

**MINUTES OF THE CITY OF HEPPNER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HEPPNER CITY HALL, 111 N. MAIN STREET, HEPPNER, OREGON
7:00 PM MARCH 9, 2026**

ATTENDEES:

**Corey Sweeney
Ralph Klock
Sharon Inskeep
Joe Armato
Adam Doherty
Ian Murray
Dale Bates
John Doherty
Chad Doherty
Eric Chick
Bill Kuhn
Nathen Braun
Dane Maben**

Absent: None

Members of the Public: Joe Miller, Laurel Lainey, Judy Healy, Justin Hoefft, Jodi Brisbois, Keven Haguewood, Tasha Hollis, Stacy Lauritsen, Mike Brosnan, Jason Hanna, Gus Peterson, Tylynn Cimmiyotti.

On Zoom: Heppner Gazette, Patrick Collins, Mariah Stephens, Kelsie Worden, Kelly Barnett, Zoe Johnson, Erin Reed, Brandy Sweeney, Michael (?).

1. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Call to Order. Corey Sweeney called the March 9, 2026, 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. Message from the Mayor – Corey Sweeney spoke about the proposed animal Ordinance. It has been removed from the agenda to get more public feedback. He announced that all 4-H animal permits will be approved by the Council. The purpose of the ordinance amendment was to streamline the process. Currently it must be approved by council, and this change would allow it to be approved in the office. All swine would have to go through the council for approval. Sheep and goats would be approved in

the office. The city manager will have the authority to refuse or revoke a permit and any grievances would go through council. The council directed the city manager to work on changing the ordinance. There was some confusion and people thought that this was going to be voted on tonight and it was just a review of the proposed changes. They will still go through with the process next month with a review. They will also approve all animal permits then as well as the ones for tonight. For anyone with non 4-H animal permit requests, you now have an extra month to get them grandfathered in. In the three years that John Doherty has been involved with the city between being on the council and then as city manager, there has only been one revocation, and it was for negligence/poor living conditions for the animals. There was one request that was partially permitted and this was due to the housing of the animals. Roosters have never been permitted. Patrick Collins wanted to clarify that this was just a draft, and it will be subject to changes. Swine would still be potentially permitted at the council level. Does this include horses and cows etc. Corey clarified that if a permit is rejected at the city desk, it would most likely be approved by the council within reason. All 4-H requests would be approved. After everyone with horses is approved and grandfathered, it will be very hard to find another pasture for horses in the city. After this he does not believe that this council will permit any horses that would not have a large enough area, if the city manager had already rejected it. Grandfathered permits would not be transferable to new property owners but they could ask the council for approval. The ordinance will be reviewed in April and after any changes the ordinance would potentially be adopted in May. There are currently quite a few non-permitted animals, and the city is trying to get that taken care of. Justin Hoeft wondered why there is a separation of sheep and goats vs cows and pigs? Corey said as there is criticism of not allowing some animals, there is also criticism of why are we allowing animals in town that can get out and cause damage to other properties. When swine get out they tend to cause damage and have more of an impact on peoples property. The council wants to make sure that the conditions are as such that the animals have less of a chance of causing problems. Jodi Brisbois heard that no steers were allowed. The city has approved them in the past but they had to be removed because they were too noisy. In the last 14 years no one has requested to keep a steer in the city. Corey said the council will approve most requests but cannot speak for any council in the future. Jason Hanna asked if there could be more of a description of lot size etc. prior to approval. Horses would be an example. Some people don't want that next door. Stacy Lauritsen asked if there would be a difference of consideration with a dry versus an irrigated lot.

D. Announcements – There will be an addition to Requests, FFA Animal Permit, Correspondence from Blown Away Ranch and OSU and a Noise Permit request from The Elks Lodge.

E. Correspondence

1. Travis Winters wrote a letter to the council in support of UTV's being allowed in Heppner.

2. Letter from Morrow County Extension Office – They received a copy of the proposed Animal Ordinance and request that the council allow 4-H animals in Heppner as it is a very important learning opportunity. There are currently 39 youth enrolled in livestock 4-H projects who have addresses within city limits. The Extension Office offered to help the city develop written fencing and cleanliness guidelines without having to prohibit the animals. They suggested not allowing Billy Goats as they have an unwelcoming fragrance.

3. Letter from Blown Away Ranch – They are opposed to any ordinance that would not allow livestock in the city as it eliminates 4-H and FFA opportunities for students to participate in the Morrow County Fair.

