



CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES December 9, 2025

The scheduled meeting of the Ontario City Council was called to order by Mayor Deborah Folden at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 9, 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, Kari Ott, Jason Cooper, Tatiana Burgess, Casey Mordhorst, Marshall Pierce, and Al Haun.

AGENDA

This Agenda was posted Friday, December 5, 2025. Copies of the Agenda are available from the City Hall Customer Service Counter and on the city's website 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, HART seconded, **TO ADOPT THE CONSENT AGENDA, WHICH CONSISTED OF ADOPTION OF THE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 12, 2025; 2026 CITY MEETINGS CALENDAR; AND LIQUOR LICENSE CHANGE OF LOCATION: HOG ROCK CAFE**. Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Eddie Melendrez, Ontario, stated: *Thank you, Mayor and Council. I'm here again, I just want to congratulate the Oasis House and all the folks that they organized to come at the last City Council meeting, and to advocate for an unhoused location, a future one, and then I want to thank you all for creating the ad hoc committee. I'm very grateful that we're exploring that. And what I'm here for is just to offer any support that I can, and if there's an extra seat, if nobody takes it, I would rather leave that to the experts that work with the unhoused community every day, but if there's a need for somebody to be on that committee, I'm more than welcome to join that and if I could get an application, I would. I think that I could bring a wealth of experience. I've served on the City Council, as well, but I just wanted to offer that. I know that sometimes on previous committees, ad hoc committees, we're looking for folks to join, and I just want to let you know that I'm willing to join that and just to give my support where I can. But other than that, I just want to appreciate all your time, and, again, I'm grateful that you all created the ad hoc committee and I hope that we're able to create a better community for all in a place that everyone's happy, that everyone can come to a place where our local businesses, our families, are able to relieve our local law enforcement and the social services that we have in our community, that everything works a little bit better and that we have a place that somebody could rest and have a cup of coffee. As we know that we're going to be in the extreme cold winter again. But, again, just thank you for all your time and I'm here to offer services to your organization. Thank you.*

Andi Walsh, Ontario, stated: *Good evening, mayor and Councilors. My name is Andi Walsh. I am a resident of Ontario. I'm here to speak to you and ask the Council to issue support for the mental health community and the threats that are being faced, that the committee is facing right now in terms of access to services. I've testified before to this committee about my own experience with my family. My father lost his life because he wasn't able to access the right mental health services, and the services that were available were community mental health center, and it failed him. And so I really, this is very passionate for me, and I want to prevent that from happening to anyone in Ontario, but I want to specifically speak to policy wise, recognizing that while the Council can't actually make the decisions on funding mental health services, you can use your voice to issue support. The risks that are happening to this community, are happening across the state. This is a position the State of Oregon has put every city in, and it's a horrific position to be put in at a time of a lot of change and fear. Cutting mental health is the last thing we need, and the last thing our community needs, in particular. In particular, Malheur*



County has the highest Medicaid rate of any county in the state, and I actually think of the country, although don't quote me exactly on that. And, there's a federal law that says you have to be able to access mental health services within 40 miles of where you're located, so asking and telling people they can access providers outside of this county not only violates federal law, but it's just, frankly, tone deaf to the reality of what our county members can do, or what our city can do. So, there are others here that have experience working in the field and working with the clients that I'm happy are here to tell you more about the actual impact, but wanted to offer that as a just policy, decision wise support. Thank you.

