

City Council Meeting Minutes

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2025 – 6:00 PM
COLUMBIA CITY, CITY HALL – 1840 SECOND STREET
CITY OF COLUMBIA CITY, COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

AGENDA ITEM 1

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:

CONVENED:

Mayor Alex Reed called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Alex Reed
Council President Rob Forman
Councilor Gordon Thistle
Councilor Lyle Bluhm

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Councilor Connie Quick

ALSO PRESENT:

Kim Karber, City Administrator/Recorder
Jerry Bartolomucci, Chief of Police

ATTORNEY PRESENT:

None

A quorum was present, and due notice had been published.

AGENDA ITEM 2

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

2.1 Public Hearing: To receive public testimony relating to a proposal to increase water rates by approximately 15%, sewer rates by approximately 5%, and to adjust the commercial and industrial sewer usage fees based upon recent winter water usage history.

Public Hearing opened.

Simon Ebert, 1865 8th Street, voiced his concerns/thoughts regarding the water and sewer rate increases. If they continue to go up at this rate every couple of years where is the water bill going to end up in cost? Simon suggested proposing a levy to the citizens to cover the costs of water and sewer construction projects as an alternative to large increases in the rates. Then once the cost is covered the levy would end or go up for renewal if there were other projects. The goal of this option would be to maintain and keep water bills reasonable, and it would give the residents a choice to vote on another possibility of how to pay. Mayor Reed mentioned that we were discussing the possibility of a monthly fee like other cities are using as another option to help cover costs and thanked Simon for his input.

Public Hearing closed.

2.2 Public Hearing: To discuss the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025 as approved by the Columbia City Budget Committee.

Public Hearing opened.

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No comments were heard from the public.
Public Hearing closed.

2.3 Public Hearing: To discuss the proposed use of revenue sharing funds for fiscal year 2025/26.

Public Hearing opened.
No comments were heard from the public.
Public Hearing closed.

AGENDA ITEM 3

CITIZEN INPUT:

3.1 Kanale Tumlinson – Site manager with Hudson Garbage regarding rate increases.

MOVED (THISTLE), SECOND (FORMAN), AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVED THE 3.5 % HUDSON GARBAGE RATE INCREASE.

3.2 Al Petersen, 101 St. Helens Street, St. Helens voiced his frustration about a citation he received regarding his vacant property located next to RiverClub Estates. He stated the grass has been mowed and is in compliance and provided pictures. It was explained that the citation was not about the grass, it was about the weeds on the outlying areas of the property, which the City received a complaint about, and he was sent multiple notices specifying the areas that were out of compliance per the City's code.

AGENDA ITEM 4

COUNCIL REPORTS:

4.1 Audit Committee: Next meeting was scheduled for September, but Chair Forman, will need to reschedule due to scheduling conflict. Kim addressed some items that had come up in the last Council meeting. First, there is no concern about the effectiveness of the audit committee, they are doing what they are supposed to. Kim showed the new auditors the list of reports/information that is provided to our audit committee four times a year. They thought the information they review was very adequate, especially since that information also goes before Council for review and approval. The Committee reviewing the City's expenses, journal entries, checks written, verifying back-up documents, etc, is their purpose and should stay their focus. Kim will go over this at the next audit committee meeting. Kim also emphasized that in each of the different City committees their focus should be on what that committee is designated to go over – parks on parks, streets on streets, etc., it is not one-on-one time for the Committee members to bring different items to the table they want to see the Mayor and Council address. If they have other concerns outside the scope of the committee, they can be emailed to the Mayor, Council, Kim, or they can bring it to a Council meeting to be addressed.

4.2 Hazard Committee: Kim reported the next meeting is next Wednesday and there was not a quorum at the May meeting, so they were not able to hold it.

4.3 Parks Committee: Chair Bluhm reported that the June meeting was cancelled since the Parks Master Plan is still being worked on. The next meeting is scheduled for July. Kim reported that at last count there were ninety park surveys turned in.

4.4 Streets Committee: No report from Chair Forman but he did inquire about the SCA grant. Kim reported we have not received any word yet. She also reported that there is currently crack seal work being done on the east side of Highway 30.

4.5 Water & Sewer Committee: Kim reported four steel septic tanks are currently being replaced and the SCADA update has been completed.

