



CITY COUNCIL

Regular Meeting Minutes

April 28, 2025

Mayor Primmer called the regular meeting to order at 7:00pm. Present were Councilors Hayward, Roberts, McCarthy, Duron, Linton (arrived at 7:01pm), Barron, and Kelso. Councilor Myers was excused. City Staff in attendance included: City Manager Byron Smith, Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan, City Attorney Rich Tovey, Finance Director Ignacio Palacios, Chief Jason Edmiston, Parks and Recreation Director Brandon Artz, City Planner Clint Spencer and City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong. The pledge of allegiance was given.

City Manager Smith announced that tonight's Council meeting would not be streamed on YouTube or Zoom as hardware needed to fix the system has not been delivered in the time frame expected.

Proclamation- National Correctional Employees Week

Mayor Primmer read aloud the National Correctional Employee Week Proclamation; praised correctional officers traveling for training near Madras, OR, including his son, for utilizing their training and expertise to aid those in need in a recent car accident; and recognized Correctional Employees present.

Councilor Barron gave special recognition to his brother who was in the audience and is also a Correctional Officer.

Citizen Input on Non-Agenda Items

Fred Pearson, 425 W Highland Ave- Complimented the Parks and Recreation Department stating that parks always look great and are well taken care of and the Police Department stating they are professional and provide outstanding service to the community. Mr. Pearson stated he lives on the corner of Highland, Cedar, and Hemlock Ave and there has been a drug house in that area for about two years. The drug house brings in lots of foot traffic, speeding cars, loitering, theft, vandalism, garbage being blown all around the neighborhood, and more at all hours of the day and night. Police provide a presence in the area and respond to the multiple complaints by multiple people, but additional resources need to be given to this issue as it is so close to the High School and West Park Elementary School.

Henry Hooker, 460 W Hemlock Ave- stated he has lived in his home for 24 years and the neighborhood has never been in this type of turmoil until now. Confrontations are more intense and continue to escalate because of the drug house. Mr. Hooker asked the Council to intervene to help protect the neighbors.

Consent Agenda Items

Councilor McCarty moved, and Councilor Hayward seconded to approve Consent Agenda item A-G to include:

- A. Committee Vacancy Announcement
- B. Confirmation to reappoint members of the Planning Commission as follows: Annette Kirkpatrick to Position 1; Philip Hamm to Position 2; and Benjamin Doherty to Position 3. All terms expiring March 31, 2028.
- C. Confirmation to appoint members to the Hispanic Advisory Committee as follows: Maryanna Hardin to Position 1, term expiring June 30, 2026, and Carolina Delgado to Position 4, expiring June 30, 2028.



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- D. Confirmation to appoint Joseph Sharon to Position 4 of the Faith-Based Advisory Committee, term expiring December 31, 2027
- E. Recommendation to appoint Janizee Serrano to Position 4 of the Planning Commission with a term expiration of March 31, 2026.
- F. Liquor License Application for Off-Premises Sales/Change of Ownership for Metro Mart located at 1120 W Highland Ave.
- G. Minutes of the April 14th Work Session and Regular Meeting of the City Council

Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2366- Establish a No Parking Zone on the West Side of NE 2nd St – Festival Street

Planning Director Spencer displayed a photo of the hazards that exist (attached) when vehicles are parked on the west side of NE 2nd Street.

After further discussion and answering questions from the Council, Councilor Kelso moved, and Councilor Duron seconded to approve Resolution No. 2366 and lay upon the record. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2367- Taxi Transit Contract

Assistant City Manager Morgan presented information (PowerPoint Presentation attached) regarding possibly approving a new two-year contract with Hermiston Taxi, LLC to provide subsidized taxi services for the Senior & Disabled Taxi Program and the WORC Program. The new contract will save taxpayers about \$70,000 to \$80,000 per year.

After further discussion and answering questions from the Council, Councilor Hayward moved, and Councilor Barron seconded to approve Resolution No. 2367 and lay upon the record. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution No. 2368- Agape House- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Professional Services

Agreement Award. City Manager Smith asked the Council to consider awarding the professional services agreement for the CDBG Agape House Project to Columbia Engineering Group.

Councilor McCarthy moved, and Councilor Hayward seconded to approve Resolution No. 2368 and lay upon the record. Motion carried unanimously.

Ordinance No. 2370- Regulating Vehicles for Hire within the City

Assistant City Manager Morgan presented information (PowerPoint Presentation attached) regarding repealing Ordinance No. 2230 to allow vehicles for hire to operate within the City. Proposed fees will be presented at a future meeting for Council consideration.

