



# CITY COUNCIL

## Work Session Meeting Minutes August 8, 2022

Council President Primmer called the work session meeting to order at 6:30pm. Present were Councilors Hardin, Spicerkuhn, Duron, Davis, Barron, and Myers. Mayor Drotzmann and Councilor Peterson were excused. Staff in attendance was: City Manager Byron Smith, Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan, City Attorney Richard Tovey, Chief Edmiston, Planning Director Clint Spencer, Finance Director Mark Krawczyk, and City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong. Youth Advisory Members Julissa Gonzales Mendoza and Manuel Salazar was also in attendance.

### **Uber Discussion**

Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan gave information (PowerPoint Presentation attached) regarding the current Taxi Code and how Uber can fall into this category if they register as a "Taxicab Company" and follow code guidelines to operate; Uber's unwillingness to follow Hermiston's Code or communicate with staff and his verbal and written communication (attached) from an Uber contracted driver, April Milbrodt; the wastefulness of police resources if the City were to enforce the code with Uber drivers; and the financial impact Uber can have on the City's Senior, Disabled, and Workforce Taxi Contracts; and the demand the community is asking for for this service.

Hermiston Taxi Owner, Sundi Marquez, stated she does think that Uber is a great concept for providing rides to a lot of people, however she has concerns with the background check methods Uber uses to verify drivers and the fact that they do not offer wheelchair and handicapped accessible services. Mrs. Marques spoke regarding the financial impact Uber has had on her Taxicab company since they started operating illegally in the City and the long-term impacts and sustainability Uber will have on the City contracted Taxicab services she provides, and the pilot program between the City of Pendleton and Uber and how that would differ from Hermiston as Pendleton has more tourism.

The Council spoke regarding their concerns of the City's possible liability for allowing Uber in the City without proper vetting and the need for Uber and other forms of transportation in the City. After further discussion the Council agreed that staff should continue to research allowing Uber to operate in the City and bring a possible solution before the Council in the near future with more information.

### **Adjournment**

Council President Primmer adjourned the work session meeting at 7:00pm and stated the Council will take a short break before starting the regular City Council meeting at 7:02pm.



# TAXI CODE

City Council Work Session 8/8/2022



# Current Code for Taxi/Uber

- 2015 changes to City Code
- Uber/Lyft, etc. CAN operate in Hermiston
- Must register as “Taxicab Company”
- Must guarantee 18hr/Day 365 Service
- Drivers must have City Background Check







# Uber Negotiation Strategy?

- Completely ignore small towns like Hermiston
- Allow local grassroots demand to force local political discussion?



# Taxi Code Scofflaw



scoff·law

/ˈskɒflɔː/

*noun* INFORMAL • NORTH AMERICAN

a person who flouts the law, especially by failing to comply with a law that is difficult to enforce effectively.

**April Kowalski-Milbrodt** is with **Lori Carey** and **16 others** at **Main Stylin' Nook Properties.**  
2d · Stanfield · 🌐

!!!!!!UBER UBER UBER!!!!!!  
We are on all weekend for Ubering!  
Spread the word! Share the Information, we need to get the word out. Pendelton Let'r Uber will be in the Umatilla County parade tomo night! They have done an amazing job bringing this opportunity to OUR area! They are ROCK STARS!

Do Not forget about using Us when your needing a ride to or from Umatilla County Fair next week! and Pendelton Round Up next month!  
[#MainRuralUbers](#)



# Scofflaw Communication

- Contacted Administration July 6
- Informed of code allowance July 7
- Contacted about challenge contacting Uber 7/14
- Informed City would not contact Uber 7/14
- Contacted that still couldn't contact Uber 8/1
- Invited to 8/8 Work Session 8/1





# Enforcement Resources?

- Chasing scofflaws at County Fair?
- Chasing scofflaws regular times?



# City Financial Impact

- Senior/Disabled Taxi Contract
  - 14,000 trips per year
- Workforce Taxi Contract
  - 7,000 trips per year
- City Subsidy
  - ~\$40,000/yr
- Projected City Subsidy
  - \$80,000 - \$120,000/yr







# Thoughts / Direction?



**From:** April Milbrodt <[stylin\\_nook@yahoo.com](mailto:stylin_nook@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 1, 2022 9:25 PM  
**To:** Mark Morgan <[mmorgan@hermiston.or.us](mailto:mmorgan@hermiston.or.us)>  
**Subject:** Re: uber

**STOP and VERIFY This message came from outside of the City of Hermiston**

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appreciate your feedback and i'd love to attend the meeting but i work. your more then welcome to read both my emails i sent this morning and now.

just know that every uber driver must drive a car 2007 or better. they ask for our ins and car registration. they run an extensive background check of our driving and criminal history.

i can gaurantee u that the taxi service does not do this extensive of a background check . i've known and seen some of the drivers they hire. no punn intended. Not to mention the cabs are run down and not necessarily in the best of shape. Or new by any means. The uber vehicles are in way better shape. it's individual s who have a desire to work and manage there own time. and keep there things nice. it's a great look for our communities! Uber and the Taxi service can co habitat together. with out a doubt. Local citizens use taxi, Uber has been the out of town guest, from truck stops and motels. i just picked up a couple of truckers who parked at rest area outside stanfield and went to hospital then pinged us again to go back to truck at rest area. headed to portland tonight from texas. the one had an asthma attack and needed to go to the hospital. it's unbelievable what these out of towners ping uber for!

the ap is safe. if u go off the gps , uber will continue to ask u if u are ok and asks the customer . there is a 911 button also and local law enforcement will get our location immediately. uber sends them to us.