AGENDA ITEM 5

CONSENT AGENDA:

- 5.1 Bills paid with check numbers 35483 through 35525 during the month of May 2025.**
- 5.2 Expense vs Budget Report for the month ending May 31, 2025.**
- 5.3 Combined balance sheet for the month ending May 31, 2025.**
- 5.4 Minutes of the May 15, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting.**

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- 5.5 Activity Report from the City Administrator for the month of May 2025.
- 5.6 Activity Report from the Public Works Superintendent for the month of May 2025.
- 5.7 Minutes of the May 29, 2025, Budget Committee Meeting.
- 5.8 Activity Report from the Chief of Police for the month of May 2025.
- 5.9 Minutes of the May 20, 2025, Parks Committee Meeting.

THE COUNCIL APPROVED THE CONSENT AGENDA BY UNANIMOUS ROLL CALL VOTE.

AGENDA ITEM 6 UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

6.1 Endorsement Guidelines.

Councilor Forman presented guidelines he thought should be in writing relating to endorsement guidelines going forward so we stay consistent and are clear on expectations. Mayor and Council did not have any additions. Kim will put together a resolution for July's meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 7 NEW BUSINESS:

7.1 Council Bill No. 25-1002: A Resolution Adopting the Budget, Making Appropriations, and Categorizing Taxes for the 2025-26 Fiscal Year.

MOVED (FORMAN), SECONDED (BLUHM), AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL NO 25-1002.

7.2 Council Bill No. 25-1003: A Resolution Providing for Water Rates and Charges for the City of Columbia City, Oregon; Rescinding Resolution No. 24-1316-R.

MOVED (FORMAN), SECONDED (THISTLE), AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL NO 25-1003.

7.3 Council Bill No. 25-1004: A Resolution Adopting Sewer Charges and Rates for the City of Columbia City, Oregon; Rescinding Resolution No. 24-1317-R.

MOVED (FORMAN), SECONDED (BLUHM), AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL NO 25-1004.

7.4 Council Bill No. 25-1005: A Resolution Declaring the City's Election to Receive State Revenues for the Fiscal Year 2025-26.

MOVED (THISTLE), SECONDED (FORMAN), AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL NO 25-1005.

7.5 Council Bill No. 25-1006: A Resolution Authorizing a Transfer of Appropriations within the General, Water and Sewer Funds During the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2024.

MOVED (BLUHM), SECONDED (THISTLE), AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL NO 25-1006.

7.6 Council Bill No. 25-1007: A Resolution adopting Budget and Financial Policies for the City of Columbia City, Oregon.

MOVED (FORMAN), SECONDED (BLUHM), AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL NO 25-1007.

7.7 Council Bil No. 25-1008: A Resolution Determining that a Nuisance Exists Upon Vacant Land Described as Map and Taxlots 5128-DA-05500, 5128-DA-05100, 5128-DA-5102 and 5128-DA-5103, Properties are Located Adjacent to Third and M Streets and Adjacent to Second Street North of Spinnaker Way within the City of Columbia City and Requesting City Abatement.

MOVED (THISTLE), SECONDED (FORMAN), AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL NO 25-1008.

7.8 Ratify Septic Tank Contract between Makana Truck and Excavation Inc and the City of Columbia City.

MOVED (THISTLE), SECONDED (FORMAN), AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE CONTRACT BETWEEN MAKANA TRUCK AND EXCAVATION INC AND THE CITY OF COLUMBIA CITY.

7.9 City Emails.

Kim addressed the suggestion of changing City email addresses from the current personalized ones to generic ones – e.g., AP@columbia-city.org. It was brought up due to a concern of emails being 'lost' when employees leave, especially when it is sudden. Kim explained that our IT department can have anyone's emails forwarded to another person when needed. The time, effort, and money it would cost to switch emails over does not justify the small benefit at this point especially due to the option to forward/delegate emails. The City will not be moving forward on this project.

7.10 City Attorney.

Kim asked if the Mayor and Council are okay with her moving forward on deciding between the two attorney firms it has been narrowed down to after seeing if they still have the bandwidth to take us on. Council and Mayor gave approval for Kim to move forward.

AGENDA ITEM 8 OTHER BUSINESS:

8.1 Newsletter Article.

Councilor Forman asked about drafting an article for the newsletter soliciting residents to volunteer their expertise and time to the City. Mayor and Council approved.

AGENDA ITEM 9 ADJOURNMENT:

9.1 There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.

APPROVED:

Alexander Reed
Mayor

ATTEST:

Kim Karber
City Administrator/Recorder