

**MINUTES OF THE CITY OF HEPPNER CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
HEPPNER CITY HALL, 111 N. MAIN STREET, HEPPNER, OREGON  
7:00 PM NOVEMBER 10, 2025**

**ATTENDEES:**

**Corey Sweeney  
Sharon Inskeep  
Joe Armato  
Ian Murray  
Dale Bates  
John Doherty  
Chad Doherty  
Steve Rhea**

**Absent: Ralph Klock & Adam Doherty (approved absences), Nathen Braun**

**Members of the Public: None**

**On Zoom: Heppner Gazette**

**1. GENERAL BUSINESS**

- A. Call to Order. Corey Sweeney called the November 10, 2025, 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. Announcements – None
- D. Correspondence - None
- E. Requests - None
- F. Presentations - None

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

**3. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. October 13, 2025, City Council meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes by Dale Bates. Seconded by Joe Armato. Councilors Sweeney, Murray, Armato, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

B. Approval of Monthly Bills

Motion to approve the monthly bills by Joe Armato. Seconded by Ian Murray. Councilors Sweeney, Murray, Armato, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve.

C. Financial Statement – For information only.

#### 4. REPORTS

A. Fire Chief Report – Steve Rhea read the report.

- 8 lift assists EMS
- 3 secure landing zone
- 4 motor vehicle accidents, non-injury
- 1 cancelled before enroute alarm
- 2 illegal burns on Gale St and Union St
- 1 cancelled on scene burn RFPD
- 1 battery fire PMH
- 1 EMS assist at OHV park
- 1 controlled burn in city limits not called in
- 1 smoke check at the reservoir
- 1 tree removal on Willow Creek Rd
- 153 calls for 2025
- 38 Chief Calls

Fire Safety table at the Children's Fair at HES. Hose and ladder testing completed. Presented a Fire Safety Program for K-6<sup>th</sup> grade. Tac Tender Use report for the month of September to OSFM. Conducted a fire drill at St. Pat's Senior Center. Took the Tac Tender to UCFD #1 Station 23 for pump testing. Picked up a pallet of fire hose and fittings from ODF in Fossil. Attended OTFTA training meeting in Pendleton. Tank Welder repaired the tank on the 539 water tender. Started installation of smoke detectors for fall. Had the grand opening of Cruson Station at Blakes Ranch. Took Brush #2 to Cruson Station for housing.

B. Morrow County Sheriff's Department – Nathen Braun was absent. Sharon Inskeep is concerned about seeing many people running stop signs and driving through crosswalks without looking for pedestrians. Several council members agreed that it has gotten worse with hunting season. She sees in the police reports that people are

only receiving a warning and not getting a ticket. John Doherty has discussed this with the officers and issuing a ticket is always up to the deputy's discretion.

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

Water Dept. – Replaced 9 water meters. Updated multiple GIS water meters and points, also made updates to water meter spreadsheet. Responded to an emergency water leak at the High School. Replaced the water service for 605 Cowins St. Made an inventory list of 1.5" meters and above. Looking for misreads and registers with low batteries. Replaced the water meter, both curb stops, and meter box at 195 S Main St. Replaced a broken meter box at 180 Rock St. Fixed a leaking water meter on Minor St. Removed sucker trees growing at Well #1. Removed all debris and cleaned out culverts on Reservoir #1 overflow channel. Fixed a leaking water meter at 245 Rock St.

Sewer Dept. – cleaned the contact basins twice. Completed 11 septic dumps. Installed a new Bluetooth water temperature reader at the effluent outfall at the golf course. Reviewed the recycled water plan and sent comments back to Anderson & Perry. Changed the packing on the sludge pump at the wastewater treatment plant. Dug up and replaced a broken frost-free hydrant at the headworks.

Streets Dept. – Responded to a hit guardrail and street sign on Gilmore St. Framed and poured two of the broken curbs that were hit. Installed new brooms on the street sweeper. Swept Main St and Gilmore St, Fairview Way, Barrett Blvd, Hager and S Court Streets. Spread leftover chip seal rock on August and Church alleys. Fixed a pothole behind the Post Office. Fixed the Gilmore and Pioneer St sign.

Parks. – Turned off all park irrigation and park meters. Made sure all park meters were insulated. Finished up mowing season for the parks. Pressure washed the memorial baskets for sanding and treatment. Removed the flower baskets for the season.

Park District – Chad and Caleb winterized the pump room at the pool under the guidance of Skip Matthews. The crew installed the winter cover on the pool. Turned off the water to the Fit Park restroom and closed it for the winter. Called Blue Mountain Plumbing to winterize the pool bathrooms.

