

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
MARCH 18, 2025 Page 1**

**CONVENE:** 7:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mayor Debbie Sullivan and Councilmembers Peter Agabi, Michael Althaus, Joan Cathey, Leatta Dahlhoff, Angela Jefferson, Eileen Swarthout, and Kelly Von Holtz.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Finance Department Director Troy Niemeyer, Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Administrative Services Department Director Michelle Sutherland, Water Resources & Sustainability Department Director Dan Smith, Parks and Recreation Department Director Chuck Denney, Transportation and Engineering Department Director Brandon Hicks, IT Department Director Lance Inman, and Police Lieutenant Carolos Quiles.

**SPECIAL ITEMS:**

**PROCLAMATION:  
WOMEN'S HISTORY  
MONTH, MARCH  
2025:** Councilmember Dahlhoff read a proclamation declaring, *Women's History Month, March 2025*. The proclamation urged people to take actions against gender bias and inequity and join in recognizing women's contributions to culture, history, and society.

Shelly Willis, Family Education & Support Services, accepted the proclamation on behalf of the Zonta Club of Olympia. The City's acknowledgement of the day is a meaningful step forward in ensuring that the contributions, struggles, and triumphs of women are recognized and valued within the community. For years, the Zonta Club of Olympia has been steadfast in its advocacy for women rights, education, and empowerment. The organization appreciates the Council's leadership in recognizing the important day.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** **Linda Burt** said that eight years ago, she asked the Council for assistance for rental caps or ways to reduce rental increases. Since then, she has experienced the loss of her husband, the murder of her sister and brother by gun violence, experienced a house fire, and the death of two baby rabbits. She plans to testify at the State Senate about rent control. She lives in a manufactured home park and is hopeful everyone's testimony will help some of the problems that she is experiencing at Laurel Park Estates in Tumwater.

**CONSENT  
CALENDAR:**

- a. Approval of Minutes: City Council, February 18, 2025
- b. Approval of Minutes: City Council, March 4, 2025
- c. Payment of Vouchers
- d. Resolution No. R2025-006, Surplus Property
- e. First Amendment to the Service Provider Agreement with Fehr & Peers for the Transportation Plan of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update
- f. Service Provider Agreement with the Thurston Regional Planning Council for Transportation Modeling

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
MARCH 18, 2025 Page 2**

- g. Lease Agreement with Kaufman Holdings, Inc. for 821 Airport Court
- h. Advisory Board Appointment of Sandra Nelson and Nelida Daniel to the Planning Commission

**MOTION:** **Councilmember Swarthout moved, seconded by Councilmember Dahlhoff, to approve the Consent Calendar as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

Mayor Sullivan reviewed the items approved on the Consent Calendar.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**R2025-005, IN  
SUPPORT OF THE  
TUMWATER  
TRANSPORTATION  
BENEFIT DISTRICT  
PROPOSITION 1:**

Director Hicks reported the proposal is for consideration of the resolution in support of the Tumwater Transportation Benefit District Proposition 1 on the ballot for the special election on April 22, 2025. Passage of Proposition 1 would continue the existing 0.2% sales tax to pay for transportation projects in the City for the next 10 years. If approved, the sales tax is estimated to generate over \$30 million for street and sidewalk maintenance over the next 10 years.

Mayor Sullivan opened the public hearing at 7:13 p.m.

**PUBLIC  
TESTIMONY:**

There was no public testimony.

Mayor Sullivan closed the public hearing at 7:14 p.m.

Councilmembers spoke in support of the resolution stressing the need for the funding source to maintain existing transportation infrastructure and that the proposal is not a new tax, but continues an existing tax paid by anyone who shops in the City, which lessens the burden on Tumwater residents.

**MOTION:** **Councilmember Swarthout moved, seconded by Councilmember Dahlhoff, to adopt Resolution No. R2025-005 in support of the Tumwater Transportation Benefit District (TBD) Proposition 1, Renewal of Sales and Use Tax for Transportation Improvements that will appear before voters on the April 22, 2025 Special Election Ballot. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**COUNCIL  
CONSIDERATIONS:**

**EMPLOYMENT  
AGREEMENT  
TEMPLATE:**

City Administrator Parks advised that the Budget and Finance Committee recommends the Council approve the employment agreement template.

