



CITY OF WINSTON, OREGON CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

July 6, 2026

1. Meeting Information

Meeting	Winston City Council Regular Meeting
Date	July 6, 2026
Location	Winston City Hall
Presiding Officer	Mayor Christie Knutson
Prepared By	Transcription Record

2. Attendance

Member	Title	Status
Christie Knutson	Mayor / Presiding Officer	Present
Dorie White	Council Member	Present
Allen Hobson	Council Member	Present
Nick Wiggins	Council Member	Present
Dave Cunningham	Council Member	Absent/Excused

Staff and presenters identified in the recording:

- Thomas McIntosh — City Manager
- Brandon Sarti — Police Chief
- Ralph Stiffler — Police Department, Patrol Lieutenant
- Chris Sherlock — Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent

3. Call to Order / Agenda Adjustments

3.1 Agenda Adjustments

- Resolution 26-1233 (Chamber of Commerce) was pulled from tonight's agenda and rescheduled to the July 20, 2026 meeting, because no Chamber representative was present to speak to the item.
- Resolution 26-1236 was added to New Business as Item G (a vehicle purchase for the Winston-Green wastewater treatment facility — see Section 6.5).

4. Approval of Council Minutes

A correction was noted to the June 15 minutes: statements on page 3 regarding strong personal support for the fireworks event alongside concern over the city's financial exposure were misattributed to Mayor Knutson; the speaker was actually Councilor Cunningham.

Motion	Result
Motion to approve the June 15 and June 22 Council minutes as amended by Hobson; second by White. Unanimous.	PASSED — Unanimous (Aye); no opposition voiced

5. Public Comment

5.1 Fourth of July Celebration Recap — Raeann Rutledge (WAID)

Raeann Rutledge, 209 Glenhart Avenue #15, Vice President of the Winston Area Independence Day committee (WAID), reported on behalf of Onikka Driscoll (absent due to a prior commitment). Key points:

- Attendance was the largest ever — an estimated 2,000+ people; the parade was described as the biggest and best yet.
- New "Little Stars" pageant crowned Little Miss Firecracker 2026 and Mr. Liberty Bell, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- The car show drew about 80 vehicles versus an expected 20; organizers plan to add vehicle classes next year.
- Equestrian drill team received the grand parade award; a representative was recognized and photographed at the meeting.
- Vendors reported running out of food and supplies; volunteer trash cleanup (led by Summer Caldwell and her husband) left minimal mess.
- Fundraising: approximately \$1,700 was raised the night of the event through sales, raffles, and trinkets (raffle winner won a leather purse); a related fundraiser benefiting BreeAnn Ricks (Chad Reams' mother) also did well. Total funds raised across the effort were reported in the range of \$33,000–\$35,000 — slightly short of the full funding goal, with additional donations still expected, leaving a good starting balance for next year.
- Council thanked WAID and the Winston Police and Fire Departments for their support.

5.2 Traffic & Public Safety Committee Reminder — Teri Fink

Teri Fink, 1100 Abraham Avenue, reminded Council that the Traffic & Public Safety Committee will meet Monday at 7:00 PM.

5.3 Marijuana Business Moratorium Appeal — Zach Koehler

Zach Koehler, 309 SW Main Street, asked Council to reconsider the city's recently adopted moratorium on new marijuana business licenses. He described a long personal connection to Winston, noted the city has received only two retail marijuana license applications (arguing the market is not over-saturated), and asked that qualified applicants be evaluated under objective standards rather than a blanket prohibition. He stated redevelopment of a local property could create approximately 10 jobs and additional local marijuana tax revenue.

Staff response: a formal appeal of the moratorium ordinance has been timely filed with the city under the 30-day appeal window available for any ordinance. A public hearing on the appeal is scheduled for the July 20, 2026 meeting, at which the applicant and the public will be able to present testimony; Council was cautioned to avoid forming a position before that hearing.

6. Department & Committee Reports

6.1 Police Department — Chief Sarti

Municipal Court:

- The Point and Pay online payment program has driven roughly a 420% increase in court revenue; the relevant account balance grew from \$2,262.42 a year ago to \$11,742.12 currently.
- A new diversion program was added for other traffic infractions: a \$150 fee with a one-year probation period, in addition to the existing \$20 administrative diversion for basic equipment violations.
- The fix-it ticket fee was raised from \$20 (unchanged for over 20 years) to \$35.
- A new \$50 administrative fee was implemented for defendants filing motions challenging probable cause, to help offset the city's cost of convening a motion hearing.
- The court has never had a formal policy and procedure manual; the Chief is developing one modeled on Springfield's Lexipol-based system, adapted to Winston's needs and applicable Oregon statutes/administrative rules.

