DRAFT Minutes
CITY OF STEVENSON COUNCIL MEETING
April 16, 2026
6:00 PM, City Hall and Remote

Call-in numbers 253-215-8782, 669-900-6833, 346-248-7799, 312-626-6799, 929-205-6099 or 301-715-8592, Webinar ID 882 5120 2134, **Zoom link** https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88251202134 **or via YouTube at** https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4k9bA0lEEvsF6PSoDwjJvA/

Items with an asterisk (*) have been added or modified after the initial draft publication of the Agenda. Current Agenda version: *Version2*

Attending:

Elected officials: **Mayor Jenny Taylor; Councilmembers Dave Cox, Erin Minnis, Tina Van Pelt, Jeff Breckel.**

City staff: **Jayne Borden, Finance Director, Cody Rosander, Stevenson Public Works Director, Robert Muth, City Attorney, Daniel Pitariu, Records and Permit Manager.**

Guests: Skamania County Undersheriff Tracy Wyckoff; Angie Martin, Director, Skamania County Chamber of Commerce.

Public participants: Rick Jessel, Bob Wertheimer, Brian McNamara, Scott Robinson, Lucy Lauser, Rick Leavitt, Mary Repar

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

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

a) Members of the public may address the Council on items not listed on the agenda. Comments are limited to three minutes per speaker unless otherwise extended or limited by the Mayor. Written comments for inclusion in the Council packet must be submitted by noon the day of the meeting to City Hall or via email.

Rick Jessel spoke about the costs of emergency vehicles, and manufacturers involved in private equity class action/anti-trust suits. It was noted the city does not purchase vehicles from the companies involved in the class action suit.

Bob Wertheimer spoke about the public need for information on the sewer ordinance.

Brian McNamara commented on a public records request he made for information on the sewer ordinance.

Lucy Lauser spoke about actions that would support trans people.

Scott Robinson spoke in appreciation of the work prior speakers had done regarding the sewer ordinance. He asked about the costs for sewer services.

Mary Repar commented the sewer issue had been ongoing for years. She asked for inspections of all septic systems, a moratorium on new development in Stevenson and grant funding to help property owners pay the costs.

Rick Leavitt requested the release of several performance bonds, and shared information on the installation of a PRV (Pressure Reducing Valve?) for the city water system.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

a) Lasher Project – Public Hearing Mayor Taylor opened the public hearing at 6:22 p.m. to receive public comment on required updates related to the Lasher Street project. **Cody Rosander, Stevenson Public Works Director** provided a brief presentation of the project and grant funding received.

Mary Repar commented on the project's sidewalk locations. She objected to the loss of some property and habitat.

Rick Leavitt stated at the Chinedere development sidewalk are located on one side only at the request of the Gorge Commission and Riverkeepers to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces and runoff.

Mayor Taylor noted the small amount of funds the city has had to pay towards the Lasher Street Project. She closed the public hearing at 6:26 p.m.

No discussion occurred between Councilmembers following the hearing.

4. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:

Mayor Taylor shared information on changes **Daniel Pitariu, Records and Permit Manager,** has made that better track agenda versions. No changes were noted.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

a) Minutes of March 19, 2026.

b) Water Leak Adjustment – The Council is asked to authorize an adjustment for Account No. 25013. The excess usage resulted from a fitting failure on the water line which has been addressed by the homeowner. Approval is requested to add $136.75 as a credit to customer’s account due to the leak.

c) Water Leak Adjustment – The Council is asked to authorize an adjustment for Account No. 18950. The excess usage resulted from a faulty toilet float which has been addressed by the homeowner. Approval is requested to waive $99.37 from the customer’s account due to the leak.

d) *Water Leak Adjustment – The Council is asked to authorize an adjustment for Account No. 25334. The excess usage resulted from a water line failure which has been addressed by the homeowner. Approval is requested to waive $530.85 from the customer’s account due to the leak.

e) *Appointment to Homeless Council: Appoint **Councilmember Erin Minnis** to Homeless Council.

Motion to approve consent agenda items a-e was made by **Councilmember Breckel,** seconded by **Councilmember Cox.**

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Minnis, Cox, Van Pelt, Breckel.**

6. SHERIFF'S OFFICE REPORT:

a) *Sheriff's Report - The Skamania County Sheriff's report for activity within Stevenson city limits for the prior month was presented for council review. Undersheriff Wyckoff noted he had separated traffic incidents from the other activities.

7. GUEST SPEAKERS:

a) Skamania County Chamber Update - Angie Martin, Executive Director, Skamania County Chamber provided updates on Chamber activities and programs. Vibe Map is a new section on the Visit Stevenson website, with interactive links to businesses and an events page. They are also working on a destination development project. Several tourism workshops have been held recently with excellent attendance, and she highlighted a Sip & Stroll event taking place May 16th in Stevenson.

8. COUNCIL BUSINESS:

a) *Sewer Ordinance (Discussion)

City Attorney Muth advised Councilmembers Option #2 as provided by **Mayor Taylor** in the current Council memorandum was legal. He provided a recap of the past 7 years worth of work and meetings held on the sewer issue. The upgrade was due to the state Department of Ecology red-tagging the former system due to influent overloads affecting discharges into the Columbia River. He noted other local cities have mandatory hook-up requirements, and briefly described the latecomer agreements available to some property owners. **Mayor Taylor** shared there had been 27 meetings held over 7 years regarding the sewer system.

Operating costs of the sewer plant were questioned. **Councilmember Cox** asked to have the payback costs removed from the current rate structure in order to determine actual operating costs for user billing purposes. **Muth** cautioned that it's just been one year since it was completed and not enough data is available to get a full picture of costs.