F. Requests

Animal Permits

1. Jean Collins, three horses.

Motion to approve the permit request by Sharon Inskeep. Seconded by Dale Bates. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

2. Aidden and Zion Ramos Lopez, two 4-H pigs. This is a renewal from last year.

Motion to approve the permit request by Ian Murray. Seconded by Ralph Klock. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

3. Colden and Garin Hoefft, four 4-H pigs.

Motion to approve the permit request by Ralph Klock. Seconded by Joe Armato. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

4. Tasha Hollis, 25-40 sheep and/or goats.

Motion to approve the permit request by Sharon Inskeep. Seconded by Dale Bates. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

5. Mary Jo Brisbois, one horse.

Motion to approve the permit request by Dale Bates. Seconded by Ralph Klock. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

6. Mariah Stephens, three 4-H pigs.

Motion to approve the permit request by Ian Murray. Seconded by Adam Doherty. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

7. Josh Coiner, two 4-H at 380 E Aiken St.

Motion to approve the permit request by Ralph Klock. Seconded by Dale Bates. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

8. Justin Botefuhr, 15 goats, 1 horse, 18 chickens (permanent and three 4-H sheep (spring-fall)).

Motion to approve the permit request by Ian Murray. Seconded by Ralph Klock. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

9. Erin Reed, 16 Hens.

Motion to approve the permit request by Ralph Klock. Seconded by Dale Bates. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

10. Kelsey Greenup-Fennern, four 4-H sheep and one goat.

Motion to approve the permit request by Joe Armato. Seconded by Adam Doherty. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

11. FFA: Beth Dickenson, up to 6 cows, up to 20 sheep and goats, up to 10 pigs, up to 300 wild birds and up to 40 chickens.

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

12. Paola Flores, one goat and two 4-H pigs.

Motion to approve the permit request by Ian Murray. Seconded by Adam Doherty. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

Noise Permit

1. BPOE Heppner Elks Lodge, noise permit.

The Elk's Lodge is requesting a noise permit for April 11, 2026 until 10 PM.

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

G. Presentations - None

2. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Joe Miller said he is still very against selling Hager Park, it should not be a daycare. It still isn't the right thing to do.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

A. February 9, 2026, City Council meeting minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes by Ralph Klock. Seconded by Sharon Inskeep. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

B. Approval of Monthly Bills

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

C. Financial Statement – For information only.

4. REPORTS

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

3 Lift assists

3 Secure landing zone

1 Cellular emergency activation UTL

1 MVA non-injury
1 Cancelled enroute MVA
Yearly total: 23 calls
11 Chief calls

Submitted Tactical tender usage report to OSFM. Took Tactical Tender to Freightliner for Warranty/Recall repair. Attended CWPP planning meeting with OSFM, NRCS, MCEM and Planning Commission. Attended joint annual meeting with HRFPD, and City. Met with USFS to revise cooperative agreement for mutual aid. Ordered equipment for VFC grant. Submitted another request to OSFM for smoke detector installation project.

B. Morrow County Sheriff's Department – Nathen Braun read the report. There were 370.75 hours for the month of February. There was a total of 314 incidents for the month and there were no arrests, 37 traffic stops and no citations.

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

Water Dept. – The crew replaced 5 water meters. Performed a locate for water lines at Well #3. Assisted TAG with auto dialer installation and trouble shooting. Investigated a water loss issue up Willow Creek. Found one meter that was misread. Replaced a meter box at 655 Elder St. Replaced 3 radios that failed.

Sewer Dept. – Cleaned the contact basins twice. Completed 7 septic dumps. Completed monthly discharge monitoring report for DEQ. Took the Vactor to Bailey Heavy Equipment repair for electrical pump failure. Found that the alternator was not producing enough power to operate the pump. Completed renewal application for our National Pollutant Discharge Eliminations System permit. Completed Biosolids report, Inflow & Infiltration report, and Solid Waste report and sent them to DEQ. Reviewed the updated Biosolids management plan and sent back approval to Anderson Perry. Troubleshoot trickling filter pumps that were not working. Found a faulty float switch. Had the switch replaced and adjusted. Adjusted the skimmer arm with new rubber squeegee on primary clarifier at WWTP. Repaired the Bank of Eastern Oregon sewer connection on Gale St. Unplugged the sewer at Thomson Square. Found wipes in the sewer line. Fixed the Gale Street cut with cold mix.

