

City Council Meeting Minutes

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2026 – 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 Connie Quick
Councilor Lyle Bluhm

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

ALSO PRESENT:

Kim Karber, City Administrator/Recorder
Jerry Bartolomucci, Chief of Police
Micah Rogers, Public Works Superintendent

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 5%, sewer rates by approximately 6%, and to adjust the commercial and industrial sewer usage fees based upon recent winter water usage history.

Public Hearing Opened.

Joe Liddicoat of 3560 5th Street asked how the rates are decided. Mayor Reed and Kim explained that we take into consideration what St. Helens rate increases will be since we buy water from them when needed, the projects coming up, and maintenance of the system. He stated it did not seem out of line considering what is going on in the world. Joe then asked if water usage was part of the sewer rate. He gave the example of when he waters his yard and wanted to know if he is charged a sewer rate for that water. Kim explained that during the months of June, July, August, and September there is only a flat fee charged for sewer because there is the assumption that there will be a lot of watering and that water is not being treated.

Julie Liddicoat of 3560 5th Street asked how the increase would look on the bill. Kim stated the monthly minimum would increase by \$5.45.

Public Hearing closed.

2.2 Public Hearing: To receive public testimony relating to the budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, as approved by the Columbia City Budget Committee.

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

2.3 Public Hearing: To receive public testimony relating to the proposed use of revenue sharing funds for fiscal year 2026-27.

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

2.4 Public Hearing: To receive public testimony relating to a proposal to adjust structural, mechanical, plumbing, manufactured dwelling, grade & fill, and miscellaneous building fee increases. The proposed fee adjustments result in an average increase of approximately 3%.

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.

Kanale spoke about the 2.5% increase for the garbage and recycling services in Columbia City, effective on July 1, 2026. He mentioned after discussing the increase in May with Kim, around the beginning of June the transfer station reported they would be increasing their tip fee by 14%. Taking that into consideration, the proposed increase would have been a 4 - 4.5% increase. Since the proposed increase had already been discussed he did not feel it would be right to ask for more. He said the increase for weekly service of the small cart will be about \$0.15 a week or \$0.60 a month.

Councilor Bluhm expressed his appreciation for them keeping their rates down as low as they can. He then asked if there was anything our community could do to help keep the rates down. Kanale said that Columbia City does a good job and has low contamination rates for recycling and yard debris and to keep that up.

Mayor Reed asked about the status of glass recycling. Kanale explained that with the single cart recycling, it is too dangerous for the people who are hand sorting due to the likelihood of it being broken. If they went with a separate curbside glass bin, then they would need to get a different style truck. With the Recycling Modernization Act and DEQ pushing to create a better recycling environment, this is a possibility down the road with help from Oregon. Kim inquired about getting a glass recycling bin for Columbia City. Kanale said he would need to talk to Waste Management and then the City would need a location to place it.

Kanale also mentioned that all batteries can now be dropped off at the transfer station at any time. Hudson is working with them and will eventually start picking up batteries that are left in a Ziplock type baggie on the garbage can and the drivers will pick them up.

3.2 Julie Liddicoat of 3560 5th Street inquired about what could be done regarding the City's hard water. PW Superintendent Rogers explained that our hard water test show that we have about 80 milligrams per liter of calcium carbonate, which is naturally occurring. Over in St. Helens, they have a multi-million-dollar membrane filtration facility and still deal with the same issue. The recommendation is a home water filtration system, and a plumber or water contractor can help with suggesting the right type of system for individual homes.

3.3 Paulette Lichatowich asked if the Mayor and Council had a chance to look at her letter regarding the fire station in Bundy Park and she could answer any questions they may have. Councilor Forman asked Kim if the deed for Bundy Park had special restrictions on what could be done and if it could be sold privately. Kim replied it is currently designated as public land and would have to research if it can be sold. Councilor Forman asked Paulette if her main argument was that the stated goal was for there to be no cost but there is a cost? Paulette replied that her main argument is that the citizens have said, 9 out of 10, said that parks and trails are important to their livability. Another one is that there is a no train horn ordinance in Columbia City and adding all the extra noise would give less livability. She stated she could give additional reasons than what was in the letter. Councilor Forman replied that we have assurances from the fire district that they will not turn on their sirens until they hit Highway 30 and even then, they will only use the sirens when they feel it is necessary. Councilor Forman stated he does not view that as any more of an increase in noise. Paulette pointed out they would be leaving from Columbia City not Saint Helens, so whichever way they go there would be noise. Councilor Forman replied that there will be an average of two to five calls per day for service. Paulette asked why have all these little fire stations around when it takes four minutes to get to the highway from the station by the fairgrounds. Councilor Forman stated that four minutes is significant when the mandatory response time per the state is eight minutes according to the fire station when they first talked to us. Paulette said she has had great response time from them when she has had to use their services and insurance rates are not going to go down having the station in Columbia City. She thinks Columbia Fire & Rescue needs to reevaluate their entire system and come up with a plan that would modernize their needs. Mayor Reed addressed the response times, which are currently around eight minutes, stating that when the Chief was here last month, he said having the fire station here would reduce the response time to four minutes, which is important for Columbia City residents. Mayor Reed also reiterated that we are just looking at this proposal. He knows it been presented before but he was not a part of that and he is taking everything in, he is walking around Bundy Park, he uses Bundy Park, and wants to see where the impact would be. Mayor Reed stated he appreciates people giving their input, lots of things are being considered, and no decisions have been made. Paulette stated she was aware when the fire station was proposed before and has seen the financial situation they have been through since then and is questioning how they can have recovered and how sustainable this will be. Councilor Thistle stated that the plan is being revised so trucks would return off Highway 30, not through the neighborhood. Councilor Quick pointed out the trains can block access of the fire department when they are going through. Mayor Reed stated that is why Bundy Park is the choice, since it is on the other side of the highway.

