



*Where Life is Sweet*

Mayor and Members of the City Council

## **STAFF REPORT**

For the Meeting of September 28, 2026

### **Title/Subject**

Recognizing the dedicated water-related city staff for their role in supporting the public health, economy, and environment.

### **Summary and Background**

City of Hermiston staff play a critical role in all facets of water management from drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater.

The City of Hermiston's Water Department staff maintains two major systems which collectively produce approximately 2 Billion gallons of water per year. The systems utilize extensive pumping infrastructure to pull water from four main groundwater wells and a Columbia River intake station. The river water is additionally treated through a complex water treatment facility to bring it to the highest drinking water standards while well water is meticulously monitored to meet our stringent water quality standards.

Non-Potable water from the Regional Water System is a critical function to several significant industries in the region which use it to provide over 1,000 megawatts of electricity generation capacity, irrigate several thousand acres of high value farmland, and provide the backbone computing capacity that the modern internet relies on. Collectively, the users of water supplied by our staff through the Regional Water System represent well over \$2 billion of assessed property value, or more than one-third of all taxable value in Umatilla County.

Potable drinking water from the Regional Water System and City Wells provides an essential need for more than 20,000 residents and businesses in our community. This clean and healthy water supply is used 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in our homes, schools, businesses, medical facilities, and by emergency responders. It's delivered immediately on-demand, without a second thought by users through a complex system of more than 90 miles of piping with thousands of valves to ensure it gets where it needs to go.

The City of Hermiston's Recycled Water Department staff operates a system which collects all household, commercial, and industrial waste which mixes with water and goes down the drain anywhere within the city. From there, that waste travels through more than 77 miles of publicly maintained sewer main spread across 37 basins serving more than 3,300 acres and more than 20,000 residents and businesses. Our staff works daily to ensure that all of the fats, oils,

greases, and other inappropriate items which make their way in to the system, like tree roots, don't cause blockages which could back up in to homes, businesses, streets, or local streams.

In addition to cleaning and maintaining lines, our staff works every day to maintain the nine lift stations spread throughout the community. These crucial pumps and motors require constant attention to move the waste through the collection system to the Recycled Water Treatment Plant.

Once the waste reaches the treatment plant, we are proud of the fact that our staff performs a still highly unique, complex, and important process to transform the more than 1.3 million gallons which come to it every day from "waste water," which could otherwise cause harm to people, plants, animals, and property who may come in to contact with it, in to "Recycled Water." Our innovative treatment process requires the focus of our highly skilled staff in performing dozens of chemical, biological, and mechanical treatment functions which results in "Class-A" recycled water which is then beneficially supplied to local irrigators to support our agricultural economy in the summer time, and discharged to the Umatilla River in the wintertime in a form clean enough for human consumption.

The City of Hermiston's Street Department staff also plays a vital role in protecting our homes, businesses, and local water resources by managing the rain, snow, and ice that falls on the more than 80 miles of roadways in the community. Despite our arid climate, more than 100 million gallons of water per year falls on our roadways and makes its way through many miles of gutters, stormwater intakes, underground pipes, and lift stations prior to reaching our local groundwater, streams, and river systems.

Street department staff works every day to sweep our roads and gutters of trash, dirt, and debris that accumulates oil and other contaminants that would otherwise be washed in to our stormwater systems. Staff also cleans out hundreds of stormwater catch-basins to further prevent other contamination and blockages which could create damaging flooding in our neighborhoods.

Our Water, Recycled Water, and Streets staff have always performed these functions day in and day out, rain or shine, whether it's 118 degrees, or minus 18 degrees, or even through a global pandemic. Thankfully these functions are carried out without the 20,000 residents of Hermiston ever having to think twice about them, but we want to think about them now and specifically recognize the hard work of our 28 Public Works Staff who have collectively dedicated nearly 340 years of service to the residents of Hermiston. As part of Oregon Water Professionals Appreciation Week, we want to thank:

#### **Streets**

| <b>Name</b>       | <b>Years of Service to the Residents of Hermiston</b> |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Isaac Barajas     | 3                                                     |
| Adam Cline        | 7                                                     |
| Roberto Herrera   | 12                                                    |
| Jacob Joyes       | 5                                                     |
| Alan Phillips     | 20                                                    |
| Gabriel Zacharias | 3                                                     |

## **Recycled Water**

| <b>Name</b>                 | <b>Years of Service to the Residents of Hermiston</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Matthew Beatty              | 1                                                     |
| Matthew Chieuchin (Chechin) | 1                                                     |
| Robert Curry                | 4                                                     |
| Richard Dutcher             | 8                                                     |
| Yahir Estrada-Villagrana    | 1                                                     |
| James Hankinson III         | 8                                                     |
| Jesus Perches               | 4                                                     |
| Eric Rivera                 | 1                                                     |
| Bill Schmittle              | 29                                                    |
| Kent Schnell                | 14                                                    |
| Chantel Waldo               | 1                                                     |
| Everett Westmoreland        | 1                                                     |
| Thomas Wiley                | 18                                                    |

## **Water**

| <b>Name</b>            | <b>Years of Service to the Residents of Hermiston</b> |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Chad Atkins            | 5                                                     |
| Sean Basford           | 33                                                    |
| Roy Bicknell Jr        | 37                                                    |
| Fernando Cervantes     | 28                                                    |
| Scott Dammeyer         | 18                                                    |
| David Estrada          | 26                                                    |
| Jorge Gonzalez-Murillo | 18                                                    |
| Jason Lohman           | 4                                                     |
| Alex McCann            | 29                                                    |

## **Tie-In to Council Goals**

Focus Area- Wellness: a Healthy Community

## **Fiscal Information**

N/a

## **Alternatives and Recommendation**

Alternatives

Recommended Action/Motion

**Submitted By:**

Mark Morgan, Assistant City Manager