Heather Bergstrom, Ontario, stated: Hello, I'm Heather Bergstrom, hello Mayor and Council members. I've been an Ontario resident, and a licensed clinical social worker since 1994. I worked at the hospital here for 18 years as a medical social worker. I worked for Lifeways for five years as a mental health counselor, and I worked at Valley Family for three years as a behavioral health provider. I probably served hundreds, if not thousands, of people through those years that I've worked in this area. My concern that is after January 1st, Oregon Medicaid is going to discontinue paying for mental health services for treatment at agencies other than Lifeways, making Lifeways the only provider in Malheur County. The fit between a counselor and the client is really important to the client's wellbeing. Evidence shows that the therapeutic relationship in and of itself promotes a lot of positive change with clients or patients. Taking away choice for vulnerable clients further limits access to care. When I worked at Lifeways, my caseload was 120 to 150 people. That's about 100 more than what is recommended. I had a wait list of four to six months for people to see me. My numbers as Valley Family were very similar. I'm not being critical of either of those agencies, but that does speak to the needs in our community. The ability of other local agencies to accept Medicaid clients makes services more available and accessible. Counseling and substance use disorder treatment prevents people from more expensive hospitalizations and incarcerations, and it deters domestic violence, child abuse, alcohol and drug abuse, suicidal behavior, criminal behavior, ER visits, etc. Telehealth is a good option for some people, but not all. The technology required makes it less accessible for those living within poverty, for those who are not tech savvy, and it's not the best avenue for kids. I also would like the City Council just to show support for access to mental health services in this community by writing a statement, maybe for the County Commissioners, maybe the community GOBHI, the Oregon Health Authority, and the state representatives. Thank you.

Jackie Koehler, Ontario, stated: Thank you Mayor and Counselors. My name is Jackie Koehler, and I am a resident of Ontario. I am here today to ask you, to urge you, actually, to support the community by issuing a public letter supporting client choice and urging the Malheur County Board of Commissioners to keep all of the providers in our area able to take Medicaid clients. Sorry. I hate talking up here. We all know why. Okay, so I'm deeply concerned about the proposed changes to the mental health providers, what mental health providers, people on Medicaid, can go to because nearly 800 Oregon Health Plan members will lose their current provider January 1st. We're not just facing a health care or mental health care crisis. The City of Ontario is actually facing a fiscal disaster for our city. Let's think about the people who use these services. Your seniors at Pioneer Nursing Home that rely on twice-weekly visits to manage depression and anxiety. Without these visits, they decline rapidly and need expensive emergency care. Students from Jordan Valley all the way to Ontario are, need counseling to help them stay in school with drug and alcohol abuse. When they can't get the help they need, they drop out. Our graduation rates fall. Our state funding drops. People on Parole and Probation are staying sober and employed right now because they have therapists that they can trust. Taking that away, you put them right back in the system, costing us more than treatment ever would. Parents are fighting to keep their families together while battling addiction or depression. When they lose their provider and relapse, their children enter foster care. The human cost is devastating, but the financial cost is astronomical. Right now, workers at our local businesses are showing up because they are getting the help they need. When they can't access care, employers in our town deal with no shows, turnover, higher training costs, and loss of productivity. These providers at risk – Insight, Altruistic, Four Rivers – they aren't just businesses. They're the thin line that's preventing chaos in our city services. When someone in mental health crisis can't get an appointment with an overwhelmed single provider, they don't vanish, they show up in our ER, pulling EMTs off other calls, consuming hospital resources, often returning repeatedly to the hospital. They require police intervention, multiple officers spending hours on scene, transport, paperwork, follow-up. Our officers become de facto social workers, a role which they are neither trained nor resourced to do. They cycle through our jail, requiring medical monitoring, psychiatric medications, suicide watches, court hearings, public defenders. Our jail becomes a mental health facility at an astronomical cost. I'm going to be over in time. This isn't speculation. Other cities have seen this. It's predictable and preventable. I'm just asking that perhaps you can write a letter of support to GOBI, or the County Commissioners, to hopefully tell them our opinion on this is we need multiple providers. So, thank you.



