



# CITY OF SWEET HOME CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

March 25, 2025, 5:30 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.

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## **Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

## **Roll Call**

### **PRESENT**

Mayor Susan Coleman  
President Pro Tem Josh Thorstad  
Councilor Chelsea Augsburger  
Councilor Bronson (5:31 PM)  
Councilor Aaron Hegge  
Councilor Dylan Richards  
Councilor Angelita Sanchez

### **STAFF**

Jason Ogden, City Manager / Police Chief  
Cecily Hope Pretty, Assistant City Manager Pro Tem  
Angela Clegg, Planning & Building Manager  
Megan Dazey, Library Services Director  
Blair Larsen, City Attorney  
Adam Leisinger, Special Projects Manager  
Cindi Robeck, Financial Operations Manager  
Greg Springman, Public Works Director

## **Work Session – FY 2025-2026 Council Goals**

City Manager Ogden stated that the purpose of the Work Session was to narrow down final selections for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 City Council goals based on proposals from the prior Work Session. He highlighted the inclusion of a memo with staff notes regarding the proposed goals. He noted that staff was not limited to working only on those selected during the session.

Mayor Coleman asked of the costs for a paving program included in the staff memo. Assistant City Manager Pro Tem Pretty replied that there would be costs associated with staffing and training in addition to start-up equipment costs. Mayor Coleman asked of other municipalities' approach to paving. Director Springman replied that Lebanon and Albany relied on contractors for significant paving projects and both cities found the costs to maintain an in-house program to be prohibitive.

Councilor Sanchez expressed concern that contract work was more costly than in-house work. Assistant City Manager Pro Tem Pretty replied that Lebanon indicated there was not enough funding in small cities to ensure sufficient work to maintain skill levels for in-house paving staff. Councilor Sanchez stated the need for creative solutions to address budget challenges in meeting streets needs.

Councilor Bronson asked of the available funding for street work annually. Assistant City Manager Pro Tem Pretty replied that there was around \$800,000 generated through the state gas tax with a large

portion contributing to salaries and benefits. She added that \$375,000 was budgeted in the current fiscal year for capital projects on streets and \$322,000 was budgeted for wages. Councilor Bronson expressed concern with the feasibility of an in-house paving program for Sweet Home if larger cities were not able to support similar programs.

Mayor Coleman asked of the use of volunteer labor and materials for Weddle Bridge. Assistant City Manager Pro Tem Pretty replied that the location of the bridge over Ames Creek posed challenges with using donated labor due to regulatory restrictions in the creek bed.

Councilor Hegge asked of the ability to provide paving services to other municipalities to offset the costs and challenges with training. Assistant City Manager Pro Tem Pretty stated that staff could investigate this opportunity.

President Pro Tem Thorstad expressed support for developing a plan for the old City Hall.

City Manager Ogden asked the City Councilor to select their top two goals in each goal category.

City Manager Ogden read the following top goals under Efficient Government:

- Increased electronic communications to citizens
- Cybersecurity review of key infrastructure

Councilor Richards suggested more City activity on Facebook.

President Pro Tem Thorstad asked if the City investigated development of a City app. Assistant City Manager Pro Tem Pretty replied that the City was currently in the process of redeveloping its website and it would include the option to opt in to text communications.

Councilors Sanchez and Bronson expressed support for expanding a City text message campaign.

Mayor Coleman stated that there were cybersecurity assessments available through the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). City Manager Ogden stated that he would make contact.

City Manager Ogden read the following top goals under Economic Strength:

- Santiam Feed Store
- Old City Hall

City Manager Ogden stated that there was already interest from a business owner in occupying the former Santiam Feed. He highlighted the location's prominence on the City's future Festival Street.

Councilor Augsburger asked if the interested business wished to purchase or lease the Santiam Feed. City Manager Ogden replied that it had not yet been determined.

Councilor Bronson noted challenges at the old City Hall with the elevator and flooding and questioned the worth of investing additional funds in the building. City Manager Ogden noted that the Sweet Home Fire District had previously expressed interest in acquiring the building but backed away due to the costs to bring it into compliance, likely exceeding \$1 million.

Councilor Sanchez asked of potential fines related to the non-functional elevator in old City Hall. City Manager Ogden stated that staff had been unable to make contact with the inspector responsible for assessing the elevator to determine the amount of potential fines but would continue to pursue an answer.

Councilor Sanchez asked of the current tenant at old City Hall. Assistant City Manager Pro Tem Pretty replied that the current tenant's lease expires at the end of April and they did not indicate a plan to renew. Councilor Sanchez asked if the cost to renovate left selling the building or demolition as the only remaining options. Assistant City Manager Pro Tem Pretty replied that those were the two simplest options available given the challenges.

Councilor Thorstad expressed support for demolition and converting the property to another use.

Councilor Bronson asked of the cost to demolish the building. Assistant City Manager Pro Tem Pretty replied that a preliminary estimate without asbestos removal totaled approximately \$160,000 but she estimated it would be closer to \$200,000.

City Manager Ogden suggested a Work Session to discuss Council's wishes for the old City Hall site.

Councilor Sanchez asked of the availability of grants to rehabilitate old City Hall. Assistant City Manager Pro Tem Pretty replied that staff investigated grants but the caps on available funding would still leave a significant portion of necessary renovations unfunded.

City Manager Ogden read the following top goals under Essential Services:

- Purchase paver and roller
- Mountain View road multi-use path and sidewalks
- Wastewater treatment plant construction – year one

Councilor Sanchez stated that purchase of a paver should be the priority as other equipment could be rented.

Councilor Augsburger expressed support for the purchase of a paver.

City Manager Ogden suggested that staff could investigate a cost-sharing agreement with other cities.

City Manager Ogden read the following top goals under Infrastructure:

- City Hall East Wing renovations
- Library technology upgrades

City Manager Ogden stated that staff would be meeting with Community Services Consortium (CSC) the following day to discuss next steps for the East Wing and that he had drafted a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the renovations.

Councilor Bronson asked of a timeline for the renovations. Assistant City Manager Pro Tem Pretty replied that staff's goal was to release the RFP and select a contractor by the end of the current fiscal year.

Mayor Coleman asked of the staff memo's indication of financial and space constraints related to technology upgrades at the library. Director Dazey replied that the building was very small and was at maximum capacity for the existing six public computers, with limitations due to the electrical outlets. She added that the majority of grants related to library technology had been pulled in the last few months.

Councilor Bronson asked if the current site of the old City Hall could accommodate a new library building. Director Dazey replied that there were concerns with sufficient parking if the old City Hall site was utilized for a new building.

Councilor Sanchez asked if electrical upgrades were needed to sustain the existing technology setup at the library. Director Dazey replied that the costs for an electrical upgrade would be significant, and she did not want to invest capital funds if the plan was to move to a new building.

Mayor Coleman expressed concern with investing significant funds into the current library due to its poor seismic stability.

City Manager Ogden read the following top goals under Desirable Community:

- Weddle Bridge
- Downtown vacancy reduction

Councilor Richards stated that he did not want to enact additional regulations to reduce downtown vacancies.

President Pro Tem Thorstad mentioned the success of other cities in utilizing targeted regulations to revitalize their downtowns and noted concerns with landlords not renting out their vacant buildings.

Councilor Sanchez expressed concern with the costs to landlords and lessees to upgrade spaces and make them usable for business.

City Manager Ogden suggested a Work Session to discuss strategies to reduce downtown vacancies.

**Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 PM.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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City Manager – Ex Officio City Recorder

DRAFT