Streets Dept. – Ordered brooms for the sweeper. Replaced the main broom and dirt shoes on the sweeper. Repaired and painted two "91" benches. Swept Main Street, N Court St, and Chase St. Decorated Main St. trees with green lights for St. Pats. Put the family banners up on Main St. Filled in pot holes with chip seal rock on Linden Alley and Kirk Alley. Worked on turn lane closer for tree planting and landscape rehab by Les Schwab. Reviewed aerial fiber plans for Windwave. Pumped out the Willow St. Reservoir.

Parks. – Took both mowers to Inland Turf in La Grande for service. Finished planting seed at Hager Park. Burned the ditch at Memorial Park. Sanded and varnished Hager Park Pavillion table. Worked with delivery company to receive new playground equipment last Monday. With the help of Troy Hyatt and CBEC's sky track we made quick work of unloading the trucks. Varnished 5 new flower pots for Memorial Island.

Park District – Continued to monitor the therapy pool.

Shop/Other Dept. – Changed the oil in the Chevy 1500 #1, Ram 1500 #2, and Ram 1500 #10. Attended the every-other-week meeting with John and Dane from Anderson Perry. Repaired the leak on the shop air compressor. Repaired the shop fill faucet.

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

1. OR Legislature – Provided verbal and written testimony on SB1585.
2. Anderson Perry – Continued bi-weekly meetings with Dane & Chad. Gilmore Street – Work with Chad and Dane on final design for project to bid in March. Work with Dane & landowner on easement for water line and necessary surveying and recording. Work with Dane, Bill Kuhn, and Wheatland/CIS regarding bonding requirements. Water projects – discuss presenting Council with multiple scenarios for completing projects to pursue funding. Dane assisted with SDWRLF application and Federal CIP applications.
3. CBEC- Visit Gilmore St Project with Brian Kollman to identify areas for placement of underground electrical conduit, transformers, etc. for potential future relocation of utilities.
4. ODOT – Completed occupation permits for St Pat's Parade and Shamrock painting. Provided copies for Chamber & PW.
5. FY 25 Audit – Submitted payment for FY25 Audit, received printed copies, provided for Council review.
6. USACE – Communication with Portland office of Corps of Engineers regarding release rates from Willow Creek Dam. Worked with Portland office regarding Flood Plain Study and scheduling upcoming meeting in the City. Hager Park – getting ready for lease renewal inspection, provided updated information for USACE, inspected baseball field with Jason Hanna from HYB.
7. IT – Work with Hermiston IT on backup power issue and ordered replacement hardware.
8. MC Planning – Work with Tamra Mabbott on (possible,) UGB development east of City.
9. USDA Rural Development – Multiple meetings with USDA, ODOT, Business Oregon, AP, RCAC, and myself regarding funding of water projects, preliminary work needed, update to One-Stop funding scenarios.
10. OPRD – Completed SOW and contracts for City Park project to submit reimbursement requests.
11. City Park – Received playground equipment from NW Playground Equipment. Chad worked with CBEC to assist unloading and storing @ Riverside lot. Approved Allred

