

MINUTES
CITY OF STEVENSON COUNCIL MEETING
July 17, 2025
6:00 PM, City Hall and Remote

Attending:

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

City Staff: **Wesley Wootten, City Administrator; Ben Shumaker, Community Development Director, Tiffany Andersen, Planning and Public Works Assistant; Robert Muth, City Attorney; Ray Broughton, Stevenson Fire Chief; Cody Rosander, Public Works Director.**

Guests: Skamania County Undersheriff Tracy Wyckoff

Public participants: Kelly Hume, Mary Repar, Rick Jessell, Sam Kinestead

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

Kelly Hume spoke about the proposed sewer ordinance and how it affects homeowners. She requested the penalty be removed for residents on existing septic systems.

Mary Repar asked about public discussion prior to the vote on the sewer ordinance. She also spoke about city road repairs needed, and suggested the Courthouse Plaza Project be abandoned.

Rick Jessel commented on the sewer ordinance, noting while it was not ideal, it was a reasonable compromise.

Sam Kinestead stated he supported the Plaza Project because it will provide a local gathering place for families and visitors.

Councilmember Cox asked about written public comments submitted regarding the sewer ordinance.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

a) Fire Department Report - Fire Chief Ray Broughton to provide an update to Council on work of the Fire Department.

b) Cascade Avenue Utility Improvements Bid Approval - Public Works Director Cody Rosander to present a bid recommendation on the contract for SW Cascade Utility Improvements project. The Council is requested to approve the bid (in the amount of \$778,456.00 (pre-tax)) be awarded to Swofford Excavating LLC.

c) Utility Back Billing Discussion - In the "Council Business" section, item D was revised to only include discussion regarding utility back-billing

6:10

4. CONSENT AGENDA: The following items were presented for Council approval.

a) Water Adjustment - Account #10040 requested a water adjustment of \$562.12 for a

water leak they have since repaired. The leak was a result of a faulty crimp on a garden hose, which has since been replaced.

b) Minutes of June 18, 2025 City Council meeting.

MOTION to approve consent agenda items a-b was made by **Councilmember Lauser**, seconded by **Councilmember Oldfield**.

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

Abstained: **Councilmember Cox**

5. SHERIFF'S OFFICE REPORT:

a) The Sheriff's Report for activity within Stevenson city limits for June 2025 was presented for council review by Skamania County Undersheriff Tracy Wyckoff.

6:10

Fire Chief Ray Broughton provided a report with updates on search and rescue call-outs; new administrative services provided through rural district EMS; and the need for a new fire commissioner. He also spoke about the purchase of a new pumper engine for the fire department and the cost savings attained through engineering choices. He noted the funds have been set aside and are available in an account, and an AFG (Assistance to Firefighters) grant through FEMA for \$770,000 will be written and submitted. **Councilmember Rice** asked for an explanation of the process for purchasing a vehicle. **Councilmember Cox** requested additional information on grant programs. **City Attorney Muth** explained the competitive bid process.

7:17

10. COUNCIL BUSINESS:

a) **Sewer Ordinance and Fee Schedule Update- Community Development Director Ben Shumaker** presented and explained updates to the draft sewer ordinance. Attachments addressed the Council's requests from the June 16th, 2025 workshop. The staff report detailed what the upper or lower penalty amount could be, and provided a recommended amount that excludes certain operation and maintenance costs. A draft fee schedule was attached to the staff report.

Shumaker advised the process for voting would be to first consider the ordinance, then follow that by adopting or establishing the penalty fee.

City Attorney Muth provided information regarding the first and/or second reading of the ordinance, the council's prerogative on voting, and its decision then determining the penalty amount. **Muth** clarified that he signs the ordinance after any changes made and approved by Council are reviewed by him to ensure accordance with RCW's.

MOTION to approve tabling the ordinance at this time until the city has engaged and hired a financial director was presented by **Councilmember Cox**, seconded by **Councilmember Rice**.

Following the motion, additional discussion took place regarding the issue.

Councilmember Oldfield noted the multiple meetings and workshops held

previously on the subject. **Councilmember Rice** questioned how many people understood the impacts of the ordinance.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Cox, Rice.**

Voting nay: **Councilmembers Johnson, Lauser, Oldfield.**

City Attorney Muth advised Councilmembers how to avoid email violations of Open Public Meeting Laws when contacted by individuals. Written public comments received should be included in the Council agenda packet even if there is no direct request from the sender. **Community Development Director Shumaker** shared all water and sewer customers were provided with the notice of the ordinance.