Kathie Collins, Ontario, stated: Good evening Mayor and Council. I am Kathie Molder Collins, and I've lived in Ontario for more than five decades. My career has included years as a newspaper editor, School District Public Information Officer, a non-profit executive director, as well as a small business owner. Because of my career path, I've had the opportunity to meet hundreds of individuals and families who are living and working throughout the Western Treasure Valley. While at the Argus Observer, the Ontario School District, and in my nine years with Treasure Valley Children's Relief Nursery, which is a child abuse prevention program, I heard time and again from families living in poverty. These were mostly working families. Malheur County, as you might know, often has the highest percentage of working poor in the State of Oregon. I was able to see firsthand the hardships that living with mental illness caused for many families, including depression, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and eating disorders. I also knew several families who were caregivers to children with highly specialized needs and they needed access to therapy to address the impact those needs had on their family. The need for services to address these prevalent in our community, and while it is generally advisable to avoid duplication in terms of non-profit services, that's a given, but in the case of mental health, it's the health component which must take precedence. When it comes to our health, we always advocate for choice, just as Americans, and Ontario residents specifically, but in fact research shows that having alternatives plays a key role in the ultimate health outcome for patients, whether that care is addressing physical or mental health issues. What is best for individuals, families, and for our community, is a broader choice when it comes to behavioral health providers, not the elimination of choice. I encourage you to continue to advocate. I know you have in the past, to our state officials, county officials, in any way you can, on behalf of our community regarding this issue. Thank you for your time.

Chrissy LaChepelle, Ontario, stated: Hello. So, we were here last month, and we got approved to do the side committee with you guys, and I'm just here because my bosses told me to be here, and they said you guys might have questions for us about the sub-committee and things like that, but hearing these guys talk about the mental health...holy cow. If Lifeways is the only place that's going to be, like, this is new to me, but oh my goodness. I can't even imagine what that's going to do to our community. Put Oasis House aside. That's bad. But, we have our committee ready to go, and so, I just need to know what I need to do next.

Councilor Kirby stated that issue was later on the agenda.

Ms. LaChepelle: Okay. That's all I need. They just told me to be here in case you guys had any questions or anything you wanted to ask me.

Sarah Dagnan, Ontario, stated: Hi. I just want to correct myself real quick. I put on there that I'm a resident of Ontario; I'm not. I'm a resident of Star, in Idaho. I'm here as a representation for Ontario because I work with the Ontario community, working at Altruistic as a community mental health provider. I am a social work for community mental health, and my concern involves with absolutely everyone in this room, from the homeless population that we have, and that we're advocating for, to the veterans, to the other services that are being provided outside of just mental health, the police, and everything. We are, I'm a veteran. I came here to get access to the veterans who are not close enough to the Boise hospital in order to get services. I stayed because I see a need in this community and I want to help, and that's what I stayed for. I've been given multiple position possibilities at the VA, which would take my 14 years in the military service and make it so I can retire in six years, but I've stayed because I care about this community, I care about the individuals here, and I care about the families I've been in contact with. We just found out about this two weeks ago with EOCCO. I have one client already who had to switch over because of a family thing with DHS, and they were given an intake that same week – fantastic – but then they were told they wouldn't be seen for another appointment for a month and a half. This mom called me crying. I can't see her as a client and be paid, so I'm seeing her pro bono until she can be seen because that's what's important. That child's mental health is what's important. A child should not be placed on a month wait list, to go through the trauma that they're experiencing because there's no options available. That shouldn't be our fallback. So I'm here to ask the committee to consider, I know this is heavy, I know this is like well what are we supposed to do? I get that you guys feel that your hands are tied, but you guys have the voice that we elected you officials to present for us. Speak to the County Commissioners. They can create not necessarily an addendum but they can require that EOCCO provide the facts that they are claiming that they are able to see everybody, which is clearly not the case. It's not even January 1st and they are already failing to meet that requirement. Great, you can see them for an intake. What's next? That's not adequate health care. That's not serving this community. That's not okay. When we talk about telehealth being an option? That's not an option. You sit with a five year old and try to do telehealth with them when they've experienced family trauma and they're in the room with their foster parent who they don't trust yet, or anything else. They can't do that. They have to be in a safe environment. We have to have that therapeutic connection. We have to be able to be face to face with our clients. This is cutting a HUGE amount of client access and I know, again, I'm sorry



I'm over my time, but I want you guys to know that you guys have a voice, and we need you guys to reach out and speak up for us. Thank you.

