



## CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES November 12, 2025

The scheduled meeting of the Ontario City Council was called to order by Mayor Deborah Folden at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Council members present were Deborah Folden, Ken Hart, Susann Mills, Michael Braden, John Kirby, Penny Bakefelt, and Adrianna Contreras.

Staff present were Dan Cummings, Tori Barnett, Corinna Hysell, Andy Wood, Clint Benson, Kari Ott, Jason Cooper, Tatiana Burgess, and Marshall Pierce.

### AGENDA

This Agenda was posted Friday, November 7, 2025. Copies of the Agenda are available from the City Hall Customer Service Counter and on the city's website [www.ontariooregon.org](http://www.ontariooregon.org).

HART moved, KIRBY seconded, **TO ADOPT THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED**. Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0.

### CONSENT AGENDA

KIRBY moved, MILLS seconded, **TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA, WHICH CONSISTED OF ADOPTION OF THE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 28, 2025**. Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Anna Whitecalf, Ontario, stated: *On July 24<sup>th</sup>, the Trump administration had created an executive order Titled 4321. This Executive Order is in regards to the homeless policies that have been established within the United States. Unfortunately, these policies have, these changes in policies throughout the United States, included federal, state, and local government in regards to homeless policies, are now no longer supporting housing first initiatives or agendas. They're not funding them, nor are they having policies in place any longer. One of the things that the City of Ontario has done, in fact, was to follow the advice of President Trump in regards to setting aside land for the homeless, both for camps or tent cities. Unfortunately, this new approach, which is a treatment first, includes treatment, recover, and self-sufficiency. It does not cover building homeless shelters. In fact, HUD, both HUD and Health and Human Services, have been instructed by the Trump administration to no longer fund any program or agency that is applying for grants, in regards to the homeless. Instead, they've been directed to support and create funding for the new policy, which is treatment first. Unfortunately, that is a piece of the City of Ontario's current procedure that we don't have in place; however, where we've already got the camps established, what we need to now is for the city to take a new approach, and this new approach would be treatment first. That approach allows both the behavioral health agencies, along with current, our current and awesome recover programs and agencies throughout the City of Ontario, to actually accomplish this greater goal. I think that rather than building a shelter, it's more important that we follow the federal initiatives because the funding won't be able to sustain any current ideas of building a housing first initiative. Thank you.*

Raymond Hoene, Fruitland, Idaho, stated: *I come tonight to speak from a place in my heart. It's personal, part of my past, and a message of hope. Regardless of what's going on federally around the country and like that, doesn't change the fact that we're all citizens of this area. And there is a problem. I sit back now as a homeowner, I've run businesses, I am employed now and I can see arguments from everybody's standpoint. I can see the business owners that are frustrated, don't know what to do with the problem with people loitering, other things that are going, crime rates, those are all points to look at. There's also points to look at this, that's there's different classification of people that have no home. Some are there, sure, on their own choice, maybe addicted, some are there just because of circumstances, health reasons, you name it. Doubt there's enough jails to put people in. There is no other place for them to go. I believe in this guy right here [pointing to his shirt], Jesus, who says that it's our duty and to honor God is to help people. That's just the way it is. And I think that each person here, and even in our whole area wouldn't have to have a personal relationship with Him to understand that.*



*And I know that. I think that there can be a lot done with everybody giving a little, a lot can be accomplished. Light work, heavy work is made an abundance of hands right? Abundance of people working together with a common goal. Some people, in my case, I needed that much help one time in my life and boy then I took off running. But I couldn't have done it, even going to, let's say a place like Lifeways, to get all the talking and help that I needed, even medication, to send me back to a tent? It wouldn't have been alright. I couldn't have accomplished anything. I had to survive. For one reason or another, every single person that lives in a tent or is homeless in this area, is trying to survive. I think that great minds and a little bit of love, it goes a long way and act like an antibiotic to a society that has an infection. A little bit of help cures people. So I'd just like to have open minds. I've listened a lot lately to different points of view and different people, and I've heard so many different opinions. The problem isn't going away. We are here to be our brother's keeper. Just wanted to bring that message tonight. I appreciate everybody tonight.*

Deanna Brown, Ontario, stated: Hello Council, my name is Deanna Brown. I live in the City of Ontario. I just came here because I would like to advocate for the homeless also. From just a human sense, we're born into this world with the sovereign right to be safe and sound and when we have the most defenseless population that cannot keep themselves safe, it becomes our responsibility to help protect and serve them, at least that's what my Father God tells me. And He also tells me that it's not based on what they're willing to do, it's based on their humanness. Because I'm a human being, I deserve safety. I deserve to be sound. I deserve a healing space, not because of what I'm going to do for you, but because I'm human. It's very simple. It's quite simple. There should be no stipulations with housing human beings, or loving them, at the basic. It has been my experience in this community that I suffer from homelessness, after I lived I lived in this community for 20 years, not being homeless. I suffered from homelessness, and I became a victim to everything, every predator in this community, not just on the streets, but the system's too, and God has woken me up to that, and, you know, either we're going to fix things or we're not, but I'd hate to see us burned to the ground, if we're being honest. Mr. Kirby, I believe I've rented from you for several years the apartments that are right behind us, before you traded them, and I felt like we had a pretty good working relationship, but, you know, the way that you have this piece of land set up for these human beings is disturbing and appalling. There is no running water, there's now way for them to groom themselves, there's no way to have any kind of safety from the elements, there is, it's, do you want to be the predator, or do you want to be the hunted? It's absolutely disgusting, inhumane. My Father God says it's not okay, so he makes me come here and open up my voice and express that. I have to say that I'm very impressed with the changes I've seen in the last couple years. Community in Action has worked really hard to get grants and provide some housing, and I thank you for that. I'm impressed. Thank you God for those blessings. But, it's not sufficient. We need more. We. Need. More. We have a whole community of people over there in that lot that need to be served. And if I remember correctly, it is your job to serve us properly. We are your citizens. We vote you into your positions, and it is your job to serve us properly. All of us. That's all I have. Thank you.

