

DRAFT MINUTES
CITY OF STEVENSON COUNCIL MEETING
May 21, 2026
6:00 PM, City Hall and Remote

Attending:

Elected & appointed officials: **Mayor Jenny Taylor; Councilmembers Dave Cox, Erin Minnis, Adi Elliott, Tina Van Pelt, Jeff Breckel.**

City staff: **Jayne Borden, Finance Director, Cody Rosander, Stevenson Public Works Director, Robert Muth, City Attorney, Daniel Pitariu, Records and Permit Manager.**

Guests: Skamania County Undersheriff Tracy Wyckoff

Public participants: Mary Repar, Rick Jessel, Lucy Lauser, Bob Wertheimer

1. CALL TO ORDER/PRESENTATION TO THE FLAG: **Mayor Taylor** called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., led the group in reciting the pledge of allegiance, and conducted roll call.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Rick Jessel spoke in favor of the meeting's You Tube videos, as captions help him understand proceedings.
- Bob Wertheimer also spoke positively about the YouTube videos, and expressed appreciation for the Council's work in public service. He commented on the sewer ordinance and suggested a one-year timeline for a decision is not enough. He asked the Council to incentivize, not penalize residents to get them to connect to the sewer system and provided a brief overview regarding the functions of a septic system.
- Mary Repar supported incentive measures and asked the city to research potential grants to assist residents with connections. She encouraged public comment on the power transmission line being planned for under the Columbia River. Mary noted a modified discharge permit is being requested by LDB Beverage Company in Stevenson. She pointed out the reason Stevenson had to build an upgraded waste water treatment plant was due to excessive biological material overloading the capacity of the older plant. Lastly she requested the Conditional Use permitting process remain with the Planning Commission.
- Lucy Lauser spoke about the issues trans people face, including violence. She asked people to attend the upcoming Pride Fest on June 13th and 14th and urged the Council to supporting the Pride Proclamation on the agenda.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

No changes were noted.

4. CONSENT AGENDA:

a) City Council meeting minutes of April 16, 2026.

b) Water Leak Adjustment – The Council was asked to authorize an adjustment for Account No. 13180. The excess usage resulted from a break in the water line, which has been addressed by the homeowner. Approval is requested to add \$128.82 as a credit to customer’s account due to the leak.

Motion to approve consent agenda items a-b was made by **Councilmember Breckel**, seconded by **Councilmember Cox**.

Voting aye: **Councilmember Elliott, Van Pelt, Cox, Minnis, Breckel**.

5. PLANNING COMMISSION APPOINTMENT:

a) **Motion** to appoint **Tracy Gratto** to the Stevenson Planning Commissioner #5 position was made by **Councilmember Cox**, seconded by **Councilmember Van Pelt**

Voting aye: **Councilmember Elliott, Van Pelt, Cox Minnis, Breckel**.

6. PROCLAMATIONS:

a) Proclamation celebrating 250th anniversary of the United States of America.

A motion to pass the proclamation was made by **Councilmember Breckel**, seconded by **Councilmember Van Pelt**. The motion passed unanimously.

b) Proclamation recognizing the 36th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

A motion to pass the proclamation was made by **Councilmember Cox**, seconded by **Councilmember Breckel**. The motion passed unanimously.

c) Proclamation declaring June 2026 as Pride Month.

A motion to pass the proclamation was made by **Councilmember Breckel**, seconded by **Councilmember Minnis**. The motion passed unanimously.

7. 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. Undersheriff Wyckoff referenced a tragic event in Stevenson, and noted within 10 hours a suspect was in custody. **Councilmember Cox** shared the importance of trauma counseling for those involved.

8. COUNCIL BUSINESS:

a) **Sewer Ordinance - First Reading.**

Mayor Taylor highlighted the difficulty of the project and the revisions still needed. She pointed to page 112 of the ordinance to begin discussion.

- A main clarification was regarding existing property owners with currently working approved septic systems will not be required to connect unless a trigger applies.

- Protection for existing functioning septic systems will be added into the table, not just in the exception section.
- Detailing when the System Development Charges (SDC) waiver is in force and when it expires (after one year).
- Property owners located along a current sewer line who have functioning septic systems are not required to connect, but if they do within one year of notice, the SDC's are waived. After that the full SDC will apply.
- Further clarification was agreed to have the language state property owners will have one year to decide to hook up and qualify for the waived SDC's from when a new sewer line is available for use.
- **Cody Rosander, Public Works Director** advised stubs would be installed with a new line to avoid having to dig up the street for new connections.
- Sewer connection fees only apply when an actual connection is complete.
- Selling or transferring ownership of a property does not trigger a requirement to connect.
- Septic inspections are required every 5 years, to be done by the county health department. Stevenson Public Works will track inspection schedules.
- Additions or ADU's that include new bathrooms a building permit/health department inspection determines would need expansion of a septic would require connections to a sewer line when if/when available.
- Appeals will be the responsibility of the city council.
- Short plats and subdivision lot numbers were clarified for sewer line extension purposes. Four or less lots is a short plat, with no extension required. Five or more lots is a subdivision, and a sewer line extension is required.
- Removal of language regarding connections outside the city limits.
- A definition of an available public sewer was explained.

Mayor Taylor will work with **Attorney Muth** to review the changes. Several Councilmembers asked for past revisions of the ordinance to compare with the most recent version.

b) *Motion to approve amending resolution no. 2026-469, a first amendment to the personal services agreement with Prothman Company to provide limited interim administrative support services; authorizing additional compensation in an amount not to exceed \$12,000; and authorizing **Mayor Taylor** to execute the first amendment was made by **Councilmember Cox** , seconded by **Councilmember Elliott**.

