

**MINUTES OF THE CITY OF HEPPNER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HEPPNER CITY HALL, 111 N. MAIN STREET, HEPPNER, OREGON
7:00 PM MAY 11, 2026**

ATTENDEES:

**Corey Sweeney
Ralph Klock
Sharon Inskeep
Adam Doherty
Ian Murray
John Doherty
Chad Doherty
Eric Chick (arrived at 7:10)
Bill Kuhn
Nathen Braun**

Absent: Dale Bates, Joe Armato

Members of the Public: Gus Peterson, Ruth Eadler, Laurel Laney, Joe Miller.

On Zoom: Dane Maben, Heppner Gazette, Lucas Calder, Corey S. Michael (?)

1. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Call to Order. Corey Sweeney called the May 11, 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. Announcements – There is an addition to Old Business #2 Protection Hearing, a protest letter from Lucas Calder.

D. Correspondence

E. Requests

1. Animal Permit: Mikalie Duncan, 15-20 sheep and goats.

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

F. Presentations - None

2. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC – Joe Miller spoke against selling Hager Park to Heppner Daycare. It is the wrong thing to do, and he will be here every time to say that. He asked why the signs they made for their yards that are against selling Hager Park were limited in size when the sign in front of Greg Smiths property on Linden Way is large. Joe thinks that Greg Smith should be told to take it down.

Ruth Eadler wants to know what the plan for Hager Park is, now that Heppner Daycare didn't get the grant and will be scaling down their plan. Corey Sweeney said that "Communications from the Public" is for people to make statements and not for questions to be answered. He instructed her to visit the office during business hours and speak to the City Manager.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

A. April 13, 2026, City Council meeting minutes.

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

B. Approval of Monthly Bills

Motion to approve the monthly bills by Ralph Klock. Seconded by Adam Doherty. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Doherty, 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.

4 EMS Lift Assists
4 Secure Landing Zone
2 Alarm Malfunction/False Alarm
2 MVA non-injury
2 MVA with injuries
1 Grass Fire Mutual Aid to Lexington
1 Attempt to Burn/Arson
19 Chief Calls.

Attended Area 9 Defense Board Chief's meeting. Worked with UMRDD on radio programming. Worked on programming for VHF Radios. Worked with OSFM, NRCS, MCEM on CWPP Update. Worked with the crew on assembly of a new brush truck. Met with USFS on joint training opportunities within the community. Held "Fill the Boot" fundraiser at the grocery store.

B. Morrow County Sheriff's Department – Nathen Braun read the report. There were 418.50 hours for the month of April. 229 incidents, 2 arrests, 13 traffic stops, 2 citations, 8 dog calls. John Doherty said that a deputy has checked in only 6 times in the last 16 days which are Monday through Thursday. He was also unaware until Wednesday last week they were away at training.

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

Water Dept. – Replaced 16 water meters. Investigated issues with Arrow Gold (GIS) not connecting to the mobile app. Coordinated with Anderson Perry, and after several days of troubleshooting, it was determined that Anatum Mobile is no longer supporting connectivity updates for Arrow Gold. DEQ came and took the sample for PFAS (forever chemicals) testing. We are waiting for the results. Received the Hurco Spin Doctor 800 valve-exercising machine from Owen Equipment. Upon delivery, it was discovered that the unit didn't include the hydraulic cooler. Owen Equipment is coming next week to retrieve the machine and have the cooler installed. Began developing a valve-exercising program. Repaired a hole in Well #1 roof. Investigated a communication error at Well #1. Determined that the Starlink cable had failed. After some considerable time trying to communicate with customer support at Starlink, they have issued replacement parts at no cost. Tag is replacing the cable on 5/8/26. Attended a meeting with Anderson Perry on GIS updates. Continued to check Res #3 manually and turning on the booster pump when needed.

Sewer Dept. – Cleaned the contact basins twice. Completed 14 septic dumps. Completed Caleb's application for Collection 1 Certification and his DEQ account. He will be scheduling his test in the near future. Met with Bouten for clarification on how they are going to install the new Courthouse sewer connection. Issued the application for the city's renewal of the NPDES permit. The crew repaired a section of sewer mainline on Cowins St. Caleb and Chad investigated an issue preventing the golf course effluent sprinkler system from completing a full cycle. Contacted Lexington Pump and were able to get the irrigation running with an adjustment to the pump heater. Hermiston IT installed a new computer at the WWTP.

