

MINUTES
CITY OF STEVENSON COUNCIL MEETING
May 15, 2025
6:00 PM, City Hall and Remote

Attending:

Elected Officials: **Mayor Scott Anderson; Councilmembers Pat Rice, Dave Cox, Michael Johnson, Chuck Oldfield. Councilmember Lucy Lauser** attended remotely.

Staff: **City Administrator Wesley Wootten; Community Development Director Ben Schumaker, Tiffany Andersen, Public Works and Planning Department Assistant; Carolyn Sourek, Stevenson Public Works Director; Cody Rosander, Public Works Director**

Guests: Skamania County Undersheriff Tracy Wyckoff; Planning Commission Chair Jeff Breckel.

Public attendees: Bob Wertheimer; Dana Hendricks, Janet Campbell, Sean Hietpas, Kathleen Fitzgerald.

1. CALL TO ORDER/PRESENTATION TO THE FLAG: **Mayor Anderson** called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., led the group in reciting the pledge of allegiance and conducted roll call.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mayor Anderson advised there would be a two-minute limit on individual public comments.

a) Guest Speaker - Kelly McKee, Executive Director - Stevenson Downtown Association. (See item 3, Changes To The Agenda.)

b) *Public Comment -

- Bob Wertheimer spoke about the penalty portion of the proposed sewer/septic ordinance regarding sewer rates, and different responses he received from city staff about hooking up to a sewer line when his property has a functioning septic system.
- Sean Hieptas (unable to hear last name) commented about City Council members not living in the city, and Councilmembers not standing during the pledge of allegiance.
- Dana Hendricks expressed concern about non-resident vacation rentals in downtown Stevenson. She requested the City Council consider a moratorium on new applications for vacation home rentals until the current ordinance is reviewed.
- Janet Campbell spoke on the number of houses for sale in Stevenson and shared similar concerns regarding vacation home rentals.
- Kathleen Fitzgerald commented on the penalties imposed in the proposed septic/sewer ordinance

Written comments attached to meeting packet.

- Brown - Apr. 18, 2025
- Mendoza - April 22, 2025

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

Kelly McKee, Executive Director - Stevenson Downtown Association was scheduled in error. They will speak at the June meeting.

4. CONSENT AGENDA: The following items are presented for Council approval. Prior to the vote **Councilmember Lauser** verified Proclamation 2025-03 (item d) was for Skamania Pride.

- a) Approve Resolution 2025-452 Banking Authorization - **Mayor Scott Anderson** presented Resolution 2025-452 updating the banking authorization by adding **Clerk/Treasurer Wesley Wootten** and removing former Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Anders Sorestad.
- b) Move June Meeting Date - Due to the June 2025 City Council meeting falling on a federal holiday (Juneteenth, June 19, 2025), City Council will move the meeting date to Wednesday, June 18th.
- c) Approve Proclamation Recognizing Public Works Week 2025 - **Mayor Scott Anderson** presented Proclamation 2025-02 recognizing May 18th - 24th, 2025 as Public Works Week for council consideration. Staff will have celebratory events throughout the week and Facebook posts recognizing our hardworking crew.
- d) Approve Proclamation Recognizing National Pride Month 2025 - **Mayor Scott Anderson** presented Proclamation 2025-03 recognizing the month of June as National Pride Month.
- e) Minutes of April 3, 2025 and April 17th City Council meetings.

6:16

MOTION to approve the modified consent agenda items a-e was made by **Councilmember Oldfield**, seconded by **Councilmember Lauser**.

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

6:17

5. SHERIFF'S OFFICE REPORT:

- a) Sheriff's Report - The Skamania County Sheriff's report for activity within Stevenson city limits for the prior month was presented for council review by Undersheriff Tracy Wyckoff. Following a question from **Councilmember Cox**, Undersheriff Wyckoff stated he would request additional information regarding the outcome of traffic stops.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

a) Sewer Ordinance-

- Staff Presentation

Community Development Director Ben Shumaker presented updates to the draft sewer ordinance as discussed at the City Council meeting of April 2025. He provided information on the changes from the current to the proposed ordinance. Longer connection timelines and incentives, options for waiving or reducing system development charges, the appeal process, a definition of development, exclusions for temporary usage or structures on wheels, and adjustments to the penalty fees were among items discussed.