After further discussion and answering questions from the Council, Mayor Primmer requested that the first reading be by title only. Hearing no opposition, City Attorney Richard Tovey read the ordinance by title only. Mayor Primmer requested that the ordinance be put on for final adoption at this meeting and that the second reading be by title only. After City Attorney Richard Tovey read the ordinance by title



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only, Councilor Linton moved and Councilor Duron seconded that Ordinance No. 2370 be adopted and become effective 30-days after adoption by the City Council. Motion carried unanimously.

March 2025 Financial Report

Councilor Linton moved and Councilor McCarthy seconded to accept the March 2025 Financial Report as presented by Finance Director Palacios, Assistant City Manager Morgan, and City Manager Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Moving the City Council Meeting of Monday May 26, 2025 to Tuesday May 27, 2025 due to the Memorial Day Holiday. Councilor Linton moved, and Councilor Hayward seconded to approve moving the May 26th City Council meeting to May 27th due to the Memorial Day Holiday. Motion carried unanimously.

Committee Reports

Public Safety Committee- Mayor Primmer and Councilor Barron gave information regarding personnel changes, Hospital staffing, 1st Quarter Activity Report with crime statistics, I Love My City and Faith & First Responders Event, Officer initiated activity, and more.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee- Councilor Duron spoke regarding the renaming event for Cimmarron Park, updates on the pickleball court status, and several Parks and Recreation events to include the Daddy Daughter Dance, Arbor Day Giveaway, Easter Egg Dash, Spring Bazaar, Swim Lesson sign-up and more.

Hispanic Advisory Committee- Councilor Duron stated the Committee moved forward with their goals and heard updates regarding the Cinco de Mayo event.

Health, Wellness, and Aquatic Center Task Force – Councilor Duron and Mayor Primmer stated the Task Force met and discussed possible locations and the overall expected 60 million budget that would be needed to move forward with this project.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Primmer spoke regarding:

- Attending the LOC Conference this week in North Bend, and
- How proud he is of the Department of Corrections in the City of Madras

Council Presidents Report

Councilor McCarthy spoke regarding the Cinco de Mayo event and Spring Bazaar.

Council Reports

Councilor Linton stated although this is a sensitive topic she feels that management salaries must be discussed. Councilor Linton stated she has done salary comparisons from the City of Tacoma Washington and Kennewick Washington where populations are much larger than the City of Hermiston, yet Hermiston Management is making more than those Cities. Councilor Linton asked that the Council look into salary comparisons from cities with populations of 20,000 and not 200,000 when establishing salaries and that going forward, salary caps be placed on all city employee positions, with only COLA increases, so they do not make as much as they currently do.



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Councilor Duron asked Councilor Linton if this item was brought to her by community members. Councilor Duron stated it is difficult to find good people to recruit to Hermiston and the City does not have a revolving door of staff members coming and going as the longevity of employees was recognized at the last meeting.

Councilor Linton stated City salaries were brought up to her by one member of the public, but she will make sure to let the Council know if she receives more comments about this topic.

City Manager Smith stated he has previously spoken with and presented salary information to Councilor Linton and recommended that he present more about salary comparisons at the Budget Committee Meeting. The Council agreed.

Councilor Barron thanked City Recorder Alarcon-Strong and everyone who performs administrative work as last week was Administrative Professional's Day. The Council blissfully agreed.

Councilor Kelso thanked the professional police department staff for participating in a ride-a-long and was proud of how well staff handled people with mental health crisis, drunk and disorderly, and more.

Councilor Kelso and Councilor Hayward thanked Umatilla County Sherriff's Office Dispatch Manager, Captain Karen Primmer and all 911 dispatchers for the superhuman job they do, stating it was incredibly impressive to see what it takes to do their job and how much respect they have for this profession.

Youth Advisory Report

None present.

City Manager's Report

City Manager Smith stated small gifts have been placed at the dais for each Council member.

Adjourn

There was no other business and Mayor Primmer adjourned the regular City Council meeting at 8:49pm.

SIGNED:

Doug Primmer, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lilly Alarcon-Strong, CMC, City Recorder





Summary

- New 2-Year Contract with Hermiston Taxi, LLC
 - Senior/Disabled Taxi Ticket Program
 - WORC Taxi Ticket Program



Senior/Disabled Taxi Program

- Operated since 1960's
 - Seniors
 - Permanently disabled
- Tax-Payer Subsidized Vouchers
 - Rider Fares + State Grants + City Taxpayers = Compensation



WORC Program History

- HB2017
 - 0.1% Statewide Payroll Tax for public transit
 - \$70/yr Median Hermiston Household (\$5.83/ mo)
 - Could NOT be used on existing transit programs
- Tax-Payer Subsidized Taxi Vouchers for workers
 - Prove place of employment
 - Taxi ride to that location from anywhere in western Umatilla County





Taxi Dependence

- City Interest in Protecting Taxi Industry vs Public Safety
 - **Ride-Shares Growing Popularity as alternative to Drunk Driving**
- Inefficient System
 - **Taxi Required to operate during slow times**
 - **Taxpayer subsidy for trips any time taxi operating**



