

DRAFT MINUTES
CITY OF STEVENSON COUNCIL MEETING
February 20, 2025
6:00 PM, City Hall and Remote

Attending:

Elected Officials: **Mayor Scott Anderson; Councilmembers Chuck Oldfield, Dave Cox, Michael Johnson, Lucy Lauser, Pat Rice.**

City Staff: **Ben Shumaker, Community Development Director/Interim City Administrator; Tiffany Andersen, Planning and Public Works Assistant, Robert Muth, City Attorney**

Guests: Kika Kielpinska with Skamania Kids & Youth

Public participants: Tracy Wycoff, Rick Jessell, Mary Repar, Dave Prosser, Mik Hendrickson, Mike Perry

1. CALL TO ORDER/PRESENTATION TO THE FLAG:

Mayor Anderson 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:

Tracy Wyckoff spoke about a recent news item alleging he had misled the Council about the process of obtaining vehicle details online. He provided information to the Council clarifying the matter.

Rick Jessell commented on the recent levy passage.

Mary Repar commented on water bills. She suggested the city develop a policy and protocol regarding actions of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.

Dave Prosser provided comments about road paving, the search process for the new City Administrator, the recent levy, and suggested combining City and Port services.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

None noted

4. CONSENT AGENDA:

- a) Water Adjustment - The customer at meter No. 79339743 requested a water adjustment of \$1,000 for a water leak that they have since repaired.
- b) Minutes of 1/16/2025 and 2/5/2025.

Councilmember Cox requested item a) be removed from the consent agenda and discussed further.

6:05 MOTION to approve consent agenda item b) was made by **Councilmember Lauser**, seconded by **Councilmember Rice**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Lauser, Johnson, Rice, Cox, Oldfield**

Item a) from the consent agenda was reviewed by **Councilmember Cox**. He requested and received an explanation from **Interim City Administrator Shumaker** on the city's policy regarding water leakage forgiveness. It was explained the maximum amount of forgiveness is \$1,000 and can only be granted once every 5 years. New technology allows for rapid notification to residents.

6:08 MOTION to approve the request for a water adjustment of \$1,000 from the customer at meter No. 79339743 for a water leak they have since repaired was made by **Councilmember Cox**, seconded by **Councilmember Lauser**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Lauser, Johnson, Rice, Cox, Oldfield**

6. PRESENTATIONS FROM OUTSIDE AGENCIES:

a) Youth Champions - Kika Kielpinska with Skamania Kids & Youth shared details about the support systems in place for area kids and teens and the current opportunity to open a teen center in Stevenson. A fundraiser was recently held to help with start up costs.

5. 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 by Skamania County Undersheriff Tracy Wyckoff for council review.

Undersheriff Wyckoff confirmed for Councilmembers any license plate number could be entered online and used to identify an individual.

Councilmember Rice noted several emails containing statutes he asked Undersheriff Wyckoff to review had not been answered, and asked for clarification.

Councilmember Cox asked about and received information on a traffic camera that had been removed from its location near a local business and repositioned.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

a) Proposed 2025 Budget Amendments-First Reading - **Interim City Administrator Ben Shumaker** presented proposed changes to the 2025 budget as outlined in the attached documents for council consideration.

6:34 The public hearing opened at 6:34

A staff report was provided by **Ben Shumaker, Interim City Administrator**. The budget amendment proposed involves changes to four of the City's sixteen funds. He shared that information in the meeting packet provided an explanation of the scenarios to consider regarding Tourism, Fire, and/or Street Funds.

Public comments received

Mike Perry commented on the importance of budgeting for long-term future expenses in the fire department.

6:39 The public hearing closed at 6:39

A detailed discussion followed, with much of it focused on how funding for the fire department would be allocated. A number of questions were raised regarding the usage of capital funds and reserve funds.

7:03 MOTION to attach Scenario 1 and approve an ordinance amending the budget for the City of Stevenson Washington for Fiscal Year 2025 as presented and appended was made by **Councilmember Lauser**, seconded by **Councilmember Johnson**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Lauser, Johnson, Oldfield**