Facilities:

- The evidence room has been reorganized and completed; available for Council or public viewing by request. Some internal office reassignments are under discussion.

Budget Reductions:

Chief Sarti described this year's budget as the most difficult since he began in 2004, and announced cuts to numerous community-engagement programs in order to preserve core public-safety functions (patrol, investigations). Programs being paused or eliminated include:

- Fourth of July department booth/participation, the Melon Festival booth, Halloween at Grocery Outlet, the high school career-day recruiting booth, the UCC job fair booth, Coffee with a Cop, Christmas Parade/tree lighting participation, Canines with Cops, and the K9 Unleashed fairgrounds event.
- The National Medication Take-Back Day event is being discontinued, though the department's ongoing medication take-back program itself continues.
- The cadet program and new reserve officer recruiting are paused (existing reserve officers are being retained).
- The Flock license-plate-reader camera program will be discontinued to save approximately \$24,000/year, making Winston the first department in the county to do so. The Chief noted the system had aided investigations into a homicide, a drive-by shooting, and park vandalism, and is used to flag stolen vehicles and high-level threats.
- The Chief stated he will not lay off any sworn officer and that if layoffs occur, he would be the first to go. He is pursuing a federal COPS hiring grant (approximately \$125,000 over three years) to help offset staffing costs, and is separately still considering funding a canine unit (potentially ~\$50,000 in donations, unconfirmed) despite an estimated \$8,600/year in overtime costs to operate it.
- A prioritized list of software/technology programs for possible further cuts is being developed by the Lieutenant and Sergeant, pending direction from the City Manager on required budget reductions.

Vehicles & Code Enforcement:

- The department's 25-year-old code enforcement pickup needs a roughly \$12,000 engine repair; a replacement vehicle request was not funded this budget cycle.
- With no cleanup budget this year, the code enforcement officer is relying on a letter/citation campaign; one exception will be pursued this year for a property discharging waste into a storm drain.

Accreditation:

- Lieutenant Stiffler has three objectives remaining out of more than 200 for state accreditation, with a target completion date of July 15, 2026. Accreditation is expected to yield an estimated 4–6% reduction in the city's insurance costs.

Radio System Update:

- Douglas County is standardizing on a Kenwood radio platform; Winston is remaining on Motorola after an investment of roughly \$380,000 in vehicle radios, repeaters, and portables.
- A previously discussed \$72,000 county reimbursement toward vehicle radios did not materialize.
- It was discovered that Winston's existing radios are not P25-capable; making them P25-capable is estimated to cost an additional \$80,000 or more. The City Manager negotiated a three-to-five-year payment plan under which the county will front the cost and the city will repay over time.

6.2 July 4th After-Action Report — Lieutenant Stiffler

- The parade and evening celebration drew some of the largest crowds on record and were among the best-behaved, with only one minor disturbance at the end of the evening.
- Eight officers were deployed in the park with two in plainclothes; citations were issued for public marijuana use near the river.
- One peaceful First Amendment demonstration occurred at the event (no amplified sound); no conflicts arose.
- The park cleared in 45–55 minutes after the event. A separate, unrelated traffic accident on the Green Bridge caused additional congestion near Main and Douglas.
- Recommendations for next year: add and better disperse portable restrooms; arrange for Public Works to be on call on-site for restroom/plumbing issues (restrooms were left fouled by a prior-night event and had to be cleaned before the celebration); require alcohol vendors to submit OLCC permit applications earlier so compliance (e.g., designated-area monitors) can be verified in advance; limit to one alcohol vendor with clearer roped-off signage; and establish a defined parking capacity limit to manage congestion.
- Over 27 calls for service were handled during the night, including two arrests; one report of a missing child was resolved quickly.
- Cost: because the holiday fell on the event date, union contract terms applied. Straight overtime totaled \$5,540 (\$2,340 for the parade, \$3,200 for the fireworks celebration). Comp time added \$7,900 (\$1,100 parade, \$6,800 fireworks), for an all-in cost of \$13,536 — above the original estimate of roughly \$8,900–\$12,000. This is funded from the department's \$55,000 annual overtime line item, which the Chief noted must also cover unpredictable events such as a homicide investigation.
- Going forward, the department will not staff a dedicated booth at the event to help reduce these costs.