Councilor Kirby stated last week there was a meeting at TVCC that brought our Oregon Senator and Oregon Representative to Ontario. They voiced concern about the upcoming session. The audience was full of mainly clients from two organizations, Altruistic and Snake River Counseling Resources. There might have been others. They addressed some concerns expressed at the current Council meeting by members of the audience. It surprised Representative Mark Owens and Senator Mike McLane. For those who thought this issue only occurred over the last ten days, he agreed. Since then, however, he did some research. In speaking with a former state legislator, Lynn Findley, he obtained some background on this heavy subject. He heard them making some recommendations that night as to what to do or where to go, but he wasn't certain as to the way to go about things. In 1963, President Kennedy wanted to get community mental health under discussion, and a bill passed that focused on community based health care. Federal funding became available for funding some of those health care facilities. In 1973, in Oregon, the Community Mental Health Program Act was established, which formed the Local Mental Health Authority [LMHA]. That meant you were represented by the county you were in. Oregon has truly diverse counties. Some were largely populated, some had very little. The western counties decided to be in the mental health care business. There were 12 counties in Eastern Oregon, Malheur County being one of them, who didn't feel they should be in that type of business. Those counties met and decided to contract with an organization that would do that for them, which was Lifeways, located in Ontario at that time. There had been at least four or five CEO's of that organization. In 1994, there was an organization created name Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Incorporated [GOBHI]. When the counties in Eastern Oregon went with Lifeways. The county courts were all on the Board of Directors of Lifeways. When speaking about going to the county court, those people would have had to abandon their role within the organization for which they were on the Board for. That wouldn't be fruitful. In Western Oregon, where the counties were upset, the counties themselves were going after the state. But, when speaking about a county, there was no way this county would abandon an organization they sat on the Board of Directors for. Further rumors were that this was happening due to Trump cutbacks, but those cutbacks wouldn't even hit until 2027, so it could definitely get worse. Basically, it was the funding metrics that the State of Oregon created in 1973, and it has never been changed. Therefore, the State was underfunding mental health care, not the feds. Representative Owens and Senator McLane were who they needed to speak with, who had been caught unaware. Many were saying to choose their own provider, and while that might be a good saying, it wasn't going to work. They were going to have to take what was available because health care in this region was limited. But, he understood they had a cause, and they wanted to follow up on it, but if they did, they needed to know where to fight. Unfortunately, the clients were the bottom rung on the ladder, and the city was only the rung up. Entrepreneurs could lose their investments; landlords with contracts could lose their renters. He had also heard at the meeting last week that 35 counselors could lose their jobs, but maybe they could hire on with Lifeways. Individuals who needed lifelong care, people with bipolar disorder, for example, would be referred to Lifeways. This Council did represent the people of Ontario, but in this venue, they hadn't created it. It had been created at the state level, so any solutions would come from that same level. Those two gentleman – Owens and McLane – was where they needed to go. It had all happened quickly, and he didn't know where they would go from here. While a client might not get the counselor they wanted, mental health would be available.

Councilor Hart stated Valley Family was a federally qualified health clinic and they could, and would, continue to see Oregon Medicaid patients for behavioral health issues. However, they were currently at capacity. There were over 10 providers, and there was a waiting list. They wanted to continue to help their patients, and their current patients had all be notified. They were still able to assist people in the community. He suggested they, as a Council, based on an email that day from Becky Woolery at Insight, addressed to the Malheur County Court, and one thing she suggested, and he believed the City Council could do a letter, but the one thing still confusing where they could ask for clarification, was requesting a meeting with EOCCO, GOBHI, and OHA. They were the key. OHA had been given the direction by the governor and legislation to provide services. That was where he believed there was an opportunity to ask OHA, because they had the money, and they rolled that money down, but to ask the questions about service volumes, wait lists, workforce impacts, and the community needs. It got back to the points of network adequacy. That was a health care term that said were there enough providers in "x" area to be able to take care of those that you said you could if they took the money. If they took the money, they were saying yes, there was adequacy; or, there were providers but there was a wait list, and if you only give me so much money, I can only have so many providers. Providers were not unlimited. But, that would be a role for Ontario, to encourage the county court to ask for that understanding and meeting with OHA, and inviting Representative Owens and Senator McLane to attend. He had spoken with them both, and told them he wasn't sure what OHA was doing, and if it was a lack of funds, just say so, because then



