

	CITY OF LANDER		
	CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING		
	Tuesday, April 22, 2025, Following Special Regular Meeting 6:18 PM		
	City Council Chambers, 240 Lincoln Street		
	MINUTES		

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: John Larsen, Dan Hahn, Josh Hahn, Julia Stuble, Melinda Cox (via Zoom), and Mayor Missy White. STAFF PRESENT: Interim Police Chief Kelly Waugh, Public Works Director Lance Hopkin, Assistant Mayor RaJean Strube Fossen, City Treasurer Charri Lara, City Clerk Rachele Fontaine.

1. NEW BUSINESS (NON-ACTION ITEMS)

A. City of Lander Proposed FY 2025 2026 Budget discussion

City Treasurer Charri Lara presented a summary of the proposed FY 2025 2026 Budget. The Budget Summary Overview included: Balanced Budget: The proposed budget is balanced, with \$3.8 million in unrestricted reserves, meeting the target of covering six months of general fund expenditures (approx. \$6 million). Reserves and Special Funds \$814,000 allocated for flood mitigation, \$411,000 in the General Fund and \$450,000 in the Enterprise Fund set aside for future retiree obligations, as well as \$1.4 million currently in the equipment and building replacement reserve fund. Revenue Estimates and Adjustments: Property tax estimates were conservatively calculated using the prior year’s assessed valuation and accounting for the Fremont County Assessor’s estimate of reductions in property tax revenue caused by recent legislation. Sales tax revenues are up 2% year-over-year, with a projected surplus of \$57,000. Supplemental state distribution funds (approx. \$980,000) are allocated to reserves, not general operations. Capital Projects and Grants: Capital projects (e.g., Senior Center, Airport) are not included in this general budget. The budget includes a \$950,000 fire truck grant, contributing to a gross budget increase. SRF-funded infrastructure projects include McFarlane, 5th Street, Buena Vista, Baldwin Creek, and meter replacements. ARPA funds are allocated for the Lincoln Street project. Personnel and Payroll: The proposed Budget includes a 3% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), increasing payroll by \$135,616. A 4.75% COLA would cost an additional \$56,000—this can be adjusted if desired. On-call pay for the Water Department was simplified and added to base pay. Health insurance costs rose 3%, but savings were achieved due to fewer employees using the benefit. 52 positions are budgeted, with only one vacancy in the Police Department. \$50,000 placeholder included for a future replacement of the current position holder. Retirement Planning: 22 employees (8 in Police) are eligible for retirement within the next 5 years. Provisions are in place to fund upcoming loan payments on SRF projects, avoiding interest amortization on top of principal. Debt Management: Project costs have significantly increased (e.g., one project rose from \$7 million to \$14 million). Future SRF loan payments are estimated at \$1.3 million annually by 2028. A savings strategy is in place to manage debt without deferring other obligations. A page-by-page discussion ensued following the summary. She sought the Council's general direction concerning Cost of Living Adjustments. Lara will make adjustments for the COLA, finalize the document, and read the proposed budget into the minutes during the May meeting.

B. WRTA presentation Tim Nichols

Tim Nichols, Director of the Wind River Transportation Authority, provided a presentation concerning mobility, people, and the real consequences of losing public transportation services, particularly through WRTA (Wind River Transportation Authority). Public transit is critical infrastructure, not a profit-making venture—like roads and schools, it delivers economic and social returns. Without immediate local funding, WRTA risks: Route and job cuts, leaving thousands of passengers stranded, loss of access to vital services like school, dialysis, and jobs as well as increased strain on social services.

WRTA currently connects 10 communities and serves over 36,000 riders, with Lander as a critical hub. Lander is asked to contribute \$60,449 from the remaining half-cent economic development tax funds, a share based on population and service usage, to help secure federal funding.

WRTA is proactively working on: Regional cooperation and reducing duplicated services, Upgraded transit software (2025), Maintenance and dispatch improvements, Shared infrastructure and fuel purchasing, Riders rely on WRTA for medical care, employment, and daily life.

C. Fremont Air Service Team presentation Kyle Butterfield

Kyle Butterfield, Fremont Air Service Team Committee Member, provided an update on commercial air service in Fremont County, highlighting its economic importance, current performance, and funding needs for continued service. Commercial air service is a critical investment in Fremont County’s economy and a revenue generator. Butterfield referenced a 2020 State of Wyoming study showing that every dollar invested returned \$3.19 in economic activity, despite lower passenger levels at the time.

A Headwaters Economics study categorized Fremont as a "connected rural community" due to its airport. This connectivity allows Fremont to perform economically like a metro area despite its rural setting. Air service promotes business, tourism, and accessibility, which would otherwise be limited due to geographic isolation.

Fremont County participates in the Capacity Purchase Program, a Wyoming-funded initiative supporting four airports. The State covers 60% of the Minimum Revenue Guarantee (MRG), while local communities contribute the remaining 40%. Historically, local funding came from a voter-approved optional 0.5% sales tax, with 20% dedicated to air service (~\$800,000/year).

Costs have risen due to inflation, new contracts, and increased pilot pay. Funds are expected to be depleted by September 2026. A potential funding gap of \$1M–1.4M is projected before new tax revenue (if any) could be collected in spring 2027. Possible solutions include: A new ballot initiative (earliest revenue: Apr–May 2027), funding from city/county allocations, reducing flight frequency, exploring alternative air carriers, or route sharing with other communities. Concerns were expressed about long-term affordability as costs rise annually.

There was a general acknowledgment of limits in revenue control (fuel costs, travel destinations, fare prices). The city is considering using remaining discretionary economic development funds.

2. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Council Member Larsen and seconded by Council Member D Hahn. Councilmembers Voting Yea: Larsen, D Hahn, Cox, Stuble, J Hahn, and Mayor White. Motion passed.

Being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 PM.

The City of Lander

ATTEST:

By: _____
Missy White,
City of Lander Mayor

Rachelle Fontaine, City Clerk

The entire meeting is available to view at <https://www.landerwyoming.org/meetings/recent> OR <https://www.youtube.com/@CityofLander>.

CITY OF LANDER MISSION STATEMENT

To provide a safe, stable, and responsive environment that promotes and supports a traditional yet progressive community resulting in a high quality of life.

VISION

Preserving the past, while embracing the future.

The City of Lander is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate. Qualified applicants are considered for positions without regard to race, religion, military status, sex, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or other characteristics protected by law.