Industry DeRegulation

- De-Couple Transit Service from Taxi/Rideshare Issue
- RFP Issued (January, 2025)
 - **Cost Containment**
 - **Propose Services & Service Levels not to exceed \$415,000/yr**
 - **Expressly Implies openness to service hour reductions.**



RFP Process

- City Staff Reached out to, and Received Interest from:
 - **Hermiston Taxi**
 - **Uber**
 - **Mid-Columbia Bus**
 - **First Student**
 - **Kayak Public Transit**
- Only Responses Received



Transit Committee Review

- Pros & Cons to Both Proposals
- Too Many Unknowns with Uber
- Award to Hermiston Taxi for 2 More Years
- Allow General RideShares & Monitor Success





Change in Service Level

- Existing Senior/Disabled Taxi Hours
 - 7 Days Per Week
 - 6am-10pm
 - 5,840 Hours/Yr
- Proposed Hours Starting 7/1/2025
 - 5 Days Per Week (M-F)
 - 7:30am – 7:30pm
 - 3,120 Hours/Yr

47% Reduction in Service



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~\$50k/yr Hourly Wages

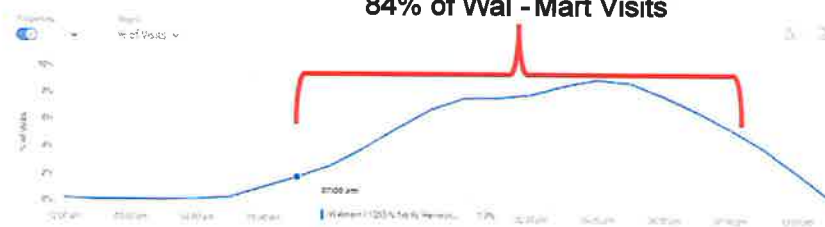


Playing to the “Meat” of the Market

Walmart

Walmart (1200 N. Hwy 101, Hermiston, OR 97101)

Hourly Visits



Service Cuts Mitigating Factors

- Un-Subsidized Taxi or RideShare
- Grocery Delivery
 - \$5-\$8 out of pocket
 - Taxpayer Subsidy: \$0
 - Taxi Ride: \$6 Out of Pocket
 - Taxpayer Subsidy: \$19 Each Trip





Financials

- State Taxpayer Funding: \$334,000
- City Taxpayer Funding: \$9,000
- Rider Fares: \$72,000
- Total Contract Cost/yr: \$415,000





Summary

- Allows Ride Sharing Companies to Operate within Hermiston July 1st.



Background

- Public Safety Interest in Regulating “Vehicles for Hire”
 - **Passenger Safety**
 - **Stable/Solvent Industry**
- Industry Stability Prevented Earlier Adoption
- COVID-19 Accelerated Grocery/Food Delivery
 - **Developed Pool of drivers/workforce**



Ordinance 2370

- Standard “Template” for Oregon Cities
- TNC’s: Transportation Network Companies
 - **Allows any operator with same rules**
 - **Uber, Lyft, Blackwolf, etc.**





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Hermiston Urban Renewal Agency (HURA)

- North Hermiston Urban Renewal Area – Project delayed due to signal analysis and ROW acquisition.



General Fund

- Ninth month of 2024-25 fiscal year
- Monthly Revenues are over projections by ~\$840k
 - **When compared to budget, revenues are meeting expectation at 78.8% (property taxes annualized)**



General Fund

- Monthly Expenses under projections by ~\$1,424k
 - **Although, four departments are over budget when compared to projected all departments are meeting or are below budget through March 2025**



Special Revenue Funds

- Observations:
 - Included with the March 2025 Financial Reports is a summary of this fund
 - Revenues for EOTEC project has not been reimbursed ~\$500k
 - EOTEC expenditures ~\$180k over budget due to Barn Project City match for project.
 - Match will occur prior to fiscal year end (sources from interest earnings on bond proceeds and savings on other related projects)



Utility and Street Funds

- Observations:
 - Utility fund ~\$680k over projected revenues
 - This corresponds to one time 'septic service' in recycled water



Capital Projects

- A number of projects in design:
 - Geer/Harper Realignment- full design expected by Spring
 - N. 1st Sidewalk (additional ROW with UPRR has begun)
 - RWS Backup Generators
 - Well #6 Chlorination Structure
 - Aquifer Storage/Recovery – drilling expected to begin this month
 - Well #4 Controls – contract awarded, initial work begins in June



Capital Projects

- Hangar Replacement – foundation work to begin
- Library – Framing underway, April Tour
- The Arc – Waiting for weather to do final painting
- Public Safety Center
 - Interior framing underway
 - Sally Port addition under construction





Discussion Questions?

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