



# CITY COUNCIL

## Regular Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2025

Mayor Primmer called the regular meeting to order at 7:00pm. Present were Councilors Hayward, Roberts, Myers, McCarthy, Linton, Duron, Kelso, and Barron. City Staff in attendance included: City Manager Byron Smith, Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan, Finance Director Ignacio Palacios, City Attorney Rich Tovey, Chief Jason Edmiston, Planning Director Clint Spencer, Court Administrator Jillian Viles, Hermiston Energy Services General Manager Nate Rivera, and City Recorder Lilly Alarcon-Strong. The pledge of allegiance was given.

### **Proclamation- Ed Brookshier**

Mayor Primmer read aloud the Proclamation honoring the life and accomplishments of previous City Manager Ed Brookshier. Mayor Primmer and Councilors Myers and Duron spoke regarding how devoted he was to the City, his strong sense of community, his vision and impact making the City what it is today.

### **Presentation- Hermiston School District Updates**

Hermiston School District (HSD) Assistant Superintendent Jake Bacon gave updates to include: 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Enhanced Core Training Instruction; Homecoming Week concluded with many student participants; November Conference Schedule; being vigilant as kids are walking and biking to and from school especially with daylight savings time approaching; events at the High School to include Portland Opera, FFA, and parent classes- a continuation from previous years, and thanked the partnership with Umatilla County for their Health Clinic at HHS.

### **Presentation- Walk with Purpose**

Sandy Wise and Marilyn, Chelle, Michael, and Deana Gilliland all representatives of the Walk with Purpose a family owned and operated Transitional Housing program presented information (flyer attached) regarding: why they started and became involved with Walk with Purpose; speaking about their personal experiences with sobriety and how it has impacted their lives; their Walk with Purpose program and how it differs from other programs, specifically as they use a more family hands on presence and approach; the community outreach partnerships they regularly work with; the two homes they own in Hermiston- one for women in recovery that houses 8, and one for men in recovery that houses 11, and their need for additional houses to fulfill the need in the community; the requirements to live in Walk with Purpose housing to include: being drug and alcohol free, attend regular recovery meetings, pay rent, and be willing to learn how to live normal lives without drugs and alcohol; and how others can get involved and donate.

Mayor Primmer thanked the group for attending and providing this very important program to the community.

### **Citizen Input on Non-Agenda Items**

Hotelier Representatives from Oxford, Best Western, OYO, and Motel 6 spoke regarding their concerns with the City not marketing EOTEC sufficiently to host weekend events to bring in people from outside the area to stay in their establishments. They mentioned that they were initially very supportive of the additional \$1.00/night TPA tax for EOTEC Marketing, but have not seen the benefits of this additional TPA tax. Vikash Narain, stated they have submitted a public records request requesting detailed accounting of EOTEC marketing funds but would also like to meet with City officials to discuss this in future detail.

Mayor Primmer thanked the Hoteliers to attending stating the EOTEC Advisory Committee has a dedicated position for Hoteliers to be regularly involved in these discussions and directed Administration to reach out to this group to schedule a meeting as they would be the appropriate persons to meet with.



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### **Consent Agenda Items**

Councilor Hayward moved, and Councilor McCarthy seconded to approve Consent Agenda items A-F, to include:

- A. New Liquor License Application for: Chipotle Mexican Grill located at 1875 N 1st Street
- B. Committee Vacancy Announcement
- C. Confirm Appointment to the Library Board- Position 3, 4-year term ending June 30, 2029 to Zaira Sanchez
- D. Replat Final Plat – Four Bros LLC & City of Hermiston 4N 28 11BA Tax Lots 101 and 102
- E. Final Plat – James Maret, 395 NE 10th St, 4N 28 11AD Tax Lot 1500
- F. Minutes of the September 22nd City Council Work Session and Regular Meetings

Motion carried unanimously with Councilors Hayward, Roberts, Myers, McCarthy, Duron, Linton, Kelso, and Barron voting in favor.