MOTION to approve an ordinance of the City of Stevenson, Washington relating to sewer service, providing for severability and an effective date as presented was made by **Councilmember Oldfield**, seconded by **Councilmember Johnson**.

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

Voting nay: **Councilmembers Cox, Rice**

MOTION to approve a resolution of the City Council of the City of Stevenson, Washington adopting a comprehensive fee schedule as presented was made by **Councilmember Oldfield**, seconded by **Councilmember Johnson**.

Following the motion a short discussion took place regarding how the fee schedule was arrived at.

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

Voting nay: **Councilmembers Cox, Rice**

b) Ordinance 2025-1229 TBD Revenue Fund - City Administrator Wootten presented and explained 2025-1229, an ordinance to authorize a budget transfer of funds from the General Fund to the Water/Sewer Fund.

MOTION to approve ordinance 2025-1229 to authorize a budget transfer of funds from the General Fund to the Water/Sewer Fund was made by **Councilmember Lauser**, seconded by **Councilmember Johnson**.

Following the motion a short discussion took place. **City Attorney Muth** reminded Councilmembers that budget amendments could be made in December. He noted the Council has previously determined any surplus or deficit will be attributed to the sewer fund.

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

c) Resolution 2025-406 Capital and Transportation Improvement Program - Community Development Director Ben Shumaker and Public Works Director Cody Rosander presented and explained the Capital and Transportation Improvement Program Update for council approval. The program is required by statute to be prepared and adopted annually, and

then filed with the Secretary of State. It provides guidance and a timeline for budgeting purposes, and is often an essential part of grant applications. Projects can be forecasted or 'shovel ready'.

MOTION to approve Resolution 2025-406 Capital and Transportation Improvement Program was made by **Councilmember Johnson**, seconded by **Councilmember Oldfield**.

Prior to the vote **Councilmember Rice** stated he would like to see projects ranked by urgency. **Public Works Director Cody Rosander** shared project priorities are discussed weekly with Public Works staff.

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

City Administrator Wootten requested action on the following item that was overlooked earlier in the agenda:

From section 3, CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

b) MOTION to approve the contract for SW Cascade Utility Improvements in the amount of \$778,456.00 (pre-tax) and award the bid to Swofford Excavating, LLC was made by **Councilmember Oldfield**, seconded by **Councilmember Johnson**.

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

Voting nay: **Councilmember Cox**

d) Discussion Regarding Utility Back-Billing - **City Administrator Wootten** presented and explained utility back-billing for unbilled usage due to unclear policy language in the current ordinance regarding utility installation and occupancy certification. The current ordinance will likely need to be changed to clarify when billing commences—at installation or occupancy.

Following a brief discussion Councilmembers reached a consensus that when the water is connected to the water meter billing begins, and when the sewer connection is inspected and approved then billing for both water and sewer commences.

11. INFORMATION ITEMS:

a) Chamber of Commerce Report - The report presented described some of the activities conducted by Skamania County Chamber of Commerce in the prior month.

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

12. CITY ADMINISTRATOR AND STAFF REPORTS:

a) Ben Shumaker, Community Development Director provided information on his work on updating the Critical Areas Ordinance; the Planning Commission's interest in gathering public input on short-term rental policies, new construction activities at Chinedere, Phase 2; and the Rock Creek Hospitality project progress.

b) Cody Rosander, Public Works Director updated Councilmembers on Public Works projects and programs. Annual water testing and reporting; street paving, sign

installation, and landscape projects; new employee hires; and final stages of the Waste Water Treatment Plant and Pump Station projects were all detailed. The first phase of a long-term water source and supply report has been received.

Councilmember Rice asked for and received assurance that the newly planted street tree roots will not impede sewer lines

Ben Shumaker, Community Development Director highlighted the completion of the WWTP and Pump Station projects as a major achievement for the city, noting it was the biggest investment in infrastructure the city has undertaken.

c) Wesley Wootten, City Administrator reported receiving fifteen applications for the position of Finance Director. Interviews are being scheduled. He thanked everyone for their well wishes and support following his recent surgery, and appreciated the city staff covering for him during his absence. Three upcoming financial audits with the state auditor are scheduled over the next two months. He finished his report by sharing information on new operating procedures he is initiating to help staff best serve the needs of city residents and customers.

VOUCHER APPROVAL

MOTION to approve the vouchers as presented was made by **Councilmember Johnson** seconded by **Councilmember Rice**.

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

14. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS:

Mayor Anderson announced a ribbon cutting will take place to celebrate the success of the projects.

16. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mary Repar spoke in favor of compost for city landscape beds and undergrounding utilities. She also asked about a video made previously showing the sewer system.

18. ADJOURNMENT - Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.