- LandWorx to begin tree trimming @ City Park (Chad was on vacation.) Reviewed work with Allred and completed work with Chad.
12. Heppner Housing Authority – Attended February meeting.
 13. Zoning/Planning – Spoke with multiple RE Agents and potential buyers of former Nazarene Church for development potential and zoning regulations. Assisted 3 residents with accessory structure requirements and placement. Worked with 2 landowners on re-plat and partition requests. Explained ROW permit to resident and future construction. Reviewed ROW permit, with Chad, for Windwave fiber project at MC Fairgrounds.
 14. Kuhn – Worked with Bill on Animal Ordinance revisions/drafts. Consulted on easement requirements and bonding/insurance requirements related to Gilmore St Project. Consulted on re-zoning and/or changes to permitted and conditional uses in City Use Zones. Discussed Estes alley vacate request.
 15. District Courthouse – DLR Group provided final permits for project. Attended “Groundbreaking Ceremony,” with Mayor Sweeney and Councilor Klock. Provided Chad with contact info for Bouten Construction.
 16. POM – Attended monthly meeting via Zoom. Funds for Gilmore St Project must be expended by 06-30-2027. Signed and returned amendment on payment schedule. New POM Commissioner – Jerry Rietmann sworn in.
 17. Chamber/St Pat’s celebration – Attended February Chamber Board Meeting. Attended February St. Pat’s planning meeting. Participated in litter pickup on 03-05-2026.
 18. TCP – Worked with Heather, Chad, and TCP on revisions and updates needed.
 19. Federal CIP – Federal FY27 Community Initiated Projects (CIP,) worked with Jessica Keys from Senator Merkley’s office on applying for Federal funds and how to present the best and most reasonable request. Worked with AP and USDA on application. Solicited new and/or updated letters of support from state and local agencies. Submitted application for funding for Well #6 & Reservoir #5.
 20. Senator Merkley – Jessica Keys, Senator Merkley’s regional representative, asked for assistance in planning Senator Merkley’s yearly Morrow County Townhall, which she would like to hold in Heppner.
 21. LOC – Attending weekly legislative updates on Oregon Legislature 2026 Short Session.
 22. Reviewed payroll, budget, bank reconciliations, timecards, signed checks.
 23. FY 27 Budget – Began work on FY27 Budget with scheduling and capital project expenditures.
 24. Fire – Held Joint HRFPD-HVFD Annual Meeting. Discussed future projects, vehicle needs, funding possibilities. Received yearly tax revenue from HRFPD. HRFPD agreed to contribute to replacement cost of #531, a new Dodge 5500 crew cab. Worked with Roberson Motors on receipt and payment of new 5500, working with Chief Chick on pickup date.
 25. PW – Multiple meetings with Chad to discuss day-to-day and future projects.
 26. RCAC – Attending ongoing online trainings and meetings related to capital project funding and BABA (Build America Buy America,) requirements and resources.
 27. Resolution 1102-26 – Drafted resolution for inter-fund transfers in Fire Fund and work with Heather on ledger entries in Fire Fund.
 28. MCSO – Worked with deputies on several code items (vehicles, nuisance, and animal.)

29. Heppner Water Control District – Assisted with Public Contracting law questions and provided them information/resources.
30. Council/Mayor – Several (separate) meetings with Mayor or Councilors throughout month regarding various items. Discussed CREZ, Gilmore St, Animal Ordinance, Code, future projects funding. Discussed and received approval for Work Session prior to March Council.
31. GEODC – Provided letter of support for GEODC for Federal CIP application. Scheduled March meeting with Executive Director.
32. Animal Ordinance/Code – Issued letters to known non-compliant residents regarding need for permit application. Met with (many,) residents regarding permit requirements and proposed changes. After receiving communication from public, per Mayor, the hearing of Animal Ordinance delayed. Posted update on social media.
33. WCVEDG – Attended monthly meeting. Decision made to rent one cottage and continue marketing other. I gave CREZ update and city projects update.
34. MCSD- Attended final MCSD Bond Design Committee meeting with all entities together. Preliminary designs for schools revealed. Heppner will be on-hiatus until Fall 2026 while north-end schools go through design process.
35. HR – Chad & I met with employee regarding training and certification schedules and expectations.
36. Council Packet – Draft Manager’s Report, complete packets, and distribute packets.

5. BUSINESS

A. Old Business

1. Gilmore Street Project

Motion to move forward with the additive alternatives discussed in the work session by Ian Murray. Seconded by Ralph Klock. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

2. Water Project

This was discussed during the work session. A motion is not needed. There will be a follow up in April.

3. FY 25 Audit

The council received copies of the audit. There were no questions.

B. New Business

1. Resolution 1102-26, A Resolution Approving Inter-Fund Appropriation Transfer for the City of Heppner for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 for Fire Protection Fund Expenses.

This is to move funds for the purchase of the 5500 Fire Vehicle. We received a check for \$19,000 from Rural Fire which leaves a balance of just over \$46,000. We need to move funds so that we don't completely empty out the capital equipment fund expenditure. Also the funds from the Pacific Palisades, mutual aid pay was paid out of payroll expenses and was originally budgeted into the conferences, trainings and meetings fund, so that needs to be moved.

Motion to approve Resolution 1102-26, A Resolution Approving Inter-Fund Appropriation Transfer for the City of Heppner for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 for fire Protection Fund Expenses by Dale Bates. Seconded by Ralph Klock. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Armato, Doherty, Bates and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

2. Budget Calendar

The council reviewed the Budget Calendar. There were no questions.

6. MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETINGS – For Information only

7. REPORT FROM CITY ATTORNEY – Most of what he has been working on has already been covered. He also worked on the bond and insurance provisions for the Gilmore Street project and the Habitability Standards Ordinance.

8. REPORT FROM MAYOR, CITY COUNCILORS – None

9. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.