Prior to the vote **Mayor Taylor** explained the purpose for the amendment. **Councilmember Cox** noted that the budget would support the costs due to savings on city administrator wages. A short discussion took place regarding timelines, duration and possible transition support.

Voting aye: **Councilmember Elliott, Van Pelt, Cox Minnis, Breckel**.

c) **Motion** to approve the Skamania County Interlocal Agreement for Building Permitting and Inspections and Addendum #1 for Fire Marshal services following legal review was made by **Councilmember Cox**, seconded by **Councilmember Van Pelt**.

Prior to the vote a discussion took place on charges, fees, indemnity and services currently provided.

Voting aye: **Councilmember Elliott, Van Pelt, Cox Minnis, Breckel**.

d) Discussion: An Ordinance Amending the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) Review Process and Assigning Final Decision Authority to the City Council.

Mayor Taylor led a discussion on having the City Council be the final decision maker on Conditional Use Permits rather than the Planning Commission. It was seen to relieve the Planning Commission of a responsibility more appropriate for the elected Council. An appeal process is still possible through the courts. The PC would do all the background work and hold public hearings, but make a recommendation to the City Council regarding their findings.

Mayor Taylor will work with **Attorney Muth** on developing language for an ordinance.

9. MAYOR AND STAFF REPORTS:

a) Jenny Taylor, Mayor

Mayor Taylor shared the interviews for the city administrator will take place on Tuesday, May 26th. She is hoping to have a quick decision made and a contract in place as soon as possible.

b) Jayne Borden, Finance Director

Financial reports were presented. Negative balances will be resolved through reimbursements. No budget variances are foreseen.

Having a CPA experienced with government budgeting is being contemplated to help with oversight, compliance, internal controls, and the audit. Modernizing and streamline processes that currently are done manually is also being considered.

Councilmember Cox requested balances on loans owed by the city and the schedule of payments. **Borden** stated she would create a SharePoint for Councilmembers to review the information.

Mayor Taylor stated she is reviewing the Capital Improvement Projects list, and would like to schedule a special Council meeting to look at priorities.

c) Cody Rosander, Public Works Director

A detailed list of programs and project updates was provided by **Cody Rosander, Public Works Director**.

- The Rock Creek water intake has greatly improved following testing and jetting. He estimates the cost to be under \$100K, with most of the cost for permitting specialists and diving services.
- Cascade is replacing hydrants. They are starting to repair pavement sections and paving. They are re-pouring concrete on Cascade and lower Russell. A full closure is planned for 4 am-2 p.m. Thursday, May 28th.

- A Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant for the Lasher project was approved for \$850K. The project will begin in late winter/early spring 2027.
- Leavens St. project is progressing. He met with contract engineers to begin developing a cost estimate and initial design work for a future TIB grant. \$850K is the estimate so far. Replacement of old sewer lines is needed. PUD will underground the utilities if the city digs the trench.
- He is meeting next week with TIB regarding some smaller projects, including seal coating around Angel Heights.
- Public Works has purchased a Trimble GIS unit. Staff has been trained and is using it to re-map assets such as catch basins and valve cans.
- He is working on having bids for geo-technical work down by Base Reservoir to learn if the area is stable enough to place a steel building on to serve as a Public Works shop.
- Cody is working on organizing projects into a master file for the CIP list. He is adding/deleting tasks based on priorities Opportunities are also being included..
- Between FEMA and Washington State most of the cost (97%) of replacing the pump and water line along Rock Creek that was damaged during the December storm will be covered. Purchasing a second pump for the Kanaka Creek lift station is also needed.
- Water valve replacements are taking place. A company on Tuesday installed a valve just below the high-level reservoir, which can now be shut off. During installation, the AC pipe cracked slightly on McAvoy. Further repair attempts will be taken, along with the third valve replacement at Rock Creek and Atwell. A total of 15 valves need replacing, taking place as the budget allows.
- Hydrant flow testing has been completed.
- Contractors are installing pressure relief valves at Chinedere.
- Quotes for epoxy work in wet well were high. Cody thinks the PW can manage bypass pumping.
- Stellar Jay has the punch list, still waiting for their response.
- Street work/sweeping and tree trimming is taking place in preparation for paving.
- Public works is looking for a bucket truck. They are in discussion with the PUD regarding a possible purchase.

d) Daniel Pitariu, Records Manager

Daniel reported on the major upgrades he is making to the document repository in order to make it easier to organize, search, and locate all the different documents, ordinances, resolutions and records.

10. VOUCHER APPROVAL: Vouchers will be presented prior to the meeting for council review.

Motion to approve the vouchers was made by **Councilmember Cox**, seconded by **Councilmember Van Pelt**

Voting aye: **Councilmember Elliott, Van Pelt, Cox Minnis, Breckel.**

11. ISSUES FOR THE NEXT MEETING

A special meeting to review and approve the city administrator contract will be set up by **Mayor Taylor**, along with a review of the CIP.

Councilmember Van Pelt questioned if an ordinance against pan handling was in place. **Mayor Taylor** will check with **Attorney Muth** to see if there is anything addressing the issue.

Councilmember Breckel noted the State Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council is in the scoping process for the Cascade Renewable Transmission Line proposed for the Columbia River, as it has been deemed environmentally significant. There is an online scoping meeting to help determine what the Environmental Impact Study will require scheduled for May 27th, 5-8 p.m.

12. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mary Repar relayed a number of houses do not have their street addresses visible, which makes it hard for emergency services to find during an emergency.

She spoke about the Cascade Renewable Transmission project. The City Council will be asked for a land use consistency certificate. She stated there must be consistency with the Shoreline Master Program, and the proposal is inconsistent with the SMP.

She also commented on the poor road surface conditions along SR 14.

13. ADJOURNMENT - Mayor Taylor adjourned the meeting at 7:51 p.m.