Voting nay: **Councilmembers Rice, Cox**

10. COUNCIL BUSINESS:

- a) Utility Billing Adjustment: The Council was asked to authorize an adjustment for the account at Meter No. 14601, relieving a \$194.45 amount owing. The customer requests the City relieve them of the charges incurred on the account between November 2023 and May 2024 because the City did not send bills to the customer during that period. Staff has worked with the customer within existing policies to reduce the amount owed by \$850.66. The customer seeks additional relief to remove the remainder. An appeal process may be available, but has not been engaged. There is no policy or direct authority established to guide action in this instance. In January the Council relieved \$167.74 from this same account to cover time when service was wrongfully deprived. There was no policy or direct authority to guide action in that instance either. A second adjustment is presented tonight for the same Meter Number.
- b) Utility Billing Adjustment: The Council was asked to authorize an adjustment for the account at Meter No. 14601, relieving a \$167.75 amount owing. The customer requests the City relieve them of the charges incurred on the account in June 2024 because the customer claims not to have received notice of a change in billing practices. The customer seeks relief to remove this amount. An appeal process may be available, but has not been engaged. There is no policy or direct authority established to guide action in this instance. In January the Council relieved \$167.74 from the customer's account to cover time when service was wrongfully deprived. There was no policy or direct authority to guide action in that instance either. A second adjustment was presented tonight for the same Meter Number.
- c) Utility Billing Adjustment: The Council was asked to authorize an adjustment for the account at Meter No. 16470 relieving a \$335.48 amount owing. The customer requests the Council relieve them of the charges incurred on the account in June and July 2024 because the customer claims not to have received notice of a change in billing practices. The customer seeks relief directly from the Council. An appeal process may be available, but has not been engaged. There is no policy or direct authority established to guide action in this instance. The customer at this meter is the same as the customer at Meter No. 14601.

Ben Shumaker, Interim City Administrator provided a brief explanation of the issue, and noted no policy or direct authority has been established to guide action in this instance and could not make a recommendation as a result.

Councilmember Rice moved to waive the charges on all three items with one motion.

7:08 MOTION to approve adjustments waiving the charges on all three items at Meter No. 14601/16470 was made by **Councilmember Rice**, seconded by **Councilmember Oldfield**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Lauser, Johnson, Rice, Cox, Oldfield**

- d) Approve Committee Appointments - **Mayor Scott Anderson** presented the 2025 draft committee and board appointments for council discussion and approval.

7:09 MOTION to approve the committee appointments as presented was made by **Councilmember Lauser**, seconded by **Councilmember Rice**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Lauser, Johnson, Rice, Cox, Oldfield**

11. INFORMATION ITEMS:

- a) Financial Report - The Treasurer's Report and year-to-date revenues and expenses through the prior month were presented for council review.
- b) Planning Commission Minutes from the Planning Commission meeting for the prior month were presented.

12. CITY ADMINISTRATOR AND STAFF REPORTS:

a) Ben Shumaker, Community Development Director

- i. The Planning Department's permitting portal is now live online. In person applications are still acceptable as well.
- ii. A rezoning application is anticipated to come before the City Council in March.
- iii. 'Forever' chemicals (PFAS) water testing is being done. The first round of testing has been done for Stevenson, results were reported as non-detectible. If results continue to report non-detectible amounts the testing schedule is revised.

b) Carolyn Sourek, Public Works Director

- i. Her written report was included in the meeting packet.

c) Ben Shumaker, Interim City Administrator/Tiffany Andersen, Planning and Public Works Assistant

- i. **Tiffany Andersen** provided information on recent public records requests.
- ii. **Shumaker** noted the work and time needed to process public records requests and highlighted **Tiffany Andersen's** efforts at responding to the requests.
- iii. Recent water billing issues showed improvements in billing methods are needed.
- iv. A recent water break occurred, Public Works crew repaired on Saturday. A project will likely be placed within the Capital Improvement plan.
- v. Reduced staff level is affecting city hall services, including the phones.
- vi. Welcomed the activity SKY will bring to an important downtown site.
- vii. Levy allocation will take place once election is certified, and the ordinance is prepared, adopted, and provided to Department of Revenue. Tax takes effect 07-01-25. Local businesses will be communicated with regarding changes in collections.

- viii. Residents are asking about what savings they can expect on water bills following passage of the recent levy. Some reconsideration of rate structures may be appropriate.

13. VOUCHER APPROVAL:

7:19 MOTION to approve the vouchers as presented was made by **Councilmember Lauser**, seconded by **Councilmember Oldfield**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Lauser, Johnson, Rice, Cox, Oldfield**

14. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS:

None presented.

15. ISSUES FOR THE NEXT MEETING:

Discussion on new tax revenue.

16. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mary Repar: Mara Reynolds, former librarian in Stevenson passed away today.

Rick Jessell: levy funds should be used to decrease rates and provide expansion of sewer system to bring in more users.

Mayor Anderson provided a brief background of the sewer system timeline-he reminded participants the sewer system was put in place 1971, and before that raw sewage went directly into the Columbia River.

Mik Henderson: He thanked the City Council and **Ben Shumaker** for resolving his water billing issue.

17. EXECUTIVE SESSION -

- a) Executive Session - City Council convened in Executive Session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) -To discuss potential litigation.

The Council entered Executive Session at 7:40 p.m. Expected time to reconvene was announced to be 7:55 p.m.

The Council reconvened at 7:55 p.m., and returned to Executive Session for an additional ten minutes. The Council reconvened in open session at 8:04 p.m.

Legal counsel has been advised to continue as discussed.

18. ADJOURNMENT -

Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at 8:04 p.m.