

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF STEVENSON COUNCIL MEETING**  
**January 16, 2025**  
**6:00 PM, City Hall and Remote**

Attending:

**ELECTED OFFICIALS:**

Mayor Scott Anderson; Councilmembers David Cox, Lucy Lauser, Michael Johnson, Chuck Oldfield, Pat Rice

**CITY STAFF:**

Interim City Administrator/Community Development Director Ben Shumaker, Clerk/Treasurer Anders Sorestad, Public Works Director Carolyn Sourek, City Attorney Robert Muth, Stevenson Fire Chief Ray Broughton.

**GUESTS:**

Skamania County Prosecuting Attorney Adam Kick  
Stevenson-Carson School District Superintendent Ingrid Colvard  
Skamania County Undersheriff Tracy Wyckoff

**PUBLIC ATTENDEES:**

Staci Patten, Rick Jessel, Valerie Hoy-Rhodehamel, Per Collins, John Logan, Mik Hendrickson, Honey with Skamania Kids & Youth, Judith Morrison, Mary Repar, Melissa Kuehnell, others unidentified

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**1. CALL TO ORDER/PRESENTATION TO THE FLAG:**

**Mayor Anderson** called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., led the group in reciting the pledge of allegiance and conducted roll call. He advised audience members that recent information on social media sites regarding the fire department was incomplete and more facts would be presented during the meeting.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Staci Patten commented on public records requests regarding the city attorney's position.

Valerie Hoy-Rhodehamel, volunteer firefighter, spoke about support for the Stevenson Fire department, PPE maintenance, and hazards encountered when fighting fires.

Per Collins, District 2 Fire Department spoke about equipment support for the Stevenson fire department volunteers.

John Logan, Fire Chief for the City of Cascade Locks, commented in support of a reserve fund for the Stevenson Fire Department.

Mik Hendrickson addressed a Utility Bill issue.

Honey with Skamania Kids & Youth provided information on a youth center being developed in Stevenson. A fundraiser is planned for February 8th.

Judith Morrison, local insurance agent, noted concerns about house insurance due to increased wildfires and offered resources to homeowners facing insurance issues.

Mary Repar spoke about climate change, undergrounding utilities, and wildfires concerns. She added her support of the Stevenson Fire Department.

**3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:**

Item 9a was removed from the agenda. It will be moved to the February 2025 City Council meeting.

**Stevenson Fire Chief Ray Broughton's** staff report was moved forward in the agenda to follow the Sheriff's Office report.

#### **4. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- a) \*Approve Resolution 2025-\_\_\_\_\_ Personnel Policy Update - Interim City Administrator Ben Shumaker presented a resolution revising the personnel policy for council consideration.
- b) Approve 2025 Tourism Funding Award Contracts in the amount of \$575,035 - City Clerk/Treasurer Anders Sorestad presented the contracts for Tourism funding approved at the November 21st, 2024 council meeting for council approval. The total amount is \$575,035.
- c) Minutes of December 19th, 2024 Regular Council Meeting presented for approval.
- d) \*Liquor License Renewal - Backwoods Brewing Company
- e) \*Approve Resolution Authorizing Road Closure - Public Works Director Carolyn Sourek presented the resolution regarding temporary road closure for private utility connections on Upper School Street.
- f) \*Utility Billing Adjustment: The Council is asked to authorize an adjustment for the account at Meter No. 14601. Service to the account was locked off for approximately 1 month in Summer 2024. Despite repeated attempts from the customer over the course of the month, service was not promptly restored. There is no policy to guide action during such situations. Council is asked to authorize removing 1-month's service charge from the customer's account (\$167.74) to cover the time when service was deprived.
- g) \*Letter of Support: Washington State Parks has requested the City Council authorize a letter of support to secure funding for a highway improvement at Beacon Rock State Park. The project description and draft letter is available for authorization.

**6:28: MOTION** to approve consent agenda items a-g was made by **Councilmember Lauser**, seconded by **Councilmember Rice**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Oldfield, Lauser, Cox, Rice, Johnson.**

#### **5. SHERIFF'S OFFICE REPORT:**

- a) Sheriff's Report - The Skamania County Sheriff's report for activity within Stevenson city limits for December 2024 was presented by Undersheriff Tracy Wyckoff.