In the City of Tumwater, the Mayor selects and appoints department directors. However, the Council approves contracts and agreements. Of the 10 department directors in the City, seven directors have executed employment

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
MARCH 18, 2025 Page 3**

agreements with three directors lacking any employment agreement. The objective was to establish new agreements for directors lacking an agreement, as well as addressing standardizing employment agreements for all director positions.

The proposal replaces existing agreements with the template and executes the standardized agreement with three directors lacking an employment agreement. The template includes some provisions that will result in substantive changes to standard components within the agreement for each director position. The basic terms of the agreement outlines the duties of the position with an attached job descriptions for each position. The term of the employment agreement emphasizes that directors serve at-will with an indefinite term of service but no guaranteed tenure.

One provision standardized for all agreements is the severance package where termination results because of a matter of right by the City without cause. The current severance terms range between two and six months. The proposal recommends a six-month severance package consistent with the City Administrator employment agreement. Salary for each position is based on the City's salary and grade system approved by the Council each year during the adoption of the budget.

The request is for approval and authorization to the Mayor to sign employment agreements with current and future directors in substantially the same format consistent with adopted City policies as approved by the City Attorney.

City Administrator Parks addressed questions about the reason for standardizing the agreements. Additionally, the director positions are non-union positions.

**MOTION:**

**Councilmember Swarthout moved, seconded by Councilmember Jefferson, to approve and authorize the Mayor to sign employment agreements with current and future directors in substantially similar form consistent with adopted city policies as approved by the City Attorney as recommended by the Budget and Finance Committee at their February 28, 2025 meeting. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**COMMITTEE  
REPORTS:**

**PUBLIC HEALTH &  
SAFETY:  
*Peter Agabi***

The meeting on Tuesday, March 11, 2025 included an update by the Thurston County Prosecutor on Tumwater activities. The City of Tumwater has experienced an increase in cases primarily surrounding domestic violence cases.

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
MARCH 18, 2025 Page 4**

**GENERAL  
GOVERNMENT:  
*Michael Althaus***

The special meeting earlier in the day included a review of the Climate and Housing Elements of the Comprehensive Plan and briefings on the Food System Plan, contract approval for a 12-Year Multifamily Tax Exemption for the Yorkshire Apartments, and consideration of a Service Provider Agreement with the Thurston Regional Planning Council for Transportation Modeling.

**PUBLIC WORKS:  
*Eileen Swarhout***

The next meeting agenda on March 20, 2025 includes consideration of acceptance of work for tenant improvements for City of Tumwater Office Space at South Puget Sound Community College, acceptance of work for the Palermo Security Fencing Replacement Project, discussion on a Schedule 74 Design Agreement with Puget Sound Energy for the Old Highway 99 and 79th Avenue roundabout, and a construction contract with Northwest Cascade, Inc. for the Linwood Avenue Sidewalk, Susitna Lane to 2nd Avenue project for additional construction funds.

**BUDGET AND  
FINANCE:  
*Debbie Sullivan***

The committee's next meeting is on March 28, 2025.

**MAYOR/CITY  
ADMINISTRATOR'S  
REPORT:**

City Administrator Parks reported personnel from the Tumwater Police Department are scheduled to present information to the Tumwater Chamber of Commerce on current trends, challenges, opportunities, public safety initiatives, and collaborating with local businesses to foster success and security. The meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, March 19, 2025 from noon and 1 p.m. at New Market Skills Center.

City Administrator Parks updated the Council on the Community Assistance Referral and Education Services (CARES) program in partnership between Tumwater Fire Department and Olympia Fire Department. The fire departments share a position with the position working half time on CARES referrals in Tumwater. All Tumwater firefighters received training in the CARES referral process with 11 community members referred for assistance.

