



City of Independence

Minutes

City Council Meeting
Tuesday, April 8, 2025

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm in the council chambers by Mayor Kate Schwarzler.

2. **ROLL CALL.**
Mayor Schwarzler present

Council Present: Shannon Corr
Marilyn Morton
Kathy Martin-Willis
Bill Boisvert
Dawn Roden
Evan Sorce

Council Absent: None

City Staff Present: Kenna West, City Manager
Rob Moody, Finance Director
Myra Russell, City Recorder
Fred Evander, City Planner
Amanda Christensen, HR Director
Juventino Banuelos, Police Chief

3. **MINUTES.** The minutes of the March 11, 2025, regular session and March 25, 2025 work session, were submitted in the agenda packet.

ACTION:

Councilor Morton moved to approve both sets of minutes as received. Second by Councilor Boisvert. Councilor Roden wasn't present for the March 25 Work Session so wanted them minutes to be approved separately. Councilor Morton amended her motion to just include the minutes of March 11, 2025, regular session; Councilor Boisvert seconded. Roll call vote. Motion passed 6-0-0:

AYES: Corr, Morton, Martin-Willis, Boisvert,
Roden, Sorce

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

ACTION:

Councilor Sorce moved to approve the minutes of March 25, 2025 work session as submitted; Councilor Martin-Willis seconded. Roll call vote. Motion passed 6-0-0:

AYES: Corr, Morton, Martin-Willis, Boisvert, Sorce

NAYS: None

ABSTENTIONS: Roden

4. **VISITORS / PUBLIC COMMENTS.** None

5. **REPORTS / PRESENTATIONS.**

5.1. Mayor Schwarzler: Busy with Budget. Continuing Office Hours. Monthly town hall, informal avenue for community to ask questions.

5.2. City Council Liaison Reports

5.2.1 MINET Board: Councilor Sorce. Has not attended yet because of the transition of appointment. Mayor Schwarzler attended the March meeting. Financials looked good. Expansion into Dallas and Falls City. New construction beneficial to expansion. MINET is working on their Budget as well.

5.2.2 Parks Board: Councilor Roden. No meeting since appointment.

5.2.3 Independence Days Commission: Councilor Boisvert attended March 13 meeting with presentations by sub committees. Headliner for July 4th Jacob Wheldon, Tuesday String Band opening. Proposed budget adopted by commission and sent to Budget committee. Also mentioned that he also sat in on City budget meetings with Budget Committee Member Garrison to see the entire process. Thanked the Mayor and City Manager for that opportunity.

5.3. City Manager West: No report, working on Budget.

6. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS.** None

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

7.1. Solid Waste Rate Adjustment Request. CM West presented information as provided in the agenda packet. Josh Brandt and Estle Harlan also presented information on behalf of Brandt's sanitary service. Councilor Morton asked about new solid waste facility coming in, do these rate increases reflect that. Brandt too far out to know, but will examine. Will continue to discuss with both communities. Councilor Sorce asked Brandt to explain tipping fees at Coffin Butte that aren't passed on to consumers. Brandt said Coffin Butte raised rates for the last 6 years and will not slow down. Owned by Republic Services, the decline in space makes space rise in cost. Councilor Roden asked about when/if next increase will happen. Brandt said some things are out of his control but hopes to come back less frequently. 4 % for the whole year is only \$12 a year increase for 35 gallon can.

ACTION:

Councilor Corr moved to approve Resolution #25-1630, A Resolution Granting a Rate Adjustment to Brandt's Sanitary Service. Councilor Morton seconded. Discussion.

Roll call vote. Motion passed 6-0-0:

AYES: Corr, Morton, Martin-Willis, Boisvert, Roden,
Sorce

NAYS: None.

ABSTENTIONS: None

7.2. Presentation of Audited Financial Statements for Year end June 30, 2024.

Moody presented audit documents with Auditor Cyrus Ward from Aldrich CPAs and Advisors LLP. Moody said financial statements are the City's, not the audit company. They were drafted in house by Moody. Moody explained different sections of audit. Ward explained the audit process and opinions. Ward presented

independent auditor reports. Opinion -clean opinion for city and URA. This is based on the presentation of financial information that was materially accurate. Minimum standards report; Ward explained the findings with URA. Items were classified wrong but were being paid as scheduled, budget category was just incorrect. Finding for appropriations that exceed the actual budget. Categories were over but fund balanced overall. No issues with internal controls. No issues with the ARPA grant single audit. No expenditures out of allowable and was within compliance with federal govt. Moody already addressed some of findings but will report to council at next meeting on what city is doing to correct findings.

ACTION:

Councilor Corr moved to accept the audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024. Councilor Sorce seconded. Discussion. Councilor Roden thanked Moody for clarifying statements and coming back with more information on corrections. Councilor Corr appreciates explanation in layman's terms.

Roll call vote. Motion passed 6-0-0:

AYES: Corr, Morton, Martin-Willis, Boisvert, Roden,
Sorce

NAYS: None.

