

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday March 10th, 2026, 5:30 P.M.

City Hall Council Chambers

115 N 3rd Street

The Council of the City of Oregon met Tuesday March 10th, 2026, at 5:30 P.M.

The meeting was held at City Hall in the Council Chambers and on Zoom.

Present: Mayor Ken Williams
Council Member Terry Schuster
Council Member Melanie Cozzi
Council Member Tim Krug
Council Member Josiah Flanagan
City Manager Darin DeHaan
City Attorney Paul Chadwick
Chief of Police Matt Kalnins
City Clerk Cheryl Hilton

Also Present: Bill Covell, John Dickson, and Josh Pickering.

Mayor Ken Williams called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

City Clerk Cheryl Hilton started the pledge of allegiance.

Council Members Cozzi, Flanagan, Krug, Schuster, and Mayor Williams answered roll call. A quorum was present.

Presentations

None.

Proclamations, Commendations, Swear In, Etc.

None.

Public Comment

None.

Approval of Minutes

Council Member Josiah Flanagan moved to approve February 23rd, 2026, minutes, Seconded by Council Member Terry Schuster.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Flanagan, Krug, Schuster, Williams. No Nays.

Approval of Warrants & Payroll

Council Member Tim Krug moved to approve payroll in the amount of \$66,066.43 and the current warrants as listed:

Ace Hardware & Outdoor Center	\$40.99
Beesing Welding	\$507.70
Butitta Bros Automotive - Oregon	\$1,824.54
Comcast	\$284.86
Comcast	\$340.87
ComEd	\$12,024.22
Darin DeHaan	\$500.00
DeKalb Implement	\$8.00
Earth Planter	\$225.00
Envision Healthcare	\$241.00

Ferguson Waterworks #2516	\$294.73
Fidelity Security Life Insurance	\$175.40
Frontier	\$138.18
Frontier	\$299.12
Hawkins, Inc	\$448.76
Highstar Traffic	\$354.35
ILEAS	\$300.00
Ken Williams	\$27.87
Ken Williams	\$275.50
Leads Online LLC	\$2,373.00
Manheim Solutions	\$1,368.50
Michael Todd & Company, Inc	\$1,115.41
Mobile Electronics	\$12,953.94
Northern Illinois Disposal Services	\$25,648.92
Northern Illinois University	\$360.00
Ogle County Economic Development Corporation	\$10,000.00
Oregon SuperValu	\$36.73
Pace Analytical Services	\$596.00
Pots Planters & More	\$10,620.60
Randy Means & Associates	\$250.00
Rat Worx, Inc	\$20.00
Shaw Media/ Sauk Valley Media	\$879.95
Shawn Melville	\$250.00
Snyders Pharmacy	\$161.67
Stillman BancCorp	\$4,047.16
Stratus Network Inc	\$65.26
Sun Life Financial	\$415.51
SundogIT	\$2,719.91
Terry Schuster	\$461.99
Village of Progress	\$1,280.00
Ward, Murray, Pace & Johnson, P.C.	\$344.50
Waste Water Management of Northern IL LLC	\$10,890.00
	\$105,170.14

Seconded by Council Member Terry Schuster.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Flanagan, Krug, Schuster, Williams. No Nays.

Ordinances

Council Member Tim Krug moved to approve Ordinance 2026-005 Approving and Authorizing the Execution of a Tax Increment Financing District Redevelopment Agreement by and between the City of Oregon and Matthew Pendergrass and 408 E. Washington Street, LLC, Seconded by Council Member Melanie Cozzi.

Discussion: City Manager Darin DeHaan said Matt has made a significant investment in converting the property into a restaurant/bar. The property sits in the TIF district, and the city is advocating fifty thousand dollars for the project. The location was previously K's Sports Bar and a laundromat. Matt had also made an offer on the car wash however it was not accepted. The property will be a bright spot on the East side of town and hopefully spur more redevelopment. The car wash has been for sale for a long time and Carla Benesh has an empty lot that is also in a prime location for redevelopment. This is a good example to show the investment to the East side of town and the RT 64 corridor into Oregon.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Flanagan, Krug, Schuster, Williams. No Nays.

