



CITY OF SWEET HOME CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

February 25, 2025, 6:30 PM
Sweet Home City Hall, 3225 Main Street
Sweet Home, OR 97386

Mission Statement

The City of Sweet Home will work to build an economically strong community with an efficient and effective local government that will provide infrastructure and essential services to the citizens we serve. As efficient stewards of the valuable assets available, we will be responsive to the community while planning and preparing for the future.

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 6:49 PM.

Roll Call

PRESENT

Mayor Susan Coleman
President Pro Tem Josh Thorstad
Councilor Chelsea Augsburger
Councilor Ken Bronson
Councilor Aaron Hegge
Councilor Dylan Richards
Councilor Angelita Sanchez

STAFF

Cecily Hope Pretty, City Manager Pro Tem
Angela Clegg, Planning & Building Manager
Blair Larsen, City Attorney
Adam Leisinger, Special Projects Manager
Jason Ogden, Police Chief
Greg Springman, Public Works Director

MEDIA

Sarah Brown, The New Era

GUESTS

Denise Lovejoy, 1172 43rd Avenue, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Dawn Miller, 331 8th Avenue, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Theresa Howard, 1253 Linden Court, Sweet Home, OR 97386
David Lowman, 2230 Main Street, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Nancy Patton, 3041 Foothills Drive, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Alonna Sanchez, 2415 Long Street, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Matthew Bechtel, 108 Holley Road, Sweet Home, OR 97386
RB Lamber, 4615 Long Street, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Renita Cohen, 431 7th Avenue, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Vincent Mack, 2415 Long Street, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Elisabeth Curtis, 1769 12th Avenue, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Brandy Wysong-Frick, 4680 Long Street, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Sherry James, 960 Poplar Street, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Gary Jarvis, 2941 Foothills Drive, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Karee McCollum, 1031 1st Avenue, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Susie Ford, 609 6th Avenue, Sweet Home, OR 97386

Matt Coleman, 411 Nandina Street, Sweet Home, OR 97386
Robert Egner, 28628 Ridgeway Road, Sweet Home, OR 97386

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes:

- a) 2025-02-11 City Council Work Session Minutes
- b) 2025-02-11 City Council Meeting Minutes
- c) 2025-02-18 City Council Work Session Minutes

Councilor Richards moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilor Augsburger seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Coleman, Thorstad, Augsburger, Bronson, Hegge, Richards, Sanchez

NAY: None

Recognition of Visitors & Hearing of Petitions

- a) Life Saving Award

Chief Ogden recognized Officer Daniel Gerkman and presented him with a Life Saving Award for his intervention in a cardiac arrest call.

Gary Jarvis asked for a point of order regarding time limits for speakers regarding an agenda item. Mayor Coleman directed City Attorney Larsen to confirm the rules regarding time limits.

Mayor Coleman recognized those registered to speak.

Denise Lovejoy expressed concern with Councilor behavior she felt was not in the best interest of taxpayers. She asked that funds be spent according to Sweet Home's needs.

Dawn Miller stated that she was the Chief Petitioner of the current petition to modify the Sweet Home Charter. She stated that the intention of the petition was not a negative reaction to the current or past Mayors of Sweet Home but rather to reflect what she believed was the desire of Sweet Home voters.

Theresa Howard expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor and asked City Council to refer it to the ballot.

David Lowman expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor and asked City Council to refer it to the ballot.

Nancy Patton expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor and asked City Council to refer it to the ballot.

Mayor Coleman asked for an update from City Attorney Larsen regarding time limits to speak on agenda items. City Attorney Larsen reviewed multiple sections of the City Rules and clarified that speakers would be required to limit their comments to three minutes.

New Business

- a) Request for Council Action – Resolution No. 6 for 2025 – Charter Amendment Referral for Direct Election of the Mayor

City Attorney Larsen reviewed the history of the item and stated he drafted a ballot measure as determined by consensus at the February 18, 2025 City Council Work Session. He noted that February 28, 2025 was the deadline for City Council to approve a resolution referring the item to the ballot. He stated that if approved by voters, the first impacted election would occur in November 2026. He noted that if a Councilor was elected Mayor and had time remaining in their term, it would create a vacancy that would need to be filled by Council appointment. He stated that items placed on the ballot in odd numbered years would incur costs to the City. He reviewed next steps if the Resolution were passed, including a seven business day challenge period in Linn County Circuit Court.

Councilor Bronson expressed support for delaying the amendment to the May 2026 ballot to save on costs and to resolve the issue of a potentially appointed Councilor.

Mayor Coleman expressed support for delaying the amendment to the May 2026 ballot to save on costs. She stated that the item was a top priority for the Charter Review Committee to examine, in addition to other items.

Councilor Sanchez expressed support for referring the amendment to the May 2026 ballot.

Mayor Coleman reminded Councilors that Public Comment did not necessarily represent the view of the entire community.

Councilor Richards expressed support for referring the amendment to the May 2026 ballot.

Councilor Augsburger expressed support for referring the amendment to the May 2026 ballot.

Councilor Hegge expressed concern with spending money on an election when other initiatives were delayed due to lack of funding.

Councilor Augsburger asked of the process through which Charter Review Committee Members were appointed while other boards and committees typically utilized a different process. Mayor Coleman stated that the Mayor had the power to appoint all members to all boards and committees and stated that she sought diverse perspectives when selecting appointees to the Charter Review Committee.