Wes Tolman, Payette, Idaho, stated: My name is Wes Tolman, Jr. I currently live in the City of Payette, due to being on parole, but for 20 years I lived in Ontario. I sold drugs here. I was a career criminal. And what I'm here to speak about is I know the streets and I know these homeless camps and I know that's it's not just about being homeless. When you're stuck in that situation, you could have somebody that doesn't have any mental health issues or any drug additions, that ended up in a homeless camp and just being around that environment, it will make you, well, I've seen it, I've been at the homeless camp down there. You will, it brings your, puts you in a state of despair. That's what's going on down there. These people are, you know, they're just, they're broken. And I don't care what Trump says about none of that. I'm a Trump supporter, but none of that's got to do with what we got going on here, what ya'all have going on here in Ontario. My suggestion would be to build, you know, do something. Ask the small business owners for small donations or something. Get something started so that they can get this shelter. And I don't know how many of ya'all are religious, but I was googling some stuff today and doing a little research on the bible, and you know there's over 2,000 verses in the bible that specifically talk about helping the poor, and helping the people in need, and the one that came out to me the most was Proverbs 14:31: whoever oppresses the poor, shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy, honors God. So I just ask that ya'all step up and do something soon. Thank you.

PRESENTATIONHomeless Shelter Sites

Chrissy La Chapelle: So, first of all, my name is Chrissy La Chapelle. This is Kylie Schroeder, she's on the board of Oasis House, and this is Lisa Ramierz. She is also on our board at Oasis House. I am here today to talk about this problem. I have this big, long speech prepared, and I can't remember, this gentleman, Ray, right here, said all. We serve an amazing God, and I don't care what Trump says. If we are called to take care of these people, God will provide the finances. It doesn't have to come from grants, it doesn't, private donors are stepping up you guys, to help us. We had people donate crazy amounts of money to help build a building. I just need a spot to build it. I would go out to the Flats and build a building out there if you would let me. I have no problem with that. I love...every single one of these people in this room are almost homeless or homeless. They, my husband calls them my homeless posse. Sorry, I'm very passionate about this you guys. Some of you, I saw out at the camps cleaning with us one day. You guys know what it's like out there. That is no way to live. No way to live. These are human beings you guys. They just need a place to be. If their basic needs aren't being met, they're not okay. Think about it for a second. If it was your son or daughter that was strung out on drugs, hurting, homeless, and they couldn't come into your home, what would you do? How would you feel? Would you want them living out there? Would you want them exposed to that environment? I'm gonna tell you guys a little story. We were out there. My husband calls these guys my homeless posse, and I promise you they are there for every major thing in our lives. I got in a car accident, they were there. They're always there. They are always there to help support us. They help clean the shelter, they help keep it running. There's days that my biological mom passed away and it was our group of people that kept the shelter running for us, because they needed that place to be, and they're only there 10-4. That's, they're out on the streets after that. If we had a place for them to be, think of what it would do for our law enforcement. It would cut down dramatically on calls. Our business owners, people would have a safer place to walk for the businesses. I love these {?} but if I see, I call him Naked Matt running around in a business, I'm not going to take my kids in there, but if he has a place to be, then he's safe and he's not bothering the businesses. We were out at camp, I don't know, probably a year and half ago, shortly after I opened Oasis House, and it happened to be a day that my son didn't have school. My son was five, four? at the time, four or five, and he was probably from me to Purpose in the blue shirt right there, and somebody yelled gun out at the camp and I remember thinking I cannot get to my kid fast enough, and that feeling as a mom, of not being able to get to your kid, I looked up to see my husband running towards my son, and before any of us could get to him, one of a very well known gang members had my son in his arms running him to safety. These guys are human beings, and they care about people, and they care about their surroundings. I was out there one night, had a gun pulled on me, you can bet they kicked that person out of that camp so fast because they know what we do for them. Randy will go out of his way to drive people hours when they need help. This lady right here [pointing], I know she's down on her luck. She brought me three turkeys the other day because we needed them. I mean, I could go on. Adam, sitting right here, he's clean for five months, you guys, five months (clapping ensued). I called 9-1-1, we have Purpose in the front row, who my three year old calls Papa Princess, and adores him. He is her favorite. And we have Matt, Matt is my new babysitter for my puppy, the new Oasis dog. I mean, these guys are human beings. They are here, they're human. Stephanie, sitting in the very front row, she is homeless, but you know what? She, on Easter, my daughter had a horrific accident, a horse accident, she was paralyzed, they told her she wasn't ever going to walk again, and I totally forgot Easter, and my littles got nothing for Easter. Stephanie and her husband, being homeless, showed up with two huge Easter baskets for my kids, you guys. They care about the people around them. And we need to step up and care about them. And all I'm asking for, I'm not asking for money, God will provide that. I 100% believe that God will provide that. There's no doubt in my mind. All I'm asking for is a piece of land where we can build it. Put me out at the Flats, I don't care. I would love to be out on the Flats. If you said, hey, you can take over the Flats, I will clean that place up, I will whip people into shape, and you know what? They response us out there. They truly respect me out there. We will clean it up. We will make it look nice, and it's off of your plates at that point in time, and it's on my plate, and I will gladly take that burden. I have no problem with that. I have seen, I mean, they're human beings you guys, and God does, I don't know if you're religious or not, I'm sorry, but God does call us to take care of them and that's what I'm trying to do. I don't ever, ever want somebody to feel that they don't have a place to be. If you sit down and you truly listen to these guys and to these stories, it would break your hearts, because every single homeless person that's in this room, is not on drugs, but they're still homeless. Some of them are even paying taxes to our community, but can't afford to have a home. I have a family right there that does that. They both work, and they can't afford to have a home. They're homeless, and they're paying taxes to our community and they have nowhere to go but their car. That's not okay, you guys. This is not okay. And I am willing to take that burden on if you guys will just give me a place. I don't care where it's at. I will make it beautiful. We will make it beautiful. We will make it beautiful. Oh, yes, sorry...another thing that's coming up that got brought to our attention is the SNAP benefit. I think most people in here, in the crowd, receive benefits. It, when the food stamps didn't come through, one day we served over 200 meals. One day -