Resolutions

Council Member Melanie Cozzi moved to approve Resolution 2026-05 Disposal of Surplus Property, Seconded by Council Member Tim Krug.

Discussion: The 2022 Kaufman trailer was purchased under a different department head. The trailer cannot be used with current equipment. The auction site for the trailer will be posted on the city website, so all have a fair chance to bid on the equipment.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Flanagan, Krug, Schuster, Williams. No Nays.

Council Member Terry Schuster moved to approve Resolution 2026-06 Allocation of Motor Fuel Tax Funds in the amount of \$200,000.00 for the purpose of Maintaining Streets and Highways – Slurry Seal Project 26-00000-00-GM, Seconded by Council Member Tim Krug.

Discussion: The project will include two years' worth of projects. Public Works Director Bill Covell stated South Third Street Adams to Collins have been added to the project as well as the driveway to well five as an alternate. He estimates the project to cost one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to one hundred and sixty thousand dollars. Bids will go out in April. City Manager Darin DeHaan said two hundred thousand is not the actual cost of the project. Engineers will give multiple options to the City Council to review.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Flanagan, Krug, Schuster, Williams. No Nays.

Motions

Council Member Tim Krug moved to approve FY26 a5 Branding & Digital Marketing Proposal and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents and make any changes as needed on behalf of the City of Oregon, Seconded by Council Member Melanie Cozzi.

Discussion: City Manager Darin DeHaan said the proposal is not set in stone. The executive group will still be in place to make the final decisions. Mayor Ken Williams said the same committee structure will be followed as before. Council Member Melanie Cozzi suggested changes to the proposal to include more than one photo date and be at local events and festivals, limit the use of AI, include the inclusion of the Depot Museum and Public Library, and include marketing in the Quad city region. City Manager Darin DeHaan said he also sees potential in drawing people from the Southern region. The circle needs to be more west and south.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Flanagan, Krug, Schuster, Williams. No Nays.

Council Member Terry Schuster moved to approve Appropriations Reallocation of Funds - \$100,000.00 from General Fund Contingency 01-01-9100 to General Fund Vehicle Replacement Program 01-01-8400, Seconded by Council Member Josiah Flanagan.

Discussion: Mayor Ken Williams said the city had held the funds for the purchase of new squads in the general fund. The funds will need to move internally to another fund to cover the cost of the vehicle purchase. City Manager Darin DeHaan said the city council approved the purchase of an additional vehicle, everything just landed in this fiscal year. We didn't appropriate enough for the vehicle purchase but part of it was mid-budget approval of the purchase. The money was already allocated; it will just be moved within the funds to cover the purchase.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Flanagan, Krug, Schuster, Williams. No Nays.

Discussion Items

Mainstreet: Mayor Ken Williams gave background information as to why the city is looking into the creation of the position. He said looking at the downtown, ten years ago there were seventeen vacant storefronts. A lot of work has gone into creating incentive programs to get people to fill these empty locations. The 1% sales tax, which does not include vehicles and is strictly retail merchandise, was up 61% over that ten-year period. Over the last five years, it is up 42%. It says our businesses are very important to the city's overall income. It helps us from having to go out to the public for tax increases. There are one hundred and thirty-eight brick and mortar businesses in town that are registered with the State of Illinois for retail sales tax. This is the reason the city is looking at putting something in place to maintain the momentum. If you look at other small towns in the rural Midwest with similar populations, we are different and want to stay that way.

City Manager Darin DeHaan said there is a revitalization to the Mainstreet Programs around the state. When looking at the Chamber of Commerce going away, the city looked into filling the gap. This individual will be responsible for going to local businesses and building a relationship with them. Business retention, business development, someone to be a central contact to create pop up events or sidewalk sales, and pub crawls are all things this individual will help with. We are missing that element of drawing more people to our downtown and supporting our local businesses. This position would work very closely with City Hall and our local businesses.

Council Member Terry Schuster said there are twenty-eight new businesses in town now compared to 2015. They are adding to the strength of our community. There are not very many communities our size that have that many businesses in operation and even though some fail, the storefronts do not stay empty long. He is concerned we are being stretched thin. It was easier for the Chamber to work with businesses when there were twenty-eight less businesses. Now there are more businesses and no Chamber of Commerce. He said we need a new approach to help retain businesses. Making sure they are successful with what they have. Many of the small businesses are family owned and do not have business degrees. There are things someone with a business degree could help the business owners with. He feels this position would go a long way to help strengthen our businesses.

