



WINCHESTER CITY COMMISSION WRAP-UP

Information from the Tuesday, Sept. 2, 2025, 4 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. meetings

Commission approves relief funds for businesses impacted by High Side construction

The High Side Project represents a major investment in the future of Downtown Winchester, though it has created some difficulties along the way. Since construction began in April, downtown businesses have reported financial strain due to closures and limited customer access.

At the Aug. 19 Winchester Board of Commissioners meeting, discussion centered on the state of Downtown Winchester. During the 4:30 p.m. work session, City Manager Bruce Manley reviewed a list of concerns submitted by

downtown business and property owners.

Later in that meeting, public input from downtown representatives sparked dialogue about potential ways the city could assist those most affected by the construction.

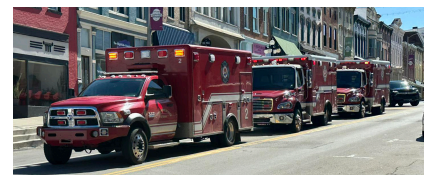
Following that discussion, the downtown business and property owners group collaborated to shape a relief plan and proposed changes to an existing grant program to better serve impacted businesses.

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DON'T MISS THE NEXT MEETING!

The Winchester Board of Commissioners will meet at 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 16.

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On Tuesday, Sept. 2, the Winchester Board of Commissioners approved both the revised grant program and additional funding for relief.

The proposal was presented by Whitney Leggett, Director of Strategic Communications and Downtown Development for the City of Winchester.

"These programs are designed to provide timely relief," Leggett said.

The Business Support Grant will provide up to \$3,000 per business to help cover short-term revenue losses. The Beer Cheese Relief Fund offers up to \$10,000 per business, determined by documented financial hardship.

The Business Support Grant expands on the Downtown Development Investment Fund grant by offering a one-time \$3,000 payment (instead of \$750 quarterly) to any business within the DDIF district. Business owners can now submit a written explanation of how the High Side Project has impacted them rather

than providing a profit-loss statement or CPA letter.

The Beer Cheese Relief Fund is structured to reimburse businesses for verifiable revenue loss related to the High Side Project. Eligible businesses — those located in the construction zone along Main Street between Broadway and Lexington Avenue and meeting other criteria — can recover 60% of losses up to a maximum of \$10,000.

Funding the relief programs has been a central question. Research by the City Manager and City Attorney determined that TIF dollars cannot be used for direct business relief, though they can supplement the DDIF account.

However, the city maintains a strong reserve from Beer Cheese Festival proceeds, which have seen limited use in recent years and are designated for downtown business support. The city will allocate \$100,000 from this fund to cover the relief program. Because these dollars are unrestricted, they can be applied directly to business

assistance.

"Together, these programs aim to get dollars into the hands of business owners as quickly as possible," Leggett said. "The reality is clear: a beautiful new High Side will mean very little if we don't have businesses open once the construction is complete. It is imperative that we support these businesses now, so that when we cut the ribbon on a revitalized Main Street, it will be lined with thriving shops, restaurants, and destinations that make Winchester a place people want to visit."

The Commission approved the measures unanimously, with Mayor JoEllen Reed pledging that businesses would begin receiving funds by Oct. 24.

For more information about the grant or relief funds, visit winchesterky.com and navigate to the Main Street High Side Project page.

Additional questions can be directed to Whitney Leggett at wleggett@winchesterky.com.

IN OTHER BUSINESS

In other business, the commission:

- approved an ordinance imposing an ad valorem tax of 19.5 cents upon each \$100 of assessed value on motor vehicles and watercraft for calendar year 2026. This has been the tax rate since 1984.

- toured the Main Street High Side project area with Chris Frazier, project foreman from The Allen Company. The tour included information about past construction initiatives and future projects.

- approved the first reading of an ordinance creating and establishing for bid a non-exclusive electric franchise agreement for a 10-year duration. The ordinance imposes a 3% franchise fee and reserves the right to impose a franchise fee of up to 5%. The ordinance is an increase from the current 1.75% franchise fee. The increase brings the fee in line with other franchise agreements in the city. The ordinance will require a second reading.

- approved an order appointing Billy Vanicek to a four-year term on the Winchester Municipal Utilities Commission. This is Vanicek's first term.

- approved an order providing funding from the Downtown Development Investment Fund for a Main Street High Side Business Support Grant for Betsey's Boutique for \$3,000 to be paid as \$750 quarterly for one calendar year.

- approved an order providing funding from the Downtown Development Investment Fund for a New Business Stipend Grant for a total of \$6,000 for The Hall.

- approved an order approving unit cost and awarding a bid to The Allen Company for the Fiscal Year 2026 paving program.

- approved amending the taser policy for the Winchester Police Department. The amendment updates the policy to reflect that the department now utilizes Taser 10s.



City ratifies agreement with County for EMS funding

Ongoing discussions have been taking place regarding joint EMS funding between the City of Winchester and Clark County.

The most recent talks have focused on how the city and county share the cost of EMS services.

Concerns about how to fund the shared services have been raised by the county.

In a letter dated Aug. 25, City Manager Bruce Manley wrote to Clark County Judge-Executive Les Yates outlining two options to help address those concerns.

The letter proposes that in 2026 the county pay 39% of the general operating expenses for EMS, while the city covers 61%. The county's share is estimated at \$968,370.

Manley's letter also highlighted two additional items

for the county to consider: the purchase of three ambulances and a contract with Stryker, a company that provides tools and equipment for EMS departments.

In September 2024, the city made a \$274,500 down payment on three ambulance chassis, with the county's share being \$107,055. The ambulances are expected to be delivered in February 2026, when the remaining balance will be due. Of the outstanding \$780,000, the county's portion would total \$304,200.

The city offered two options regarding the ambulance payments: either the county pay its portion based on the 61%/39% split, or the county could contribute 10% while the city covers 90%. The county chose the 90%/10% split.

Additionally, in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2025, the city entered into a seven-year lease agreement with Stryker for EMS equipment, including cardiac monitors, LUCAS devices, cots, and other supplies for all units. Payments of \$21,058 per month began in May 2025 after all equipment had been received. To date, the county has not been billed for or contributed toward the Stryker lease.

The county opted to exclude this lease from its billing obligations for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2025 and all of fiscal year 2026.

The commission voted unanimously to ratify this agreement with the county.