

Intro (00:00):

Instrumental music

Barry Lee (00:04):

Hi Barry Lee with 92.5 WINC FM excited to be at Rouss City Hall hosting our second season of the City of Winchester's podcast, the Rouss Review. The way this works, twice each month, on the second and fourth Thursday, we explore City services, programs and events and discuss information that you need to know. So up first is the Council BLUFF. That's a Bottom Line Up Front recap of the February 25, 2020 Council meetings.

New Speaker (00:30):

During the regular meeting, Council received an overview of the 275th anniversary celebration during the year 2019 from George Schember, member of the Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society, which was appointed as the lead planning committee for the celebration. Council also formerly appointed Mary T. Price as Interim City Manager effective March 17, 2020 and for an indefinite period. The first reading to establish the composition and election schedule for the Winchester School Board was held at the February 11th meeting. Council forwarded an option to this meeting for first reading and future adoption. If the general assembly approved the charter amendment. Under this option, the two current at-large seats that are set to expire on June 30, 2020 will be eliminated. The term for the remaining at-large seats set to expire in 2020 shall be extended to December 31, 2020 and shall be on the board. Therefore, the 2020 election shall consist of four members for the school board including the vacant seat for ward two, two other wards seats to be randomly selected by the City Electoral Board, and the remaining 2020 at-large seat. And since this was a first reading, no action was required. The item was forwarded to the March 10, 2020 regular meeting for public hearing and official vote. At the work session, Council discussed a resolution to amend the Comprehensive Plan to define the entire city as an Urban Development Area, or UDA, per Virginia code. This can improve the City's chances for receiving state transportation funding in the future. Council forwarded the resolution to the March 10, 2020 regular meeting for official vote. Communications Director Amy Simmons presented the City's 2019 annual report to Council. The report highlights the services provided and accomplishments made over 2019 by all City departments. The report now is available on the City's website. Public Services director Perry Eisenach presented seven options for changing the trash and recycling collection services to Council in order to address several issues including the global recycling market challenges. And by the way, Perry is here today to discuss these options in the next segment, so stay tuned for an overview of the recent discussion with Council. At the February 11th work session, Council discussed potential code changes to rectify inconsistencies with the City Charter structure. The Charter states that the City should be managed by a City Manager who's responsible for administration of the City's affairs, including management, appointment and supervision of all City employees. Essentially, the Council establishes the policies and overall goals of the City and the City Manager is responsible for the daily operations and implementing those policies and goals. Section 5(c) of the charter gives Council the right to appoint or remove department heads at its pleasure but Council has only opted to exercise this right with the Police Chief position as stated in City Code. Also in City Code, the Police Chief is allowed to appeal his or her termination by the City Manager to Council. These two operations are inconsistent with the Charter structure or the Council-Manager form of government and are not required by the Code of Virginia. Council continued the discussion at the February 25th work session and the three options provided by the City Attorney. Council forwarded option one to the March 10, 2020 meeting for first reading. With option 1, Council may adopt an Ordinance amending City Code and deleting sections 20 through 17(b) and (c) to better align with the city charter. This amendment will make all department heads including

the Police Chief fall under the purview of the City Manager only. For more information on these topics and to view the agenda packet, visit the City of Winchester website and click Council meeting agendas under the government tab.

New Speaker ([04:17](#)):

At Tuesday's City Council meeting, as I reported in the Council BLUF, Public Services Director Perry Eisenach provided an overview of some possible options for the City's trash and recycling collection services. So, we've whisked him upstairs here to explain the issues and options. Perry, great to have you back with us.

Perry Eisenach ([04:35](#)):

Thanks Barry. It's always nice to be with you.

Barry Lee ([04:37](#)):

So, let's start with the why. Why is the City researching possible changes to these services?

Perry Eisenach ([04:43](#)):

Sure. Well, providing curbside trash and recycling services is one of the many important services that the City provides to our residents. Back last October, I provided City Council with an overview of the trash and recycling issues that we're currently experiencing. At the conclusion of that work session last October, Council directed us to develop options for possible changes to the overall program for possible consideration during the FY21 budget process. The Interim City Manager will begin discussing the proposed budget options with Council in March. So, we really needed to get this information to City Council before that so that we could get direction from them on how they would like us to proceed with these options.

Barry Lee ([05:34](#)):

What are some of the issues that you've experienced with the trash and recycling program that prompted this research and the discussion?

