



# CITY OF SWEET HOME CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

October 20, 2020, 5:30 PM  
Sweet Home City Hall, 3225 Main Street  
Sweet Home, OR 97386

WIFI Passcode: guestwifi

PLEASE silence all cell phones – Anyone who wishes to speak, please sign in.

## 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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## Meeting Information

The City Council will hold a Special City Council meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, 3225 Main Street. In order to protect residents, staff, and elected officials due to the novel COVID-19 virus, the frequency and length of public meetings, including the City Council, boards and commissions, will be minimized. Non-urgent and non-essential City business with expected public feedback will be postponed whenever possible. Individuals attending public meetings in person will be required to maintain appropriate social distancing (6-ft.) and be free of symptoms related to COVID-19. The City of Sweet Home City Council is streaming the meeting via the Microsoft Teams platform and asks the public to consider this option. There will be opportunity for public input via the live stream. To view the City Council meeting live, online visit [live.sweethomeor.gov](https://live.sweethomeor.gov). If you don't have access to the internet you can call in to (541) 367-5128 and choose option #1 to be logged in to the call.

This video stream and call in options are allowed under Council Rules, meet the requirements for Oregon public meeting law, and has been approved by the Mayor as Chairperson of the meeting.

## Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was Called to Order at 5:30 PM.

## Roll Call

### PRESENT

Mayor Greg Mahler  
President Pro Tem Diane Gerson  
Councilor Cortney Nash (Absent)  
Councilor Dave Trask  
Councilor James Goble (left at 7:42 PM)  
Councilor Lisa Gourley  
Councilor Susan Coleman

### STAFF

Administrative Assistant Julie Fisher (video)  
Finance Director Brandon Neish  
Community and Economic Development Director Blair Larsen  
City Attorney Robert Snyder

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*The location of the meeting is accessible to the disabled. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, advanced notice is requested by notifying the City Manager's Office at 541-367-8969.*

Motion to approve the Absence of Council Nash.

Motion made by Councilor Gourley, Seconded by Councilor Goble.

Voting Yea: Mayor Mahler, President Pro Tem Gerson, Councilor Trask, Councilor Goble, Councilor Gourley, Councilor Coleman

**Recognition of Visitors and Hearing of Petitions:**

None

**Old Business:**

None

**New Business:**

a) Public Hearing Regarding Community Development Block Grants

The Public Hearing was opened at 5:33 PM.

Community and Economic Development Director Blair Larsen read the Public Hearing announcement for the Community Development Block Grants and explained the reason for the Public Hearing and the process.

Mayor Mahler asked for Public Comment. There were none.

The Public Hearing was closed at 5:37 PM.

b) Appointment of Manager Pro Tem

Community and Development Director Blair Larsen explained the Sweet Home City Charter states the Council shall appoint a Pro-Tem during the absence of the City Manager. City Manager Towry is out of Country and City Attorney Snyder felt a pro-tem should be appointed.

There was discussion among the Council.

Motion to appoint Community and Economic Development Director Blair Larsen to City Manager Pro-Tem.

Motion made by Councilor Gourley, Seconded by President Pro Tem Gerson.

Voting Yea: Mayor Mahler, President Pro Tem Gerson, Councilor Trask, Councilor Goble, Councilor Gourley, Councilor Coleman

c) Discussion Only - Amendments to the Commercial Exterior Improvement Program

Community and Economic Development Blair Larsen discussed potential amendments to the CEIP (Commercial Exterior Improvement Program). The program was reviewed and explained to the Council. The Council has identified the downtown areas as an economic development priority, prompting proposed changes to the CEIP program. Proposed changes included increasing the grant award amount, giving priority to "highly visible properties", and requiring a sign posted funds granted by the City of Sweet Home.

There was Council discussion on the proposed changes as well as additional changes that could be made. Consensus of the Council was to focus on the downtown area and review the projects to ensure that it accomplishes the Council's goals. The Council would also like to see Public Works clean the sidewalks and curbs.

d) Discussion Only - Vacant Buildings

Community and Economic Development Director Blair Larsen introduced the various reasons a building may be vacant. CEDD Larsen presented a proposed Vacant Building Ordinance and stated the purpose of the ordinance is to prevent further deterioration of

buildings, ensure safety of buildings, identify property owners and contact information, and to be able to give information to property owners for programs such as the CEIP program. Another option would be a volunteer vacant property registration. CEDD Larsen explained the voluntary registration would not have any enforcement mechanisms and may have low participation.

There was discussion among the Council including limiting the ordinance to a specific area, including residential properties, and enforcement. The Chamber of Commerce vs. Downtown Association and the functions of each were discussed.

The consensus of the Council was an ordinance that would focus on Commercial Properties. It was also discussed hiring a part time coordinator using Economic Development Funds to help stimulate downtown vs. the Chamber of Commerce's role and responsibilities.

The Council will review the draft provided by staff.

e) Discussion Only - Business License or Registry

Community and Economic Development Director Blair Larsen introduced the Business License or Registry topic for discussion. CEDD Larsen explained during the COVID pandemic, staff has had a difficult time getting information out to businesses due to lack of information the City has. Staff is suggesting to Council the implementation of a Business License or Registry. Pros and Cons of the business license ordinance were discussed as well as any fees associated with the licenses. CEDD Larsen emphasized this is not meant for any control over business or business activity, but merely as an attempt to be able to get information out to the business community.

The Consensus of the Council was to move forward with the business licensing with a minimal or no fee.

f) Discussion Only - Business Incentives

Community and Economic Development Director Blair Larsen introduced a presentation for options for business incentives. Staff introduced reasons for incentives and reasons for caution. Staff explained incentives are not a guarantee for success. Options for new incentives were presented such as a building fee waiver or rebate, planning fee waiver or discount, and SDC waiver or discount. Specific goals were discussed as well as targeted areas.

Other business incentives the City has available include the CEIP Program, Business training available from RAIN or SBDC and Enterprise Zone.

**Council Business for Good of the Order**

None

**Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

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Mayor

ATTEST:

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City Manager Pro-Tem