they'd at least know. Or, was it that they were only going to allow certain entities to be able...in speaking with leaders from Altruistic and Insight, it didn't appear they were given an opportunity to be contractors. While he could be completely wrong, and he didn't want to judge anyone, but having that information from OHA, that would really help to say if there was enough money, but they needed a bigger network, then how could they do that? How could they get Altruistic and Insight the ability to contract with the state so they could provide those services. Valley Family was able to provide those services, but he had concerns because on January 1st, when he had more people show up at Valley Family, it would be difficult to get them in, and it would be difficult to continue to help the people already being helped. That was valid, and Councilor Kirby might disagree.

Councilor Kirby stated it wasn't that he disagreed, it was because of the makeup of the organization as it was put together years ago. What he got out of Mr. Findley was that the LMHA, when the counties took that up, in Western Oregon they basically were the ones that would have the greatest strength in the state. Malheur County could be bidding itself against 11 or 12 other counties within the organization. He only presumed that after conversations with Mr. Findley. His goal had been to inform those in the audience that night was that he felt their pain, but didn't know that the Council was the right avenue to take it. It was certainly within their rights to contact Representative Owens and Senator McLane, to tell them to get back here. Senator McLane was on the OHA Advisory and Funding Board. If anyone would have sway, it was him. This whole issue had caught the eye of the press, and everyone in Western Oregon, and this was the home of Lifeways. But in this business where they were limited on providers, they had to try to make something work. He had found out that the independent providers received more money than Medicaid reimbursement. But their vision was good enough to say there was a payday coming when the State of Oregon wasn't going to be able to afford them. They then applied for a certificate to come back and receive the same reimbursement rate that Lifeways did, and they received that certification. He wasn't defending Lifeways, it was just what he'd heard from those he had spoken with, who were reasonably in authority and what was in print from other organizations.

Mayor Folden stated if she had the consensus of the Council, she'd gladly provide a letter of support. She did hear what the community was saying, and she understood their position. She thought this was very important.

Mayor Folden asked for a consensus.

Councilor Bakefelt abstained from the action as she was an employee of Lifeways.

There was Council consensus to write a letter of support from the City Council to Representative Owens and Senator McLane.

PRESENTATION

Grants Committee: Semi-Annual Report

Tatiana Burgess, Planning Director/Grant Committee Chair, presented.

THE GRANT COMMITTEE :

- ☐ was organized in 2023
- ☐ is made up of city department members
- ☐ is focused on seeking and securing grant funding for city projects to complement the city budget
- ☐ identifies funding opportunities, coordinates applications
- ☐ ensures that awarded grants align with the city's priorities and community needs.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS





The City Council could choose not to declare the vehicle surplus, which would require the Street Department to retain the vehicles, or, they could choose to surplus the vehicle and sell the vehicle instead of donating it.

BAKEFELT moved, CONTRERAS seconded, **THE CITY COUNCIL TO APPROVE RESOLUTION #2025-127: A RESOLUTION DECLARING THE 1991 FORD BUCKET TRUCK SURPLUS PROPERTY AND APPROVE THE DONATION OF THE SURPLUS VEHICLE TO THE CITY OF NYSSA AND APPROVE THE CITY MANAGER TO SIGN ALL DOCUMENTS REQUIRED TO MAKE THE TRANSFER.** Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0.

Resolution #2025-128: Create an Ad Hoc Committee for a Homeless Shelter

Dan Cummings, City Manager, presented.

At the November 12, 2025, Council meeting, following a presentation by the Oasis House on the need for a homeless shelter, a motion was made to create an Ad Hoc Subcommittee to investigate the need and possible location of a shelter. This action would adopt the proposed resolution to create a Homeless Shelter Ad Hoc Committee to explore the impact and needs of a Homeless Shelter within the community. Staff prepared a resolution creating the Ad Hoc Committee for the Council to consider, which addressed the request that the committee would consist of two City Councilors, two from Oasis House, one unhoused individual picked by Oasis, and two Citizens at Large. That would be if they chose to have it a 7-member committee. Oasis House would like to get something going as soon as possible. However, the Council also had the option of not creating an Ad Hoc Committee.