Perry Eisenach ([05:42](#)):

One of the biggest issues that we're facing right now is how the changing international markets for recycling have really changed the demand for those materials. It's a national problem. We're not the only ones experiencing this issue. China used to take pretty much all the recycling materials from the United States. That has virtually ceased. There's just not a market for a lot of these recycling materials. That, coupled with the fact that our local vendor closed their operation. We used to take all of our recycling materials to a business locally. They have closed, so we had to find a new vendor to take our materials. Now, we transport our paper and cardboard up to Maryland and we take our plastic and cans that are recycled to Manassas. It's really changed what we have to do and it's added labor costs as well as fuel costs to drive to these places in addition to wear and tear on our trucks. The second challenge that we have been facing for a while now are employee-related issues. The job that our employees do in picking up trash and recycling, I think, is one of the hardest jobs in the city. It's difficult and unfortunately, as a result of the difficulty and the physical nature of the job, our employees have suffered a lot of injuries the past few years. And so that's a constant issue that we're dealing with. We found that it's hard to keep employees because it is such a difficult job, so we've experienced a lot of turnover with our employees. So that's another challenge that we have. The third challenge that we

have is that our trucks that we use to pick up trash and recycling are starting to get very old. The average age of our eight trucks is about 11 years old and trucks are really only built to last about 10 years.

Barry Lee ([08:04](#)):

So you're on borrowed time.

Perry Eisenach ([08:06](#)):

We're on borrowed time. Yes.

Barry Lee ([08:10](#)):

So Perry, what are the options that you presented to Council?

Perry Eisenach ([08:14](#)):

Well, we developed seven options that we presented at the Council Work Session Tuesday night.

Barry Lee ([08:19](#)):

Wow. Seven. That's a lot to digest.

Perry Eisenach ([08:22](#)):

Yes, it's a lot and there's a lot of differences between the options. There's a lot of information there and it, you know, it may be difficult for everybody to follow all of that.

Barry Lee ([08:36](#)):

Well, let's start from the top.

Perry Eisenach ([08:38](#)):

Sure. Well, the first option was probably the easiest one to understand. It's the status quo option where we would just continue to do what we're doing today. That option, even though we're not really changing what we're doing today, would still require an additional \$250,000, as compared to what our current year budget is. That's mainly for the additional costs for handling recycling. So, even if we just keep doing what we're doing today, we're still going to have to spend an additional \$250,000 in next year's budget to be able to do that, assuming that there will be no additional General Fund revenues available to pay for any of these additional costs that we're talking about today. Really, our only avenue for paying for these additional costs is to raise the current solid waste fee. We charge all of our customers \$5 a month. So a \$250,000 increase in expenses would raise the monthly fee about \$2.50 a month.

Barry Lee ([09:56](#)):

All right. So what about option number two.

Perry Eisenach ([09:59](#)):

In option number two, all recycling services would be eliminated and we would basically just maintain the current trash collection services. Now because of this, there would still be an increased cost because

we would have to haul more materials to the landfill. This option also includes a new truck for part of our truck replacement [program]. So we would still be looking at an additional \$250,000 increase, which was basically the same as option one. Then option three, we would still continue to collect paper and cardboard recycling, but we would eliminate plastic and cans. There would also be a truck replacement with this option, but we're still looking at an increase in cost of about \$300,000 per year. So [with] options one, two, and three there would be an increase in costs and we're really not dealing with the issues because it's not going to help the employee issues that we have today, and I think our residents for the most part want to be able to recycle. So taking part of that away while still increasing costs is, you know, those really aren't good options.

Barry Lee ([11:23](#)):

Right. Right.

Perry Eisenach ([11:25](#)):

So then we get into the other options and that's where it starts to get a little more complex. For option four, we would maintain all of the current services that we currently provide, but we would add an additional crew of employees and an additional truck to help spread the workload out because right now our employees, they have to lift almost seven and a half tons of trash every day.

Barry Lee ([12:05](#)):

Holy cow.

Perry Eisenach ([12:06](#)):

Yes. I think that's one of the reasons why we experience so many injuries is because these employees are being overworked. By adding an additional crew that would help out and adding an additional truck, that would add about \$900,000 in additional cost. So for every \$100,000 of additional cost, it would require the rate to go up by about a dollar per month. A \$900,000 cost would increase the current rate about \$9 a month.

