

**MINUTES OF THE CITY OF HEPPNER CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
HEPPNER CITY HALL, 111 N. MAIN STREET, HEPPNER, OREGON  
7:00 PM MARCH 11, 2024**

NOTE: Where stated "Motion Carried" is considered unanimous, unless otherwise stated.

**ATTENDEES:**

**Corey Sweeney  
Ralph Klock  
Sharon Inskeep  
Ian Murray  
Dale Bates  
Adam Doherty  
John Doherty  
Chad Doherty  
Eric Chick  
Bill Kuhn**

**Absent: Cody High**

**Members of the Public: Barb Orwick, Terri & Jerry Gentry, Kolby Golden, Marie Johnson, Jason Zinter, Sharon Harrison, Brandi Sweeney, James Healy, Pat & Trisha Sweeney, Paul Lauritsen, Ken Bailey, Richard Drake, George Nairns, Diane Kilkenny, John Kilkenny, Tony Clement, Tiffany Clement, Dale Woods, Judy Healy, Jerry Healy, Nathen Braun**

**On Zoom: Heppner Gazette, Brandi Hanson, Austin Gutierrez, Jeanne Collins, Nicole Mahoney, Lori Coppentrath, Justin Nelson, Kelli Stewart, Mollie Rhea, Matt Jensen, Bill Schlaich, Phil Sanfiorenzo, Megan Golden, Jodi Ferguson, Sue Wack, Emily Collins**

**1. GENERAL BUSINESS**

A. Call to Order. Corey Sweeney called the March 11, 2024 meeting of the City of Heppner City Council to order at 7:00 PM.

B. Pledge of Allegiance. Corey Sweeney led attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

C. Public Hearing

1. Proposed Supplemental Budget FY 23-24.  
Open Public Hearing at 7:01- No public comments.  
Close Public Hearing at 7:03

2. Council Action, Resolution 1069-24, A Resolution Approving the Adoption of a Supplemental Budget of the 2023-2024 Budget.

Motion to approve Resolution 1069-24, A Resolution Approving the Adoption of a Supplemental Budget of the 2023-2024 Budget by Dale Bates. Seconded by Ralph Klock. Motion Carried

D. Announcements - None

E. Correspondence – None

F. Requests – Animal Permit for two 4-H goats: Gage Rosenbalm and Maddex McMasters.

Motion to approve the animal permit request by Ian Murray. Seconded by Adam Doherty. Motion Carried

G. Presentations

1. Mayor Sweeney: District Courthouse Discussion

Corey Sweeney spoke about the proposed County Courthouse building. The property at the Fairgrounds is still the selected site. That location hasn't been popular with a lot of people. The City of Heppner wants to keep it in Heppner, and fully support it being in Heppner. It was just recently approved to be out of city limits at the Old Mill Zone near the DMV. We want to ensure that it stays in the Heppner zip code. Corey cautioned that if it is ok for it to be out of city limits and the Mill Zone isn't feasible, we could lose it altogether. Boardman and Irrigon have a lot of potential and a lot of room to grow. Heppner cannot afford to lose anything including our Courthouse. The vision is to keep the Circuit Court in Heppner and Heppner would get its own Circuit Court Judge for Gilliam and Wheeler County to redistrict out of Heppner. The Fairgrounds location was very close to being finalized. They had made an agreement to purchase or lease some farmland for Fair and Rodeo parking. Someone told the property owner that the Mill Zone property was chosen and he decided against the agreement. The Mill Zone may not be feasible as there is no infrastructure. Corey is trying to set up a meeting and renegotiate with the property owner. We need to collaborate with everyone to make it stay here.

John Doherty spoke about the discourse on social media about renovating City Hall, Old Courthouse and Bartholomew Buildings for the Circuit Court. The City offered the three lots, at and around City Hall. That totals .8 acres. The current County owned lot near the Fairgrounds is 2.27 acres. The footprint of the building and the parking lot pretty much covers the whole area. The building will be 25,000 sq ft, 2 stories, 28 staff parking spaces in the back and 94 in the front. There are certain specifications for the needs of the building. That seems like a lot of parking