Chrissy LaChepelle asked who was on the committee. She didn't understand. She thought that two City Councilors would be on the committee, and then Oasis House was forming the actual committee. She, along with the Oasis House board of Directors thought that was going to be how it was put together.

Councilor Hart stated this issue had been raised with other committees. If this became an ad hoc committee of the City Council, it got more complicated. He supported that if that was what they wanted, but they fell under the public meetings laws versus two members of the Council on the committee to meet more as a community group. There would be more flexibility.

Ms. LaChepelle stated she believed that was what Oasis House wanted to do. To have two members from the Council just sit as committee members. They didn't want another add on committee. They just needed brains from City Council, brains from Oasis, and brains from the community working together to fix this problem.

Councilor Hart stated it might be easier to do it that way, instead of a city committee. It became more complicated and rules had to be followed.

Councilor Bakefelt asked if they had a mission statement for what the committee was actually going to do?

Mr. Cummings stated he had added it in, but it appeared there had been some miscommunication.

Ms. LaChepelle stated they didn't want a city committee, just two Councilors to sit on that committee. They didn't want to have to deal with a bunch of red tape. They wanted to help the people that needed it. When someone approached them because they couldn't get into Lifeways or Altruistic, she had a person that could say they'd meet with them pro bono. That's what mattered.

Mr. Cummings stated the Council should, to make that committee successful, since they wanted the support of the Council by having two Councilors have seats, then just make a motion or take volunteers who committed to attending the meetings.

Ms. LaChepelle stated it was important the city and Oasis House worked together. This was a city problem, or a city/county problem. It was here and they needed to fix it.

Councilor Kirby stated he didn't mind doing that, but if they were to have a city ad hoc committee, there were things the city offered in the way of zoning instructions or limitations, availability, just knowledge of property that might be available, but maybe that information could be available to the Councilors on the committee.

Mr. Cummings agreed. The committee could always contact the city departments.



Councilor Kirby suggested inviting city staff to meetings, as well.

Mr. Cummings agreed. If the committee was questioning certain properties, they could invite him, or the City Planner, to meetings.

Ms. LaChepelle stated they had already looked into the Mallard's property, and Tatiana [Burgess] talked with Kylee and found out about all the liens against it, so they stopped that one.

Mr. Cummings stated a private committee was probably the best way to go.

Mayor Folden stated she'd like to volunteer to be on the committee.

Ms. LaChepelle stated she thought Councilor Kirby had also expressed interest. Was that still the case?

Councilor Contreras stated her interest in being on the committee.

Ms. LaChepelle stated they needed one more, so that was perfect.

Mr. Cummings just reminded them not to go over three Councilors.

Ms. LaChepelle said that was great – three it was!

Councilor Kirby asked Ms. LaChepelle how many they had fed over Thanksgiving.

Ms. LaChepelle stated they fed 250 people. It was great, because there were three other churches that stepped up with Thanksgiving meals, and they had just as many people. She had been able to sit at every table and talk with people. They even sang to one gentleman whose birthday was the day after. Her husband did all the work while she got to mingle with everyone. He had heard a million times how people couldn't believe they were doing that. It was great to see Mormons and Christians and Catholics and homeless and rich and in-between all in the same room, talking to each other. That was her goal.

Mr. Cummings stated as there was no action on this, they could move on to the next action.

Helipad AIP25 – Independent Fee Estimate (IFE) – Century West Engineers

Dan Cummings, City Manager, presented.

FAA AIP Handbook Order 5100.20C outlined Programming Control and Reporting Procedures Grant-In-Aid Program procedures. The next process was to have an Independent Airport Engineer estimate the project formulation, design, bidding, and construction services. The IFE Contract was within the budget to date with the funding from FAA at 95% and ODAV at 4%. Local City Council matching funds were 1% of the complete project.

