



Outlook

Concerns about City Council on May 11, 2026

From Brett Egbert <w.brett.egbert@gmail.com>**Date** Tue 5/26/2026 7:27 AM**To** Michelle Quinn <MQuinn@cityofsumas.com>**Cc** Todd Daniels <TDaniels@cityofsumas.com>; Richard Postma <RPostma@cityofsumas.com>; Jessica Koehler <jkoehler@cityofsumas.com>; Joshua Clawson <JClawson@cityofsumas.com>; Jesse Clawson <JAClawson@cityofsumas.com>; Bruce Bosch <BBosch@cityofsumas.com>; racquel@lyndentribune.com <racquel@lyndentribune.com>

I wanted to write and express several concerns I have related to the most recent Sumas City Council session on May 11, 2026. I apologize for the length, but I have a lot to say.

1. Surprise removal of remote video access
2. Appointment of direct family members to elective office for City Council Position No. 5
3. Accuracy of the draft meeting notes

For full transparency, I am sending this email to the Sumas clerk, mayor, members of the council, and Racquel of the Lynden Tribune who covered the meeting I am discussing.

1. Surprise removal of remote video access

Following the December 2025 flood, attendance at the Sumas City Council meetings increased significantly. Several sessions in a row, with each session separated by at least 2 weeks, requests were made to broadcast the meetings remotely. Due to flood damage, many residents were not living within Sumas, making physical attendance much more difficult. The city responded following weeks of public request and had been providing remotely accessible meetings through Zoom.

It was disappointing that this access was cut off starting in May with no prior discussion. From the bit of information mentioned at the May 11 meeting, remote meeting access was only temporarily put in place. Why was there no discussion about continuing it? Our own city buildings are not yet done with their repairs. We can see many vacant homes still in the repair process around the city. Each week there have been 3-5 virtual attendees, which is a significant amount when a regular meeting might only have 5-10 public attendees. Community members who are not residents are also interested in staying informed. For example, staff members of WCLS are heavily invested in the city council updates even if they are not living in Sumas.

The main issue on everyone's mind is flood mitigation. As discussed repeatedly across many meetings, that is a complex problem not within the city's power to fully solve or even meaningfully address alone. However, the City of Sumas does control how we communicate and how accessible we make our information. The lack of communication coming from the city is a sentiment I hear repeatedly in-person and read in various online comments. The video conferencing equipment already exists and is already set up. The Internet required for a remote video call is already being used during the meeting. I assume with our limited use that we are on a free plan for Zoom calls. So why did we cut one of the newest and most accessible ways for residents to be directly informed, straight from the city? And if

we do need to remove remote video calls due to some unstated city limitation, why was that not discussed before shutting it down?

I cannot comment on why this happened as no information was shared with the public. But I can comment on how this looks to an outsider looking in. It looks like the city checked a box, people stopped asking for it, so the city unchecked the box. It looks like the city is removing channels of communication and reducing transparency. Viewing a meeting is a different experience than reading notes about a meeting, no matter the quality or accuracy of the note-taking.

Communication matters.

2. Appointment of direct family members to elective office for City Council Position No. 5

In the recent 2025 primary election I ran for an elected position for the first time. I had started attending city council meetings due to my involvement in Friends of the Sumas Library (FOSL). I liked going, and when I heard there was an upcoming election decided to run for what I thought at the time was a vacant position. In the end, three of us ran for the same city council position. During the primary election, Councilmember Postma and I received the most votes, moving us both on to the general election ballot.

The third candidate, David Daniels, was not chosen to move forward by the residents of this city. However, the city council just voted this third-place candidate to fill the vacant council position. This makes me question what the deciding factors were, especially when I learned that the key votes to both nominate and vote in David during the most recent council session came from direct family members. Councilmember Daniels is the father of candidate David Daniels, while Councilmember Clawson is David's cousin.

The optics of this are not good, even if no nefarious plan is in motion. For a position with 5 applicants, the choice made by the council was to keep the council in the family, replacing one family member with another.

Additionally, in the last year and a half that I have been attending, I have yet to see candidate David Daniels attend a city council meeting. This includes when David was actively in a public election for the position, the time former Councilmember Jesse Clawson announced he was leaving, and even the prior meeting when applicants were reviewed but no vote took place. The first time I saw David at the Sumas city council was the session he got voted in by his family members. According to the Lynden Tribune, current Councilmember Koehler also has never seen David at a council meeting or at city events.

I understand that the current council has authority to pick the replacement, but this is an elected position. This choice does not represent our city.

3. Accuracy of the draft meeting notes

I am comparing the draft meeting notes from the council session on May 11 with my own memory and the account shared by the [Lynden Tribune](#). The meeting notes indicate the following sequence:

- Councilmembers Clawson and Daniels nominate candidate David Daniels

- A vote takes place, with 2 in favor (Clawson, Postma), 1 against (Koehler) and 1 abstained (Daniels)
- With no majority vote, council members went to executive session to discuss
- Another vote takes place, with 3 in favor (Clawson, Postma, Daniels) and 1 against (Koehler)

This contradicts my own memory and that of the Tribune. The end result is the same, but the details matter. Here is what actually took place:

- Councilmembers Clawson and Daniels nominate candidate David Daniels
- No vote took place. Prior to any vote, Councilmember Posta requested an executive session
- A first vote takes place, with 2 in favor (Clawson, Postma), 1 against (Koehler) and 1 abstained (Daniels). When Daniels abstained, Koehler questioned this. Daniels clarified that while he was part of his son's nomination, he was not voting for the actual decision.
- Once it was made clear that no majority vote took place, Councilmember Daniels changed his vote from "abstained" to "yes"
- The change in vote was formalized with a second vote, with 3 in favor (Clawson, Postma, Daniels) and 1 against (Koehler)

Those differences matter, especially in the context of the candidate David Daniels being the son of Councilmember Daniels and the cousin of Councilmember Clawson. The importance of this was further solidified by the conversations happening with the public while waiting outside during executive session. Many vocally questioned why Councilmember Daniels did not recuse himself from the vote/nomination process. Several members of the public indicated that he should recuse himself and believed he would.

The difference between the draft notes and what actually took place only highlights this issue. Councilmember Daniels recognized the conflict of interest and tried to work around it with his own admission that he was part of the nomination, not the vote. Councilmember Daniels demonstrated how performative that "abstained" vote for his son was by immediately and vocally changing his vote as soon as the majority rules were clarified that a 2-1 would not pass.

A video recording, such as one publicly accessible through Zoom, would have helped clarify exactly what happened. Unfortunately we turned that off without explaining why.

-Brett Egbert