An extensive Council discussion took place held regarding the sewer ordinance and options for simplifying and clarifying ordinance language and penalties. Existing vs new sewer line hook up timelines for homeowners, advanced notice to residents regarding planned line locations, applying SDC (System Development Charges) waivers, municipal bond options, inspection schedules for septic systems, income/site hardship considerations and appeal processes, abandoned properties, and more were all taken into consideration. It was noted 27 property owners out of approximately 450 are currently located along sewer lines but have not tied into the system.

Councilmember Cox proposed a one-year timeline for homeowners to decide to hook up. If they agree to within a year, the SDC's will be waived. If they wait until their septic system fails, they will pay the full SDC charge plus all the costs of constructing a sewer line to their residence.

The Council reviewed the requirement for developers of short plats of four or more lots to be responsible for bringing in and hooking up to the sewer lines. Removing the term 'abut' and replacing it with 'within 100' was agreed to for short plats. (Recording became briefly muffled and unintelligible at that point in the discussion.)

Following the discussion, **Mayor Taylor** noted she and **Attorney Muth** will develop a draft section of the ordinance with the changes made, and have it available at the May 2026 CIty Council meeting for review. First and second readings will be held in June and July 2026. **Councilmember Van Pelt** requested the city work more closely with developers to encourage projects.

b) Public Works – Engineering Standards Update (Discussion)

A discussion of proposed updates to the City’s Engineering Standards was held. Following a comprehensive review to align with current practices, address gaps, and improve clarity, draft standards were provided for Council review, with future adoption anticipated.

Cody Rosander, Public Works Director provided a brief update on the process. He is still working with local contractors in developing final standards, and will have them available at the May 2026 City Council meeting

c) Resolution 2026-___ (Action) Driveway Standards Resolution to update the City's driveway standards to reflect current engineering practices, improve safety and access, and provide clearer guidance for development and public works projects.

MOTION to adopt the Driveway Standards Resolution as presented was made by **Councilmember Cox,** seconded by **Councilmember Van Pelt.**

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Minnis, Cox, Van Pelt, Breckel.**

9. FINANCIAL REPORT:

a) **Finance department reports.
Jayne Borden provided a detailed update on the state of the city's finances. Revenues and expenditures are tracking as anticipated with minimal unexpected expenses. The packet she provided includes information on fund totals, investment accounts, and account totals. Several projects are waiting on reimbursements to be provided.
Mayor Taylor and **Councilmember Cox** discussed several alternative ideas for budgeting. A budget workshop is being planned.

10. MAYOR REPORT: Jenny Taylor– Interim City Administrator reported on administrative transition and key operational updates. Candidates for the City Administrator position are scheduled for April 27th. The Planning Commission has two applicants for an open position, and will conduct interviews with both at the May Planning Commission meeting.

11. STAFF REPORT:
a) **Cody Rosander - Public Works Director** provided information on the Rock Creek water intake work. Divers discovered silt and gravel blockages on one section, and were able to clear them. Water flow has increased significantly. **Rosander** is still continuing to work on obtaining permits for replacement of the intake system. He has paused a redesign project with Grayline Engineering. Additional project updates were provided. Problems with electrical equipment are being addressed and legal action may take place.
Rosander shared information on the declining health of the walnut tree at Walnut Park and an arborist's recommendations for prolonging the life of the tree.

b) Jayne Borden - Finance Director
No further report was provided.

12. VOUCHER APPROVAL: Vouchers will be presented prior to the meeting for council review.

MOTION to approve vouchers as presented was made by **Councilmember Cox,** seconded by **Councilmember Breckel.**

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Minnis, Cox, Van Pelt, Breckel.**

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION -
City Attorney Muth explained the process to the candidates prior to interviews beginning.

a) *Interview Council Applicants - Council interviewed applicants for the open position #3. Applications were due on April 15th and were added to the packet as received.

Adi Elliot, Susie Shade, and Thad Ross were the candidates interviewed. They answered a series of questions describing their interest and qualifications for serving on the City Council.

After applicant interviews, City Council convened in Executive Session at 8:40 p.m. under RCW 42.30.110(1)(h) to evaluate the qualifications of a candidate for appointment to elective office. The meeting reconvened at 8:50 p.m., with **Attorney Muth** announcing a further 5-minute Executive Session.

At 8:45 p.m. the City Council reconvened in open session.
Motion to appoint Adi Elliott to the remainder of the term of council position number 3 was made by **Councilmember Minnis,** seconded by **Councilmember Van Pelt.**

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Minnis, Cox, Van Pelt, Breckel.**
Adi Elliott was congratulated and welcomed.

14. COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS:
Mayor Taylor corrected the number of people discussed previously as being affected by the sewer line hook-ups to 26.

15. ISSUES FOR THE NEXT MEETING:
None were noted.

16. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT:
Mary Repar spoke about efforts for the city to be more welcoming to and treat people with dignity. She also commented on the meeting agenda and requested the full packet be made available in time for the meeting. Mary suggested all septic tanks be inspected annually and spoke against waivers for septic users.
Brian McNamara spoke about sewer connection costs and ongoing fees once a property owner is connected. He asked for a workshop to include property owners in determining solutions.

17. ADJOURNMENT - **Mayor Taylor** adjourned the meeting at 9.08 p.m.

===
****Agenda change log**
*** 4/15 Changes(Version1):** -Added third water leak adjustment (item 5d) -Added appointment to homeless council (item 5e) -Attached Sheriff's Report file to packet (item 6a) -Removed Vacation rental home ordinance from item