200 meals. Do you know our food budget is \$200 a month? That's it. That's how I know God will provide. When I'm feeding, I have fed 13,000 meals since our doors opened 19 months ago on \$200 a month. And God has provided every single step of the way. Every single step of the way. So with the food stamps getting cut, and the changes coming up in the government, why not get something into place right now, to avert the crisis. To stop the crisis before it happens, because people are going to go crazy. When they need to feed their kids, I would be the first one in line to go crazy to feed my kids. I mean, it's going to happen. There's no way around it you guys, and people get nasty when it comes to their families. Why put that on our officers? Our officers are stretched so thin right now, it's not even funny. And it's not fair to them. It's not fair. My brother's a state trooper, so I know how that works, and it's not fair to them at all. So, I'm asking the city to please, please find a spot to put us. I will pay for everything. I'm not asking you for money. God will provide that 100%. I'm asking for a spot to put us. I get people don't want us in their backyard. I understand that, 100%. But there's places we can go. I will gladly take the Flats. I know it's a flood plane zone. I will figure out how to work around that because there's home out there, around there, so there's a way around it somehow. And I would take over everything. I would clean it up, I would take responsibility for it, whatever you wanted me to do, I would jump through whatever hoop you were asking me to do, to make these guys have a place to be. Do you guys have any questions?

Councilor Mills asked how much land they thought they'd need to do what they wanted to do.

Ms. La Chapelle: *Not much. I need a building that's about 4,000 square feet and I can make it work. We are in, Dad, how big do you think our building is now? Four to five thousand. Yeah, we're in a four to five thousand right now and we could fit then. One acre my Dad said. My Dad is the Executive Director. I just get to run the show. He's the heavy lifter.*

Councilor Mills verified Ms. La Chapelle already had the funds for the building, but they just needed some land.

Ms. La Chapelle: *We just need the land, that's all we need. We have a five-year plan in place. Year One we want to open the shelter, to get it open, to get the 24/7 open, so they have a place to shower, to be clean, to, I was surprised how many of them want to shower, want to brush their teeth, like that surprised me walking into this. Wash clothes. Yes, we will have a laundry room in the shelter. Year Two, we want to extend to a men's shelter and have a men to be where they can learn to be husbands and dads and fathers, the leader of their home that they're called to be. Year Three, women and children. Project Dove is so full and I, I was in a domestic violence situation and I had no place to go. Had I not had my Mom and Dad and Prudy, I don't know if you guys know Prudy Sherman, if I hadn't had those people in my life, I would have been on the streets with my two littles. The Fifth year, we're going to revamp everything and, not revamp, but just take a look at everything and watch how it's impacting our community. The elderly, yes, sorry, she's telling me, Year Four we want to do the elderly, Year Five we want to see how it's impacting our community, because this is a huge need and it's only going to keep growing, especially with the stuff trickling down the line, and it's not going to take long. Do you guys have any other questions?*

Councilor Hart asked if she had spoken with staff yet, or was this like the first time of getting out there.

Ms. La Chapelle: *I came when we first opened Oasis House. I came and talked, I think we got the city's permission Oasis House at St. Matthews. St. Matthews is a huge supporter for us; however, we can't do an overnight there. It's just not feasible to do it there. There's neighbors around that don't, they like us but they don't want them overnight, and I understand that. I get that. But, now, we're here.*

Councilor Hart replied so it's like a first step.

Ms. La Chapelle: *I think Kylie has talked to Dan quite a bit.*

Kylie Schroeder: *We've spoke with, we talked to Debbie, we've spoken to Dan, and I've been through all of the key people in the law enforcement arena. I've been through a lot of the businesses in town. We're talking about doing things like just spreading the word that we exist is number one. Number two, we are asking for support from the greater Ontario area. Frankly, we shouldn't be owning it in all of the little towns that surround Ontario as well. And, we just touched on it briefly, but there is a, I was surprised by this, that there was an enormous expansion of homeless groups in the elderly. What's happening is they can afford to pay their rent, but then they can't afford food, or they can buy their food, but they can't pay their rent. And this is increasingly becoming a very grave concern. It's another vulnerable group. We can't turn our backs on it. And this is going to come back to bit us if we don't take action and we don't do it together, because we're all in the same community.*



Ms. La Chapelle: *She talked about the elderly. We had an 82 year old man come in today, and he was found passed out in the alley, homeless. He gets Social Security every month, but he can't afford to live in a house, and I'm a landlord so I understand the rent increases, and I get that. I'm a landlord. I have seven apartments. But, the elderly, he can't work. He's got a big old sore on his face, and he was just, it broke my heart, you guys, and this lady in the community just found him in the alley and picked up, put him in her car, brought him into Oasis, got him a coat, got him some clothes, Lisa took care of him. It's, it's here, and it's here to stay, unfortunately.*

Councilor Hart stated in regards to the Flats, he believed that was in the county. What he would appreciate was having a broader discussion. There was someone from Fruitland there, so look into Idaho. Ask how they could help Ontario.

Ms. La Chapelle: *Homelessness is illegal in Idaho.*

Councilor Hart stated that was one of those concerns he had was making sure they were doing a good job, but not saying everybody come to Ontario. How did Ontario share that burden as a resource, whether it was Vale, Payette, Fruitland, or the county. These were community issues, so how could they do better as a community across that river. But, at the same time, trying to figure out what were some of the barriers. Was it just land? Was it code? It would get complex fast. Was there a willingness to have a proper discussion.

