



Council Minutes

February 25th, 2025

ROLL CALL: Mayor Craven called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with Councilor Chambers, Councilor LaCoste, Councilor Eversull, Councilor Hansen, Councilor Winklepleck, and Councilor Solberg present. Administrative Assistant Elizabeth Coleman, Administrative Assistant Tammi Morrow, and City Administrator Scott McDowell were also present.

ABSENT: Everyone was present.

PUBLIC: Wendy Toshitsune, Jack Alsman, Betsy Ramshur, Bill Hand, Victor Aguilar, Don Lyon, Heather and Marie Timmons, Jared Swezey, Steve Frambes, (*Linn County Sheriff's Office*), Carley Geider, Penny Rosenberg (*Democrat-Herald*), and Senator Cedric Hayden.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS: Remove 6) D. Website Review and add 10) G. Secure Survey Work.

MINUTES: Mayor Craven indicated that the Council President position last month was passed by majority vote, not unanimous vote.

Councilor Solberg made a motion to approve the January 30th, 2025 meeting minutes with clarification. Councilor LaCoste seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Councilor Hansen made a motion to approve the February 19th, 2025, Goal Setting Session minutes as presented. Councilor Winklepleck seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING | PRESENTATIONS:

1. **Sweet Home Sanitation | Chris Kjar & Michael Estes.** Chris Kjar reviewed the leadership change at the Sweet Home Station. Michael Estes is the new Site Manager, replacing Joshua Stanley. The Call Center is now open again, with two folks in the Sweet Home office. Sweet Home Sanitation is proposing a 2.6% rate increase to cover increasing costs.

Councilor Solberg moved to approve the solid water rates increase of 2.6% over last year. Councilor Chambers seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

2. **Goals Review 2025.26.** Council considered goals for the upcoming two years; continuing from their work on February 19th, 2025. The City is facing many challenges being imposed by the State and Federal governments. There are a lot of wants and needs in the community including the Calapooia Riverbank, a new Pavilion building in the Park, a Water Treatment Plant and Distribution System upgrade, Sewer Treatment Lagoon and Chemical update, Kirk Avenue project, and the playground equipment reestablished on the prairie. Mr. McDowell reviewed price points for the various projects, and what a typical utility bill would look like with all the additional amenities.

Other ongoing projects include the Canal Company and Millrace. Mayor Craven stated that the City can do many of the projects, but it will come at a cost. He feels the need to prioritize, narrow them down, and proceed with the most feasible. After a brief overview of concerns and pending projects, Council directed McDowell to pare the goals down for consideration at the April meeting

3. **Calapooia Riverbank Retrospective.** Mr. McDowell discussed the Calapooia Riverbank situation. The restroom at the north end of the park was lost to the river in 2011 due to flooding.



Council Minutes

Council reached out to local, state, and federal agencies to address the situation. There were two options for repair, 1) Army Corps of Engineers estimate of nearly \$3 million, and 2) River Design Group estimate of \$600,000 with only a 50/50 chance that the repair would sustain long term. With no good options, Council decided to retreat from the riverbank. Plans are underway to relocate the playground equipment and rebuild the pavilion in another location as funding and time allow. All riverbank information can be found on the City's website, www.ci.brownsville.or.us. This project has been reviewed every year since 2011.

4. **Kirk Avenue Retrospective.** McDowell reviewed the components of the Kirk Avenue project. The surface of the street would need to be lowered considerably to install storm drainage. Moving all utilities including water lines, water service lines, sanitary collection lines, installing curbs & gutters, sidewalks and securing easements to perform the project would be more than \$3M. If Council were to consider the project, Council assesses the costs to abutting property owners. The assessment would be over \$45,000 +/- per property owner from Main Street to Hunter Street. The assessed cost would be levied annually for a period of ten years or \$4,500 per year in this example. All Kirk Avenue information can be found on the City's website, www.ci.brownsville.or.us. This project has been reviewed annually since 2007.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

1. **Linn County Sheriff's Office (LCSO) Report | Sergeant Steve Frambes.** Sergeant Frambes reviewed the statistics for January. Frambes shared that LCSO is having a huge influx of fraud in the County, totaling over \$500,000 in the last two months. LCSO has a lot of information on their website, check it out for tips to stay safe. He also encouraged everyone to look out for their elderly neighbors, they are often the easiest mark for scammers. Frambes stated, just to clarify, LCSO will never call and ask for money. These fraud cases have a low success rate for prosecution. Sergeant Frambes also encouraged everyone to obey traffic control devices. With the recent crazy rainy weather, folks have been driving around road closed signs. This failure to obey signage has initiated citizen water rescues, tow trucks dispatched to tow vehicles, and citations have been issued.
2. **Administration.** Administrator Scott McDowell reported that Staff will be traveling to the City County Insurance Annual Conference later this week.

