



City Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 07, 2025 at 6:00 PM

33 Church Street, Sutter Creek, CA 95685

The Agenda can be found on the City's Website: www.cityofsuttercreek.org

The City of Sutter Creek City Council Meeting was available via Zoom and in person.

1. Call to Order and Establish a Quorum for Regular Meeting

Call to order at 6:00pm by Mayor Gunselman.

Council Members present: Claire Gunselman, Dan Riordan, Julia Sierk, Jim Swift, Susan Feist

Council Members absent:

City Treasurer: Vicky Runquist

Staff present: City Manager – Tom DuBois, Contract City Attorney – Derek Cole, City Clerk – Aaron Wolcott

2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The pledge of allegiance was led by Mayor Gunselman.

3. Public Forum

Gail Schifsky, Flume Rd: Concerned resident, asking for enforcement of no parking signs on Greenstone Terrace. Also concerned about the Goldrush development potentially coming back. Doesn't think the city can accommodate that many new homes. Wants Council to do their homework on the issues that may arise from the development.

4. City Manager's Report

The City Manager gave a presentation ([attached](#)). The presentation focused on Public Works improvements taking place in the City, including sidewalk repair and Minnie Provis Park improvements in preparation for the Duck Race in a few weeks. The presentation also gave an update on planned projects related to the Wastewater Treatment Plant and gave a preview of upcoming agenda items including the draft budget.

5. Presentations

A. Proclamation Recognizing Mary Ann Solbrig

The proclamation was read and presented to Mary Ann Solbrig by Mayor Gunselman.

B. Proclamation Recognizing Ryan Baldwin

The proclamation was read and presented to Ryan Baldwin by Mayor Gunselman.

C. Introduction of New City Staff

New City staff were introduced by City Manager, Tom DuBois and Chief O'Connell. The new staff are, Brooke Wunschel - Part Time Account Clerk, William Watson - Administrative Project Manager, and Aaron Wolcott - City Clerk. The City also swore in a new Police Reserve officer, Phillip Wassner.

6. **Approval of Minutes**

A. City Council Minutes of March 17, 2025

Motion to approve the minutes from March 17, 2025 as presented, by Council Member Sierk, second by Council Member Feist.

AYES: Council Members Riordan, Sierk, Gunselman, Swift, Feist

NOES: none

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

7. **Consent Agenda**

A. [Updated Pool Management Agreement Between City of Sutter Creek and ACRA](#)

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda by Council Member Riordan, second by Council Member Swift.

AYES: Council Members Riordan, Sierk, Gunselman, Swift, Feist

NOES: none

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

8. **Ordinances and Public Hearing**

None

9. **Administrative Agenda**

A. **Two Thirds Year Budget Update**

Presentation:

City Manager, Tom DuBois gave a [short presentation](#) regarding the budget. Overall, the city's budget is on target, though there is concern about sales tax, which is difficult to forecast and lags by a quarter. Recent months have shown improvement, and the forecast may be adjusted to reflect this. Property taxes are expected to be on target. A mistake was noted on the COPS grant budget, which was overestimated by around \$50,000. There were savings in a few areas, notably due to unfilled staff positions and from paying CalPERs upfront, which saved \$10,000. The planning budget is on track. The city has deferred some street projects to maintain balance.

Discussion:

Council Member Riordan inquired about the sales tax increase forecasted for the current fiscal year. The increase was set at about 2%. He also raised concerns about inconsistent payments from the new waste service provider. He also inquired about the PG&E budget issue due to the billing method. A budget amendment will be proposed at a future meeting to address this.

Council Member Sierk requested clarification on fee recovery. City Manager DuBois explained that the city collected more in project fees than expected, which is reflected as additional revenue but is offset by related expenses for consultants and staff.

Mayor Gunselman suggested a more conservative approach to sales tax forecasts going forward, given concerns about economic uncertainty.

Next steps:

Staff will work on budget amendments and bring them to future City Council meetings.

B. Long Range Financial Forecast

Presentation:

City Manager, Tom DuBois [presented an update](#) to the five-year financial forecast for the General Fund. The forecast provides a baseline for understanding the city's core revenue and expenses. The most significant expenses are wages, pensions (CalPERS), benefits, county service and insurance. The forecast assumes a conservative annual revenue growth of 2-3% for property tax and sales tax at 2%.

