

DRAFT MINUTES
CITY OF STEVENSON COUNCIL MEETING
April 17, 2025

6:00 PM, Stevenson City Hall and Remote

Items with an asterisk (*) have been added or modified after the
initial draft publication of the Agenda.

Attending:

Elected Officials: **Mayor Scott Anderson; Councilmembers Chuck Oldfield, Dave Cox, Michael Johnson, Lucy Lauser, Pat Rice.**

City Staff: **Ben Shumaker, Community Development Director/Interim City Administrator; Tiffany Andersen, Planning and Public Works Assistant; Robert Muth, City Attorney; Carolyn Sourek, Stevenson Public Works Director.**

Guests: **Jeff Breckel, Stevenson Planning Commission; Tracy Wyckoff, Skamania County Undersheriff**

Public participants: Rick Jessell, Mary Repar, Janet Campbell, Scott Robinson, Karen Ashley, Josh Barstow, Jesse Flutter, Alan/AJ Smith, Leah Smith, Scott Robinson? Kathleen Fitzgerald, Will Gordon, Amber Hoffman, Tina Weaver, Kristi Holbrook, Melissa Farni, Pamela Seaman, Tom McCloskey, Kathleen Morrow, Simon Wilkerson and others unidentified.

1. CALL TO ORDER/PRESENTATION TO THE FLAG: **Mayor Anderson** called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., led the group to recite the pledge of allegiance and conducted roll call.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Prior to taking comments **Mayor Anderson** provided details on the structure and expectations of the public comment period.

- Comments on Air B&B legislation or policy changes were offered.
- A plant and seed swap at the Stevenson Library, April 19th from 10-2 was announced.
- A number of participants provided comments critical of actions **Councilmember Lauser** took at a recent public event.
- A number of meeting attendees provided comments supportive of **Councilmember Lauser's** actions.
- An audience member decided to hold comments regarding the sewer ordinance until the public hearing.

- **Councilmember Lauser** asked for time to respond. She was granted two minutes. During her remarks she was advised several times by **Mayor Anderson** she exceeded her allowed comment time and was being disruptive.

Councilmember Cox left the meeting following **Councilmember Lauser's** remarks.

Written comments received:

- a) - D. Hendricks 04/08/2025 - Vacation Rentals
- S. Bentley 04/11/2025 - Support of Lauser
- L. Paxson 04/14/2025 - Defense of Nakedness

Following the comment period **Mayor Anderson** called for a five-minute recess.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

4. CONSENT AGENDA:

a) Resolution 2025-451 Personnel Policy - Adopt a resolution to modify the personnel policy. All changes are discussed in the attached staff report.

b) Resolution 2025-450 Fire Department Pay - Adopt a resolution to modify the compensation afforded to members of the Stevenson Fire Department.

c) Minutes of Stevenson City Council Meetings and Executive Sessions: March 20th, March 25th & April 9th, 2025.

Councilmember Lauser moved to approve the consent agenda with items **a-c**. Prior to the motion receiving a second, **Councilmember Oldfield** requested item **a)** be removed from the consent agenda.

6:40

Councilmember Lauser then amended her motion to approve consent agenda items **b-c**, seconded by **Councilmember Johnson**.

Voting aye: **Council members Johnson, Lauser, Rice and Oldfield**.

Councilmember Oldfield requested and received an explanation regarding a question he had on page 109 of the personnel policy concerning no requirement for a commercial driver's license for the position of Waste Water Treatment Operator #1. **Public Works Director Sourek** stated it was intentional as there is no CDL requirement for that position.

6:41

MOTION to approve consent agenda item a) was made by **Councilmember Oldfield**, seconded by **Councilmember Johnson**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Johnson, Lauser, Rice and Oldfield**.

5. SHERIFF'S OFFICE REPORT:

a) **Sheriff's Report** - The Skamania County Sheriff's report on activity within Stevenson city limits for the prior month was presented for council review by Skamania County Undersheriff Tracy Wyckoff.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

a) Public Hearing: Ordinance 2025-_____ Sewer & Pretreatment - Staff will reintroduce the Public Release Draft Ordinance for Public Comment

6:41 The public hearing was declared open.

- Staff Presentation

Stevenson Public Works Director Sourek gave a brief history of sewer issues and upgrades leading to the development of the proposed ordinance. A draft with changes highlighted has been provided to the public. A public workshop was held after release of the draft ordinance. Notable changes include redefining 'availability' of the public sewer for connection purposes. The current ordinance states it is available within 300' of the property; it has now changed to be within property Right-of-Way. Other revisions include financial assistance for low to moderate-income property owners through the waiver of system development charges. Another proposed change provides a fee/penalty for those who don't connect when sewer is available. Those making a commitment to connect within 3 years could have that penalty reduced. She explained additional changes and advised the council to prepare to address the issue of erroneous information provided to property owners with existing septic systems who do have sewer availability.