#### **6. PRESENTATIONS FROM OUTSIDE AGENCIES:**

- a) Stevenson-Carson School District 303 Superintendent Ingrid Colvard shared information on district activities, including strategic planning, school funding, student achievement, school safety efforts, enrollment, and resources that support student mental health. She answered several questions regarding student drug and alcohol misuse, and pointed to the biennial Healthy Youth Survey for data. Youth suicide rates were also asked about, and she noted over the last five years local suicide cases included one middle-school youth and several parents of students.

#### **7. SITUATION UPDATES:**

None were presented

#### **8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

- a) 3-Party Interlocal Agreement, Probation Services - Skamania County Prosecutor Adam

Kick discussed at length the request presented by Skamania County at the December 19th City Council meeting regarding payment for county probation services utilized by the cities of North Bonneville and Stevenson.

He explained Stevenson's Municipal Court cases contribute 20-22% of the county probation office's caseload, but the city currently pays nothing to support probation staff time. If individuals cannot pay, under statute the city is obligated to cover those costs. He noted two days of jail time are equal to the costs of 3 months of supervised probation. He related the annual costs to administer probation services by Skamania County are approximately \$215,000.

**7:33: MOTION** to approve the Three-Party Interlocal Agreement for probation services contract as presented was made by **Councilmember Cox**, seconded by **Councilmember Johnson**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Oldfield, Cox, Rice, Johnson**.

Voting nay: **Councilmember Lauser**

- b) \*Fire Strategic Reserve - **Mayor Anderson** initiated a discussion about the Fire Department Strategic Reserve Fund. This followed the introduction of an amendment proposed to the 2024 budget at the December 2024 meeting regarding a transfer of the unspent operational funds to the fire department's strategic reserve. Changes to the Fire Reserve Fund are intended to provide clarity on a long-standing practice to reserve unspent operational funds for future capital/equipment needs. **Stevenson Fire Chief Broughton** provided a detailed explanation of department needs and a list of anticipated purchases of equipment, vehicles, and gear.

**7:56: MOTION** to have city staff calculate the amount of unspent funds in the budget after the 2024 Capital expenditures have been determined and compose a budget amendment for 2025 to transfer that amount to the fire district strategic reserves, and then allow the fire district to transfer any amounts left over from their budget amounts for 2025 to their strategic reserves at that time was made by **Councilmember Oldfield**, seconded by **Councilmember Lauser**. (The motion was summarily corrected to replace the words 'the fire district' with 'the city of Stevenson').

Prior to the vote **Councilmember Cox** stated budgets should accurately reflect anticipated expenses, unspent funds from the fire district should be returned to the city's general fund at the end of the fiscal year, and the city should budget a specific amount annually for the fire department reserve.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Oldfield, Rice, Johnson, Lauser**.

Voting nay: **Councilmember Cox**.

## **9. COUNCIL BUSINESS:**

- a) Approve Committee Appointments - This item was removed from the agenda, and will be discussed at the February 2025 City Council meeting.

## **10. INFORMATION ITEMS: The following items were presented for Council review.**

- a) \*Contracts Awarded Administratively - The report on contracts, purchases, and change orders over \$10,000 approved administratively over the past month was attached.
- b) Chamber of Commerce Report on some of the activities conducted by Skamania County Chamber of Commerce in the prior month.

- c) Financial Report - The Treasurer's Report and year-to-date revenues and expenses through the prior month were presented for council review.
- d) Housing Programs Report on housing services provided by Washington Gorge Action Programs in Skamania County.
- e) Planning Commission meeting minutes from December 9th, 2024.