### **Misdemeanor Case Distribution**

Court Administrator Jillian Viles presented detailed staff report information (PowerPoint Presentation attached) asking the Council to consider moving all misdemeanor cases to be sent to the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office to be processed effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026. This recommendation is being requested as there is a state-wide attorney shortage and the Hermiston Municipal Court has been unable to secure a contract for a public defense attorney.

Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus spoke regarding how this attorney shortage is impacting the District Attorney's Office as well as they are shorthanded by four attorneys; his offices attempts to recruit attorneys to his office and the area in general; the amount of financial and other incentives offered in recruitment attempts that are comparable to what the west side of the state and the State of Washington offer; the City of Pendleton is going through this exact same process that the City of Hermiston is presenting tonight as they too are unable to secure attorneys; and explained that their office will process all cases to the best of their ability, however because they have to prioritize the severity of cases, these lower-level misdemeanors that may be transferred to his office will be processed after more extreme offenses.

After staff answered questions from the Council and thorough Council discussion regarding the low-level misdemeanor crimes that the Municipal Court processes, the Council agreed that these crimes greatly impact livability, and criminals should be held accountable as quickly as possible to help avoid repeat offenders and offenses. Councilor Hayward moved and Councilor Linton seconded to table this decision and Councilor McCarthy amended the motion and Councilor Roberts seconded to direct city staff to return to the Council with alternative budgetary cut options for reallocation to the Municipal Court to meet the state recommendation. Motioned carried unanimously with Councilors Hayward, Roberts, Myers, McCarthy, Duron, Linton, Kelso, and Barron voting in favor.

### **Report on Communication/Community Engagement Efforts**

City Manager Smith presented information (PowerPoint Information attached) regarding various City efforts and tools that have been rolled out and utilized to improve communication with city residents including a new APP that will be shared with the community in November.

The Council thanked the City for their efforts and specifically commended transparency efforts being made with City Chat's, the mentioned APP, the website, and time stamps on meeting videos through YouTube.



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### **Committee Reports**

Airport Advisory Committee- Councilor Roberts gave updates regarding: The Flying Club, financial report, land for lease, and hangar construction and hangar rentals

Faith-Based Advisory Committee- Councilor Hayward gave updates regarding: Stepping Stones Alliance presentation as they received a grant from AWS for solar energy, and are at an average of 26-guests per night with a 40-guest capacity, and have once again filled all huts

Hispanic Advisory Committee- Councilor Kelso stated he is extremely proud of this group and the great job they did putting on the Hispanic Heritage Month Event on

### **Mayor's Report**

Mayor Primmer spoke regarding:

- Attending the LOC Conference in Portland with City Manager Smith and Councilors Duron and Linton, and the many Youth Advisors who were able to attend, as well as the great presentations and speakers at the Conference
- How great the new Airport Signage looks during the day and night on S. HWY 395
- Cancer Awareness Month
- Community Yard Sale at the Community Center
- Homecoming and other Hermiston High School Events
- Monster Truck Event at EOTEC
- Grand Re-Opening of the Library
- Stepping Stones Alliance Fundraising Gala
- Human Bean- Coffee for a Cure
- Treats on Main

### **Council Presidents Report**

Councilor McCarthy spoke regarding:

- Dispatch Center sit-in experience
- Primary Election
- It's a Wonderful Life Hermiston High School Performance
- Service Organization Fair at the Community Center

### **Council Reports**

Councilor Myers spoke regarding the Library's Grand Re-Opening Celebration and how well it was attended.

Councilor Linton spoke regarding the LOC Conference she attended stating it has been the best conference so far and encouraged the public to run for Council at the Primary Election.

Councilor Roberts encouraged the Hoteliers to apply for the open EOTEC Advisory Committee position as well as other vacancies on the City's Committee's, Boards, and Commissions.