McDowell reported he and Councilor Chambers will be attending the Linn County Sheriff's quarterly meeting soon. Sheriff Duncan has indicated that there is likely to be an increase in fees soon; Cities may need to pare back hours to address affordability.

McDowell referenced the Recycling Modernization Act (RMA) document provided in the agenda packet. The document provides an update of local government responsibilities. Chris Kjar, Sweet Home Sanitation, is working with the City to get reports filed.

McDowell reported that the Canal Company leadership recently met with Councilor Chambers, Mrs. Coleman, and Mr. McDowell to review progress. Questions were raised, and the group should be moving forward again soon with the agreement.

The Rural Economic Alliance (REAL) is working with LBCC to explore the possibility of creating an internship program to accomplish strategic & marketing goals.

Budget season has started. Morrow and McDowell recently attended the annual budget training in Albany at Linn County Fairgrounds. Deadline for Staff budget requests is March 30th, 2025. McDowell continues to work on the prospectus.



Council Minutes

Repairs continue at the Rec Center that included lighting, the scoreboard controller, and the rigging for the west basketball hoop.

Staff are preparing for the website upgrade to the newest version of Drupal. The City is being forced to upgrade the facility reservation module, likely going with CivicsPlus for the upgrade. Administrative Assistant Jannea Deaver and McDowell will meet with CivicsPlus representatives to determine the best course of action.

Mr. McDowell reported that the City has received two applications so far for the Park Host position. Public Works Superintendent Karl Frink and Administrative Assistant Tammi Morrow will conduct interviews soon.

McDowell reviewed key bills being considered in Salem. The Recreational Immunity bill is SB 179.

McDowell addressed false comments that recently surfaced on social media platforms regarding properties located near North Avenue & N. Main Street. Two properties are considering building a quadplex and a duplex. Staff were accused of making backroom deals among other allegations. McDowell showed those in attendance that the zoning has never changed since the map was adopted in 1981 and that those two property owners have full rights to develop those two properties lawfully.

Mr. McDowell talked about the City's advocacy efforts. Legislative Advocacy Policy Committee (LAPC) will be activated soon. McDowell reported that Jami Cate has featured Brownsville in her last two newsletters. It is vitally important to get heard at the State House and for our legislators to know who we are, and what our concerns are. There are several bills to be concerned about, including 427, the water surface issue.

McDowell requested that if anyone wanted to attend the Water Day Caucus at the Capitol on March 20th, 2025, to let him know.

McDowell reported that EPA has appointed a new director, Lee Zeldin. Zeldin has confirmed the City's position since taking over his post. The Feds have funded non-profit organizations to sue the Feds.

3. **Planning.** No comments.
4. **Library.** No comments.
5. **Office.** No comments.
6. **Council Comments.** Mayor Craven read a prepared statement (see attached) concerning government overreach, and how we as a community can ensure that government is working for us, not the other way around. Craven discussed several pending legislative bills including the metering of private wells, wildfire maps based on risk and what damage that will do to everyone. Mayor Craven encouraged everyone to get involved by researching upcoming legislation and becoming familiar with testifying, making your voice heard. Inactivity is never going to make a change for us for the better. Council can only do so much; citizens are extremely important to the process.
7. **Citizen Comments.** No comments.

LEGISLATIVE:



Council Minutes

1. **Resolution 2025.05 | Authorizing Additional Reimbursement Costs.** Mr. McDowell reported that one late invoice has been received by the City for the 2021 Downtown Sanitary Sewer Project from Mari Vanderstelt.

Councilor Chambers moved to approve R 2025.05 as presented. Councilor Winklepleck seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

2. **Proclamation | Recognizing & Congratulating Willamette Valley Insurance Service.** Mayor Craven read the proclamation into the record, stating this building is the first to be built in the downtown core in nearly one hundred years.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. **Elect Cascade West Council of Governments Representative (COG) | Two Year Term.** Council expressed no interest in serving on the Board as their priorities do not align with City priorities. Past members that have served on the Board have not been overly happy with the situation. McDowell will pass these sentiments along to the COG.