but it would be needed during jury selection. During jury selection at the current Courthouse, there is not enough parking. The current Courthouse and Bartholomew building area is 2.5 acres. The current Courthouse cannot be renovated to meet the specifications and there is no room for more parking. The Bartholomew Building doesn't even have a big enough footprint to add stories to it, and the current layout cannot be modified to meet the specifications. Even if they bought all the lots up to Willow Street, that is only 1 acre. That's only if those people wanted to sell. If the City had 2 acres of buildable land, we would offer it. They need a large building as Morrow County Government is growing. They had outgrown the Bartholomew Building before they moved in, it was the same with the new building in Irrigon. The proposed spot is the only 2 acre lot in town and there is already water and sewer available. The City Hall building is only 10,000 sq ft and doesn't fit their specifications. The new building will have a sallyport and a secure entrance. All of that will not work at the City Hall Building. Everything downstream on Hinton Creek is in the regulated floodway and they can't build there either. What happens if they look at the Mill Site and they must drill a well, or can't put in a septic system? It could be 2 or 3 million dollars for infrastructure improvements. What if they decide to move it out of Heppner? John warned to be extremely careful of the slippery slope effect. If we lose the District Court, Juvenile Services goes with it and then other services will leave. An example is Coalville UT. It is the county seat but all of the county services moved to Park City. Coalville is still a community but they have lost everything but the sign that says they are the county seat. There was concern about it being close to the school but the state has no requirements for the distance a courthouse can be from a school. It will be a secure building with a separate secure entrance for prisoners. Other comments included suggestions to use the city lot on Chase and May for employee parking and have them walk up the hill to work. Another suggestion was to move the Football Field or the bus shed to use for parking. Quite a few people in attendance preferred the Mill location. There are a lot of hurdles at the Mill property, it may not be able to go there. We need to be prepared for that. It cannot be annexed as it is out of the Urban Growth Boundary. It would be a good place to build as it would help clean the area up and if infrastructure were available, it could attract other business. Everyone agreed that we want to keep it in Heppner. Corey said we all need to work together and be on the same page with no drama. The Rodeo board would like to work with the city and county to make this work. John Doherty said that worst case scenario is if the county was not able to use the land by the Fairgrounds, they could sell it and it could be split up. Ten to fifteen 35' tall houses would fit in that area. It could block access and there would be no agreement for parking. The parking lot for the Courthouse may not be good for horses but would be good for overflow parking or 4-H campers. Morrow County said that they will not conduct court during Fair and Rodeo so that the parking lot can be used.

## 2. Howard and Beth Bryant Foundation: Kim Cutsforth – Cancelled

3. Barb Orwick: The Neighborhood Center

In February they gave away 75 food boxes which fed approximately 182 people. 250 people came to the Neighborhood Center in the last month. Volunteer hours are up.

**2. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC** - None

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. February 12, 2024 City Council meeting minutes & February 12, March 1, Work Session Minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes by Sharon Inskeep. Seconded by Dale Bates. Motion Carried

- B. Approval of Monthly Bills

Motion to approve the monthly bills by Adam Doherty. Seconded by Dale Bates. Motion Carried

- C. Financial Statement – For information only

**4. REPORTS**

- A. Fire Chief Report – Eric Chick read the report.

8 Lift Assists  
2 Secure Landing Zone  
1 Central Station Alarm  
1 Body Removal  
1 Vehicle Fire  
2 Cancelled Enroute Controlled Burn 2  
40 calls for the year to date  
23 Chief Calls

Met with Steve Freeland Emergency Manager, Eric Imes from MCPW and Gerry Arson at the new station site at Blakes Ranch. Was joined by 3 contractors to look over the site.

Conducting smoke detector installations.  
New Tactical Tender delivery expected in March OSFM  
Training Academy for NFPA Firefighter 1.  
Sent 5 Firefighters to Hermiston for Hazmat Training.

Laid in Propane Line and placed form for the new generator at the station.

B. Morrow County Sheriff's Department – Nathen Braun read the stats report. There were 386.75 hours for February. There were no questions.

C. Public Works. Chad Doherty read the Public Works report.

Water Dept. – Repaired a meter box at 61215 Hwy 207. Repaired a water leak on Green Street. Put a cap on water service at the Heppner Community Foundation building. Replaced a check valve on the chlorination pump at Reservoir 1. Fixed multiple meter lids and sensor holders on meter boxes. Set up new meter reading phone with Ferguson Waterworks. Still working through some connectivity issues. Continued to manually adjust wells and reservoirs.