Ms. Schroeder: *Absolutely, Ken. You know, I'm the one that's been going around and speaking to people, and I have every intent to visit every one of those. I live in Wieser, and I think we own it as an area. So it's going to be something that's going to be brought up to each of them. We've also visited successful rescue missions in Idaho. They exist. It's a huge rescue mission. We don't have, Oasis is not in Idaho, so we went to Grants Pass, and we visited the Gospel Rescue Mission there. We know that we don't need to reinvent the wheel. We want to make use of those areas that are doing this successfully, and they're very willing to share information. We'll end up with a leg up in a lot of areas and not have some expenses that are foreseeable. To your point, though, it is something that has to be a part of every single person's discussion, so I will be visiting all of those City Councils. We will also be talking with the county people. We know that the ramifications and the zoning, some of the details in a county location are a little different. Quite frankly, I think as we get to know folks, we really need to be on the edge of town somewhere. The county is great. There are a lot of opportunities maybe to get into a farmland area, but these are folks that are coming into town, or already intown, to have to go get in a car or find a ride five miles outside of town is not feasible. They have needs for mail, they have needs for doctors, they have places they go to get additional help, and all of those things require mail, they need to be able to get around town to get it done. Part of the need in any one of these agencies, or any one of these fingers of our five-year plan, all include busses and vans because people need to get around town. You can't get away from that. That is the issue in almost each case. If you look around both the State of Oregon and the State of Idaho, all of the rescue missions are in town where there's public transportation available and more local things. Now, in terms of getting them, getting these little towns to be a part of the solution? I think that's going to be, well, that's a barrier. We're going to have to climb it. We're going to have to beat it down if necessary; however, we will note that Oregon treats people differently than Idaho does, and the agencies and the organizations that are here to meet people's needs, are critical, and they're not available everywhere. So we have to understand that people want to be here because they can get taken care of here. Do they need to be a drain on us all? We all, there are people here who have completely turned their lives around. The success stories exist, and they are now becoming part of our solution, and I think that it's up to us to have an attitude of this is the solution. We're going to work together as a community. We need to put our heads together for appropriate locations. We need to be smart about it. And I'm willing to head the battle into the hinterlands of these other towns, and I'll do that, but we need your support. We need to know that we can count on your help. We don't, despite the fact that we a realtor, we don't know everything about the buildings in town. We don't know what's available, what we could rent, what we could buy even for \$1 from someone. I mean, those are things, those are purchases that happen, and we need your help to get there.*

Councilor Kirby stated he believed they, as a Council, should create a subcommittee for this issue, which he'd like to be a member of, and maybe an NGO representative. There was also a major health care provider sitting up on the dais, that being Councilor Ken Hart. Councilor Adrianna Contreras also worked for Valley Family. If appropriate, he'd make that a motion, to form that subcommittee, of maybe 5 people, which would include 2 from the Council.

Mayor Folden stated she'd be willing to sit on the Committee.



Ms. La Chapelle: Mr. Hart, I wanted to address one more thing with you. Just today I had a gentleman come in, his name was Robert, I don't remember his last name, I'm sorry, but he is going up against Portland, telling them "why are you getting paid for money that you're sending people to me?" Escobedo? Escobedo. "Why are you getting paid for money that you're sending people to me?", so he is fighting for Ontario because it's not fair that they're sending people down here, and they're reaping the money for it. That's not fair to Ontario. That's not fair to you guys. That's money out of your pockets. That's not cool. And he is fighting super hard to get that changed, because he's like this is not okay. He had been to Portland several times, and he's now coming on with Oasis House, under our 501c3 to help us with everything because he's got so much knowledge about that and that's, to me, that's a huge issue that we really need to address.

Councilor Kirby stated there was a motion on the floor.

KIRBY moved, BAKEFELT seconded, **TO START A COMMITTEE TO WHERE WE ARE ABLE TO HELP MAKE THIS HAPPEN.** Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0.

Randel Cramm, Ontario, stated: Hello, my name is Randall Cramm. I'm a resident of Ontario, Oregon. I'm not born and raised here. I'm a transient from Portland, Maine. I'm here to share my success story. I've been homeless since I was 16 up to the time I was 55 and I had an encounter with Christ. Been through the prison system and everything and got 10 years clean. Relapsed in Portland, Maine, and rededicated my life to Christ since then. I've got seven years clean, and I realized that I needed to get away from my environment. John Hades says you want to change your life, change your friends. Now I only associate with Christians. But, a bought a home out here, sight unseen. Stepped out in faith. I'd never been here before, but I got two years clean, saved some money, and asked God "how you want to spend this money?", and he wanted me to invest it wisely, so I bought a mobile home, and came out here. I brought my wife out here from Maine and she promised me that she was going to try the Christian life, and she did well for two years until somebody corrupted her, and, needless to say, she's now in Idaho in a recovery center, a one-year program, and I have faith that she's going to come home a new person. Alright, because I did it, she can do it. Like I said, in my years' experience, I came here to bring my experience. I been homeless in Los Angeles. Born and raised in Los Angeles. I've traveled all over the United States, being in 40 states, been a truck driver, a cab driver, I figured that's the best way to be homeless, you know? But, anyways, I worked my way out of the Bowery Pit, because I no longer wanted to be homeless. I wanted to have what you guys have – stability. Now I got stability, and I had to make a tough choice to send my wife away, and the first lady talked about treatment. I agree with treatment. I don't think that if you have a foundation in Christ you don't stand a chance, but with God all things are possible. Without God, it's impossible. Alright. I know that all of you are Christians, but I know for a fact, this works. I've been through Phoenix, Arizona, the hub center, the rate center, they got a tent center out there, they got a great homeless community, and not everybody, you know, ends up out of homeless, but a lot do. Not everybody wants to be homeless. Homelessness is a choice, and a lot of them are mentally ill, and a lot of them are stuck on drugs. Anyways, I came here from Portland, Maine. I poured myself into CLF Church, Christian Life Fellowship, alright, and I went through their program. I've been there five years now; I've been here five years, okay. Anyways, I'm now the transportation leader and a small group leader, and I call myself Barnabas, Son of Encouragement. I call myself Brother Barnabas because I want to encourage those who are like me, are like-minded, and are sick and tired of being sick and tired. And, my next point is, you know, yes, I understand the businesses are frustrated, and they got a right to be frustrated, because these people are a nuisance. They are, I agree. Alright, Deanna brought up that she deserves to be served and all that, well, I serve my community wholeheartedly. I provide transportation to people who can't afford transportation. I notice you don't have a new transportation system out here. And what they did in Maine, is they moved everybody out of the city and out towards the airport, which I didn't think was a bad idea. A lot of people thought it was a terrible idea because access to facilities and stuff like that, but as long as you make transportation available, that's a good thing. I think it's a great idea. Move them out on the outskirts, get them away from where they're getting their drugs, or they're getting their alcohol. And then Wes talked about experience. I agree with him. Experience gives you wisdom. Oasis mentioned that they wanted to provide, they wanted you guys to provide at least 4,000 square feet. I got out to homeless camps all the time. I go the Food Bank not because I need food, I'm not even on government assistance anymore, praise God. I don't even get food stamps, but I go there and get food boxes and I drop it off at the homeless camp because I know that they're too ashamed. They don't even have transportation to get to the shelters, so bring food out there. Some of my friends are Pagan, but I still love on them. And, Ken Hart had a good point about a sub-committee. I like that idea. Oh, sorry, I tried to take notes, but I only got a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education, so I'm not an eloquent speaker, but I thank you for all your time and your effort and there is hope and I'm proud to part of this community and having a chance at a brand new life and living a new life. I am living the abundant life. That's all I got to say. Thank you.