Century West Engineering from Bend, Oregon, was approached to provide the fee estimate contract and could turnaround Century West's fee estimate within two weeks of receiving the signed contract. Century West Engineering was a reputable airport engineering company that gave a competitive, fair, reasonable estimate that satisfied FAA requirements.

The Ontario Airport Committee was requesting the approval of the City Council to sign the Century West Independent Fee Estimate contract. The FAA would reimburse the City of Ontario for the cost of the IFE. The FAA and ODAV agreements are subject to the AIP Project Development Schedule.

MILLS moved, KIRBY seconded, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE THE CITY MANAGER TO SIGN THE CENTURY WEST ENGINEERS INDEPENDENT FEE ESTIMATE (IFE) CONTRACT FOR \$4,500.00 ONCE THE GRANT HAS BEEN AWARDED TO THE CITY. Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0.



Task Order (TO) Award: Anderson Perry – Finalize North Park Design

Marshall Pierce, City Engineer (Jacobs) presented.

The city desired to finish the North Park Roadway Extension Project. This project was completed through the 95% design package in 2023, but not finalized. Finishing this project would extend the North Park street section to the north by approximately 1,100 feet. Additional improvements included underground sewer and water lines for new development in the future. This TO award was for Anderson Perry to finish what they started. The city was in a position to sign Anderson Perry and get this project wrapped up. The city would utilize remaining funds from the East Lane Project to completely fund this final design project.

MILLS moved, CONTRERAS seconded, **THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE THE ANDERSON PERRY TASK ORDER TO PROVIDE ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE NORTH PARK ROADWAY EXTENSION PROJECT, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$15,000, AND AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO SIGN ALL DOCUMENTS.** Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0.

Task Order (TO) Amendment: Consor – Services During Construction (DSC) for Floc Mechanism Replacement Project at the Old Water Treatment Plant (WTP)

Marshall Pierce, City Engineer (Jacobs) presented.

The city signed with Consor (engineering firm on the city's roster) to perform the design of the old Water Treatment Plant Floc Mechanism Replacement Project. This was completed in the Fall of 2024. Having bid and awarded the project for construction earlier this year, staff was ready to sign Consor to support the construction phase of this project. The city was in a position to sign a Task Order Amendment with Consor to provide Construction Services for the old Water Treatment Plant Floc Mechanism Replacement Project.

The project would be funded by the Utility Capitalization Fee (UCF). The design phase had a budget under-run of approximately \$35,000, which was utilized for services during bidding and early construction phase. This TO Amendment was to fund the full amount needed. Funds were needed within the next few weeks to allow Consor to continue to support this project. Not awarding this phase would put the project's successful completion in jeopardy.

MILLS moved, HART seconded, **THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE THE CONSOR TASK ORDER AMENDMENT TO PROVIDE SDC FOR THE OLD WATER TREATMENT PLANT FLOC MECHANISM REPLACEMENT PROJECT, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$59,020, PLUS A 10% DESIGN CONTINGENCY, AND AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO SIGN ALL DOCUMENTS.** Roll call vote: Mills-yes; Braden-yes; Hart-yes; Contreras-yes; Kirby-yes; Bakefelt-yes; Folden-yes. Motion carried 7/0/0.

Ordinance #2842-2025: Renewal of Cascade Natural Gas Company Franchise Agreement

Dan Cummings, City Manager, presented.

Cascade Natural Gas Corporation, a Washington corporation, currently operated a natural gas utility within the City of Ontario, an Oregon municipal corporation, pursuant to the terms of a franchise agreement contained in Ordinance No. 2706-2015, dated September 8, 2015. The term of the original Agreement expired on September 7, 2025.

If approved, the ordinance granted Cascade Natural Gas the right, privilege, and franchise to place, erect, lay, maintain, and operate in, upon, over, and under the public streets, alleys, avenues, thoroughfares, highways, places, and grounds within the franchise area, lines, pipes, boxes, stations, laterals, conduits, valves, pumps, and other facilities for a natural gas distribution system, subject to the terms and conditions contained in this ordinance. Once approved, Cascade Gas would continue to pay to the city a franchise fee based on the new Agreement. This action needed to be approved as soon as possible as the existing Agreement had expired.