Sewer Dept. – The crew cleaned contact basins twice. Did 7 septic dumps. TMG services came out and inspected and cleaned the chlorine and sulfur dioxide systems. Also fixed a broken leak detection alarm system. Attended City Council work session along with Anderson & Perry on upcoming Wastewater and Water projects. Completed Biosolids and I & I reports and sent them to DEQ. Completed Hazmat reports on chlorination and sulfur systems and sent them to the State Fire Marshalls office.

Streets Dept. – Applied deicer on multiple days. Pulled weeds in bubble outs on Main and May Street. Continued to repair and paint downtown benches. Installed 15 MPH signs on Fairview Way. Painted the Shamrock. Swept town on multiple days with the new street sweeper. Repaired street sign on Aiken and Elder. Repaired the stop sign that blew over by Les Schwab.

Parks Dept. – Fixed a broken water line at the City Park Restroom. Sanded and painted the doors on the City Park Restroom. Fixed the throttle cable on the Walker mower. Took 2013 Walker mower to Inland Turf and Equipment in La Grande. Replaced 2 dogipot garbage cans. One at City Park and another at Hager Park.

Shop Dept.- Painted the shop office at 140 N Gale St. Cleaned scum and scaling off the ice maker. Replaced oil in 2018 Ram 1500 #1 and 2018 Ram 2500 #12.

D. City Manager Report

Met with Mac Hoskins to sign "Reclaimed Water Registration Form," for inclusion in Anderson Perry report to DEQ.

Received \$600,000 CREZ II funds.

Attended GEODC board meeting and discussed R3 Housing Development funding and future opportunities for our area.

Attended Joint Heppner Rural/Heppner fire. Received Heppner Rural payment of \$57,633.04. Steve Rhea asked for funding for attendance to FDIC for Eric & Kaitlyn. Asked Mayor Sweeney and approved COH contribution.

Attended POM meetings via Zoom. Port reports Mill Site project has requested bids for flood zone remediation.

Verkada cameras – Worked with Chad, LTT, and OTLD regarding offline cameras at City Park. Work will continue when Chad Doherty returns from training.

Drafted Resolutions 1069, 1070, 1071, and 1072.

Published Public Notices regarding: Hager St Vacation Ordinance, Police Commission, and Council Work Session.

CenturyLink/Lumen: Worked with Congruex to complete application for upcoming fiber optics project. Sent letters to property owners in ROW to inform them of work.

ODOT – filed permit for Shamrock painting

CRS Users Workgroup – attended Zoom regarding floodplain, elevation certificates.

Reviewed payroll and city bills.

Handled multiple complaints regarding Chase St resident having roosters.

Meeting with Chad Doherty regarding (1) Lumen project (2) City of Lone water supervision, (3) WCPD service contract (4) City Park playground equipment grant (5) Work session – items to discuss in his absence.

Jeff Merkley office – work with Jessica Keys regarding 2025 CIP

Floodplain meeting with FEMA, OEM, USACE, Kim C. regarding upcoming studies and timelines on possible re-mapping.

Met with Kevin Payne @ MSWCD and Janet Greenup @ Water District to discuss maps and studies of Shobe Creek basin projects and conservation to provide for floodplain study.

Planning Commission – Spoke with members of Commission regarding information requests about District Courthouse – of which we have not received a permit application – and advised all to direct requests to myself to avoid possible ethics complaints.

Pinegate Renewables – met with Jeff Fox, Logan Stephens, and Zac Hillis regarding Sunstone Solar project and opportunities involving the COH.

ODOT – Met with Ken Patters, Region 5 Manager and Rich Lani, District 12 Manager. Discussed HB2017 funds, upcoming grant opportunities, Main St bridge repair.

Worked with FD on IT licensing needs.

Jimmy Wimer – worked on permit for garage/ADU for property.

Attended CREZ III meeting via Zoom.

OGEC – contacted regarding ethics questions and upcoming

Received ODOT reimbursement of \$208,004.69 for HB2017 project.

Deputy Thomas – Asked to cite resident for animal permitting violation, traffic patrol requests, and contacting vehicle owners regarding parking violations.