Councilor Duron spoke regarding attending the LOC Conference, Library's Grand Re-Opening Celebration, and thanked all those who volunteer and are involved and investing in our community like Margaret Saylor.



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Councilor Barron spoke regarding attending Captain Eynon's Retirement Celebration, and asked the Council to consider having a future discussion regarding possibly naming the basketball courts near Newport Park after Joe Thompson who is now deceased but gave so much to the community. Councilor Hayward moved and Councilor Kelso seconded Councilor Barron's request. Motion carried unanimously with Councilors Hayward, Roberts, Myers, McCarthy, Duron, Linton, Kelso, and Barron voting in favor.

Councilor Kelso spoke regarding attending the Stepping Stones Alliance Fundraising Gala and thanked all those who made the event a success, the Library's Grand Re-Opening Celebration, and invited all to attend the TruCare Fundraising event on October 21<sup>st</sup> at the Community Center with Representative Greg Smith as the keynote speaker.

### Youth Advisory Report

None present.

### City Manager's Report

City Manager Smith gave information regarding:

- Art work was installed today in the Library and encouraged the Council and public to take a look
- The City will be honoring Ed Brookshier's life with a bench in his name placed at City Hall

Councilor Linton moved and Councilor Myers seconded to direct City staff to return to the Council with different options on how to give the Harkenrider Senior Center \$30,000 to use for their food program to either make their food program free and/or provide meals 5 days/week. Motioned carried unanimously with Councilors Hayward, Roberts, Myers, McCarthy, Duron, Linton, Kelso, and Barron voting in favor.

### Adjourn

There was no other business and Mayor Primmer adjourned the regular City Council meeting at 9:32pm.



SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

Doug Primmer, Mayor

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

Lilly Alarcon-Strong, CMC, City Recorder

## - Outreach Partners -



**eocco**

**EASTERN OREGON  
COORDINATED CARE  
ORGANIZATION**



**COPEs**  
peer centers

*Finding hope and recovery*  
Hermiston - Pendleton - Milton-Freewater  
SAFELY RECOVERING LIVES SINCE 1982



**Oregon Department  
of Human Services**

## Contact Info:

Marilyn 541-571-3326

Michael 541-571-0675

Deana 541-561-1803

Chelle 541-571-2435

Sandy 541-571-6107

## Email:

2walkwithpurpose@gmail.com

## Applications:



WWP Ladies App



WWP Men's App



**Family Owned and Managed  
Transitional Homes**



Some members of management  
are in recovery while others  
have experienced addiction in  
other forms. We believe  
addiction is a family disease  
and therefore must be battled  
against...  
as a Family.

# Transition Recovery Unity Dignity Grace Empowerment



***Trudging*** the road means to  
***Walk With Purpose.***

*And every sober day, whether we have one day sober or a thousand days, is an intentional walk towards a better and more fulfilling life. We are walking towards a happy destiny, and that journey is worth the discomfort it takes to get there.*

## Residency Guidelines:

- The residence is not intended to be permanent.
- We recognize that each person's recovery journey is unique and may require different timelines.

## Legal Compliance

- Obey all City, State, and Federal laws.



## Family Involvement:

- We actively encourage loved ones to participate in the recovery process.
- Their presence can strengthen healing and connection.

## Recovery Commitment

- Members must remain sober to reside in the home.
- Attend at least four recovery meetings per week.
- Follow through on all probation requirements.
- Comply with Outpatient Treatment as directed.