Streets Dept. – Helped Anderson Perry issue the 1200-C stormwater permit for the Gilmore Street Project. Sprayed Hemlock around town. Posted nuisance abatement signs at 360 S Chase Street (Calder property). The crew removed years of accumulated sediment from the swale near the children's park on Main Street. The crew repaired a broken irrigation line and started up the Main Street irrigation.

Replaced a stormwater sump pump near the city shop. Hung the HHS senior banners up on Main Street. Planted flowers in the pots by Bucknum's and the food court. Planted flowers in front of Napa Auto Parts. The crew weed trimmed "Gonty Island", Matlock St Bridge and Wells #1 and #3. Chad and John met with Bouten and allowed them to place construction signs on Quaid and Elder St.

Parks. – Turned on irrigation at all parks and began the mowing season. Replaced the carburetor on a broken weed trimmer. Repaired a broken lock on the City Park restroom door and replaced a damaged P-trap on the restroom sink. The crew fertilized all City parks ahead of the forecasted heavy rain. Replaced sprinklers at City Park and Heritage Plaza.

Park District – Continued to monitor the therapy pool. Activated the irrigation at the Fit Park and the Pool. Got the Fit Park lawn mower back into service. Repaired The ½" backflow device for the pop machine. Repaired the circulating pump for the therapy pool. Chad and Caleb ordered chemicals for the pool startup.

Shop/Other Dept. – Attended the quarterly Chamber luncheon. Chad and John attended the League of Oregon Cities meeting in Irrigon. Took the Vactor to Bailey's for service, radiator leak and diesel tank leak.

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

1. 360 S. Chase St – Nuisance property. City posted nuisance declaration. Worked with Bill Kuhn on requirements for letters and posting. Certified letters sent. Phone conversation with property owner, multiple in-person conversations with owner @ City Hall and at property. Multiple site visits to check progress and prepare report for Council. Resident requested "Protection Hearing," per Code 4-1-8, at May Council Meeting.
2. Heppner Housing Authority – Attended April meeting. HHA set to receive donation that will aid in currently planned renovations. HHA moving forward with already funded renovations.
3. Public Records Request – Processing 2 separate requests. FD involved in research on one request. Completion expected week of May 11th.
4. Anderson Perry – Gilmore St Project was bulk of work performed during the past month.
5. Chamber – Attended monthly meeting.
6. OR SOS – Communication regarding FY24 & FY 25 filing fees and summary report. FY 25 audit had not been filed. All reporting and fees are now current.
7. Barnett & Moro – Communication regarding why fees, report, and audit not filed. B&M has since filed all documents, and City is in good standing with OR SOS.
8. RCAC – Attended BABA training. Attended "Unlocking Funding" training.
9. CIS/Wheatland – Multiple meetings, calls, and emails regarding FY 27 P&C, health, excess crime, and cybercrime coverage and rates.