President Pro Tem Thorstad expressed concern with City Council making direct appointments if there was a vacancy due to an election and asked of solutions to amend the ballot referral. City Attorney Larsen stated that it could be difficult to predict the outcome of modifications to the referral.

Councilor Sanchez suggested that the Charter Review Committee could examine potential additional amendments to address any concerns raised through the current proposed changes for consideration in a future election.

Councilor Hegge asked if there was any training specific to a Mayoral candidate. City Attorney Larsen replied that there was not and that they received the same training as the other Councilors.

Mayor Coleman recognized those registered to speak.

Alonna Sanchez expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor and asked City Council to refer it to the ballot.

Matthew Bechtel expressed support to delay the amendment to the May 2026 ballot.

RB Lamber expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor and asked City Council to refer it to the ballot.

Renita Cohen expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor and asked City Council to refer it to the ballot.

Vincent Mack expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor and asked City Council to refer it to the ballot.

Elisabeth Curtis expressed support to delay the amendment to the May 2026 ballot and expressed concern with the potential influence of money on Mayoral elections.

Brandy Wysong-Frick, 4680 Long Street, expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor.

Sherry James expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor and asked City Council to refer it to the ballot.

Gary Jarvis expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor and asked City Council to refer it to the ballot.

Carri McCollom expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor and asked City Council to refer it to the ballot.

Susie Ford expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor and asked City Council to refer it to the ballot.

Matt Coleman expressed support to delay the amendment to the May 2026 ballot.

Robert Egner expressed support to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor and asked City Council to refer it to the ballot.

Mayor Coleman noted concerns she had heard from the community regarding the influence of money on a Mayoral election.

Councilor Sanchez stated that anyone was allowed to challenge the residency of a declared candidate.

Councilor Bronson reiterated his support for delaying the amendment to May 2026.

Councilor Augsburger stated that she received community feedback expressing support for spending tax dollars on a May 2025 election.

Mayor Coleman expressed support for allowing the Charter Review Committee the opportunity to review the proposed amendment and address any issues before recommending it for a public vote.

Councilor Augsburger asked whether the Charter Review Committee could recommend modifications if the amendment were approved on the May 2025 ballot. City Attorney Larsen replied that this was correct but there was no guarantee that recommendations from the Committee would also be approved by voters.

Mayor Coleman asked if staff was aware of any attempts to amend the Charter for a direct election of the Mayor since the previous Charter Review Committee was convened in 2021. City Manager Pro Tem Pretty replied that they were not.

Councilor Sanchez moved to approve Resolution No. 6 for 2025. Councilor Richards seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Richards, Sanchez, Thorstad, Augsburger

NAY: Coleman, Hegge

ABSTAIN: Bronson

Ordinance Bills

Third Reading of Ordinance Bills (Roll Call Vote Required)

- a) Request for Council Action – Ordinance No. 1 for 2025 – Ordinance No. 1330 – Amending Ordinances No. 427, 825, 975, 1224, and 1322

City Attorney Larsen stated that the Ordinance proposed to amend Ordinances lacking the required enacting clauses. He read Ordinance No. 1 for 2025 by title only.

President Pro Tem Thorstad moved to approve Ordinance No. 1 for 2025. Councilor Richards seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Coleman, Thorstad, Augsburger, Bronson, Hegge, Richards, Sanchez

NAY: None

Reports of Committees

Community Health Committee – Councilor Bronson

Library Advisory Board – Councilor Augsburger

Park & Tree Committee – Councilor Hegge

- a) 2025-01-15 Park & Tree Committee Meeting Minutes

Planning Commission

Public & Traffic Safety Committee – President Pro Tem Thorstad & Councilor Richards

- a) 2025-02-12 Public & Traffic Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Area Commission on Transportation – Councilor Sanchez (Councilor Bronson, alternate)

Chamber of Commerce – Councilor Hegge

Charter Review Committee

Council of Governments – Councilor Hegge

Solid Waste Advisory Council – Councilor Richards

Councilor Hegge stated that the Park & Tree Committee met with the Beautification Committee to discuss plans for future plantings. He noted that Arbor Day would be celebrated on April 26th in Sankey Park.

Councilor Augsburger stated that the Library Board was canceled due to inclement weather.

Department Reports

Police Chief

- a) Police Department Report – January 2025

Police Chief Ogden highlighted improvements in multiple crime categories.

Reports of City Officials

City Manager's Report

City Manager Pro Tem Pretty thanked the Public Works Department and Police Department for their quick responses to wind damage and incidents in the recent inclement weather.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Coleman thanked those who responded to a recent community survey. She stated that the History Jamboree would be visiting on March 28th and March 29th to research the history of Sweet Home prior to the construction of Foster Dam. She highlighted the Sweet Home Early Literacy Program through the Sweet Home School District.

Council Business for Good of the Order

Councilor Bronson highlighted the success of local school sports teams in District and State Championships. He highlighted the recent Fun Run fundraiser to support the New Era.

Councilor Sanchez thanked those who engaged with City Council during Public Comment. She stated that campaign finance could be researched through ORESTAR. She noted upcoming changes to campaign finance regulations.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 PM.

ATTEST:

Mayor

City Manager Pro Tem – Ex Officio City Recorder