## 11. CITY ADMINISTRATOR AND STAFF REPORTS:

- a) **[Note: Actual report occurred after Agenda Item 5a)] Ray Broughton, Stevenson Fire Chief**, presented information on Fire Department staff positions, recent call outs and responses, volunteer training, hydrant paint upgrades, and more. He answered several questions from the Council about cleaning and decontaminating firefighter gear and the equipment needed. **Mayor Anderson** reiterated the city's increasing commitment to firefighter safety.
- b) **Ben Shumaker, Community Development Director**
  - i. An application has been received for a rezone. The Planning Commission will review the application prior to it coming before the City Council. **Shumaker** advised the Council their review will be as a quasi-judicial body, and explained the Appearance of Fairness doctrine that will be administered. He shared the Planning Commission has requested greater coordination between the City Council and the Commission's alignment of strategic priorities and acknowledgement of their efforts to advance those priorities.
  - ii. He has met with staff from City of Cascade Locks to learn about their development review process and their fees. He suggested adopting some of their methods could streamline parts of the permitting process.
- c) **Carolyn Sourek, Public Works Director**
  - i. Water: Water Services are being installed, taking advantage of dry weather.
  - ii. Streets/Bridges: She met recently with Skamania County engineers. Under WSDOT requirements all structures require scour analyses. The county engineers provided inspection reports that showed the Rock Creek bridge needs work that is beyond the capacity of the city's public works staff, so the project will be added to the capital facilities plan.
  - iii. She thanked the Stevenson Downtown Association for helping to cover the costs of materials for the ADA parking sites.
  - iv. Project updates: Waste Water Treatment Plan is in startup. First St. is largely complete, striping and concrete work needed. Cascade Project design is expected to be done by April, with bids set for May. Construction set to begin in September 2025. Lasher Street is also in design mode. A community survey is planned for spring of 2026 to gather public input.
  - v. Long-term water supply report due April 2025. Deferred maintenance has accrued and needs to be addressed. Costly repairs are needed to ensure an adequate and stable water supply. Decisions will have to be made regarding which sources to prioritize.
  - vi. The Pump Station held a walk-through inspection with USDA. Russell Street project remains on the radar.
  - vii. Staffing: New temporary staff has been brought on through People to People. He will be providing landscape maintenance downtown.
  - viii. Employee Training: Cody Rosander received his Water Treatment Plant Operator 1 license.
  - ix. The small works roster is being updated for 2025.

**d) Ben Shumaker, Interim City Administrator**

- i. Anders' last day is January 17th, and he will be missed. Deanna will cover for now. Once a new City Administrator is hired, the Clerk/Treasurer position will be posted with the City Administrator's input.
- ii. A new front desk clerk, Megan Mosco Horan will temporarily join the staff on January 21st.
- iii. He has drafted a new interlocal agreement with the fire district and has sent it to them for comments. He has also proposed to increase the payment amount volunteers receive for call outs. He revisited the purpose of painting hydrants, and shared that firefighters do not want to hook up to hydrants on AC lines because of breakage potential. The next replacement of AC lines will be along Cascade Avenue in 2025.
- iv. Staff is looking into development review costs. There may be ways to provide funds for Public Works to put towards maintenance.
- v. A budget amendment for the street fund is being drafted to help with project costs on the Capital Improvement Plan.
- vi. Working to improve communications in a number of different ways. New strategic priority assessments for initiatives included in personnel policy changes. Also working to ensure communications between staff and public by following up with individuals making public comments at city meetings.
- vii. The ballot measure supporting the Transportation Improvement Fund is coming up in February. For/against committees appointed, some membership changes were made with Auditor approval.
- viii. He thanked Council for approving the probation contract.

Following questions from **Councilmember Rice, Shumaker** provided further details on the city policies pertaining to the water service concerns raised by a property owner during earlier public comments.

**12. VOUCHER APPROVAL:**

- a) \*December 2024 payroll, 13th Month December 2024 and January 2025 AP checks were audited and presented for approval. December payroll checks 18246 thru 18275 and 18335 total \$148,395.95 included EFT payments. 13th Month December 2024 AP checks 18336 thru 18383 total \$527,273.02, included EFT payments. January 2025 AP checks 18384 thru 18399 total \$228,554.76 included EFT payments. The AP check registers with fund transaction summary was attached for review.

**8:39 MOTION** to approve the vouchers as presented was made by **Councilmember Lauser**, seconded by **Councilmember Oldfield**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Lauser, Cox, Rice, Johnson, Oldfield**.

**13. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS:**

**Mayor Anderson** expressed thanks to Clerk/Treasurer Anders Sorestad for his work and wished him good luck in his new ventures.

**Councilmember Lauser** asked for and received information about the homeless housing five-year plan. **Shumaker** explained while funding was available, the city of Stevenson and Washington Gorge Action Programs did not have the staff capacity to administer the program.

**14. ISSUES FOR THE NEXT MEETING:**

None presented

**8:42**

**15. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mik Hendrickson spoke further on a utility issue and his experience with city staff.

(Unidentified) Commented on positive response by staff about a utility billing concern.

Melissa Kuehnell spoke about maintenance, repairs, and shipping delays for parts large equipment needs, and asked about the fire department's budget for maintenance and parts.

Ingrid Colvard commented about positive citizen and city staff connections and service.

**16. ADJOURNMENT - Mayor Anderson** adjourned the meeting at 8:48 p.m.