ABSTENTIONS: None

7.3. Public Hearing AX|2025-01, Annexation of Certain Rights-of-Ways into the City of Independence. Mayor Kate Schwarzler read the hearing script regarding how the meeting would be conducted. State Law Required Statements read.

- Declaration of Conflicts of Interest, Ex-Parte Contact, Bias: None
- Public Hearing opened at 7:32 pm by Mayor Schwarzler.
- Staff Report as submitted in the agenda packet was reviewed by Fred Evander, Planning Manager. Annexation of roadways, portions of Corvallis Road, Hoffman Road and 6th St., so that the city has control of all roads in the Urban Growth Boundary. Public Works would like the roads under one agency instead of currently two, ability to repair in accordance with city standards and allow city to manage roads as far as speed limit, etc. Evander recommends approval.
- Discussion: None
- Further questions from the Council. None.
- Objections or testimony received:
 - Michelle Lewis- sent letter but also appeared in person
 - Mike & Carol Brown-sent letter but also appeared in person
- Public Testimony:
 - Rich Frye, Salem, OR: Concerned about right of ways on Hoffman Road.
 - Phil Strom, Salem, OR: Has interest in property at 6675 Corvallis Rd. Stated that annexation and rezone should not be in same application. Evander stated he would respond to all comments at the end.
 - Eric Hill Harrisburg, OR: Long time family property at 6485 Corvallis Road. Reserve rights to appeal. If roadway is expanded his family opposes.

- Michelle Lewis 6240 Corvallis R. Independence, OR: Delivered a letter and is concerned that annexation of road will create property island. Wants the council to consider that annexing the road now could cause property owners issues in the future
- Rick Hopkins 6275 Corvallis Rd. Independence, OR: Concerned that in past City tried to annex West side of Corvallis Road, that annexation was denied because Corvallis Road was in the County. Annexation now so that city can build water treatment plant. He disagrees If City annexes properties on Corvallis Road \$3000 per year increase to property taxes.
- Michael Brown 6460 Corvallis Rd, Independence, OR: if property is annexed into city they will get city taxes. Concerned about hardship of property taxes.
- Discussion: Evander responded to testimony. Annexation and zone change combined. City does not zone rights of way, but county does, so need to change zone to remove county zoning. Anticipated to be developed to minor arterial standard. It would not be done all at once, but piece by piece as owners develop their property. Roden carry meeting forward to May 13
- Councilor Roden made a motion to leave hearing open until date certain: May 13. Staff potential island letter, potential taxes. right of way width. Cost to city to take over roadway. Councilor Morton seconded
- Roll call vote. Motion passed 6-0-0:
 - AYES: Corr, Morton, Martin-Willis, Boisvert, Roden, Sorce
 - NAYS: None.
 - ABSTENTIONS: None
- Hearing Left open to date certain, May 13, 2025, at 6:30 PM.

7.5. Public Hearing AX|2024-04, annex and designate 8.9 acres of 6675 Corvallis Road located west of the Southern Pacific Railroad along with a portion of the 50-foot right of way located directly north of the property Mayor Kate Schwarzler read the hearing script regarding how the meeting would be conducted. State Law Required Statements read.

- Declaration of Conflicts of Interest, Ex-Parte Contact, Bias: None
- Public Hearing opened at 8:31 at pm by Mayor Schwarzler.
- Staff Report as submitted in the agenda packet was reviewed by Fred Evander, Planning Manager. Evander recommends approval with provisions.
- Discussion: Morton asked if request to be annexed was made by property owner. Evander affirmed. C Sorce exited at 8:36PM, returned at 8:37PM. Roden asked about roads. Evander explained that annexation is the first step, then plans for subdivision. Transportation plan would be part of the next steps but is not considered in annexation.
- Further questions from the Council. None.
- Objections or testimony received
- Public Testimony:
 - Dakota Huxman, 1523 S 6th St. Independence, OR: Development of road-S 6th.S 7th st. Concerned for wildlife habitat. Safety for multi-

generational families at the end of 6th/7th Street. Concerns for emergency egress and emergency management.

- Michelle Lewis, 6240 Corvallis Rd. Independence, OR: concerns for utilities in that area.
- Discussion: Evander UGB build outs facility plans, based on unit anticipated improvement. The applicant will know what improvements are necessary. Roden traffic bottleneck 7th St. Evander said transportation impact analysis will happen at time of subdivision.
- Hearing Closed at 8:48 pm by Mayor Schwarzler.

7.6. Council Bill 2025-04, to annex and designate 8.9 acres of 6675 Corvallis Road located west of the Southern Pacific Railroad along with a portion of the 50-foot right of way located directly north of the property. City low density residential.

Evander explained this is to act on annexation and zoning for property mentioned in previous public hearing.

1st MOTION: Councilor Corr moved move to approve Council Bill 2025-04 to adopt AX 2024-04, the text of which is contained in the Council packet and read the proposed Ordinance for the first time; Councilor Morton seconded. Discussion: None.