Mr. Cummings thanked everyone for attending. He assumed what the Council meant was to form an ad-hoc committee, so staff would get this in place, and then would contact Council to see which three members...it sounded like they wanted two City Councilors on there, and three members from the Oasis group. He'd get the ad-hoc committee written up, and did the Council want the group to submit names for being on the committee for selection, or did the Council want the group to make their own selections?

Councilor Kirby stated they could make their recommendation.

Ms. La Chapelle: *So we would probably do like the Director, Kylie, and then one more person. I doubt it would be me because I'm just too busy.*

Councilor Kirby stated maybe someone that was homeless. He thought that would give credibility.

Ms. La Chapelle: *Somebody that's homeless?*

Councilor Kirby stated yes.

Ms. La Chapelle: *Oh, I got that. Okay.*

Mr. Cummings stated he would get in contact with Ms. La Chapelle and they'd get that put together as quickly as possible. He'd also like to address Councilor Hart's question about if this was the first approach. No, it wasn't. He had met with these folks a few times. He wanted the Council to know they'd asked the same thing. They had the funding, but needed a piece of property. He told them the first step was to discuss it with the Council to see if they'd entertain staff looking for a piece of property that might fit their needs. He would begin looking so he'd have some options to share with the committee. Most of the time when they were within cities was due to the infrastructure. It was difficult to construct a building in the county and provide sewer and water.

Ms. La Chapelle: *We were looking at a property, the one across the street from Ware-Mart, that 1.29 acres, it's for \$1.2M, I think. We did look at something like that, too. But I didn't know how the city felt about that.*

Mr. Cummings stated that was what this committee would do. They'd look at all the options to see if they could find something that worked for everybody.

Ms. La Chapelle: *Okay, perfect, awesome. Thank you guys very much.*

#### OLD BUSINESS

##### **Ordinance #2836-2025: Farmers Mutual Telephone Franchise Agreement**

Dan Cummings, City Manager, presented.

Farmers Mutual Telephone Company desired to operate a telecommunications business within the city's incorporated limits. To this end, Farmers desired to place and operate its facilities in, upon, and across the city's right-of-way. The Council's approval of the subject franchise agreement (Ordinance #2836-2025) would provide Farmers with the right, privilege, and franchise to place and operate their facilities in the city's right-of-way.

In consideration of the rights, privileges, and franchise granted by the city to Farmers under the franchise agreement, Farmers would pay the city a franchise fee equal to the greater of 7% of Farmers' gross revenues, or \$500.00 per month. The term of the franchise agreement was 10 years.

The franchise agreement was presented to the Council for discussion on October 14, 2025. Negotiations with Farmers had proven successful.

Fees collected from Farmers would add revenue to the general fund. This agreement should be approved in a timely manner as to not hold up the construction of the project and completion.

Ron Rembelski, General Manager, Farmers Mutual Telephone Company, stated: *Farmers Mutal had a long history, since 1908, providing communication services in Idaho in the Fruitland area, and expanded services outside of that area over the years. Currently, in Ontario, Nyssa, Vale, they provided a wireless internet service. A few years ago, they applied for a grant to provide fiberoptic internet services in the area surrounding Ontario.*



*They already had fiber across the river, but just into Ontario to connect to some other providers, and they had chosen that as route to get to the outskirts of Ontario. This grant was for the unserved and underserved people, and it was for \$18.9M. They were under a tight timeframe to get this built out, and they had to come through Ontario to do that. The focus was to connect customers on the outskirts of town, and they had a specific 931 locations they had to build to. It did not preclude them from coming back into Ontario and providing services to the interior once they were established, but currently, under the grant program, they could not spend funds to connect houses within the city limits where Sparklight currently provided gigabit services. Once Farmers got the grant agreement, they began working on the engineering and permitting, and began working with Mr. Cummings, and he referred them to the City Attorney, who they worked with to negotiation an acceptable agreement for both parties. Therefore, Farmers Mutual was seeking approval, if the City Council was amendable.*

Councilor Mills asked what part of Ontario this would go through.

Mr. Rembelski: *They were coming across the bridge on East Idaho, to Southeast Lane, then South to the Rogue Credit Union, West on 5<sup>th</sup> to SE 1<sup>st</sup>, and then South again on SE 2<sup>nd</sup>, to 18<sup>th</sup> Street. That's where they could begin picking up customers, once they hit 18<sup>th</sup>. The service area that they could provide service to, extended from 18<sup>th</sup> Street, South as far as King Avenue. It extended West as far as Lincoln, towards Vale, on the other side of 201, it extended North and West as far as SRCl, and it also extended North but tighter to the river, up to the Centennial Bridge, where Highway 52 left Payette.*

Councilor Kirby stated he noticed orange cones with orange conduits about every 100 feet. Did that belong to Farmers?