ODOT – submitted and received approval for \$21,604.00 reimbursement for crack seal project under HB2017.

MC Planning – met with Daisy Goebel and Stephen Wrecsics regarding Zoning maps and work with City/County to correct and update maps for inclusion on both our websites.

Police Commission – Feb 27<sup>th</sup> -attended and received recommendation to approve 2024-2026 MCSO contract at Council.

District Courthouse – attended County Townhall and explained COH permit process and asked individuals to direct questions to City Hall and not rely on social media for information. Answered questions from the public.

WCVEDG - attended meeting and discussed grants approval within city and possible new grant program.

Attended SMCSM luncheon 02-27-2024.

Planning – met with Kelly Fox to complete permit application for variance for April Planning.

Met with Mike Cannon – Cannon Companies and Will Allred of Allred Landworx regarding project possibilities and possible shop rental.

Work with ECONorthwest on 2022 Morrow County Housing Implementation Study and information to Anderson Perry for WSMP.

City Park playground equipment project – contact HES, Sage Garden, Heppner Daycare regarding letters of support and presentation on project. Grant application work.

Council Work Session – attended where we decided CREZ funds usage, daycare support, and economic subcommittee ground rules.

Supplemental Budget – created and published for approval of receipt, transfer of CREZ funds.

Mayor Sweeney – several meetings regarding courthouse, CREZ funds usage, marketing of Chase St properties.

HHS – met with Ryan Gerry regarding Safe Routes to School grant.

DOR – attended Basic Local Budget Law training, with Heather Kelton, in Albany in preparation of COH budget process.

MC Planning – discussions with Tamra Mabbott on buildable land in Heppner and meeting.

Attended ODOT NEACT meeting to discuss future ODOT funding and projects.

District Courthouse – Meeting with MC, PBS, DLR, and Alliance to discuss infrastructure and zoning for possible courthouse locations.

Calls and meetings with several current or prospective property owners regarding development on lots within City limits.

Made Tarina wait til the last minute to print Council Agenda.

## **5. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- A. Ordinance 591-24, An Ordinance Vacating That Portion of Cross Street Between Hager Street and Matlock Street and Declaring an Emergency.

Mayor Sweeney read Ordinance 591-24.

Open Public Hearing at 8:49 –No Public Comment

Close Public Hearing at 8:50

Council Action:

Motion to approve Ordinance 591-24, An Ordinance Vacating That Portion of Cross Street Between Hager Street and Matlock Street and Declaring an Emergency by Dale Bates. Seconded by Ralph Klock. Motion Carried

## **6. BUSINESS**

### **A. Old Business**

1. Resolution Number Correction – Resolution # 1065-24 was duplicated by mistake. The Resolutions following that have been renumbered to correct it.

### **B. New Business**

1. Resolution 1070-24, A Resolution Declaring the City's Endorsement to Retain the Morrow County District Courthouse Within the City Limits.

This is nothing official. It is just to embrace the new courthouse to be located in Heppner. After discussion the Council decided to amend the Resolution to replace "City Limits" with Heppner Zip Code.

Motion to approve Resolution 1070-24, A Resolution Declaring the City's Endorsement to Retain the Morrow County District Courthouse Within the City Zip Code 97836 by Ian Murray. Seconded by Adam Doherty. Motion Carried

2. Resolution 1071-24, A Resolution to Approve the Morrow County Sheriff's Contract for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

This was discussed by the Police Commission and they recommended accepting this contract.

Motion to approve Resolution to Approve the Morrow County Sheriff's Contract for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 by Ralph Klock. Seconded by Dale Bates. Motion Carried

3. Resolution 1072-24, A Resolution Creating an Economic Development Committee.

This was discussed at the March 1, 2024 Council Work Session.



Motion to approve Resolution 1072-24, A Resolution Creating an Economic Development Committee by Dale Bates. Seconded by Ian Murray. Motion Carried

**7. MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETINGS** – For information only.

**8. REPORT FROM CITY ATTORNEY** – No report.

**9. REPORT FROM MAYOR, CITY COUNCILORS** – Sharon Inskeep reported that they held the last St. Patrick's Committee meeting and are ready for this weekend. Corey will be absent for the April meeting. Council President Adam Doherty will run the meeting.

**10. ADJOURNMENT** – Meeting adjourned at 8:59 PM