Motion passed 5-1-0:

AYES: Corr, Morton, Martin-Willis, Boisvert, Sorce

NAYS: Roden

ABSTENTIONS: None

Councilor Sorce noted that only certain criteria are allowed to be considered for these matters and if we don't follow that criteria it leaves the City open to being sued.

Five-minute recess at 8:55 PM

Reconvened at 9:00 PM

7.7. Board, Committee, Commission Appointment CM West presented information as submitted in the agenda packet regarding the process for appointing new members to boards committees and commissions. Mayor will recommend appointments, and Council can make motion to approve. Councilor Sorce asked if preference of applicant could be noted if they applied for multiple positions.

ACTION:

Mayor recommended Jesica Porter, Bradley Karkenan and Dana Sharman to the Budget Committee. Discussion by councilors about process and input. Councilor Morton moved to appoint applicants to the Budget committee as chosen by mayor. Councilor Corr seconded. Discussion: Councilor Corr and Morton had different candidates on their list but support the mayor's choice. Councilor Roden and Martin-Willis both had another candidate on their list and support diversity of thought. Porter to Position 5, Sharman to Position 3 Karkenan to Position 2.

Roll call vote. Motion passed 4-2-0:

AYES: Corr, Morton, Boisvert, Sorce
NAYS: Martin-Willis, Roden.
ABSTENTIONS: None

ACTION:

Mayor recommended Patrick Fugman for the Planning Commission. Councilor Sorce moved to appoint Fugeman to the Planning Commission. Councilor Martin-Willis seconded. Discussion: Councilor Sorce sees that Fugeman attends many city meetings and thanked him for his dedication. Councilor Roden is concerned that he hasn't lived in community for a very long time. Councilor Martin-Willis mentioned that Planning Commission is a constrained position and long term resident maybe isn't as important in this committee.

Roll call vote. Motion passed 6-0-0:

AYES: Corr, Morton, Martin-Willis, Boisvert, Roden, Sorce
NAYS: None.
ABSTENTIONS: None

ACTION:

Mayor recommended Catherine Underwood Bush, Jennifer Flores and Anne Devane to positions 2, 3, & 5. Councilor Morton moved to approve those 3 appointments to the Historic Preservation Commission. Councilor Martin-Willis seconded. Discussion: Councilor Roden has concern because Underwood Bush is remodeling historic home and hopes there will be no conflict of interest. Anne Devane to position 5, Jennifer Flores to Position 3 and Catherine Underwood Bush to position 2.

Roll call vote. Motion passed 6-0-0:

AYES: Corr, Morton, Martin-Willis, Boisvert, Roden, Sorce
NAYS: None.
ABSTENTIONS: None

Mayor recommended Willis Homann to fill the last position. Councilor Morton moved to appoint Willis Homann to Position 1. Councilor Martin-Willis seconded.

Roll call vote. Motion passed 5-1-0:

AYES: Corr, Morton, Martin-Willis, Boisvert, Roden, Sorce
NAYS: None.
ABSTENTIONS: None

ACTION:

Mayor recommended Jasper Smith and Katherine Rice to positions 1 and 4 on the Museum Advisory Board. Councilor Corr moved to appoint the 2 applicants to the Museum Board. Councilor Martin-Willis seconded. Discussion: None

Roll call vote. Motion passed 6-0-0:

AYES: Corr, Morton, Martin-Willis, Boisvert, Roden, Sorce
NAYS: None.
ABSTENTIONS: None

ACTION:

Mayor recommended Jasper Smith to position 1 and Bill Henley to position 6 on the Parks Board. Councilor Corr moved to accept the appointments to the Parks Board. Councilor Morton seconded. Discussion: None.

Roll call vote. Motion passed 6-0-0:

AYES: Corr, Morton, Martin-Willis, Boisvert, Roden, Sorce

NAYS: None.

ABSTENTIONS: None

ACTION:

Mayor recommended Kelie McWilliams to position 3 on the Traffic Safety Commission. Councilor Corr moved to accept the appointment to the TSC. Councilor Martin-Willis seconded. Discussion: Councilor Roden mentioned concerns about McWilliams as she is council liaison to that commission, but said she can work with her.

Roll call vote. Motion passed 5-1-0:

AYES: Corr, Morton, Martin-Willis, Boisvert, Sorce

NAYS: Roden

ABSTENTIONS: None.

8. **COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

8.1. Councilor Morton: Friday April 11 at 6pm Valkyrie first Ghost Walk planning meeting for this year

8.2. Councilor Martin-Willis: thanked applicants that are willing to participate in boards and commissions.

8.3. Mayor Schwarzler/Patrick Bodily: Youth Coding League playoffs voting ended. But voting reopens Thursday afternoon, April 10.

9. **GENERAL INFORMATION** Items submitted here in the packet are for information only; no action was required by city council.

10. **ADJOURNMENT** With no further business to come before the council, Mayor Schwarzler adjourned the meeting at 9:22 pm.

MAYOR KATE SCHWARZLER

ATTEST:

Myra Russell, City Recorder