Mr. Rembelski stated yes. There were multiple providers. The ARPA funds (federal funds) where these were allocated from had been distributed down to the State of Oregon and each state received their fair share. There were other telecom providers that were also doing these types of projects, one around Vale, and one around Nyssa. Farmers Mutual was awarded the grant around Ontario. But yes, the work on Alameda currently was Farmers Mutual.

Councilor Braden stated under the Franchise Agreement, Section 5.1, payment of franchise fees, it read that in consideration they would commence payment on the effective date of this agreement.

**BAKEFELT moved, KIRBY seconded, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE ORDINANCE #2836-2025, THE FARMERS MUTUAL TELEPHONE FRANCHISE AGREEMENT, AS PRESENTED, ON FIRST READING BY TITLE ONLY.** Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0.

**MILLS moved, CONTRERAS seconded, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE ORDINANCE #2836-2025, THE FARMERS MUTUAL TELEPHONE FRANCHISE AGREEMENT, AS PRESENTED, ON SECOND AND FINAL READING BY TITLE ONLY.** Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0.

#### **Ontario Train Depot Lease and Management Agreement Addendum #1**

Dan Cummings, City Manager, presented.

This action was a housekeeping action to formalize an agreement made sometime in 2013 to remove the charge of  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the electrical cost to the Ontario Basque Club, who leased and maintained the Ontario Train Depot owned by the City of Ontario.

In April 1997, the Ontario Railroad Depot building was donated to the City of Ontario.

In April 1998, the Ontario Train Depot Restoration Committee was a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation organized to support the renovation and restoration of the Train Depot, and to provide support for community projects and organizations located in the general area encompassing the City of Ontario. It previously managed all aspects having to do with the renovation and restoration of the Train Depot, as well as overseeing and providing for the general maintenance, repair, cleaning, rental, supplies, and all operations having to do with the Train Depot. The Ontario Train Depot Restoration Committee completed the renovation and restoration of the interior main central portion, the interior south portion, all restoration of the outside, sidewalks, fencing, and entryway areas of the Ontario Train Depot.



The Basque club was a private (501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation organized to support the larger Basque community in the area, as well as to protect and promote the historical and cultural heritage of the region and to provide support for community projects and organizations not necessarily affiliated with the Basque community.

On February 22, 2006, the Ontario Basque Club entered into a lease agreement with the City of Ontario to lease a portion of the building being maintained by the Ontario Train Depot Restoration Committee. Under the lease agreement, the Basque Club was to pay one-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) of the average electrical cost per year starting out at \$633 annually, but adjusting each year based on the previous year's total power usage.

On or about November 10, 2007, in conjunction with the dedication of the restored and renovated north end of the Ontario Train Depot as a Basque Cultural Center, and in conjunction with the celebration of the 100th Anniversary Celebration of completion of construction of the Ontario Train Depot, the Ontario Train Depot Restoration Committee informally turned the keys to and its responsibilities for the facility over to the Basque Club. The city did not formally participate in the transfer of responsibilities to the Basque Club.

Since November 10, 2007, the Basque Club had been overseeing and providing for the general maintenance, repair, cleaning, rental, supplies, and all operations having to do with the Ontario Train Depot, as well as projects providing for the continued renovation and restoration of the Ontario Train Depot under the general auspices of the city without a written agreement with the city.

On March 5, 2009, the City of Ontario entered into a Management Agreement with the Ontario Basque Club for the overseeing and providing for the general maintenance, repair, cleaning, rental, supplies, and all operations having to do with the Ontario Train Depot, as well as partnering with the city in future costs of improvements to be made to the building conforming to the master plan for the building. This also called for the Basque Club to pay for one-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) of the electrical costs, which were to be adjusted in November of each year.

In October 2025, City Manager, Dan Cummings, following a review of the Lease Agreement and Management Agreement, determined that the last time the city had invoiced the Basque Club for their one-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) of the electricity was on November 5, 2012. The city received said payment on November 26, 2012. Further researching, staff could not find where the \$1.00 per year on the 99-year lease had been paid as well.

Mr. Cummings, in phone and email discussions with the Basque Club, arranged a meeting with their board after they had time to research their records to see what they had or could remember.

Both parties were assuming that some kind of agreement was made with then City Manager Jay Henry (2013) that since the Basque club had been doing upgrades and remodeling without asking the city for any additional funds, which was part of the agreement, the city would pay the full electrical cost of the facility and stopped invoicing the Basque Club the one-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) power cost.

Staff could not find any documentation stating a cessation to invoicing the Basque Club; therefore, staff was bringing Amendment #1 to the lease and agreement to formalize these past 13 years of no payment on the electrical costs by the Club.

Staff did invoice the Club for the full 99 years of lease payment at \$1.00 per year and the Club has paid the amount of \$99.00 in full as of November 4, 2025.

It was his opinion that it was very beneficial to the city to continue allowing the Basque Club to manage and maintain the Train Depot that belonged to the city. It would cost a lot more than the current average of approximately \$1,800 a year in electrical use to maintain the building through the city contract with Jacobs, as well as having to manage the use of the building, which was all being done by the Basque Club at this time.

There would be no additional cost to the city at this time, as the city had been paying all the electrical bills for the past 13 years.

The Council could choose not to recognize the actions and require the Basque Club to start paying the one-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) power cost again and could also request back payment of the owed amount since no formal agreement could be found to document the agreement.



Councilor Braden asked who owned the building?

Mr. Cummings stated the building was owned by the city, but the land was leased from Union Pacific.

Councilor Braden asked what the city had used the property for.

Mr. Cummings stated in the breakdown provided by the Basque Club, it reflected the rent coming in, from things like weddings or receptions. The city had only used it, that he was aware of, for the eclipse event, and also when the state gave the money to the county to build the transload facility, and maybe a few more functions. But, most of the operation occurring there was managed by the Basque Club. Under the agreement, all rent money received from that had to go to restoring the building. That was why the Club was about \$58-84K in the hole because the money collected was not enough to cover all the expenses. However, the city had the right to use the facility anytime they wanted.