Sourek provided a map that shows city properties on sewer, those on septic, and vacant lots. She also discussed a timeline regarding when a sewer line extension is first proposed to when it is completed.

- Comments In Favor

Rick Jessel spoke in support of the recommendations, and stated they seemed as fair as possible. He pointed out there is an appeal process. He noted he has problems with sections E and F as they attempt to predict the unpredictable.

Jeff Breckel, Chair of the Stevenson Planning Commission provided comments in favor of the ordinance. He noted it was a positive step forward, and it can be modified or adjusted. It will help the Planning Commission develop an annexation policy.

Mary Repar shared comments on the proposed ordinance. She stated it was a good step forward, and encouraged the city to do extension work in coordination with street projects. She also suggested the city assesses how well septic systems are functioning in order to find those that are failing.

- Comments Opposed

Tina Weaver stated she did not think it was fair that she would have to go on sewer when she has a perfectly working septic system

Simon Wilkerson suggested having new property owners be required to connect to the sewer. He has a septic system that is still functioning and does not want to pay for something he won't be using.

Scott Robinson stated that properties with working septic systems should not have to connect to the sewer. He related inspections every 3 years would determine which systems were working and which were not.

- Neutral Comments

None received.

7:06 The public hearing was declared closed.

7:07 -Council Deliberation

Councilmembers held a detailed discussion on the proposed sewer ordinance. Topics included the purpose and reasoning behind the ordinance language, alternative timelines for property owners to connect, potential penalty amounts, residential versus commercial costs, and how system development charges are determined. Scheduling a workshop with the new City Manager to help them get familiar with the issue was also considered. Staff will present a revised ordinance with the changes noted at the May City Council meeting.

7. COUNCIL BUSINESS:

8. INFORMATION ITEMS:

- a) Contracts Awarded Administratively - The report on contracts, purchases, and change orders over \$10,000 approved administratively over the past month was attached.
- b) Chamber of Commerce Report - The report presented described some of the activities conducted by Skamania County Chamber of Commerce in the prior month.
- c) Financial Report - The Treasurer's Report and year-to-date revenues and expenses throughout the prior month were presented for council review.
- d) Planning Commission Minutes - Approved minutes from the March 2025 Planning Commission meeting were attached.

9. CITY ADMINISTRATOR AND STAFF REPORTS:

a) Ben Shumaker, Community Development Director

- i. Rock Cove Development—permitting is moving forward.
- ii. He reiterated the Planning Commission's desire to help support the City's strategic planning goals.
- iii. Reconsidering how vacation rentals are managed. Ready to revisit the issue.
- iv. Moving forward with critical ordinances updates. Looking to align with Skamania County's regulations.

b) Carolyn Sourek, Public Works Director

- i. The long-term water supply memo has been received.

- ii.Stevenson was awarded an outstanding performance award for Waste Water Treatment operations in 2023.
- iii.Spruce Up Stevenson is taking place on April 26th.
- iv.First Street project is nearly complete.
- v.Staff announcements-new babies have arrived.
- vi.Carolyn will support operations with Public Works through mid-May. She has not determined a final date for her departure.

c) Ben Shumaker, Interim City Administrator

- i.Glad to have new city administrator hired. Wesley will begin soon.
- ii.He thanked Council for the Personnel Policy passage. Staffing levels are getting back to normal.
- iii.Skamania County Emergency Management held a wildfire training with other agencies to help map out each group's role during an emergency.
- iv.Spruce Up Stevenson is April 26th.

Shumaker was thanked by the Mayor and Council for taking on the role of Interim City Administrator.

10. VOUCHER APPROVAL:

7:54

MOTION to approve the vouchers as presented was made by **Councilmember Rice**, seconded by **Councilmember Johnson**.

11. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS:

Councilmember Lauser spoke about issues faced by trans people.

12. ISSUES FOR THE NEXT MEETING:

Councilmember Oldfield asked for a further discussion about water and sewer appropriations. He was informed that information on the rate study, budget amendment and appropriation had already been provided to the new City Administrator.

Councilmember Rice confirmed the Planning Commission would be reviewing the Airbnb correspondence.

13. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT: For items on agenda

A comment was received regarding financial aid for homeowners affected by the sewer ordinance change.

14. ADJOURNMENT - Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

=====