6:23

Mayor Anderson opened the public hearing, noting it was out of order.

- Comments In Favor

Rick Jessell spoke in support. He suggested striking section F, stating it was never a consideration of the sewer committee and was largely unworkable.

- Comments Opposed

None received

- Neutral Comments

None received

6:34

Mayor Anderson closed the public hearing.

-Council Deliberation

Following the staff report, Councilmembers engaged in a detailed discussion on the proposed ordinance. It was determined more questions needed to be answered before final passage. How the ordinance would lower sewer rates, the number of properties with septic systems along an existing sewer main, and how to address developments were among the questions considered.

Councilmember Oldfield spoke about the need for all property owners to support programs and infrastructure that benefit the community as a whole. **Councilmember Cox** suggested passing a bond to ensure property owners pay a fair and equitable amount for services. A workshop/special meeting will be arranged prior to the June 2025 Council meeting to work out the issues raised. Councilmembers will submit their suggestions to the administrative staff.

b) Capital and Transportation Improvement Program Update - City Administrator Wesley

Wootten presented the Capital and Transportation Improvement Program Update for public comment and council discussion. The attached report is from 2024. An updated list will be provided for the June meeting. This is the first of two scheduled Public Hearings.

7:41

Mayor Anderson opened the public hearing at 7:41 p.m.

- Staff Presentation

City Administrator Wesley Wootten provided information on the priority list. He requested **Carolyn Sourek, Public Works Director** and **Cody Rosander, Public Works Supervisor** provide details on the projects completed and those pending. **Community Development Director Ben Shumaker** advised the council that this hearing is intended to be a review of future projects and no decisions are expected. Identification of projects allows draft budgets to be created. The Transportation Improvement Plan is required to be adopted annually. The Capital Improvement Plan includes all systems, with the TIP a subset.

Mayor Anderson closed the public hearing at 7:45 p.m.

- Comments In Favor

None received.

- Comments Opposed

None received.

- Neutral Comments

None received.

-Council Deliberation

Sourek explained most of the projects are determined via the water, sewer, and asset management plans. Community input on desired projects is also a consideration. **Councilmember Rice** suggested fully funded projects only be on the list and requested the Columbia Avenue realignment be removed.

It was noted the list helps staff determine a projects costs and scope in order to research funding sources. Projects do not go into the budget until funding is secured. Prior to the next meeting Councilmembers were asked to submit their suggestions on projects to be removed or added to the list.

7. COUNCIL BUSINESS:

8:01

a) Ordinance 2025-1227 Authorizing USDA Bond Issuance - **City Administrator Wesley Wootten** requested approval of Ordinance 2025-1227 to issue a bond to pay costs of improvements to the City's water and sewer system.

8:03

Cody Rosander provided additional information on the process. He introduced Marc Greenough with Foster-Garvey to explain how the bonding works. The ordinance authorizes the city to borrow money from the USDA to pay off the construction portion of the sewer projects currently financed through Cashmere Valley Bank. The city then pays the USDA back through net revenue received from water and sewer rates. Interest rates with USDA are approximately 1 to 2%, and there is a long repayment schedule. The ordinance will be formalized for passage at the June 2025 City Council meeting.

8:10

b) Approve Resolution 2025-453 Updated Fee Schedule - **City Administrator Wesley Wootten** presented for approval Resolution 2025-453 to update the comprehensive Fee Schedule. The changes reflect a simple adjustment to align fees for building permits and Fire Marshal services with the fees charged by Skamania County.

MOTION to approve Resolution 2025-453 Updated Fee Schedule was made by **Councilmember Oldfield**, seconded by **Councilmember Lauser**.

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

8. INFORMATION ITEMS:

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 - The report presented described 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 - The report for the prior month on housing services provided by Washington Gorge Action Programs in Skamania County was enclosed for council information.

e) Planning Commission Minutes - Minutes from the Stevenson Planning Commission meeting for April 2025 were attached.