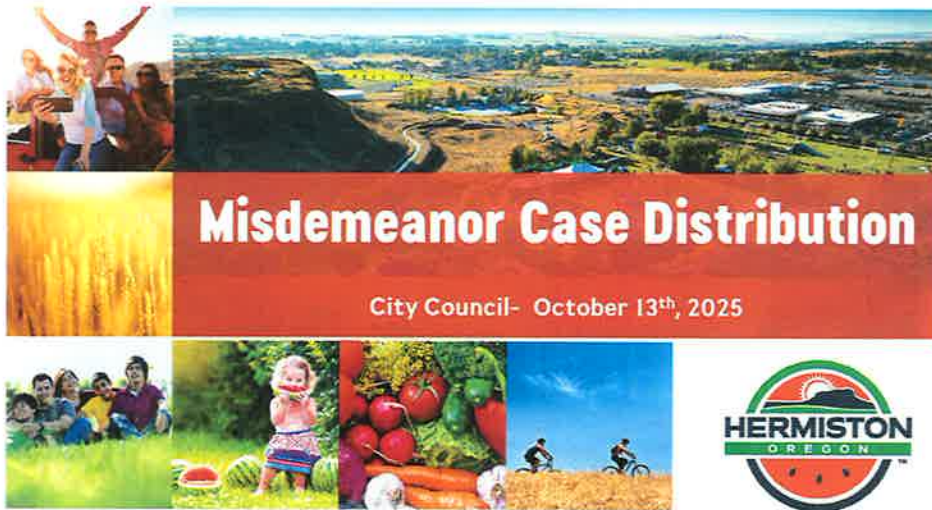
## Guidance and Support:

- We offer tools and insights to help families understand the recovery journey.
- We help loved ones learn to set healthy, respectful boundaries.
- We promote meaningful, compassionate support that uplifts both the individual and their family.

## Community Participation

- Attend a weekly house meeting.
- Shared accountability for all expectations.
- Openly share successes and challenges to foster celebration, support, and acknowledgment.





## BACKGROUND

- Hermiston Municipal Court- Misdemeanor Cases
  - **2014- City Council voted to move Class A Misdemeanor Cases to Circuit Court**
    - Class B & C Misdemeanors remained with HMC
  - **2024- City Council voted to resume jurisdiction of Class A Misdemeanor Cases in HMC**



## BACKGROUND

- Hermiston Municipal Court- Contract Attorney Positions
  - **2022**
    - February- City Prosecutor gave notice to terminate contract and later rescinded.
  - **2024**
    - March- Defense Attorney gave notice to terminate contract.
    - April- New Defense Attorney accepted contract.
    - April- City Prosecutor gave notice to terminate contract to pursue a new full-time job.
    - July- New City Prosecutor accepted contract.
    - November- Secondary Defense Attorney accepted contract.
  - **2025**
    - February- Defense Attorney gave notice to terminate contract.
      - HMC has been utilizing the Secondary Defense Attorney only.



## BACKGROUND

- Hermiston Municipal Court- Defense Attorney Position
  - **Request for Proposal Published- March 2025**
    - Oregon State Bar Center Job Listing Site
    - 6<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Bar Association (Umatilla & Morrow Counties)
    - National Association for Public Defense
    - City of Hermiston Website



## State-Wide Criminal Attorney Shortage

- Sixth Amendment Center Report- 2018
  - **Oregon's public defense system was flawed.**
    - Attorneys were incentivized to take on as many cases as possible by being paid per case.
    - But this conflicted with their ethical duties to provide due process rights to their clients.
- Implemented Changes
  - **Oregon Public Defense Commission (OPDC) capped the number of cases 1 attorney can handle per year to 300 misdemeanor cases.**
  - **The pay for a full-time case load of 300 misdemeanor cases by OPDC is \$213,085.**



## State-Wide Criminal Attorney Shortage

- Resulting Impact
  - **Defense Attorneys are at capacity with the number of cases they can take.**
  - **Over 5,000 individuals in Oregon have been charged with a crime and do not have an attorney to represent them.**
  - **Attorneys are not willing to be paid under what OPDC will pay case.**

| AVERAGE PAYMENT PER MISDEMEANOR CASE |                           |                            |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Oregon Public Defense Commission     | Hermiston Municipal Court | West-side Municipal Courts |
| \$710                                | \$400-500                 | \$250-400                  |



