



TUALATIN CITY COUNCIL

OFFICIAL WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES

FOR APRIL 14, 2025

PRESENT: Mayor Frank Bubenik, Council President Valerie Pratt, Councilor Christen Sacco, Councilor Cyndy Hillier, Councilor Bridget Brooks, and Councilor Octavio Gonzalez

ABSENT: Councilor Maria Reyes

Mayor Bubenik called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

1. Homelessness Update.

City/County Homelessness Liaison Megan Cohen, Just Compassion Street Outreach Coordinator Caleb Peterson, and HomePlate Youth Services Outreach Coordinator Lucy Simmons presented a six-month update on homelessness in Tualatin. Mrs. Cohen explained current definitions of homelessness, including HUD and Department of Education standards, and shared that a growing number of individuals in Tualatin are experiencing housing instability, especially seniors and families with children. She noted that 30% of Tualatin households live at 50% area median income or below, and the city lacks sufficient affordable housing to meet demand.

Liaison Cohen emphasized the critical role of street outreach workers in connecting individuals to resources. She shared that coordinated referral networks, including the Tualatin Library and Police Department, have improved responsiveness and access.

Outreach Coordinator Simmons described her work with youth ages 12–24. She stated in 2024, her team served over 900 youth, more than 500 of whom were engaged through outreach. Outreach Coordinator Simmons described challenges such as working with students who are unsheltered, living in vehicles, or couch surfing. She emphasized the relational nature of outreach and the importance of consistent connections with young people and community partners.

Outreach Coordinator Peterson highlighted the expansion of services, including a new 60-bed shelter in Tigard and a Safe Parking program. He described conducting field assessments that connect individuals with shelter and housing services through the regional Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Outreach Coordinator Peterson emphasized the long-term nature of outreach relationships and the gaps that arise when individuals are not consistently engaged. Peterson shared emotional stories of long-term homelessness in Tualatin and underscored the life-saving impact of early connection and persistent outreach.

Councilor Brooks expressed appreciation for the work being done and inquired about statewide trends in child homelessness. Both Outreach Coordinator Peterson Simmons and Liaison Cohen noted a dramatic rise in housing instability and cited multi-generational poverty and the growing cost of housing as major contributing factors. They also noted an anticipated increase in demand due to cuts in eviction prevention funding.

Council President Pratt asked how individuals in need can connect with services. Liaison Cohen directed residents to the Washington County resource site "ShowtheWay.org" and noted that the Tualatin Library is a key local point of contact. She also described law enforcement's ability to access emergency shelter beds at the Just Compassion facility in Tigard.

Councilor Brooks inquired what can be done to support individuals experiencing homelessness. Liaison Cohen and Outreach Coordinator Peterson emphasized increasing access to services locally, providing basic resource hubs, and ensuring strong relationships between outreach workers and trusted community sites.

2. *Parks & Trails Project Update.*

Parks Planning and Development Manager Rich Mueller, Project Manager Kara Hein, and Parks and Recreation Director Dustin Schull presented an update on projects funded through the Parks and Trails bond. Manager Mueller stated that 50% of the projects are completed. He gave an overview of the projects and explained how they align with the City's Council goals, initiatives, priorities, and vision. Manager Mueller highlighted the Veterans Plaza and stated that the Communications Team is trying to get the word out about it.

Project Manager Hein shared the continuous progress on the three remaining investment areas: the Nyberg Creek Trail, Riverfront Park access, and athletic field improvements. She stated the first phase of the Nyberg Creek Trail—a three-quarter mile concrete path—will begin construction in summer 2025. Manager Hein state remaining funds will support planning for the future trail crossing under I-5.

Project Manager Hein explained they are working with Urban Renewal/Economic Development Manager Sid Sin to ensure downtown integrates well with the park. She invited all to attend the Ribbon Cutting ceremony on Memorial Day.

Councilor Brooks thanked them for the work they have done thus far and stated she is excited to see what we do with the boat launch at Riverfront Park.

Council President Pratt expressed her support and gratitude that these projects are moving forward.

Councilor Sacco inquired about the opening of Las Casitas Park. Project Manager Hein stated that opening is scheduled for 2025/26.

3. *Council Meeting Agenda Review, Communications & Roundtable.*

Councilor Sacco stated she attended the Byrom CIO meeting.

Councilor Hillier stated she attended the Washington County Consolidated Communication Agency meeting and the Tualatin High School gala.

Councilor Brooks thanked the Mayor and others present who attended the Grand Opening of Plambeck Gardens grand opening. She stated also attended the Tualatin Chamber of Commerce meeting, met with Metro Councilor Rosenthal, attended the Water Consortium meeting, and was at the Riverkeepers' birthday event.

Council President Pratt stated she attended the TTSD Foundation gala, Plambeck Gardens Grand Opening, and the Clackamas County Business Association Mayoral Summit.

Mayor Bubenik shared that he attended the Community that Cares meeting. He invited all to attend the Town Hall with local representatives on Friday the 18th at 6:30 pm.

Adjournment

Mayor Bubenik adjourned the meeting at 6:49 p.m.

Sherilyn Lombos, City Manager

_____ / Erika Pagel, Recording Secretary

_____ / Frank Bubenik, Mayor