8:12

9. CITY ADMINISTRATOR AND STAFF REPORTS:

a) Ben Shumaker, Community Development Director

- i. The current vacation home licensing process is under review with the Planning Commission. A public engagement strategy being initiated, with a workshop planned for public input. From there a focus group will consider recommendations.
- ii. The Planning Commission is preparing to explore an annexation policy once final adoption of the sewer ordinance has taken place.
- iii. Development review: Permits are coming for Chinedere phase 2/3. He is not seeing much pre-application talk. Rock Cove Hospitality is moving forward. A plat alteration request went before the Planning Commission to review, followed by a recommendation to the city

council. Shumaker advised Councilmembers to refrain from discussing the Rock Cove project. No ex-parte communications should take place.

- iv. The Capital Facilities Plan will have updated detail sheets on projects for Council review.

b) Carolyn Sourek, Public Works Director and Cody Rosander, Public Works Supervisor

- i. A hit and run recently damaged a fire hydrant by Ace Hardware. New cameras helped identify the driver.
- ii. Cascade Street water and sewer improvements have gone out to bid, with some local contractor interest.
- iii. Waste Water Pump Station project is coming to an end.
- iv. Department of Ecology visited in April for an inspection and review of infrastructure. Will get a new WWTP permit issued. Additional annual testing requirements and temperature monitoring of discharge water are now required.
- v. The 30% plan for Lasher Street has been received. Meeting with engineer to review.
- vi. First Street project-from May 19th-23rd First Street will be closed to replace a concrete panel.
- vii. Transportation Improvement Board will meet again in Stevenson.
- viii. Met with Skamania County re paving for Railroad/Seymour/Ash Alley. Funds secured.
- ix. Tree planting is taking place.
- x. Wayfinding signs, just a couple left to put up.
- xi. Spruce Up Stevenson was successful. Focus was Walnut Park- bark dust, weeding.
- xii. Utility maintenance position had over 30 applicants.
- xiii. Partnered with Skamania County for flagger training with an on-site trainer.
- xiv. Carson Whitney and John Schultz have passed their WWTP 1.
- xv. Stevenson FD Chief has a student intern painting hydrants to align with fire code standards.
- xvi. Engineering standards being reviewed, reducing to single pages where possible. Input from local contractors is requested.
- xvii. Public Works week is coming up. Promoting People, Purpose, and Presence.
- xviii. Public Works will be providing barriers for upcoming events.
- xix. Devin Grooms has resigned his position with the City of Stevenson.

c) Wesley Wootten, City Administrator

- i. Appreciates the welcome he has received.
- ii. He has been meeting with local stakeholders, including the Planning Commission, the Port, Chamber, Downtown Association, etc.
- iii. Mediation with Stellar J has been rescheduled to June 2025
- iv. The Transportation Benefit District sales and use tax goes into effect in June 2025. Businesses are being notified so they can adjust their tax collection programs.
- v. Posted job openings for utilities maintenance and WWTP operator. He is exploring changing the Clerk-Treasurer position to a Finance Director position, and will send a proposed job description to the Council in June for review.
- vi. He is looking into ways to simplify use of website for permits and documents and/or provide a guide to help with requests from small businesses. **Councilmember Cox** requested meeting minutes be posted adequately via Municode.

d) Document Repository Report - Tiffany Andersen provided and explained a report on a requested change of document repository company from Laserfische to CivicPlus. Pricing sheets for each company were also attached. New options are being explored that are easier to use and less costly.

10. VOUCHER APPROVAL:

8:25

MOTION to approve vouchers as presented by **Councilmember Rice**, seconded by **Councilmember Johnson**.

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

11. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS:

Councilmember Lauser will be hosting a town hall on Sunday, June 22nd from 6-8 p.m. at the Stevenson Community Library

Councilmember Cox reported the Opioid Abatement Committee work is continuing.

Councilmember Rice noted his permit application to build a house is progressing, and he does live in Stevenson.

12. ISSUES FOR THE NEXT MEETING:

Councilmember Oldfield requested an agenda item for June 2025 to discuss a budget adjustment for street funding due to the Transportation Benefit District.

Public Works Director Carolyn Sourek was recognized and thanked for all her work for the city of Stevenson-tonight is her last meeting. **Mayor Anderson** wished her future success.

8:37

13. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

Planning Commissioner Chair Jeff Breckel spoke about the work the Planning Commission is doing to review licensing of vacation rentals in Stevenson. The Planning Commission will also be meeting with Skamania County to align Stevenson's critical areas ordinance with theirs to ensure consistency with regulations.

14. ADJOURNMENT - Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

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