6.3 Wastewater Treatment Plant — Chris Sherlock

- An unknown "slug load" entered the plant around the end of May and disrupted nitrification (ammonia treatment) for the entire month of June — an unusually long recovery period (typically hours to days, rarely a full week).
- Core treatment continued throughout, but nitrifying bacteria could not be sustained. A lab in Virginia identified the contaminant as a cationic cleaning agent/sanitizer that bonded to the plant's sludge and killed the nitrifying organisms.
- Staff purchased an oxidizer treatment to help break the chemical bond; the plant showed signs of natural recovery after approximately 31 days and returned to full permit compliance on the day of this meeting.
- DEQ was kept informed throughout via the plant's self-reporting process; the official monthly report is not due until July 15, and any enforcement/fine determination typically takes a long time — a 2023 mechanical-failure violation only resulted in a fine notice within roughly the last year.
- The plant now has equipment to test specifically for this compound (a quaternary ammonium compound, or QAC) going forward, which may help trace the source; preliminary flow/dissolved-oxygen data suggested a possible origin on the "Green" side (Green Area Water and Sanitary Authority service area), though this is unconfirmed.

6.4 Administration — Thomas McIntosh

- The general fund faces a structural gap of roughly \$200,000–\$250,000 in annual expenditure growth without corresponding new revenue.
- Revenue measures adopted last year — a 3% tax, allowing dispensaries, and reclassifying year-round RV parks onto standard residential utility rates — generated an estimated \$128,000 in new revenue, which was helpful but insufficient to close the gap.
- Staff is completing a five-year budget look-back and a three-year forward projection (beyond the standard 3% assumption) to better identify cost trends; results will be shared with Council and the Police Chief.
- Without corrective budget action, staff cautioned that layoffs could be necessary as soon as next fiscal year. The city has already effectively absorbed one loss — a vacant City Planner position (budgeted at roughly \$140,000/year fully loaded) was not backfilled, with duties being absorbed by the City Manager.

7. New Business

7.1 New Business License Applications

Staff presented five new business license applications, all vetted:

- Way Maker Yard Maintenance — Scott Ellsworth Mickel
- DML Services — David Lynes
- Lair Pro Service — Daniel Lair
- Golden Fortune Asian Cuisine (food truck) — Sean Ye
- Ramsay Signs, Inc. — Wendy Gibson

Motion	Vote	Result
Motion to approve all five business license applications as presented by Wiggins; second by Hobson.	Unanimous — Aye; none opposed	PASSED

7.2 Resolution 26-1232 — IGA with Douglas County for Senior Center Space

Read by title only. This resolution authorizes the City Manager to enter into an agreement with Douglas County for senior center space at the Winston Community Center, supporting the Meals on Wheels program. Staff described it as a standard (two-year-term) renewal within a three-way arrangement — the county selects the meal vendor (currently "E&S," which uses food trucks) and the city separately contracts with that vendor. A nominal 2% annual increase applies.

Motion	Vote	Result
Motion to approve Resolution 26-1232 IGA — Douglas County Senior Services by Wiggins; second by White	Unanimous — Aye; none opposed	PASSED

7.3 Resolution 26-1234 — IGA with Douglas County for Abandoned RV Storage & Disposal

Read by title only. This resolution authorizes an intergovernmental agreement with Douglas County Solid Waste for storage and disposal of abandoned RVs and motor homes towed from city property. Staff described it as an unchanged, standard renewal of the existing arrangement (vehicles held 60 days at a \$10/day rate).

Motion	Vote	Result
Approve Resolution 26-1234 IGA — Abandoned RV Storage & Disposal by Hobson; second by Wiggins.	Unanimous — Aye; none opposed	PASSED

7.4 Resolution 26-1235 — Certification of Delinquent Sewer Charges

Read by title only. This annual resolution certifies delinquent sewer and plant-upgrade utility charges to the Douglas County Assessor for collection through property tax rolls, per statute — the only utility fee categories that can be certified this way. Staff noted that public-safety, transportation, and storm-fee arrears cannot be recovered through this mechanism, though a new collections platform (also benefiting municipal court collections) may help recover some of those amounts separately. Council also raised the question of passing the roughly 4% credit-card processing fee (an estimated \$32,000/year, largely be brought forward).