**COUNCILMEMBER  
REPORTS:**

***Peter Agabi:***

At the March 7, 2025 Thurston Regional Planning Council meeting, members received an update by LOTT Clean Water Alliance on current and future activities, an overview of the Regional Transportation Plan's future conditions chapter, and an update by Intercity Transit staff on transit services offered by the agency.

***Kelly Von Holtz:***

Meetings included attendance at Tumwater Public Health & Safety Committee and the Intercity Transit Authority meeting. Members received an update on legislation affecting statewide transit agencies and the funding forecast. The Authority is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, March 19, 2025. The agenda includes a region transportation update by TRPC. Councilmember Von Holtz

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
MARCH 18, 2025 Page 5**

is scheduled to attend the Tumwater Chamber of Commerce meeting at New Market Skills Center

***Angela Jefferson:***

The last meeting of the Emergency Medical Services Council included several updates. The first ALS academy hosted 40 participants with all graduating and moving forward. An EMT class had an enrollment of 30 participants. The program is supported by Thurston County. Staffing updates included the departure of two personnel and the 2024 EMS Comprehensive Plan and concerns about the plan's alignment with the mission statement and the process for the Council's approval.

On March 4, 2024 Councilmember Jefferson attended an Equity In Education Forum in lieu of the Council meeting to learn more about Senate Bill 5044 concerning professional learning, equity, cultural competency, and dismantling institutional racism in the public school system. The forum addressed cultural competency with a goal to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion training for educators and school staff in Washington State. Councilmember Jefferson shared why she attended the forum. She stressed the importance of everyone talking about race, as discussions on race are difficult because everyone has a different perspective. She cited a recent incident involving a biracial child that was spit on by a young white girl on a school bus. The incident was on video. The parent was not notified of the incident and after meeting with school officials he was informed that the incident was not an assault, as the girl did not physically strike the boy. The school principal informed the parent that he would not receive an apology and that the responsibility was with the School Transportation Department, as the incident did not occur on school grounds. SB 5044 is a bipartisan bill and a crucial step of ensuring that all schools provide an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students, particularly those from historically marginalized communities.

Councilmember Jefferson commented on her efforts to preserve the FRESH program because of budget cuts by the Tumwater School District. The Tumwater FRESH Program is a prevention program for high school at-risk students. At an earlier meeting with Councilmember Swarthout, students presented a plan to preserve the FRESH Program. Parents have attributed the program to benefiting their child. Additionally, in collaboration with Councilmember Dahlhoff, a meeting was held with the Tumwater School District Deputy Superintendent to discuss how they could assist in saving the program.

***Leatta Dahlhoff:***

Councilmember Dahlhoff attended the LOTT Clean Water Alliance Board meeting. The Board declared the Henderson Boulevard property in Tumwater as surplus. The Board approved the use of \$125,000 from the Affordable Housing Support Program (shared pool) for the Franz Anderson housing project. Staff provided updates on the hauled waste receiving station project

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
MINUTES OF HYBRID MEETING  
MARCH 18, 2025 Page 6**

that may entail a road closure up to four years. The project will cost millions of dollars and serves food truck waste.

The Thurston County Opioid Abatement Council recently met. City Administrator Parks and Councilmember Dahlhoff attended the meeting. Members discussed the process, program structure, and funding uses. Funding can be used for treatment, connections to care, recovery support services, primary prevention, overdose prevention, harm reduction, and police and fire CARES support. The meetings are scheduled monthly and as funding is discussed, updates will be provided to the Council to determine how potential funding could benefit Tumwater.

Councilmember Dahlhoff attended the Tumwater Public Health and Safety Committee and the General Government Committee meetings.

***Michael Althaus:*** The next meeting of the Regional Housing Council is on Wednesday, March 26, 2025.

***Eileen Swarthout:*** Councilmember Swarthout reported on her attendance to the March 7, 2025 Thurston Regional Planning Council meeting.

Councilmember Swarthout reported on the Transportation Online Open House March 20 - April 2, 2025 in support of the Transportation Plan update as part of the update of the Comprehensive Plan. She encouraged community members to attend.

**ADJOURNMENT:** **With there being no further business, Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President  
Puget Sound Meeting Services, psmsoly@earthlink.net