3.4 Garrett Greig of 405 C Street talked about his concern about the fire station since he lives on the border of Bundy Park, the fire station would be next to his side yard. He has kids, his neighbor has kids and they have friends over, which is a safety concern to him. There is also concern for the wear and tear on the side streets and the cost to maintain those by the City. Councilor Forman asked if the tweaks mentioned by Councilor Thistle helped. Garrett stated it does help a little, but the noise is still a concern. He stated the trees are a very nice buffer from Highway 30, especially in the summer when they have all their leaves.

AGENDA ITEM 4

COUNCIL REPORTS:

4.1 Audit Committee: No report.

4.2 Hazard Committee: Chief Bartolomucci stated they have a meeting coming up and they are still working on Prepare Fair stuff. Since Corey is gone, they have not determined who is going to take over CERT.

4.3 Parks Committee: Chair Bluhm stated he thought the Memorial Day celebration was better than last year. The sound system was good, the attendance was good, the

4 Regular City Council Meeting
June 18, 2026

agenda was good, and he thought it went well. The last two meetings were unable to be held since there was not a quorum. The next meeting is TBD.

4.4 Streets Committee: Chair Forman stated they are still waiting on the results of our Small City Allotment grant application, which should be out sometime in the middle of July. A question came up regarding street sweeping. Councilor Bluhm stated that the last time the street sweeper was out they did not sweep along the curb in his cul-de-sac, they just went down the middle. PW Superintendent Rogers explained that it is a contracted service that we use more often in the fall and that if there are any issues to let him know and he will reach out to their shop manager. Kim added she thinks it is a service we need to help keep all the streets clean especially in the fall and spring to clean up the leaves, cherry blossoms, debris, etc. so it helps keep the gutters/storm drains clean.

4.5 Water & Sewer Committee: No report.

AGENDA ITEM 5

CONSENT AGENDA:

- 5.1 Bills paid with check numbers 36032 through 36077 during the month of May 2026.
- 5.2 Expense vs Budget Report for the month ending May 31, 2026.
- 5.3 Combined balance sheet for the month ending May 31, 2026.
- 5.4 Minutes of the May 21, 2026, Regular City Council Meeting.
- 5.5 Activity Report from the City Administrator for the month of May 2026.
- 5.6 Activity Report from the Public Works Superintendent for the month of May 2026.
- 5.7 Activity Report from the Chief of Police for the month of May 2026.
- 5.8 Minutes of the April 28, 2026, Hazard Committee Meeting.
- 5.9 Minutes of the May 28, 2026, Budget Committee Meeting.
- 5.10 Minutes of the May 29, 2026, City Council Workshop Meeting.

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

AGENDA ITEM 6

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

AGENDA ITEM 7

NEW BUSINESS:

7.1 Council Bill No. 26-1020: A Resolution Adopting the Budget, Making Appropriations, and Categorizing Taxes for the 2026-27 Fiscal Year.

MOTION: MOVED (FORMAN), SECONDED (THISTLE), TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL 26-1020 MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

7.2 Council Bill No. 26-1021: A Resolution Providing for Water Rates and Charges for the City of Columbia City, Oregon; Rescinding Resolution No. 25-1330-R.

MOTION: MOVED (QUICK), SECONDED (BLUHM), TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL 26-1021 MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

7.3 Council Bill No. 26-1022: A Resolution Adopting Sewer Charges and Rates for the City of Columbia City, Oregon; Rescinding Resolution No. 25-1331-R.

MOTION: MOVED (FORMAN), SECONDED (QUICK), TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL 26-1022 MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

7.4 Council Bill No. 26-1023: A Resolution Declaring the City's Election to Receive State Revenues for the Fiscal Year 2026-27.

