Building:

- Building was originally constructed as a post office in the late 1970s / early 1980s, later converted to a public library before becoming the PD
- A \$2.4 million seismic study grant (100% externally funded) has been awarded and is underway
- The seismic study will determine whether the building can be retrofitted for earthquake resilience or must be demolished and rebuilt
- Health concerns: Three long-tenured staff members (each with ~30-year careers in the building) have died from cancer-related conditions; no definitive causal connection established, but concerns noted
- Black mold has been identified in the building
- An evidence building addition is in progress; a drainage issue causing water intrusion has been resolved
- Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP) currently designates the Police Department as the crisis command center — this designation would need to change if the building is deemed unsafe

City Hall Building:

- Building is aging with known concerns including potential asbestos and electrical issues
- Health concerns: Three long-tenured staff members (each with ~30-year careers in the building) have died from cancer-related conditions; no definitive causal connection established, but concerns noted
- An independent inspection of the building has been commissioned by Thomas (via Public Works); scope includes electrical systems, asbestos survey, and overall structural integrity
- Inspection cost: estimated at a few hundred dollars (similar to a prior community center inspection)
- \$72,000 in URA (Urban Renewal Agency) funding was previously approved for a council chamber renovation — the engineering review associated with that project surfaced the broader building concerns
- Building carries approximately \$90,000/year in overhead costs to the general fund
- Asbestos is anticipated to be present given the building's age; special abatement funding may be available

Contingency Planning Discussion:

Councilor Cunningham proposed developing a formal contingency plan for city operations in the event that one or both buildings are lost or condemned. Key discussion points:

- The Community Center was identified as the most viable alternative facility for city administration and/or police operations
- City Hall could temporarily house both City Administration and the PD if the PD building is condemned — this arrangement has occurred previously
- If both buildings fail simultaneously, the Community Center becomes the only available option
- The city's general fund reserve (\$163,000) is well below the recommended 20% reserve (~\$800,000) for a \$4 million budget; this limits capital response options
- URA funds and seismic grant do not cover City Hall, as it was not included in the urban renewal area (public facilities were excluded at formation)
- Community members expressed frustration about public perception of the city's financial situation; council members noted they actively engage with the community on social media to explain infrastructure challenges
- Thomas committed to bringing the inspection report to a future council meeting; timing depends on contractor availability

City Staff Response (Thomas):

- Staff is already in the process of procuring an independent building inspection for City Hall
- If the inspection reveals serious issues, the City would need to immediately reassess staff safety and operational continuity
- Staff are exploring all options; no decisions on demolition, sale, or relocation have been made
- City Hall's location on the highway was noted as a potentially attractive commercial redevelopment site if the building were ever to be vacated

Outcome:

No formal motion was made. Council directed staff to:

- Complete the independent building inspection for City Hall
- Report findings at an upcoming council meeting
- Begin preliminary planning for contingency scenarios involving the community center

4. Action Items Summary

Action Item	Responsible Party	Status / Notes
Disburse \$2,500 to WAID from Transient Room Tax fund for July 4th Independence Day Celebration	City Staff (Thomas)	Approved by Council vote (4-1); to be processed
Reach out to new property owner ("Bob") of former venue site regarding parade route and community partnership	Mayor / City Staff	In progress; WAID has been attempting outreach since October
Provide City of Winston logo to WAID for sponsor recognition use in promotional materials	City Staff	Pending; staff to supply logo
Complete independent building inspection of City Hall (electrical, asbestos, structural integrity)	Public Works / Thomas	In motion; contractor being engaged; report

		expected at a future meeting
Develop preliminary contingency plan for city operations if City Hall and/or PD become unusable (Community Center as primary alternative)	City Administration (Thomas) / Council	Initiated in discussion; no formal plan yet
Monitor seismic study results for Police Department building and report outcomes to Council	City Staff / Public Works	Study underway; \$2.4M grant fully funded externally
Determine repair or replacement options for code compliance vehicle (engine failure; estimated cost \$12,000)	City Staff	Pending; vehicle is a 2001 model
WAID to pursue grant funding for future events to reduce reliance on city contributions	WAID (Onikka Driscoll)	Committed by presenter; targeting next fiscal year

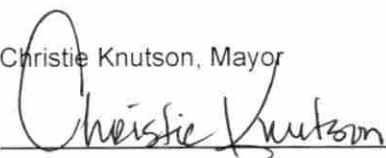
5. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned following completion of the Good of the Order discussion.

Approved By:

Christie Knutson, Mayor

** as amended*



Attest:

Thomas McIntosh, City Manager