10. FY 27 Budget – Largest time commitment over previous month. Met with department heads and worked with Chad, Eric, and Heather on completion of the budget. Published required Public Notices. Budget completed in a timely manner, meeting deadlines.
11. LOC – Attended Quarterly Small Cities Meeting, with Chad, in Irrigon. 2026 Legislative Session, Infrastructure needs for cities, and upcoming PFAS testing & potential costs (“forever chemicals” in water,) were major discussion topics.
12. DLCD – Met with Dawn Hert to discuss revision of PW Standards grant spending allowances. Discussed future “Housing Density & Needs Study,” and 2027 grant. Received updated grant contract and signed. Working with Chad and DLCD on access to our GIS system for state lands & zoning. Attended HAPO meeting regarding model code and UGB extensions.
13. WCVEDG – Completed 2026 Community Enhancement grant for City. Attended April meeting where CE grants were reviewed and approved. Reviewed and signed City grant contract.
14. OCCMA – Inquired to listserv group on (1) Street vacation forms and process; (2) Bulk water sales.
15. Planning –
 - a. Work with resident for structure in flood plain.
 - b. Work with resident on garage addition, setback requirements, and variance process.
 - c. Along with AP and Kenny Land Surveying, completed paperwork for Ellsworth minor land partition. Public comment period closes May 12th with recording to follow.
 - d. Created Street Vacation form. Provided to Kenny Land Surveying for ongoing Estes request for city alley vacation.
 - e. Discussed future development of undeveloped Thompson Street lot, with owner.
 - f. Reviewed lot lines and code requirements on Terrace Street property.
 - g. Aided on Main Street property and possible (historical,) underground storage tanks (fuel or unknown.)
16. Kenny Land Surveying – Met with Matt regarding Estes street vacation. Discussed Ellsworth partition and process after public comment period closes.
17. MCSO -Requested inventories of 360 S Chase on multiple occasions. Requested contact with DaBella for unauthorized door-to-door solicitation. Deputy check-in averaging less than 50% of days on Mon-Thu.
18. HHS- Principal Gerry reached out on possibly placing HHS banners on downtown light posts during periods outside of special events. HHS Booster Club to purchase. Discussed logistics with Chad. Placed item on Council agenda.
19. Gilmore Street Project – Bid opening held on April 28th. AP reviewed bids and NOI to Award issued on May 1st. Approval of award on Council Agenda.
20. Senator Merkley – Attended Senator's May 3rd Morrow County Townhall @ Willow St HUB. Senator met privately with city and county officials to discuss needs prior to open Townhall.
21. Investment Policy – Reinvested matured bond holdings on multiple occasions over past month.

22. Kuhn – Met with Bill to discuss Corbin land partition and Calder nuisance property. Discussed NOI to Award for Gilmore Street Project.
23. ODOT – Completed SCA Grant application and submitted. Attended bi-monthly NEACT meeting online.
24. FD – Met with Eric to go over FY 27 budget, discussed funding options for future vehicle purchases, reviewed purchasing, and coding of purchases. Will recommend Visa card for FD for equipment purchases. Discussed “Fire Auxiliary account,” discussed 2026 burn ban in light of current weather and water conditions. Discussed disposition of ODFW boat.
25. PW – Chad working on PFAS testing of water, viewed properties and projects on multiple occasions. Worked with Chad on setup for Senator Merkley visit.
26. Finances – Reviewed payroll, bank reconciliations, accounts payable, and signed checks.
27. Cities Summit – Attended at POM with Mayor Sweeney. Senators Todd Nash and Rob Wagner, Representatives Greg Smith and Bobby Levy, LOC President MacInnes led a half-day meeting with city officials from SD 29. Discussions of legislative priorities, infrastructure needs, USDA funding, Governor’s Prosperity Board, and Open Q&A.
28. ODFW – Working with local office on possible return of 1995 Duckworth 16’ boat on loan to City. Council Agenda discussion item.
29. Complaints – Handled multiple complaints on DaBella door-to-door soliciting. Heard complaint of possible encroachment into City ROW causing safety hazard.
30. Sister City – Continued work with possible Sister City(s.) Working on setting meetings during my personal vacation to Ireland in June.
31. I was out (2) ½ days for vacation.
32. Council Packet – Draft Manager’s Report and add agenda items. Distributed along with Budget Committee packets.

5. BUSINESS

A. Old Business

1. Gilmore Street Project

Dane Maben gave an update on the bid opening that was held on April 28th. There were 4 very good bids. The apparent low bidder was Culbert Construction Inc. at just over 1.5 million including the additives. The initial fear about costs, due to fuel prices etc., did not come to fruition in the bid process. The intent to award was issued on May 1st and the 7-day protest period has closed and no protests were received. The city can now choose to proceed with awarding the project and it can be approved by council and signed tonight. There is an approximately additional \$370,000 in design engineering, construction engineering and permits etc., which comes out to about 1.93 million without any change orders. Dane checked with the State Contractors

board, and Culbert Construction is in good standing. The approval of the bid will be #6 under "New Business".