I will reiterate again. that we are doing out of towners. the locals have not been utilizing it yet. when they do it ll be prob 10-15% and after the taxi isn't available. they close at 10pm. our local town people need to get home safe from bars and party's and the taxi does not provide that service fyi. We could.

We do a lot of long distance ubers to that I mentioned in earlier email.

pendelton prob will share there uber contact w u. i was told pendelton made them pay a hefty chunk money. i'm just not having any luck finding that person for u.

our groups getting ready for fair and round up . we plan on getting as many people back and forth as safely as possible and hope that each town appreciates what we are bringing to the table. Pendelton ubers ( i'm part there group as well) plans to be i. our parade. we are letting them lol, cause at end of day they are marketing for us because the range is 20 mile radius. they can't get our rural pings...

after fair i will give u feedback on if we had locals or out of towners use us and same with round up.

i know we did alot driving from pend to herm during whiskey fest last month. because overflow stays here in our motels . and Sunday i was busy over here getting them to breakfast and to tri city airport to fly home to there cities.

Please share this information at your meeting. and anyone of them cld call me 541 571 8061 and i will happily answer any of there questions.

Stanfield and Echo are established . Umatilla and Irrigon are on Board. Boardman is ok with it as well but are kinda like you, trying to figure out how to handle it .

My city manager and I will be revisiting after pend round up because that will be when the town pend decides if they keep them or not. which will ultimately decide if U er continues to run there ap here in eastern oregon.

If we here in our rural area can prove we can support it maybe they won't shit us down and then pend uber group may end up coming here to help us out and there is nothing pend cld do if we were taking people there.

it's silly for the city forefathers to think this is t going to happen. do they want bootlegging and not have some safety or knowledge of what's going on or do they just want people to do it and everyone is in the dark?

Thanks again for your time. I make great points and hope you get them across to whoever needs to hear h them.

April

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

On Monday, August 1, 2022, 4:17 PM, Mark Morgan <[mmorgan@hermiston.or.us](mailto:mmorgan@hermiston.or.us)> wrote:

Hi April,

Thanks for all of this.

So you know, we just finished our weekly staff meeting where we set the City Council agendas, and at 6:30 on August 8 at the Hermiston Community Center, we'll have the City Council do a half-hour workshop to discuss what in the heck they want to do with the taxi code. I'm basically going to ask them if they want to allow Uber or not. I honestly don't care either way, but I don't see any middle-ground on this, because I doubt that Uber will even acknowledge our existence, let alone change their algorithms to account for every little town's unique restrictions.

You're more than welcome to attend that Council work session if you'd like. We don't typically allow "public" comment during the work sessions, but seeing as how you have some critical insight, the Council may be interested in hearing your thoughts. You could also just offer a general public comment later during the actual Council meeting, during the "Citizen Comment" period.

I am not going to be scheduling any action at all for the Aug. 8 meeting, it's purely just to get some clarification as to how they want us to handle this (whether that's bring code changes back to them at a future meeting, or continue the status quo).

Thanks,

**Mark Morgan**

Assistant City Manager

(541) 567-5521

180 NE 2<sup>nd</sup> St.

Hermiston, OR 97838

*Where Life is Sweet*

**From:** April Milbrodt <[stylin\\_nook@yahoo.com](mailto:stylin_nook@yahoo.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 1, 2022 4:00 PM  
**To:** Mark Morgan <[mmorgan@hermiston.or.us](mailto:mmorgan@hermiston.or.us)>  
**Subject:** uber

**STOP and VERIFY This message came from outside of the City of Hermiston**

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I spoke with city mgr of Stanfield and he is gonna contact you .

I have tried unsuccessfully to get the people of uber to understand u need to have them contact you.

You can call city of pendelton , there city hall and ask them there contact person for them. Best I can do.

I have a group of Uber drivers and we are doing mostly out of towners 1-5 a day. trips to portland , spokane etc. some to dinner.

No one asks how it's going or seems to care so i'll just let you know. I have a business license in Stanfield. I'm trying to do what each town wld want. that's why i reached out to each town.

I get from you very little intrest and you want to hear from uber itself. Good luck with that.

Ask Pendelton because I'm getting nowhere. they have someone they are in contact with.

Irrigon basically laughed at me. but gave us the go ahead

Boardman is clueless and will get back to me. but said good luck. Echo wants 5there residents to pay if they drive as does stanfield and umatilla.

It's here so maybe you towns need get on same page and figure it out. Our city manager plans on talking with you when you all meet up.

I have a small group and we are working together to keep hours covered.

April Milbrodt

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)