Councilor Braden asked if the city paid rent to use it, or a user fee.

Mr. Cummings stated no.

Councilor Braden asked what it cost the city for the facility? Did the Club maintain everything, and the city just paid the power?

Mr. Cummings stated so far, that was what it had been. The Club paid for everything, and had not asked the city for any money. However, that might not occur in the future, depending on what needed to be done. The Club had mentioned that the HVAC needed to be replaced. They might ask the city for funding for that. If they did ask, he'd question it because he could see on the spreadsheet that they'd had that done twice already. If it needed replacement again, he highly suggested they not hire that same firm.

Councilor Braden stated it was probably the opinion of some Councilors that the City Hall HVAC should be fixed before fixing one in another building. His only comment was that the city owned the building, and getting it maintained for the cost of the electricity at \$2K a year, seemed like a very good arrangement.

Mr. Cummings encouraged them to go see the building, and all the renovations done by the Basque Club.

BRADEN moved, BAKEFELT seconded, **THE CITY COUNCIL TO APPROVE ADDENDUM #1 TO THE ONTARIO TRAIN DEPOT LEASE AND MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS DATED FEBRUARY 22, 2006, AND MARCH 5, 2009.** Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0.

#### DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES

##### **Finance: Monthly Report**

Kari Ott, Finance Director, presented.

Councilor Hart stated at the end of last year, there was \$1.4M more than anticipated, in addition, in *this* budget, some of the Council voted to increase the taxes on the taxpayers, so that was another \$400K that was on the Safety Fee, so that was in the budget, and that was additional money. So about \$1.8M more, so were they going to let everything roll, were there things they needed to invest in, or something fun for the community that they'd like to see, or parking in Lions Park? Instead of the Council just allowing things to roll and happen, he would like them to be proactive and think about what to do with those resources, or, he would move that the city, at some point, pay down additionally on the PERS debt, which was still over \$10M, or \$14M in debt. It went down, and then it went up. There was a lot of debt, so there were uses for these funds. He did not want it rolled into the next Budget Committee meetings, unless it was done purposefully. He wasn't sure how to address the excess funds, but maybe a future topic for staff to bring some ideas to them. Figure out if there were some needs, and there were one-time dollars. How much was the paydown on PERS this year?

Ms. Ott stated \$250K had been budgeted, to come out of the General Fund, and \$148K from Public Works.



Mr. Cummings stated staff was working on ideas. One suggestion was to have staff research if the city should build the new parking lot North of the Aquatic Center. They [Recreation ] were struggling, as the Council knew, and when he referenced the North, in the Maste Plan, there was a parking lot shown along the Eastside of the park, along those houses, and he was putting together costs of what it would cost to develop that parking lot. He'd then present it to the Council. It had two parts, was the thought, suggested by Councilor Hart, that it would not only serve people using the swimming pool, but also people who used the park. When functions were held at the park, parking was at a premium. Staff was working on that.

Councilor Contreras asked if those funds had to be spent in one set place, or could it be given back to the community, like through Oasis House, regardless of the amount.

Mr. Cummings stated that would be up to the Council; however, they were trying to spend it on one-time things, not something perpetual. But, it could be that if they wanted to give, for example, Oasis House \$25K, or whatever amount, just for a one time shot. However, they needed to be careful with perpetual things. He had asked Oasis to be there that night because they were seeking a parcel of ground. Was that an option? That was something they could do without cost, or minimal. If they chose that route, then he recommended they have a reversion clause that if they no longer used it for what was proposed, the land would revert back to the city, including any buildings on the property. Overall, the Council could do whatever they wanted.

Councilor Braden asked Ms. Ott if the city took no action, would the funds be addressed in the beginning fund balance of the next budget cycle?

Ms. Ott stated that was correct.

Councilor Braden asked what the process would be if they did want to parcel it out on some current year projects, because they were not currently budgeted.

Ms. Ott stated it depended on the amount. If they were going to change the budget by over 10%, they'd need to do a supplemental budget process. That meant it would need to be published, and have an accompanying resolution under a public hearing. If it was under 10%, it would still take a supplemental budget, but no public hearing or publishing was required.

Councilor Braden asked if the Council would have a strategic meeting to decide what to do when they found surplus like this?

Ms. Ott stated in the past, it had been addressed during the primary budget meetings, but nothing different had been done than that. They could certainly do a strategic meeting to discuss that.

Councilor Braden stated he believed there were ideas floating around. They should delve into it from a strategic standpoint in the future.

Councilor Kirby asked what type of retainage of cash did the city need to have on hand.

Ms. Ott stated they always tried to do at least three months of operating expenses in the General Fund; for Public Works, six months.

Councilor Hart wanted to ensure a camera for Andy so he could start taking pictures of the airplane tails so the city could bill people for landing. And also, the Chief wanted cameras for the stoplights.

#### **Fire: Quarterly Report**

Clint Benson, Fire Chief, presented.

Councilor Hart questioned the cost of a staff physical at \$1,000. He'd like to see more detail on that. He believed he knew of a place that could do better than that on the cost.

Chief Benson stated it was a one-stop. It included blood work, cancer screening, mental health evaluation, chest x-ray, a 12-lead stress test, etc. Currently, people were being sent for chest x-rays in Nampa, to Nyssa for a physical, and back here for their blood work. It was an NFPA-rated physical.



Councilor Mills stated when she was heading to Ontario, before the Fruitland exit, it was like going from clean air to a lot of smoke. Was that because farmers were burning their fields? The whole valley looked like it was on fire.

Chief Benson stated yes, it was farmers burning.