## Proposal

- Effective January 1, 2026
  - **All Misdemeanor Cases cited by Hermiston Police Department would be sent to the Umatilla County's District Attorney's Office for Prosecution.**
- Advantages:
  - **Hermiston Municipal Court costs would decrease in the next fiscal year.**
- Disadvantages:
  - **Low-level misdemeanor cases may not be a priority for prosecution.**



## Proposal- Future of HMC

- Hermiston Municipal Court
  - **Continue handling all current Criminal Cases**
    - **Slowly wind-down as cases are resolved.**
    - **Estimated to be completely done with criminal cases in 2032.**
    - **Still need a part-time contracted City Prosecutor and contracted Defense Attorney. Estimated cost reduction of \$50,000-\$100,000 in next FY.**
    - **5% of court revenue is from Criminal Cases (approximately \$20,000 per year).**



## Alternative Option

- RFP for Defense Services at rate/caseload as OPDC

- **Advantages:**

- Criminal case would remain with HMC.
- City Prosecutor files approximately 90% of cases cited by HPD.
- Cases are filed quickly, meaning offenders are held accountable more quickly, resulting in behavior intervention.

- **Disadvantages:**

- A significant cost increase for HMC/City (\$254,000 per FY).
- Anticipated additional increased costs for City Prosecutor and Judge.
- No guarantees an attorney will be interested.



**Questions?**

*Where Life is Sweet™*



## Outline

- Council Meeting Livestreaming
- Inside Hermiston
- Ask Hermiston
- City Chats
- Surveys



## Live Streaming

- Started in April 2020
  - 154 live feeds over the past 5+ years
- So far in 2025 (Youtube #s)
  - 16 council videos
  - Viewed 2082 times
- Viewership (2025)
  - 50-185 views per video
  - Average of 130 per video
  - Average of 3 concurrent viewers
  - Most viewers watch after the meeting is completed
    - Average duration – 13:03
    - Average amount – 11.2%



## Live Streaming

- Timestamped Video

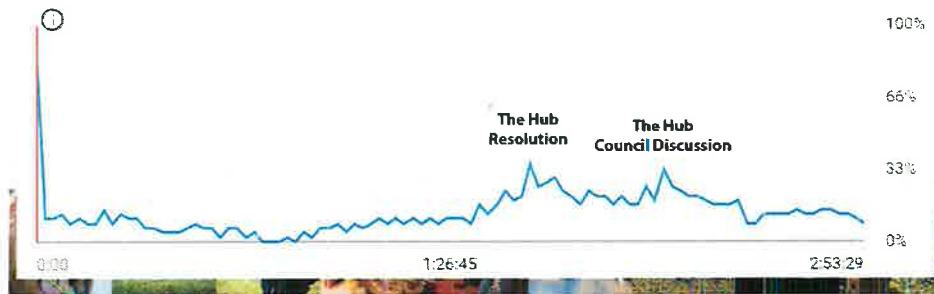
### February 25, 2025 Hermiston City Council Meeting





## Live Streaming

### July 1, 2025 Hermiston City Council Meeting



## Inside Hermiston (newsletter)

SIGN UP TODAY



INSIDE  
**Hermiston**  
Community Newsletter

- Six monthly Newsletters (May-October)
- Audience
  - 130
  - 372 (Oct 7)
- Open Rate
  - 63.2%
  - Average for government – 38.9%
- Click to Open Rate
  - 16%
  - Average for government – 4.3%



## Ask Hermiston



## Ask Hermiston

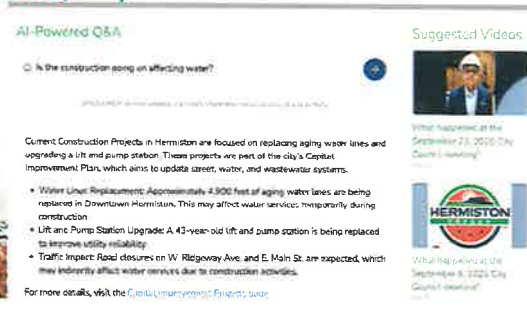
- Third party tool
  - Answers questions using AI on our Website content
  - Video messaging/creation