Motion	Vote	Result
Approve Resolution 26-1235 Certification of Delinquent Sewer Charges by Wiggins; second by White	Unanimous — Aye; none opposed	PASSED

7.5 Resolution 26-1236 — Vehicle Purchase for Winston Green Wastewater Facility (added to agenda)

Read by title only. This resolution authorizes the City Manager to purchase a department vehicle for the Winston Green wastewater treatment facility, with cost shared 50/50 with the Green Area Water and Sanitary Authority. As introduced, the not-to-exceed figure was stated as \$44,137.90 total (\$22,068.95 per party); staff corrected this at the meeting to reflect the actual purchase price of \$49,982.66 total (\$24,991.33 per party).

Staff reported finding a used 2024 Ford pickup with approximately 2,800 miles at Kendall Ford — effectively new, within budget, and less expensive than a comparable new half-ton pickup. The vehicle qualifies for a Ford Certified Gold Warranty (7 years/100,000 miles, exceeding the standard 5-year/60,000-mile new-vehicle warranty). Staff confirmed the purchase was already anticipated in the current budget.

Motion	Vote	Result
Approve Resolution 26-1236 Winston-Green vehicle purchase, cost-shared with Green Area Water and Sanitary Authority by White; second by Hobson	Unanimous — Aye; none opposed	PASSED

8. Consolidated Voting Summary

Item	Description	Vote	Result
Minutes	Approval of June 15 & June 22 minutes, as amended	Unanimous Aye	PASSED
Business Licenses	5 new business license applications	Unanimous Aye	PASSED
Res. 26-1232	IGA — Douglas County Senior Services (Meals on Wheels space)	Unanimous Aye	PASSED
Res. 26-1234	IGA — Douglas County Abandoned RV Storage & Disposal	Unanimous Aye	PASSED
Res. 26-1235	Certification of Delinquent Sewer User Charges	Unanimous Aye	PASSED
Res. 26-1236	Winston Green Wastewater Facility Vehicle Purchase (cost-shared)	Unanimous Aye	PASSED

9. Non-Agenda Items / Good of the Order

- A thank-you card was received from the Douglas High School Parents Committee (Class of 2026) for the city's support of Grad Night.
- Checks, copies, and claims in excess of \$500 were included in Council packets per standard practice.
- Announcement: the Friends of the Winston Library will not meet in July.

10. Action Items & Follow-Up

Action Item	Responsible Party	Deadline / Notes
Place Resolution 26-1233 (Chamber of Commerce agreement) on the agenda	Staff	July 20, 2026 meeting
Hold public hearing on marijuana moratorium ordinance appeal (Zach Koehler)	Council / Staff / City Attorney	July 20, 2026 meeting
Bring forward resolution on passing through ~4% credit card processing fee to utility customers	Thomas McIntosh / Finance	Upcoming meeting, timing not specified
Prepare prioritized list of PD software/technology programs for potential further budget cuts	Lieutenant & Sergeant, Winston PD	Pending direction from City Manager
Pursue federal COPS hiring grant application	Chief Sarti	Application in progress; meeting scheduled
Finalize accreditation objectives (3 remaining)	Lieutenant Stiffler	Target: July 15, 2026
Submit official DEQ monthly report on plant nitrification incident	Wastewater Treatment staff (Chris)	Due July 15, 2026

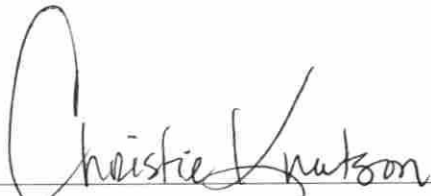
Action Item	Responsible Party	Deadline / Notes
Complete 5-year budget look-back / 3-year forward projection and share with Council	Thomas McIntosh	Timing not specified
Finalize radio system P25 upgrade and county repayment plan	City Manager / Chief Sarti	Ongoing, 3–5 year repayment plan

11. Adjournment

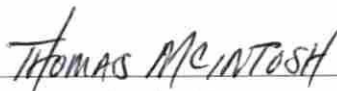
The meeting adjourned at 8:20.

CERTIFICATION

These minutes are a true and accurate record of the Winston City Council meeting held on July 6, 2026, and are subject to approval at the next regular meeting.



 Mayor Christie Knutson, Presiding Officer



 Thomas McIntosh, City Manager