Shop/Other Dept. – Worked on the new Time Clock Plus hour tracking app. Hermiston IT installed a cellular backup modem at the Public Works Office. This will be used for the alarm dialer. Hauled off the spoils pile and the grass pile to Balm Fork dump.

D. City Manager Report – John Doherty read the City Manager Report.

1. Heppner Daycare – Legal Description for Hager Park partition as prepared by Kenny Land Surveying sent to Kuhn Law for inclusion in Earnest Money Agreement. Completed Earnest Money Agreement signed by Mayor and Heppner Daycare on 10-27-2025 with copies to entities. Drafted and then submitted letter of support from City for Heppner Daycare grant funding requests/applications.
2. Anderson Perry – Set and held Teams Meeting regarding flood mitigation projects feasibility. Continued bi-weekly meetings with Dane and Chad. Will discuss projects in Old Business section of Council Agenda.
3. DLCD – Sent signed copy of Resolution 1096-25 for grant application. Attended Housing and Production Office (HAPO,) rules and programs availability training/meeting. Attended OHNA webinar on Goal 10 (Housing) & Goal 14 (UGB) amendments.
4. City Hall – Completed lease agreement between COH & Kenny Land Surveying, and lease signed by both parties. Submitted inquiries with contractors for replacement of exterior door to 123 May St office.
5. Planning – Worked with MCPW for permit for sidewalk construction. Completed zoning permit for placement of new manufactured home within city, replacement of existing/older manufactured home.
6. Heppner Housing Authority – Attended October meeting.
7. Review payroll, accounts payable, bank reconciliations, and current budget. Work with Heather on budget fund transfers.
8. LOC- Attended quarterly luncheon, with Mayor, in Pendleton. Discussed infrastructure funding, floodplain regulations, affordable housing, and upcoming conference. I attended Municipal Fundamentals Training session via Zoom. Attended Housing Infrastructure Financing Program (HIFP,) webinar.
9. Met with Mayor on several occasions to discuss (1) fairgrounds improvements, (2) flood mitigation feasibility, (3) code enforcement, (4) CREZ updates and future funding, (5) FY24 & FY25 audits.
10. Community Rating System – CRS, submitted 2025 permits and reports for yearly compliance of NFIP and insurance discounts.
11. CREZ – Reviewed previous meetings minutes. Attended October meeting where new application for CREZ III approved and qualifications and advertisement for CREZ Manager. Reviewed draft IGA for CREZ III (as prepared by government agency,) regarding guidelines for CREZ III funds' distributions. Discussed with Mayor. Draft not yet submitted for consideration.
12. MC Fairgrounds improvements – Held informational meeting with Anderson Perry to discuss options for development at current site, including channeling/mitigation, dike construction, or construction in current state that meets FEMA requirements. Shared findings with Mayor and Morrow County. Mayor and I met at separate times with (1) Fair Manager and (2) MC Asst Administrator, to discuss improvements projects. Mayor and I will attend and schedule future meetings regarding improvements.
13. MCSO – Deputies continued work on code enforcement and safety items. (illegal dumping, dog(s) at large, dog bite, parking violations, abandoned vehicles, nuisance

properties to name a few.) Met with Lt. Braun and discussed training of deputies assigned to Heppner, scheduling, process for code enforcement, and need for incident creation for records and follow-up.

14. SAM.Gov – Continued research and work for COH profile.

15. IT – Hermiston IT migrated files from old server to new and decommissioned old server. Ordered backup cellular internet router and service for PW Shop. Added scan-to-email services for offices to eliminate server scan files, eliminating extra steps.

16. FEMA – Submitted response to NFIP/PICM/ESA to “Integration in Oregon Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS,) and updated Draft Implementation Plan to highlight Morrow County cities impacted by decisions when no ESA species present in Willow Creek.

17. Hager Park – Met with adjacent landowner regarding pending sale and partition and effects on their property and lot line recordings.

18. MC Assessor – Reviewed 2025-2026 Certified Property Tax Report. Discussed with Heather, potential receivables to exceed projections. Worked with Assessor’s office on property ownership on several lots in city.

19. Investment Policy – City had bond call in October. Researched and reinvested funds.

20. WCVEDG – Attended October meeting. Community Development Grants were reviewed and approved.

21. PW – Chad and I met and discussed (1) exterior door replacement at City Hall/May St (2) downtown landscaping and research/purchase of trees for beautification.