Discussion:

Council Member Sierk expressed concern that the assumed 10% annual increase in CalPERS costs may be low given market volatility. The City Manager explained that CalPERS forecasts are based on 30-year actuarial averages, smoothing out year-to-year fluctuations in investment returns.

Council Member Swift noted the upward trend of the unfunded CalPERS liability despite a relatively flat normal cost, which could point to a potential systemic issue.

The City Manager suggested that a 115 trust could be a potential mechanism for the city to invest additional funds to offset future CalPERS liabilities.

Council Member Swift stressed the importance of reacting quickly to any negative financial trends to prevent snowballing effects.

Council Member Sierk suggested reprioritizing Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects to align with grant opportunities and affordability.

The City Manager is exploring multi-year agreements with the county for services like animal control to provide more predictable cost expectations.

Mayor Gunselman suggested that it would be good to do a study of the police budget, as identified during prior priority-setting discussions. She floated the idea of creating an ad hoc committee including Council Members Riordan and Swift to review the police budget.

Council Member Riordan agreed to joining the ad hoc committee and expressed a desire to better understand how the police department functions through a fact finding study.

Council Member Swift agreed to join the committee but wanted to stress his appreciation of the police department and believes we have a great police department. All council Members agreed with this.

Next steps:

Staff will incorporate the Council's feedback into the baseline for next year's budget.

A more detailed discussion on the 115 Trust may occur in the future.

Staff will continue to monitor the economic environment and be prepared to react quickly to any revenue shortfalls. A mid-year budget check-in is recommended.

An ad hoc committee will be formed to study the police budget.

C. Weed Abatement Ordinance

Presentation:

Contract City Attorney, Derek Cole [presented the revised Weed Abatement Ordinance](#), noting it was based on previous discussions and modeled after ordinances in Ione, Jackson, and Angels Camp. The Attorney expressed confidence in addressing prior concerns and outlining necessary procedures and authority. He encouraged the Council to pass the ordinance.

Discussion:

Mayor Gunselman inquired about the ease of modifying the ordinance after adoption based on practical experience. The Contract City Attorney confirmed it would be very easy to amend, even potentially as an urgency item during fire season, or after a full season of implementation.

City Manager Tom DuBois clarified that while the ordinance provides the framework, the operational procedures (e.g., enforcement) will be developed separately and are expected to be complaint-driven. This flexibility might minimize the need for ordinance amendments.

Council Members Sierk and Feist requested clarification on the fee structure and the ladder fuels and tree spacing elements of the ordinance.

Council Member Swift raised concerns about the areas described as “nuisance” in the new ordinance and the potential overlaps with other existing ordinances. The Contract City Attorney explained that the various ordinances should be viewed as a toolkit which can be applied to different situations that may arise in the city.

Motion to accept the Weed Abatement Ordinance as presented, by Council Member Sierk, second by Council Member Riordan.

AYES: Council Members Riordan, Sierk, Gunselman, Swift, Feist

NOES: none

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

10. Mayor and Council Member Reports

Council Member Riordan: He is continuing to follow up with ACTC on the Bowers Road realignment. At this point the city is waiting for the developer to complete their application. The city won’t keep negotiating with ACTC at this stage. He will be gone for the next meeting so needs Council Member Sierk to attend.

Council Member Sierk: Reminder that she is going to the hazzard risk plan at the county. ACRA is rescheduled in order for the board to attend.

11. City Attorney’s Report

City Attorney: None

12. Future Agenda Items

Council Member Feist: It would be wise to have a conversation about the city’s philosophy of growth. She would like to have additional discussion about growth, development, preservation, and land use.

14. Closed Session

A. CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATOR

Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6

Agency Negotiator: Tom DuBois, City Manager

Employee Organizations: Sutter Creek POA and SEIU

Went into closed session at 8:03 PM

15. Report from Closed Session

Returned at 8:35 with no reportable action

15. Adjournment at 8:35

The next regularly scheduled meeting is April 21, 2025 at 6pm.

Minutes Approved: April 21, 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron Wolcott".

Aaron Wolcott, City Clerk