Barry Lee ([12:53](#)):

Now option four, there was a mention of adding a glass crusher at a drop-off location for glass recycling. Maybe a little bit more on what's involved there. And, you know, right now the City's not collecting glass. So, what's involved with this?

Perry Eisenach ([13:12](#)):

We're not collecting glass, but we have still received a lot of feedback from our residents that they want to be able to recycle glass. Unfortunately, the global markets are such that we really can't take the glass anywhere. But we've looked into an option where we could purchase our own glass crusher, where we would crush the glass and it could be used for purposes such as backfilling around our utility line replacements in the trench. It could also be used as mulch. Some places use it as mulch for landscaping certain areas. Council seems to be very interested in that. And what that option would also include is a drop-off location. We would not be able to pick up everybody's glass curbside, but people could bring their glass to this location and we, in essence, would be doing the best we can to reuse the glass in that kind of manner.

Barry Lee ([14:29](#)):

Yeah. All right, so now let's look at options five through seven.

Perry Eisenach ([14:35](#)):

Sure. Well options five through seven really would be a major change to what we currently do today. What these options consist of primarily is to add roll-off carts that would be used to collect. And so every customer would receive a roll-off cart that they would put their trash in. They would roll this cart to the curb. In certain areas where we can, we would purchase different kinds of trucks so that the collection would be automated.

Barry Lee ([15:17](#)):

Ah, so the lifting would be done by the truck.

New Speaker ([15:19](#)):

Right. In areas [like] some of the downtown streets where they're very narrow and there's a lot of cars that park on the street, we could not use the automated system. We would still need our employees to roll the cart to the truck, but then there would be a lifting mechanism that would empty the cart for the employee so that they're not having to lift it.

Barry Lee ([15:49](#)):

Got it.

Perry Eisenach ([15:50](#)):

But, this would go a long way to reducing employee injuries and turnover. And I think it would be more convenient for our customers too.

Barry Lee ([16:02](#)):

Sure.

Perry Eisenach ([16:03](#)):

Because one of the issues that we face is that the rules for how much trash you can put out are confusing to a lot of our residents, they're difficult for us to administer. Sometimes people tend to put out more than they're supposed to. With these carts, you would have to put your trash in the cart and we would only pick up what's in the cart. It's very understandable.

Barry Lee ([16:29](#)):

Yeah, you have a visual reminder this is all you can put in there.

Perry Eisenach ([16:32](#)):

Right. And I think we would look at perhaps there might be three different sizes of carts. So, you know, a larger family would need a bigger one, a single person, you know, could get by with a small one. So that's really what options five, six and seven entail. Option five would be a cart just for trash pickup. Option six, there would be two carts for every customer, one for trash, one for recycling. And option seven, which I called the Cadillac option at the work session, we would also add an additional crew to pick up glass curbside.

Barry Lee ([17:22](#)):

Okay.

Perry Eisenach ([17:24](#)):

But you know the cost for these options are, you know, it's not cheap. So option number five, where it would be just carts for trash pickup, would add about a million dollars in expenses.

Barry Lee ([17:43](#)):

Okay. Alrighty. As far as what was decided, what did Council come up with?

Perry Eisenach ([17:52](#)):

Well they haven't made a final decision, but the direction that they gave us was to look at including option number five, which would include a roll-off cart for trash collection for every customer and to look at phasing it in over say a two or three year period. So, that's what we are going to include in the budget proposal that will go to Council, the whole City-wide budget proposal, that will go to Council in March for their discussions and consideration. That's really where we're at right now. There will still be a lot of details to work out, you know, how we phase in the program, what if there's a phase in period for rate increases to pay for it. And certainly we want to get input from our residents, as to their thoughts on moving forward in this direction.

Barry Lee ([18:56](#)):

In seeking information from the residents, I mean they, want to recycle. They were willing to pay a little more. Right?

Perry Eisenach ([19:03](#)):

We did do a survey last year where we asked residents if they would be willing to pay additional money to be able to recycle and the vast majority of the responses were 'yes, we would be willing to pay to be able to do that'.

Barry Lee ([19:22](#)):

Okay. Alright. So Perry, I'll tell you, man, I don't envy you. That's going to be a tough project to pull together and to implement city-wide, but appreciate you being here.