22. FY 24 Audit – Received draft report of FY 24 financials. Reviewed with Heather, provided feedback to Barnett & Moro, and approved revised draft for submittal to OR SOS.

23. FY 25 Audit – Discussed process with Mayor. Signed engagement letter with Barnett & Moro. I submitted records requests with legal, insurance, etc. to outside agencies. Heather and I provided financials for audit and scheduled in-person meeting for week of November 10th.

24. MCSD – Accepted role in MCSD Design Advisory Committee for upcoming capital construction projects in Boardman, Irrigon, and Heppner. Meetings to commence in November and continue into 2027.

25. SMCSM – Spoke at October 28th luncheon. Didn’t put anyone to sleep.

26. Economic development – Held phone meeting with individual interested in development possibilities in or near-in Heppner. Discussed zoning, lands availability, and agency contacts.

27. TCP – Continued meetings on timecard software as we near “going live.”

Halloween – City Hall participated in downtown businesses Trick-or-Treat event.

29. BizOr – COH received preliminary approval to apply for funding for Wastewater Facilities Plan. Researched several housing and floodplain grant and loan programs.

30. DOR – Attended “Cost Allocation Project,” discussion, via Zoom. How costs for services are billed through 64 different programs DOR administers and required approval of recommendations through legislature.

31. ODOT – Attended NEACT meeting via Zoom.

- 32. CBEC – Attended yearly business meeting and luncheon. Began (very preliminary and informational,) discussions with CBEC on utility relocation within city limits.
- 33. Draft Resolution 1097-25 for Inter-fund transfer for General Fund, Audit Expenses.
- 34. Council Packet - Draft Manager's Report and distribute Council Packets.

## **5. BUSINESS**

### **A. Old Business**

#### 1. Anderson Perry Projects

The Recycled Water Plan is complete and has been submitted to DEQ. The Mixing Zone Study will be submitted this week. They are working on funding applications for the Wastewater Facilities Plan. We have been invited to apply for the Business Oregon Grant. They will send the application soon. The Gilmore Street design is progressing on schedule. Port of Morrow inquired about the 1.5 million from Business Oregon we are to receive, as they were informed that it is likely they may be cutting funds by 13.5%. If this happens, we will have to do more value engineering or increase the required additional options for the bidding. There will be no final decision until April 2026.

#### 2. FY24 Audit

We received the copies of the audit today. It was completed on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October. This is quite a long way behind schedule. Barnett and Moro had an abundance of audits that were contracted before their split with Boylan. They were far behind schedule. They filed an extension. There were no glaring deficiencies. There was a fire account that was in the negative when it was closed due to unexpected maintenance issues at the fire hall two years ago. Separation of duties is always going to be on there as we have a small office department.

### **B. New Business**

#### 1. Barnett & Moro, FY25 Audit

The auditors were here today for the FY25 Audit. John signed the Letter of Engagement prior to the council meeting so the audit could be scheduled sooner. Due to the delay with the FY24 Audit and the FY25 one starting, we were left without the option of going out for an RFP or RFQ to hire a different auditor. Regarding the FY24 Audit, the city was in constant communication with Barnett & Moro and putting as much pressure as we reasonably could on them for completion. Council approval is needed for the approval of the auditor

expense for the FY25 Audit. The first council work session of 2026 would be a good time for discussing if we want to continue with our current auditors.

Motion to approve signing the Letter of Engagement with Barnett & Moro for auditor services by Joe Armato. Seconded by Sharon Inskeep. Councilors Sweeney, Murray, Armato, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve.

2. Resolution 1097-25, A Resolution Approving Inter-fund Budget Transfer for the City of Heppner for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 for Administration Expenses.

Since the FY24 Audit was not completed on schedule, we are paying for two audits this fiscal year. The rates for the two audits is higher than we put in the budget. The audit for FY24 came in at \$22,700 and FY25 will be \$25,000.

Motion to approve Resolution 1097-25, A Resolution Approving Inter-fund Budget Transfer for the City of Heppner for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 for Administration Expenses by Ian Murray. Seconded by Joe Armato. Councilors Sweeney, Murray, Armato, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve.

3. 2026 Committee Vacancies

There are upcoming vacancies on Planning and Budget that will need to be filled.

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

**8. REPORT FROM CITY ATTORNEY** – The only thing he worked on was the earnest money agreement with Heppner Dayare.

**9. REPORT FROM MAYOR, CITY COUNCILORS** – None

**10. ADJOURNMENT** – Meeting adjourned at 7:39 PM.