



925 S. Main Street
Lebanon, Oregon 97355

TEL: 541.258.4900
www.lebanonoregon.gov

MEMORANDUM

Administration

To: Mayor Jackola and City Council

Date: March 3, 2026

From: Ron Whitlatch, City Manager

Subject: **Administration Update – February 2026**

- We are continuing to work with Business Oregon on a potential Industrial Economic Development where the company is looking to expand on the West Coast. Lebanon is one of two sites being considered in Oregon. The City has been awarded a grant to complete an updated wetland delineation of the properties under consideration. Swale Environmental was selected to complete the work and began in mid-February. This process will likely take until early summer to complete.
- Cleanup of the Champion Mill property was started in mid-February. The cleanup was substantially larger than first expected. To date, 12-30-yard dumpsters have been filled and disposed of. The property owners will either pay for the cleanup as it occurs, or a lien will be placed on the property.
- Staff will be working with three property owners along Berlin Road to clear and clean up several encampments. Resource Officers with the Police Department have been out in this area identifying the locations of the encampments and the individuals staying in them.
- Staff has been gathering information to provide to Betsy Shultz (Municipal Jail Levy Consultant) in order to develop polling questions to be sent out in early March. Staff will provide the questions to the City Council (likely via email) once they have been finalized. The poll results will be discussed at the March 25th City Council Meeting.
- We are continuing to work with our outside legal counsel for claims against the Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE). The claim will be filed with the Federal District Court in the coming weeks. An amended complaint will be filed in early March. This is likely to be a lengthy (and slow) process, and we will provide more information as it becomes available.
- Staff continues to work with Sean Tate (Tate Public Affairs), who is helping the City navigate legislative affairs and advocate for the City. We currently meet with Sean every other Wednesday. Sean has also agreed to help with necessary tasks as we explore the operations levy for the Municipal Jail.
- On February 2^{11th}, Mayor Jackola, Sean Tate, and I met with staff from Representative Bynum's Office and Senator Merkley's Office to discuss our Wastewater Treatment

Plant Project and potential funding. We also conducted a tour of the wastewater plant for the attendees to see the issues we face firsthand.

- In February, Brandon Neish and Brent Hurst provided oral testimony to the Joint Committee on Management and Technology and the Joint Capital Construction Committee. We have also submitted pieces of written testimony throughout the short Legislative Session.
- I have spent quite a bit of time over the month of February submitting requests for both State and Federal funding for the Wastewater Plant Project. We have submitted a Capital Funding Request to the State of Oregon for \$5.0 Million, a \$2.0 Million Senate Appropriations request, and a \$2.0 million House Appropriations request. It will be several months before we know if we receive funding.
- Cascades West Council of Governments has submitted a joint Build Grant application for Linn County and the City of Lebanon for a planning/design project of the Cascade/Crowfoot/Central Intersection.
- Staff has been preparing for next year's budget process. There will be a City Council Work Session in March to discuss any Utility Rate and City Services Fee adjustments.
- Staff is continuing to work on the sale of the Santiam Travel Station. We hope to bring the final deeds to the City Council for approval in March and close on the property shortly thereafter.
- Holding regular Department Director Meetings (every two weeks) to keep moving priorities forward.
- We continue to meet with Susan Patterson from the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments twice a month to identify grant opportunities that could benefit the City. We are currently exploring funding opportunities to support wastewater plant projects, water service line replacements, street projects, and other initiatives that will benefit the city.
- We have received a Planning Grant for a sanitary sewer analysis and transportation analysis of the Champion Mill site. We are currently under contract with Kittleson Engineers to complete the transportation aspect of the grant. We are in the process of scoping the off-site sanitary sewer improvements required for the future redevelopment of Champion Mill.
- Over the next couple of months, Staff will be reviewing all city-owned properties in an effort to identify properties no longer needed. Once the list has been updated, Staff will engage the City Council to recommend any that should be declared surplus.
- We will be working on forming a Citizens Advisory Committee in the coming weeks to begin updating both the methodology and fee structure for Wastewater System Development Charges (SDC) and Drainage SDC. This will be a consultant-led project.