Perry Eisenach ([19:33](#)):

Oh, always happy to be here and you're right. This will be a challenge, but I think it would be an exciting challenge and we really look at it as a benefit, not only for the City and our employees, but for the residents as well. We think it would improve upon the service that we currently provide.

Barry Lee ([19:55](#)):

Alrighty. So again, that five year plan phased in for option five: current recycling services, the glass crusher and the roll-off cards for the trash.

Perry Eisenach ([20:04](#)):

That's correct. You got it.

Barry Lee ([20:06](#)):

Hey Perry, thank you very, very much. Appreciate it.

Perry Eisenach ([20:08](#)):

Thank you.

Barry Lee ([20:09](#)):

After a short break, we're going to be back with the Now U Know segment and a list of some upcoming events and activities. Hang in here with us.

Lt. Amanda Behan ([20:18](#)):

The City of Winchester is nine square miles situated at the top of Virginia with a population of 28,000. It is a small but flourishing city known for its vibrant downtown. Winchester and its surrounding area produces a quality of life residents feel safe raising their families in. However, when murder occurs, it rocks the community. I'm Lieutenant Amanda Behan with the Winchester Police Department and I am excited to bring you in on my journey with retired Detective Craig Smith to look at cold cases. This is Defrost, Winchester's true crime with Behan and Smith. Stay tuned for our first episode airing March 11, 2020 in which you will get the unique opportunity to listen alongside law enforcement as we look closely into an unsolved homicide from over 40 years ago and unravel the details each month.

Barry Lee ([21:22](#)):

And now it's time for the Now U Know segment where we talk about interesting City of Winchester facts that you may not be aware of or important information you need to know. For instance, did you know that the City offers several resources to help you stay informed about public works services? To find your refuse and recycling collection day, use the City's online property search program to find the day that your refuse and/or recycling is collected each week. Just enter your address and information about your property will populate, including your refuse and recycling collection days. Never miss a collection due to holiday schedule changes by signing up for the City's notification system. Create a profile and opt-in under subscriptions to receive refuse and recycling collection change alerts via text, phone, email and more. Submit a service request and track its progress using the City's 3-1-1 system online, the City's mobile app or Citibot texting service. Local residents can submit service requests for a variety of tasks such as a street light out, pothole, missed refuse/recycling collection, blue recycling bin needed, City tree issue, dead animal in roadway, and much more. Create an account to track the progress and receive updates or submit anonymously, but no account needed for Citibot. Discover the leaf collection area number in which your property is located and get daily updates of where crews will be collecting leaves curbside via the Public Works Leaf Collection web page. All this information and more is available on the Public Works web page on the City's website. Well, if you didn't before, now you know.

Barry Lee ([22:58](#)):

And we close with upcoming events and activities offered by the City of Winchester and partners. AARP is providing free tax service at the Jim Barnett Park Rec Center from 9 am to 3 pm every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday through April 15, 2020. Starting at 8 am on Tuesdays, call 540-247-6479 for more information and to sign up. Have you heard this exciting news? Winchester Police Chief John Piper will host Mocha Mondays every first Monday from 7:30 to 8:30 am at various coffee shops in Winchester. The first Mocha Monday will be held on March 2 at Starbucks on S. Pleasant Valley Road. The annual Old Town Winchester St. Paddy's Celtic Fest returns on March 7. There will be plenty of

live music and entertainment at various locations in downtown Winchester. More information will be posted soon on the EnjoyOTW.com website. The next Community Meeting hosted by Vice Mayor John Hill and Councilor Herbstritt will be held on March 7 from 10 am-12 pm at the John Mann/Wesley Parish United Methodist Church located at 527 Van Fossen Street. Local residents are invited to attend to learn more about the City's refuse and recycling services and ask questions. If your child loves to paint, sign them up for Winchester Parks and Recreation's Little Brushes for ages 2 to 5 or Acrylic Painting for kids ages 6 and up. Several classes are available in March and April. There's also Acrylic Painting classes for adults, so sign up now to save your spot. Register now for Winchester Police Department's Citizen Police Academy. This free program begins on March 12 with sessions held in the evening. Visit the winchesterpolice.org website to register.

Barry Lee ([23:07](#)):

So thanks for joining us. I'm Barry Lee with 92.5 WINC FM. We'll be bringing you another episode of the Rouss Review on the second Thursday in March, and we'll see you then.