City Manager Darin DeHaan said the city is up almost sixty thousand dollars in sales tax revenue over last year, up twenty thousand dollars in gaming revenue. The money previously used to support the Chamber could all be allocated to this position. The city is not looking for additional money to come in, the money is there, it would just be allocated to this position. Council Member Melanie Cozzi asked if the funds would go towards creating events. City Manager Darin DeHaan said a budget would be created for personnel costs and activities. Council Member Terry Schuster said he would expect there to be sponsors for events just as there have been in the past. Local businesses would get recognition for sponsorships. Mayor Ken Williams said this will be a full-time position. The individual will work with all businesses, not just businesses that were part of the Chamber. Council Member Melanie Cozzi said they can also help promote city programs such as façade grants, rental assistance, and sustainability practices. City Manager Darin DeHaan will provide more information, such as salary and responsibilities at the next City Council meeting.

Board & Commission Reports

Economic Development: Mayor Ken Williams stated the importance of the Kunes location. Kunes had a pending offer however it fell through. They will be marketing the location soon.

Sustainability: Council Member Melanie Cozzi said the committee will need one more meeting to complete the Eco Oregon Program.

Tree Board: An Arbor Day Event is being planned. The Tree Board is looking for an additional member.

Public Art Commission: The committee completed their vision for new welcome signs. The proposed designs will come to City Council for approval.

250th Commemoration Committee: John Dickson will serve as the committee chairman. The committee is working on a Flag Day event. Flag Day is June 14th and the committee suggested holding small events at historical locations. They also discussed the idea of having two hundred and fifty residents fly the American Flag for the 250th Commemoration.

Department & Officer Reports

Chief of Police Matt Kalnins: Last two squads have been delivered. Officer Cofield will be driving the new SUV and Lieutenant Brechon will be driving the new truck.

Public Works Director Bill Covell: Public Works completed the first round of leaf pickup. They will do their best to do another round. Bill also stressed the importance of the Headworks Project. He said one employee spent an entire day raking the screens at the treatment plant after the rain. City Manager Darin DeHaan said the city is hopeful to receive EPA loan forgiveness since this project is a multi-million-dollar project. Public Works Director Bill Covell said a resident reached out to him about employee Aidan Ellsworth. He complimented Aidan on going above and beyond. Council Member Terry Schuster asked if residents should be storing yard waste until April. Bill said yes, yard waste collection starts in April. The public works department still has leaf piles from last year to dispose of. They will also begin street sweeping soon.

City Manager Darin DeHaan: A pre-audit meeting is scheduled for March 18th. The TIF Joint Board of Review will be meeting March 23rd if anyone would like to learn how TIF funds are used. A public hearing for the Safe Routes to School project is being held on March 25th from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The Illinois Housing Authority will be holding a meeting at the Polo City Hall to discuss the community revitalization plan on April 13th.

Council Reports

Council Member Tim Krug: He asked if the new squad truck would remain unmarked. Chief of Police Matt Kalnins said the department typically does not mark an administrative vehicle.

Mayor Ken Williams: He said every couple of months he meets with the mayors from Polo, Stillman Valley, Mt. Morris, and Byron. The mayors discussed their mutual issue with the post office. Utility bills are being delivered late or not delivered at all. The mayors expressed their frustration with the post office services to Congressman Darin LaHood. Congressman Darin LaHood has sent a letter to the Postmaster General requesting the causes of the delivery failures be identified and to restore reliable service.

Council Member Terry Schuster moved to go into Executive Session at 6:11 p.m. to discuss litigation and possible lawsuits, Seconded by Council Member Melanie Cozzi.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Flanagan, Krug, Schuster, Williams. No Nays.

Council Member Terry Schuster moved to adjourn the meeting, Seconded by Council Member Melanie Cozzi.

Roll Call: Cozzi, Flanagan, Krug, Schuster, Williams. No Nays.

Adjourn: 6:36 P.M.

Ken Williams, Mayor

Attest: _____
Cheryl Hilton, City Clerk