2. **Brownsville Senior Center Agreement.** Mr. McDowell reported that this agreement has been a good partnership for many years. A few years ago, Council increased the support for this group. Councilor Winklepleck stated they are a great asset to the community.

Councilor Winklepleck moved to approve the agreement as presented. Councilor Chambers seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

3. **Brownsville Flower Club Agreement.** Mr. McDowell reported that a few years ago the Brownsville Flower Club joined forces with the Senior Center. The group beautifies around town with flowers. Over the last 12-13 years, the City has been reimbursing them for the flowers they plant.

Councilor Hansen moved to approve the Flower Club agreement. Councilor LaCoste seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

4. **Brownsville Art Association (BAA) Agreement.** Mr. McDowell stated that due to an obscure law Linn County has decided to tax art associations including the BAA. The agreement presented has a few minor changes to reflect BAA being more in charge of their space.

Councilor LaCoste moved to approve the agreement as presented. Councilor Winklepleck seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

5. **Appoint Legislative Advocacy Policy (LAPC) Member.** Mr. McDowell indicated that the City received one application, from Marie Timmons. Mayor Craven stated that this is a key role, and thanked Ms. Timmons for applying.

Councilor Winklepleck moved to approve the appointment of Marie Timmons to the LAPC. Councilor Chambers seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

6. **Appoint Budget Committee Member.** Mr. McDowell stated that there are two open positions. The City received one application, from Daniel Pearson.

Councilor Hansen moved to appoint Daniel Pearson to the Budget Committee. Councilor LaCoste seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.



Council Minutes

Mr. McDowell stated that upon review, there is some language clean up in the Brownsville Municipal Code (BMC) that states that the City Administrator can appoint nonelective members to committees. Past practices have had Council making the appointments, and it might be a good idea to have the BMC reflect this practice better. There are also some budget publications language that could be updated while we are looking for strategies in keeping with State law. McDowell will bring language back to Council for review. Council agreed by consensus.

7. **Survey Work.** Mr. McDowell would like to seek out some survey work.

Councilor Hansen moved to authorize Mr. McDowell to go forth with securing survey work. Councilor Winklepleck seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. **Partnership Agreements.** Mayor Craven requested that Mr. McDowell generate a report that includes a compilation of nonprofits and civic organization that the City partners with for Council review. Memberships were also included for review.
2. **Oregon Government Ethics Committee (OGEC) | Statement of Economic Interest.** Mr. McDowell reminded Council that OGEC sends out an annual Statement of Economic Interest that must be completed online. Please let Staff know when you have submitted your documents, or if you need help in the process.
3. **January Financials.** No comments.

CITIZEN QUESTIONS & COMMENTS. State Senator Cedric Hayden thanked Council for their volunteer work. His intent tonight was just to come and listen. Senator Hayden recapped several of the bills on the floor this legislative session, what to be looking for, and paying attention to. He encouraged Council and community members to come and testify at the Capitol. These new bills will affect all of us and our abilities in what we can do in our homes and businesses.

Mark Cosby, Marcola, stated that Senator Hayden is not wrong! Legislators need testimony to defeat some of these bad bills and laws. Cosby encouraged everyone to go in and talk to your legislators. If you cannot personally go there, send emails, or write them letters letting them know what you want our government officials to do. Our legislators need this support; if we remain silent, we all lose. The wildfire stuff that is coming down will negatively impact us all.

Jack Alsman, Brownsville, addressed the remaining silent comments. Mr. Alsman stated that the State of Oregon is trying to set aside \$5 million to fight President Trump and his administration. He encouraged Council to make their concerns known to the Governor that we are not in favor of using this \$5 million taxpayer dollars in this manner. President Trump is doing amazing things for the good of our country, and we need to stand up as citizens and support him. Mayor Craven stated that he can draft a letter and have others sign as they would like.

COUNCIL COMMENTS. Mayor Craven stated that he has been working with a Councilor from Estacada working on advocating for funding in rural Oregon. Timber and agriculture communities are being left behind. It is important to remember that 90% of the cities in Oregon are rural, or small, cities. Mayor Craven stated that rural cities collectively have a much larger voice when we band together for common causes.



Council Minutes

ADJOURNMENT: Councilor Winklepleck moved to adjourn at 8:48 p.m. Councilor LaCoste seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of the initials "SM" in a stylized, cursive font.

City Administrator S. Scott McDowell

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of the initials "AC" in a stylized, cursive font.

Mayor Adam Craven