2. Protection Hearing – Lucas Calder/360 S Chase St. Nuisance Declaration Heppner City Code title 4-1-8.

Lucas Calder is disputing the Nuisance declaration. John looked at the property today and it still looks the same as the pictures that were provided to the council. One vehicle has a registration, one trailer has a temporary registration. Two vehicles are unknown/expired, three trailers unknown/expired. Weeds were cleared from the majority of the property, and some items were organized, it is improved but still far from code compliance. All of the information has been given to Lucas and he was referred to the city website. This is one of the few locations that has its own nuisance file that dates back to 2017. John would like to begin issuing citations for lack of compliance. There is still a chemical tote, concrete forms and miscellaneous garbage on the lot. Lucas understands the city's concern and has been working on it. He has spent thousands of dollars on it in the last few weeks. He is asking for a 30 to 90 day extension. At this point the city has three options: 1. Dismiss the dispute and proceed with nuisance abatement. 2. Dismiss and do not proceed with abatement. 3. Decide on a timeline for compliance. There have been many complaints about the property, and there have been many empty promises in the past. The council decided to give Lucas a 30-day extension as he has made a recent effort to clean the lot.

Motion to approve a 30-day extension with vehicles, tote, debris and other additional fire hazards addressed by Adam Doherty. Seconded by Ralph Klock. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Doherty, and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

B. New Business

1. FY27 Utility Rate increase request

The recommended CPI for this year is 3.33%. The charge for usage of over 7,500 gallons has not been updated for years. The bulk water fee should be raised based on the rate increase. We don't need to sell bulk water as it is sort of an inconvenience. Some cities charge regular rates for bulk water, others charge up to twice as much, higher minimum charges, and daily access fees. The city doesn't receive any property taxes, fuel taxes, SIP payments, or CREZ funds from the buyers. This is a moderate increase for selling bulk water to people making money by reselling our water.

Motion to approve the recommended utility rate increase by Ian Murray. Seconded by Adam Doherty. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Doherty, and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

2. Finance – credit card request for Fire Department.

The Fire Department needs to have their own credit card for purchases where they do not have an account. This will end the process of reimbursing the Auxiliary account.

Motion to approve issuing a credit card to the Fire Department by Sharon Inskeep. Seconded by Ralph Klock. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Doherty, and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

3. Fire Department - ODFW loaned Duckworth boat disposition.

ODFW leased a boat to the Fire Department in 2011. It has been used maybe once since it was received. The boat has been stored at the fire station and the city has it insured. Morrow County has a Marine Division so there is no reason to keep it, as there is no room to store it any longer. The IGA states that it can be returned to ODFW if no longer needed. There is some equipment in it that the Sheriff's office can take if they can use it. The council agreed to return the boat to ODFW.

4. HHS banners/downtown streetlamps.

Ryan Gerry approached the city about getting HHS banners to put up when there aren't banners up for special events. If approved, the Booster Club will purchase them. Full time banners were stopped because it causes stress to the poles that are getting old, and the bases are breaking. The poles will need some repairs and banners may not be installed on poles that have concerns. The council agreed to the idea.

5. Budget Committee – May 12th – Reminder that the budget meeting is tomorrow.

6. Gilmore Street Project: Notice of Award

Motion to accept the bid from Culbert Construction Inc. for the Gilmore Street project by Ralph Klock. Seconded by Adam Doherty. Councilors Sweeney, Klock, Murray, Doherty, and Inskeep voted unanimously to approve. Motion Carried.

6. MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETINGS – for information only.

7. REPORT FROM CITY ATTORNEY – Bill Kuhn has been speaking with Linda Corbin regarding a property she had divided 25 years ago. This was approved by the Planning Commission. A few years later she wanted to adjust the property line from the division she created. The process was started but she did not finalize it as the survey plat was not recorded and the deed was not updated. She has come into City Hall several times confused about the status of it and what needs to be done. Bill has referred her to Matt Kenny and has billed her for his time. He is the city attorney but does not see any conflicts with this at this point.

8. REPORT FROM MAYOR, CITY COUNCILORS – None

9. ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 8:13 PM.