## Ask Hermiston

- All on our Website content
  - **612 Users**
  - **1844 Engagements (clicks, views, etc.)**
  - **374 Queries**
    - **19% Public Works**
    - **18% Administration**
    - **13% HR**



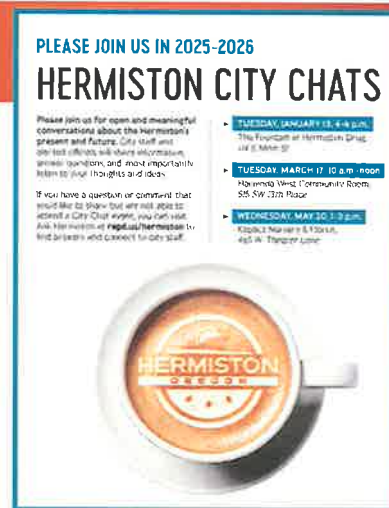
## Ask Hermiston

- Video Messaging/Creation
  - **72.3% average completion rate**
  - **Municipal video completion rate average 8% to 15%**
  - **1:14 Average Watch Time**



## City Chats

- Five Chats
  - **~50 non-city people**
  - **Broad range of topics**
  - **Great Appreciation from attendees**



## Surveys

- Various Types and Lengths
  - **Carnegie**
  - **Ongoing Community Survey**
    - **Every six months**



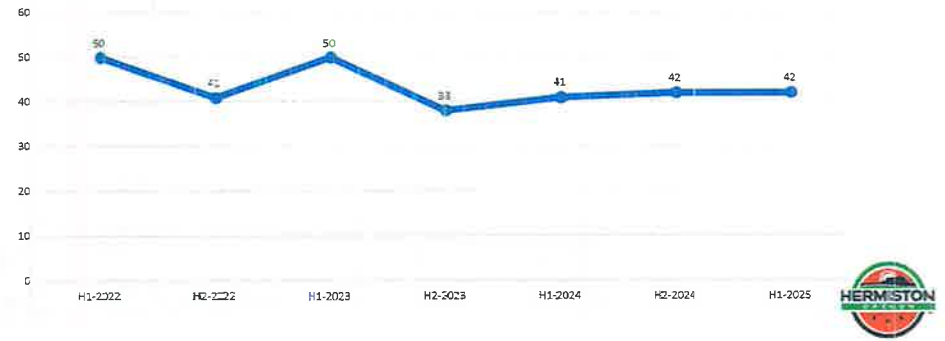
## Surveys

### Responses



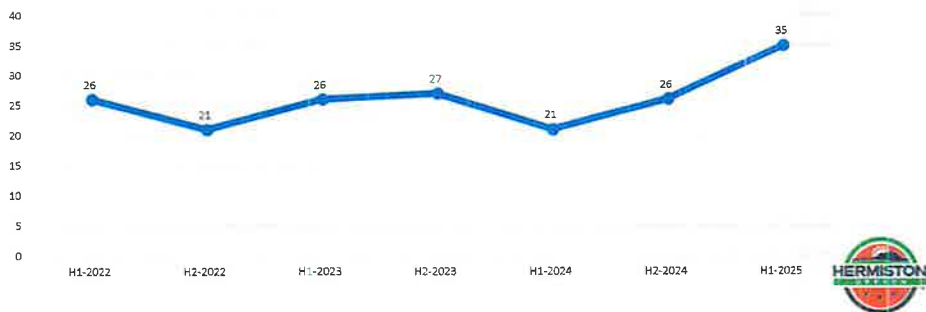
## Surveys

### How is the Overall Quality of Life in Hermiston?



## Surveys

### Ability of Residents to Give Input to the Hermiston Government



**DISCUSSION/  
QUESTIONS**

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