MOTION: MOVED (THISTLE), SECONDED (BLUHM), TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL 26-1023 MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

7.5 Council Bill No. 26-1024: A Resolution Authorizing a Transfer of Appropriations within the General, Street, Water, and Sewer Funds During the Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2025.

MOTION: MOVED (BLUHM), SECONDED (FORMAN), TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL 26-1024 MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

7.6 Council Bill No. 26-1025: A Resolution Setting Rates to be Charged by Waste Connections/Hudson Garbage Service for Collecting and Disposing of Solid Waste, Recycling Materials, and Yard Debris Within the City of Columbia City, Oregon, Effective July 1, 2026.

MOTION: MOVED (THISTLE), SECONDED (QUICK), TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL 26-1025 MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

7.7 Council Bill No. 26-1026: A Resolution of the City of Columbia City Setting Building Department Fees.

MOTION: MOVED (BLUHM), SECONDED (FORMAN), TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL 26-1026 MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

7.8 Council Bill No. 26-1027: A Resolution Authorizing the City of Columbia City to Apply for a Local Government Grant from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department for Improvements to Harvard Park.

MOTION: MOVED (BLUHM), SECONDED (THISTLE), TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL 26-1027 MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

7.9 Ratify Personal Services Contract between City of Columbia City and AC Moate Industries Inc for Crack Sealing.

MOTION: MOVED (THISTLE), SECONDED (BLUHM), TO APPROVE THE PERSONAL SERVICES CONTRACT BETWEEN CITY OF COLUMBIA CITY AND AC MOATE INDUSTRIES INC FOR CRACK SEALING. MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

7.10 No Bid – 2014 Police Car.

Kim asked for direction on what to do with the police car that did not receive any bids. The consensus was to put it back up for bid at \$2000 or best offer.

7.11 Permit Application for Structures in the Unimproved Right-of-Way as applied for by Joel and Annalisa Smith of 2405 5th Street.

MOTION: MOVED (FORMAN), SECONDED (THISTLE), TO APPROVE THE RIGHT OF WAY PERMIT WITH THE AMENDMENT THAT THE STORAGE SHED ON THE NEIGHBORS PROPERTY BE MOVED ONTO THEIR PROPERTY. MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

7.12 Council Bill No. 26-1028: A Resolution Determining that a Nuisance Exists Upon Property Described as Map and Tax Lot 5128-AC-00801, Tax Account Number: 14365, Property Located at 2050 Third Street within the City of Columbia City and Requesting City Abatement.

MOTION: MOVED (QUICK), SECONDED (FORMAN), TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL 26-1028 MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

7.13 Council Bill No. 26-1029: A Resolution Determining that a Nuisance Exists Upon Property Described as Map and Tax Lot 5128-AB-00300, Tax Account Number: 14309, Property Located at 2205 Second Street within the City of Columbia City and Requesting City Abatement.

MOTION: MOVED (THISTLE), SECONDED (BLUHM), TO ADOPT COUNCIL BILL 26-1029 MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

AGENDA ITEM 8

OTHER BUSINESS:

8.1 Audit of Columbia River Fire & Rescue (CRFR)

Kim explained that she had reached out to our auditors about auditing CRFR recent audits but has not received a price estimate. She is looking for guidance on the limit for how much should be spent. The consensus was that if there will be more than two billable hours, it will need to be discussed at the next Council meeting.

8.2 Councilor Forman Resignation

Councilor Forman turned in his resignation, effective as of June 19, 2026. He stated that he was grateful for working with the Mayor and other Councilors and he thinks that everyone has made a lot of effort to make the community and City better and it was an honor to serve with everyone.

Councilor Forman was the Council President and with his resignation it was necessary to elect a new one.

MOTION: MOVED (THISTLE), SECONDED (FORMAN) TO ELECT COUNCIL MEMBER CONNIE QUICK AS THE NEW COUNCIL PRESIDENT. MOTION PASSED (5-0). AYE (REED, FORMAN, THISTLE, QUICK, BLUHM)

Council then discussed how the position would be filled. Kim explained that the position is up for election in the November elections, so whoever is appointed will only be in the position until December. The consensus was to have interviews at the July 16th Council meeting, if any applications are received. The due date for the applications is July 15th. It was also decided that once a new councilor is appointed, the committee assignments will be done.

8.3 Councilor Thistle thanked the staff for putting on the Centennial Celebration. Kim added that Laura Markham and the Committee did a great job, it turned out great, and everyone had fun. Councilor Quick also gave kudos to Laura for a job well done!

AGENDA ITEM 9

ADJOURNMENT:

9.1 There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:13 pm.

APPROVED:

Alexander Reed
Mayor

ATTEST:

Kim Karber
City Administrator/Recorder