



CITY OF SWEET HOME CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

July 14, 2026, 5:30 PM
Sweet Home City Hall, 3225 Main Street
Sweet Home, OR 97386

WIFI Passcode: guestwifi

PLEASE silence all cell phones – Anyone who wishes to speak, please sign in.

Mission Statement

The City of Sweet Home will work to build an economically strong community with an efficient and effective local government that will provide infrastructure and essential services to the citizens we serve. As efficient stewards of the valuable assets available, we will be responsive to the community while planning and preparing for the future.

I. Meeting Information

This meeting is open to the public in person and virtually. The City of Sweet Home is streaming the meeting via the Microsoft Teams platform and asks the public to consider this option. To view the meeting live, visit <http://live.sweethomeor.gov>. If you do not have access to the internet, you can call in to 971-203-2871 and enter the meeting ID followed by the # sign to be logged in to the call. Meeting ID: 689 560 927

This video stream and call in options are allowed under Council Rules, meet the requirements for Oregon Public Meeting Law, and have been approved by the Mayor and Chairperson of the meeting.

II. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

IV. Work Session: City Attorney Services

- a) [Memo: City Attorney Service and RFP](#)
- b) [City Attorney Job Description](#)

V. Adjournment



City Attorney's Office

City of Sweet Home
3225 Main Street
Sweet Home, OR 97386
541-393-7409
www.sweethomeor.gov

MEMORANDUM

TO: Sweet Home City Council
FROM: W. Blair Larsen, City Attorney
DATE: July 14, 2026
RE: Recommendations for Replacement City Attorney and other Legal Services

As you are aware, I will be leaving employment with the City of Sweet Home at the end of August, which necessitates finding a replacement for the position of City Attorney. This is a City Charter-mandated position that is appointed directly by the City Council. The City Attorney does not need to be a direct employee and can be a contracted firm or individual.

My recommendation is that the City seek to contract with individual(s) or firm(s) to obtain needed legal services, rather than directly employ a City Attorney. There are some options regarding how to accomplish this.

I. Current Legal Services

Currently, the City of Sweet Home employs an in-house City Attorney (myself), who provides legal advice to the City Council and Staff, contract review, ordinance drafting and review, employment issues, and misdemeanor prosecution. The City receives additional legal services related to the City's various insurance coverages. The City also contracts with attorney Akin Blitz to represent the City in labor negotiations and conflicts, however this work is being done as needed, and there is no active contract for this work.

While the City is required by the Charter to have a City Attorney, it is not required to have a City Prosecutor. However, if the City were to eliminate prosecution, it would require downsizing the Sweet Home Municipal Court to traffic and code violations only, and would require an agreement with the District Attorney's Office or a private firm to handle any appeals.

II. Typical Division of Labor in Legal Services Contracts for Small Cities

Most small cities under 25,000 in population, as well as many larger cities, contract with individual attorneys or law firms for legal services, rather than hire an attorney directly. Most of these contracts divide the work into three main categories—misdemeanor prosecution (when applicable—many small cities do not prosecute at all), labor union legal services, and general City Attorney work.

It is unusual to have one firm or attorney that handles all of these services. In fact, while some cities combine general City Attorney work with labor representation, legal services for labor issues are most often handled by a specialist. It is advisable to keep prosecution and labor law separate, because the City Prosecutor needs to maintain good relationships with City police officers, and the City's labor attorney must be free to take positions against the police officers' union.

Prosecution services are more often combined with general City Attorney work, but even that seems to be less common than contracting with a specialist prosecutor or foregoing prosecution entirely.



III. Options

The City Council has four options for legal services:

1. Seek to hire an in-house City Attorney to handle both prosecution and general City Attorney work. This would essentially be the same as the current situation just with a different attorney. Given the current market for attorneys in Linn County, this option would likely be the most expensive, which is why I don't recommend this option.
2. Issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for legal services, which could be done in several ways.
 - a. Issue three separate RFPs for general legal services and land use (City Attorney), prosecution (City Prosecutor) and labor representation.
 - b. Issue two RFPs, one for general legal services and prosecution, and one for labor representation.
 - c. Issue two RFPs, one for general legal services and labor representation, and one for prosecution.

IV. Conclusion

My recommendation is to issue three separate RFPs for general legal services and land use, prosecution, and labor representation. I would make clear in the documents that individual submitters or firms could respond to two of the three RFPs, but not all three, so that the City can maintain a separation between prosecution and labor representation.



Effective: 4/10/2024
City of Sweet Home
FLSA Exempt
Non-Represented
Approved by: *Kelsey Young*

CITY ATTORNEY

SUMMARY:

Under direction of the City Council, the City Attorney provides legal counsel to the City and represents the City in all legal matters. The City Attorney is appointed by the City Council and is guided by the City Charter, City Ordinances, and other statutes as they exist and by the procedures and limits imposed by them. This is a part-time position anticipated at 30 hours weekly. Attendance at City Council and other meetings outside of standard business hours will also be required.

This position exercises no supervision.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

The duties listed here are intended for illustration. The omission of any assignment does not exclude it from the position.

- Give legal advice and confer with various City officials, employees, boards, commissions, and committees. Prepare legal opinions on questions submitted by City officials and prepare all legal documents and instruments.
- Prepare ordinances, resolutions, official notices, and legislative acts relative to the City's governmental functions.
- Prepare a variety of studies, reports, recommendations, and related information for decision-making purposes.
- Draft or review proposed policies, handbooks, procedures, and other documentation to ensure legal compliance.
- Assist with contract solicitations and negotiations.
- Serve as prosecutor for the City and, upon request, review all crime reports where complaints are requested to determine if a complaint is valid and prosecution merited.
- Represent the City in all jury trials and all trials where there is a defense attorney, represent the City in various other courts, and confer with police officials and other persons in such capacity.
- Conduct trials, hearings, and arraignments, including to make findings of guilty or not guilty and determine penalties.
- Pursue professional development opportunities to keep abreast of trends and developments in the legal field.
- Attend City Council meetings and provide guidance on procedural and legal requirements for the conduct of City Councilors.
- Serve as a member of various City Committees or work groups as assigned.
- Assist other staff in the performance of their duties as assigned when legal consultation is required.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Juris Doctor from an accredited law school and licensed to practice law in the State of Oregon; OR ability to obtain licensure to practice law in the State of Oregon within one year of appointment, plus two years of relevant municipal experience requiring extensive interpretation of laws and regulations.
- Oregon State Driver's License or ability to obtain within six (6) months of appointment.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Two (2) years in the practice of municipal law or experience in a private law firm advising municipal governments.
- Extensive knowledge of contracts, criminal justice, employment, land use, and procurement in the State of Oregon.