



Community Health Committee Meeting Minutes

August 27, 2025, 4:00 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 4:00 PM.

Roll Call

PRESENT

Chair Kelsey Ann Wray

Vice Chair Bob Dalton

Committee Member Michael Grenz

Committee Member Dr. Larry Horton

Committee Member Dick Knowles

Committee Member Shirley Schumacher

ABSENT

Committee Member Wanda Jones

STAFF

Jason Ogden, City Manager / Police Chief

Cecily Hope Pretty, Deputy City Manager

Adam Leisinger, Special Projects Manager

GUESTS

Dr. Ivan Wolthius

Approval of Minutes

- a) 2025-07-23 Community Health Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee Member Knowles moved to approve the minutes of the July 23, 2025 Community Health Committee Meeting. Vice Chair Dalton seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

AYE: Wray, Dalton, Grenz, Horton, Knowles, Schumacher

NAY: None

ABSENT: Jones

Recognition of Visitors / Public Comment

There were no visitors to be heard.

Old Business

a) Health Fair Recap

Vice Chair Dalton stated that there were over 40 tables, an increase over the previous year. He recommended that the Committee utilize the participant list to update the Community Resource List. He expressed his belief that the event was capturing the attendees most in need of the services and that he received positive feedback from attendees.

Committee Member Knowles highlighted the increased participation of Linn County compared to previous years.

Vice Chair Dalton noted an increase in interactions between the service providers and that several indicated they were already interested in participating the following year.

Chair Wray noted the importance of planning for potential emergency medical events in the future. She recommended the Committee host their own table at the next Community Health Fair.

No action was required for this item.

b) Health Forum

Chair Wray stated that the Health Forum would take place on October 4th. She recommended that the Committee select a topic from the eight central concerns as identified through community outreach by Western University:

- Medical care
- Specialties
- Literacy
- Transportation
- Mental health
- Resources
- Drug abuse
- Nutrition

Vice Chair Dalton recommended mental health as a topic and the importance of early intervention.

Committee Member Knowles stated that local mental health care providers continued to struggle with staff but that Linn County Mental Health was in the process of adding eight additional staff.

Vice Chair Dalton expressed concern that there was not enough time to plan a robust forum by the selected date.

Committee Member Knowles suggested highlighting the Community Resource List to enhance community awareness.

Committee Member Schumacher asked of the target audience. Vice Chair Dalton replied that the forum would be for anyone who had a need for information and assistance relevant to the topic.

Deputy City Manager Pretty suggested that the Committee consider postponing the forum in order to hold a dedicated Work Session to plan it, or to form a subcommittee of two to three members who could formulate a plan to bring back to the full Committee for consideration.

Councilor Bronson suggested literacy as the topic due to the timing of the school year and the availability of programming. Chair Wray if Councilor Bronson would be able to provide the presentation; he replied that he would not.

Chair Wray suggested utilizing an organization that was already connected to the Committee and recommended that the forum focus on access to available services.

There was consensus to postpone the forum to allow for additional planning and to hold a Work Session prior to the next regularly scheduled Committee meeting.

New Business

There was no new business to be heard.

Community Partner Presentations

a) Community Fluoridation Presentation – Dr. Ivan Wolthuis

Dr. Ivan Wolthuis expressed his disappointment with the recent City Council process and vote to remove fluoridation from Sweet Home's water supply. He reviewed the history of fluoridation in Sweet Home, including that the City Council last held a public engagement effort in 2014 which resulted in no action. He expressed that the majority of scientific evidence and professional organizations were supportive of fluoridation. He provided a document regarding fluoridation and asked for the Committee's support in discussing fluoridation in the community. He highlighted statements and statistics supporting the health benefits and safety of water fluoridation. He spoke of the difference between topical and systemic fluoride and noted that topical fluoride was less effective in providing benefits to dental health. He stated that fluoride was of particular benefit to low-income populations without access to regular dental care and that the Sweet Home School District was the lowest-income district west of the Cascades and the fourth lowest in Oregon. He noted that every dollar spent on fluoridation resulted in at least \$20 in savings on dental health care. He spoke of a number of organizations worldwide that support water fluoridation. He expressed concern that residents had already been negatively affected by the City's non-functional fluoridation system. He highlighted a study from Canada in a community that removed fluoride from their water and observed a 700% increase in dental issues in children. He expressed a desire to bring the topic back to a public forum.

Vice Chair Dalton asked if statistics were available demonstrating significant differences between cities that fluoridate vs. those that do not. Dr. Wolthuis replied that he was aware of several examples. Vice Chair Dalton asked how Dr. Wolthuis could encourage the City Council to reconsider the item. Deputy City Manager replied that a City Councilor who voted in the affirmative to remove the fluoride could make a motion to reconsider within the first six months of its passage, requiring a second to place it on a future agenda for reconsideration. She added that after six months, it could be placed on the agenda without reconsideration, or it could be placed on the agenda through a petition effort at any time.

Committee Member Schumacher asked why the ordinance removing the fluoride was allowed two readings in one meeting. Deputy City Manager Pretty replied that it was allowed by City Charter.

Councilor Bronson stated that he would have been a "no" vote if he had been able to attend the meeting where the first reading occurred.

Vice Chair Dalton asked if Dr. Wolthuis could give a 15-minute presentation to City Council on fluoridation. Deputy City Manager Pretty replied that it was up to those who had the power to set the agenda.

Committee Member Horton asked of the current number of registered voters. Deputy City Manager Pretty replied that she could get an updated number from Linn County Elections. Committee Member Horton asked if the petition process would begin with the City. Deputy City Manager Pretty replied that the process was regulated by the State but she was available to speak with anyone about more procedural details. Committee Member Horton suggested fluoridation as the topic for a health forum. Deputy City Manager Pretty reminded the Committee that as Council appointees, they were bound to support the outcome of the Council vote when representing the Committee but an open conversation about the topic would be allowable.

Dr. Wolthuis stated that his materials were also available online. Deputy City Manager Pretty stated that she could include the digital version as part of the record with the online meeting packet.

No action was required for this item.

Committee Business for the Good of the Order

Committee Work Session Protocol

Deputy City Manager Pretty stated that work sessions were designed for the Committee to focus on one or two topics with a goal in mind and that no votes could be taken.

Chair Wray asked if any items requiring a vote could be moved to a future actionable agenda. Deputy City Manager Pretty replied that they could. She advised that if a Subcommittee was formed, the entire Committee may want to adopt their recommendations by vote.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:14 PM.

Chair

ATTEST:

City Manager – Ex Officio City Recorder