



Where Life is Sweet

Public Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2025

Mayor Primmer called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Councilors Linton and Kelso were present. City staff in attendance included: City Manager Byron Smith, Finance Director Ignacio Palacios, and City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong.

Mayor Primmer stated his vision for this Committee was for the City to present financial information in a more thorough way taking a deeper dive into what the City spends money on. A way to have more transparency and accountability to the public.

Councilor Linton and Kelso agreed adding this Committee is also an opportunity to help give the public a better understanding of City finances, help build trust within the community, as well as making sure there is more oversight to help avoid previous financial shortfalls.

Order of Business

Finance Director Palacios spoke regarding the following (as attached):

- Finance Committee Introduction and Review
- Role of Finance Department
- Financial and Budget Report Summary
- Current Projects and Goals

Committee Questions or Comments

Finance Director Palacios and City Manager Smith addressed questions regarding:

- Public access to financial information
 - Available on the City's website and new tools via Open Gov
- How larger purchases are vetted and addressed
 - Reviewed by either City Manager Smith or Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan
- How the City is handling required changes from the State of Oregon and at the Federal level that impact the City
 - The City is comparable to other sized cities
- Provide purchasing details of all items over \$50,000 be reviewed by the Committee at each meeting
 - Will begin to provide this at the next meeting. The City is required to bid everything over \$150,000

The following comments and suggestions were given by Committee members:

- Asked that Senior Financial Analyst, Tasha Harrell, attend a future meeting to demonstrate the online interactive report
- Asked that the Committee review the Financial and Investment Policy, as well as the City's Portfolio at the next meeting
- Asked that the Monthly Financial Report be simplified to help the public follow the report and add an executive summary at the top for clarity and help prevent misinformation

Public Comment

None given.

Adjourn

Mayor Primmer adjourned the meeting at 6:50pm.



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Finance Committee

November 10, 2025

Finance Committee Introduction

Welcome to the inaugural finance committee meeting. The primary role of this committee will be to provide insights and advice on financial issues affecting the city and review financial reports as needed. The Finance Director with the City Manager will provide requested information as requested and provide a review of the city's operations at these committee meetings.

Finance Department and Its Role

The Finance Department is responsible for the day-to-day financial and utility billing operations for the City of Hermiston. As stated on the City's website the Finance & Utility Billing Department does the following:

Mission Statement

The Department of Finance at the City of Hermiston maintains the City's sound financial and effective internal control structure in alignment with the City of Hermiston's Strategic Plan, the City of Hermiston's Financial Policies and GAAP. We emphasize a service-oriented, team approach to providing financial information, systems, and policies that serve the needs of our citizens, the city council, various regulatory bodies and City of Hermiston employees while meeting fiduciary and regulatory responsibilities and addressing the operational needs of the city's departments.

Responsibilities and Activities

The Finance department plans, organizes, leads and monitors the daily accounting for expenses and revenues of the city; annual budget preparation, issuance and control; periodic financial reporting; investment management; debt issuance & management; the billing and receipting of utility accounts; risk management; information technology application and management; grants management and customer service.

This department is unique in that it has both extensive internal and external customers. The Finance Department is the ‘face’ of the city and typically the first contact residents have with the city whether they make a utility payment, seeking information on various city services, information on regional services or other information they will contact the front counter. Our department also provides all accounting and reporting services to all internal departments as well as providing support and advice for a broad range of financial issues.

Currently, the department consists of the Finance Director, a Senior Analyst, Accounting/Grant Clerk and three (3) Customer Service Representatives (Utility Billing Clerks).

Some Stats:

- Process approximately 5,100 utility account billings
- Process approximately 200 service orders for new and change in services, disconnects, reconnects and
- Processes billing for Sanitary Disposal this includes drop boxes
- Processes vendor payments – approximately 3,200 checks per year – this includes 3% payments made via ACH
- Counter traffic is approximately 70 per day (this increases significantly during weekly shut-off days)
- Manage the Airport lease contracts
- Manage collection and tracking of grants
- Track and maintain fixed asset records
- Monitor insurance reporting (claims, additions, deletions, etc.)
- Utilize Caselle ERP for the city’s accounting system
- The city invested in a cloud-based budget software system for budget development and tracking (OpenGov)

Financial and Budget Report Summary

See included September 2025 Budget to Actual Report and Financial Reports.

Current Projects and Goals

- Review and updating of city’s financial policies and procedures
- Implement five-year forecast
- Leveraging of OpenGov for monthly financial reporting and on-line financial summaries
- Educating public on online payment options (text-to-pay, web payment, etc.)
- Transition vendors to ACH payments
- Improvement to investment reporting

Questions/Comment