

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 5:30 P.M.  
City Hall Council Chambers  
115 N 3<sup>rd</sup> Street

The Council of the City of Oregon met Tuesday March 24<sup>th</sup>, 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  
Chief of Police Matt Kalnins  
City Clerk Cheryl Hilton

Also Present: Mike Arians, Jessica Cash, Bill Covell, John Dickson, Vicki Farbo, Earleen Hinton, and Josh Pickering.

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

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

Council Member Tim Krug started the pledge of allegiance.

**Presentations**

None.

**Proclamations, Commendations, Swear In, Etc.**

Mayor Ken Williams proclaimed the month of April as National Child Abuse and Awareness Prevention month in the City of Oregon. Jessica Cash with Shining Star Children's Advocacy Center and Vicki Farbo with CASA were present. Jessica said she appreciated the City Council for proclaiming the month of April as National Child Abuse and Awareness Prevention month and helping to raise awareness. Jessica stated Shining Star will be holding the Hands Around the City event on April 17<sup>th</sup> at the Rochelle City Hall at 12 pm. The Hope of Ogle County event will be held at River's Edge Experience in Oregon on May 21<sup>st</sup> from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Shining Star will be opening a large office here in Oregon and has secured a location on Pines Road. She said they are happy to be able to operate in the same county as the people they serve.

**Public Comment**

John Dickson asked about the Mainstreet position that was discussed at the last meeting. He commented on the use of tax revenue to fund the position and if the revenue goes up when does the government downsize tax assessments, gaming fees, or something similar. He also asked about a peaceful protest being held on March 28<sup>th</sup> and vendors being involved. City Manager Darin DeHaan said they had attempted to secure space on the courthouse lawn; however, they could not find insurance carriers. He also asked about the Abbey Road style photo on the crosswalk in front of City Hall. City Manager Darin DeHaan said the picture has been completed. Mayor Ken Williams said he will share the photo.

**Approval of Minutes**

Council Member Terry Schuster moved to approve March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026, minutes, Seconded by Council Member Tim Krug.

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

**Approval of Warrants & Payroll**

Council Member Josiah Flanagan moved to approve payroll in the amount of \$64,008.26 and the current warrants as listed:

Amazon Capital Services, Inc	\$301.98
Ancel Glink, P.C.	\$4,090.00
Butitta Bros Automotive - Oregon	\$356.93
Caspers Home Inspection LLC	\$1,550.00
Cintas	\$150.85
City of Oregon	\$5,500.00
Comcast	\$833.46
Comcast	\$1,031.25
Corboy & Demetrio, PC	\$30.00
Ecolab	\$316.46
EM Benefits	\$1,822.66
Eric Higby	\$14.55
Fehr Graham & Associates, LLC	\$10,401.00
Frontier	\$139.35
Illinois EPA	\$10.00
Illinois Municipal Treasures Association	\$100.00
Ken Williams	\$58.07
Melanie Cozzi	\$25.00
Menards	\$201.79
MPSG	\$3,601.00
Pace Analytical Service	\$725.00
Polo Cooperative Association	\$2,245.23
Postmaster	\$813.74
Radar Man Inc.	\$250.00
Sun Life Financial	\$415.51
Sutton Ford Inc	\$133,123.84
Verizon	\$843.15
Visa	\$1,539.20
Visa	\$1,781.87
	<b>\$172,271.89</b>

Seconded by Council Member Terry Schuster.

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

**Ordinances**

None.

**Resolutions**

None.

### **Motions**

Council Member Tim Krug moved to approve the Engineering Agreement with Fehr Graham for the Bridge-to-Bridge Walking/Bike path and authorize the City Manager to sign all documents on behalf of the City of Oregon, Seconded by Council Member Melanie Cozzi.

**Discussion:** This is an ongoing project and is part of the city's long-range plans. The Bridge-to-Bridge project is a partnership between multiple entities to create a walking/bike path from 2<sup>nd</sup> Street by the Trestle Ridge subdivision to RT 64. The city was unsuccessful in securing ITEP grant funding several cycles ago because the engineering had not been completed.

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

Council Member Melanie Cozzi moved to approve the Appointment of Steve Rypkema to the Tree Board, Seconded by Council Member Tim Krug.

**Discussion:** Mayor Ken Williams said he is glad to see Steve stepping into this role; he will be very valuable to the Tree Board. City Manager Darin DeHaan said Steve will be filling the vacancy left by Caleb Jenks.