### DISCUSSION ITEM(S)

#### Border Board Grant

Clint Benson, Fire Chief, stated Station 2 was a storage building. Studies showed they department would double their 5-minute response time by adding staff out there. There was a lot of good reasoning for it. Staff had completed a concept plan for a 2400 square foot addition, at an estimate of approximately \$900,000. It was a critical facility. It was a lot of money, but staff had done a lot of work on the front end. He worked with the GEODC, meeting with them monthly searching for grants and funding opportunities. One grant was the Eastern Oregon Border Board Planning Grant, which seemed to fit. Staff applied for the grant, and presented the request to their Board. He was notified that the department had been awarded the funds. They voted unanimously to award his department \$80,000 on a reimbursement basis, so one question had been if it would be more or less, and the Board determined they would reimburse the city up to \$80,000 for the design of the project. The project benefits were distribution, career female firefighters, private sleeping quarters and private restrooms, and development of new opportunities for staff. He had received an email that day from a gal transferring from Southern Oregon to TVCC, asking about a sleeper program. Departments that were using these programs, such as the sleeper program and the Oregon Apprenticeship Program, they were using that to supplement staffing. It opened the door for a lot of good things. He was there to ask if anyone had an objection for the city to receive that money and moving forward with the design.

Mr. Cummings stated since the city had been approved, he told Chief Benson he had to present it to the Council to make sure he had their support and the next step was to go out to bid to get a designer. At that point, they'd know what the total cost would be, and if the \$80,000 would cover it or not. Staff would have to return to Council with a resolution to accept the funds, and then move forward with one of the contracts. Tonight's presentation was to inform the Council the city had received the funds to go out to bid to get the design done. Staff would then return with a budget resolution to accept and expend the funds, and also to award a contract. If the contract was going to exceed the grant, the Council would need to make the decision to move forward by providing the additional funds or not. Also, if it came in less, such as \$70,000, would that be paid back, but he informed the Board it would be a "not to exceed" the \$80,000, so if it came in at \$70,000, that's all that would be expended. So that would eliminate the need to possibly "pay back" any overage. Also, the Rural Board had already committed to providing some funds, as well.

Councilor Kirby asked about having to pay Davis-Bacon wages, or prevailing wage, or what?

Mr. Cummings stated it would be prevailing wage, unless there were federal funds provided. That would cause the Davis-Bacon wage.

#### Second Council Meeting in November

Council consensus to cancel the November 23, 2025, Council meeting due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

### HAND-OUTS

#### Minutes

County Court: 10-15-2025, 10-22-2025

#### Packet

V&C Board, November 2025



CORRESPONDENCE, COMMENTS, AND EX-OFFICIO REPORTS.

Councilor Mills asked a few meetings back if the Recreation Department could provide an update on the status of the swimming pool. Also, related to the parking discussion held earlier that night, would the Rec Department be contributing to that, as that parking would be used by people using the pool.

Mr. Cummings stated yes. That was part of the plan. Their architects and engineers were addressing the existing parking lot, and looking at the layout where it showed they could add to their existing parking, along with the potential for the new additional parking area. Mr. Maeda had not committed to making a presentation yet, because he was working on getting the baseball diamonds completed. He was also waiting on their architects to provide a new cost for the parking lots – their share.

Councilor Mills asked if they might come and visit the Council and give an update? She had a lot of citizens asking questions, and she thought they needed to address that.

Councilor Braden stated he had a Community in Action board meeting, which was across the street from the Rec District, so he usually stopped in to see Andrew or Toni. Seven to ten days ago he stopped in and chatted with Toni, sharing with her that the Council had brought that issue up more than once, and the Council had not had an update in a while, and knew the Department had received partial funding. He reminded them they needed to inform the city about what was going on. He received a text from Andrew Maeda four or five days ago, which stated he would communicate with Dan in the very near future. It sounded like this calendar year. He said at our next meeting, but he wouldn't push him to do that. He told Andrew to contact Dan to get on the Council agenda when he was ready.

Mayor Folden stated she also received a text from Andrew on Thursday. It read *"Hey Mayor Folden, just wanted to give you an update since we had our official bid opening day today for the pool project. We had really good competition and only the very small scopes of work did not receive bids today, which was only accounting for about 5% of the overall project. There is still some work to be done to solidify and verify bids that are accurate and that the project is ready. But we are sitting somewhere between \$4.5 to \$4.95M. I believe our board will be ready to approve the project immediately once we get our guaranteed maximum price from our construction management team. I will prepare a presentation that will include our updated business plan, bidding costs, budget, and finances for the project, for which we plan to begin in December. I will look to get the public comment at next Council meeting, and we'll see you then."*

Councilor Hart stated this was back to Plan A, using the existing hole, and taking the roof off. He knew there were concerns about that, expanding, and then what to do with the other space. This was good news in going down the path of using the existing facility. There were still concerns about parking, but not as many now.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONORS 192.660(2)(i): City Manager Evaluation

An executive session was called at 8:25 p.m. under provisions of ORS 192.660(2)(i) to conduct the annual City Manager evaluation. Representatives of the news media and designated staff would be allowed to attend the executive session. All other members of the audience were asked to leave the room. Representatives of the news media were specifically directed not to report on any of the deliberations during the executive session. No decision would be made in executive session. At the end of this executive session, the Council would return to open session and welcome the audience back into the room. The Council reconvened into regular session at 8:59 p.m.

ACTION FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION

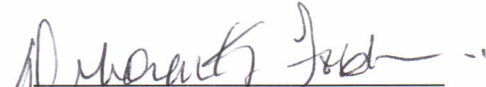
**BRADEN moved, MILLS seconded, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL AMEND THE CITY MANAGER'S CONTRACTS TO BE THE SAME AS OTHER NON-REP STAFF IN PROVIDING FOR CITY-PAID PERS, BACKDATED TO 7-1-2025, AND AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO SIGN THE AMENDMENT.** Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0.




**ADJOURN**

BAKEFELT moved, MILLS seconded, **THE MEETING BE ADJOURNED**. Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0. Meeting concluded at 8:23 p.m.

**ACCEPTED:**

  
Deborah K. Folden, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

  
Tori Barnett, MMC, City Recorder