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

### **Discussion Items**

**Main Street:** Mayor Ken Williams said the city will be taking time with this decision. City Manager Darin DeHaan presented the City Council with a budget and funding options for the position. He said most Main Street programs are 501c3 nonprofit. There are a multitude of municipalities, including Dixon, who help with funding Main Street programs. These communities combined the Chamber, Economic Development, and Main Street under one umbrella.

If approved by the City Council, funding for the program would be with economic development funds. He provided the City Council a breakdown of the revenue and expenses for the Economic Development Fund. Total revenue is approximately two hundred and ninety-seven thousand dollars, total expense approximately two hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars, leaving an ending fund balance of approximately forty-seven thousand dollars. All revenue from gaming would be moved into economic development, approximately two hundred and forty thousand dollars for fiscal year 2027. Previously the gaming revenue was split between general, capital building, and economic development funds. He stated funding for the program would come from video gaming revenue, not tax dollars. The breakdown included the cost for personnel and program expenses for the Mainstreet Program.

Council Member Terry Schuster asked how long the program has been in effect. City Manager Darin DeHaan said the program has been in existence since the mid 90's. He said it shows the program is sustainable over decades. He said the Chamber format has been struggling for many years. Mayor Ken Williams said the Mainstreet Program is much broader in scope. The program will work on sustainability of existing merchants and will do much more in the form of economic development such as working with building owners to make repairs to buildings, work with potential new businesses, and work with the county to attract new businesses that are looking for locations in town. Businesses come and go and it is normal, but we need people in place to make sure the process continues. The Chamber of Commerce had a very low membership. With the Mainstreet Program, every business will get the same amount of support. He also stated Economic Development in the city started with volunteers. The city was later able to bring in a contract employee. Council Member Melanie Cozzi said she sees the program as a way to streamline all the agencies the city currently works with. By putting them under one directive, it makes the city more efficient. City Council

Member Josiah Flanagan said he could not see why the city needed to create a full-time director position. He said we could try to save some money; we are a small town. Mayor Ken Williams said the city could also look into hiring a contract employee. He stated the city would have more control and direction for the position if the city hired a full-time employee. He said it will come down to cost and how to save money, and if we save money, where does it go. Council Member Terry Schuster said he would like to see a list of job responsibilities and duties in terms of what the person will be expected to do, expertise and knowledge, and the time they would have to do those things. He said we want to be able to support the businesses with skills to help them be more successful. You need to have someone who understands marketing, budgeting, and bookkeeping. He said he feels the program will need a full-time person. The City Council asked Darin to provide them with the duties and responsibilities list for them to review.

### **Board & Commission Reports**

**Planning:** Will be holding a public hearing to consider changes to the city zoning code to allow hotels as a permitted use in the Commercial District.

**Economic Development:** The annual TIF review was held. Laura McKee with the Oregon Fire Protection District was present. All taxing bodies are invited to attend the meeting.

**Finance:** The City Council was provided the current budget worksheet for review. Preparations for next fiscal year's budget have begun.

**Tree Board:** A tree planting will be held on April 24<sup>th</sup> in observance of Arbor Day. The tree will be planted by the north end of town's welcome sign.

**250<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Committee:** John Dickson said the committee has discussed holding events over three days, including Flag Day. Ideas are still in the concept phase and include events being held at Conover Square, the Depot Museum, and CMAAA. Mayor Ken Williams provided John Dickson contact information for the VFW.

### **Department & Officer Reports**

**Chief of Police Matt Kalnins:** He said it has been amazing to work with Jessica Cash and Shining Star. He also complimented the public works department on the fantastic job of clearing the snow after the recent weather event.

**Public Works Director Bill Covell:** The public works department will be cleaning catch basins. He reminded everyone to slow down and give extra attention and space to workers.

**City Manager Darin DeHaan:** Thanked CASA and Shining Star for everything their organizations do.

### **Council Reports**

**Mayor Ken Williams:** Thanked the public works department for cleaning up the downtown in short order. City Manager Darin DeHaan reminded the community that snow clean-up in the downtown is a partnership with the business owners. Business owners still need to remove snow and apply salt if necessary. Mayor Ken Williams thanked Shining Star Advocacy Center for their work. He is very happy they will be in town.

Mayor Ken Williams said the City Council will be going into Executive Session to discuss litigation and the potential purchase of property. No action will be taken after they reconvene to regular session.

Council Member Melanie Cozzi moved to go into Executive Session at 6:18 p.m. to discuss litigation and potential purchase of property, Seconded by Council Member Tim Krug.

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

Council Member Melanie Cozzi moved to adjourn the meeting, Seconded by Council Member Josiah Flanagan.

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

Adjourn: 6:46 P.M.

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Ken Williams, Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cheryl Hilton, City Clerk