Councilor Kirby asked if the different franchise agreements had different rates.

Mr. Cummings stated they used to have varied rates, but when any are renewed they are now going to the same percentage rate. This particular agreement authorized them to use the city's rights of way. The fee was to replace and repair areas they used.



HART moved, CONTRERAS seconded, THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE ORDINANCE #2842-2025: AN ORDINANCE OF CITY OF ONTARIO GRANTING CASCADE NATURAL GAS CORPORATION, A WASHINGTON CORPORATION, THE RIGHT AND PRIVILEGE TO PLACE, ERECT, LAY, MAINTAIN, AND OPERATE IN, UPON, OVER, AND UNDER THE PUBLIC STREETS, ALLEYS, AVENUES, THOROUGHFARES, HIGHWAYS, PLACES, AND GROUNDS WITHIN CITY OF ONTARIO, MAINS, LINES, PIPES, BOXES, STATIONS, LATERALS, CONDUITS, VALVES, PUMPS, AND OTHER FACILITIES FOR THE NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM 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.

HART moved, KIRBY seconded, THE CITY COUNCIL TO APPROVE ORDINANCE #2842-2025, AN ORDINANCE OF CITY OF ONTARIO GRANTING CASCADE NATURAL GAS CORPORATION, A WASHINGTON CORPORATION, THE RIGHT AND PRIVILEGE TO PLACE, ERECT, LAY, MAINTAIN, AND OPERATE IN, UPON, OVER, AND UNDER THE PUBLIC STREETS, ALLEYS, AVENUES, THOROUGHFARES, HIGHWAYS, PLACES, AND GROUNDS WITHIN CITY OF ONTARIO, MAINS, LINES, PIPES, BOXES, STATIONS, LATERALS, CONDUITS, VALVES, PUMPS, AND OTHER FACILITIES FOR THE NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM ON SECOND 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.

DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES

Finance: Monthly Report

Kari Ott, Finance Director, presented.

Community Development: Quarterly Report

Tatiana Burgess, Planning Director, presented.

Public Works: Quarterly Report

Casey Mordhorst, Public Works Director, presented.

Councilor Kirby suggested looking into high strength vinegar for weed control.

DISCUSSION ITEM(S)

December 23, 2025, Council Meeting: Hold or Cancel [Due to Christmas Holiday]

Council consensus to cancel the December 23, 2025, Council meeting due to the Christmas holiday.

EV Charging Stations

Dan Cummings, City Manager, stated: *In your packet, I've provided some information about it. I was contacted by a company that actually told me that they were doing a study on installing EV chargers in front of the Depot, and I contacted them and I said no, you're not going to do that. We have minimal parking stalls there, and they're for the Depot, so I said it's just not a good space. I said the city only owns the building. We lease the property, so under that agreement anything we put there has to have Union Pacific Railroad approval, and that's a long, drawn out process. So then they asked about the parking lots across the street, and I said yes, the city owns those, and I told them that before we went very far with the planning process of them pending money doing their study, seeing if there's power needs there, or how much that would cost, I told them I'd bring it front of the Council to get a consensus of whether this is a good idea, a good use of some of those parking. I'm proposing that we would put them, they want to put three charging stations, and in the Exhibit in there, there's a couple locations shown. These are not set in gold. It would be based on truly where the power needs are. At first, I wasn't sure I liked the idea, but then from past personal experience, and I'll just use my sister. This last year for the 4th of July, our family reunion, she bought a brand new EV, coming from Southern California up to about around the Reno area, and it's normally about a six hour drive. It took her 25 hours. And the reason being is all the charging stations, most of them are broke down, the others were in an out of the way area, she said she was totally afraid. She had to keep the doors locked, there was no place to even get a cup of coffee or anything. So I'm using these things, and I'm going wow, that's not a very good idea. And she was stressed out because it's a brand new car. She'd just bought it days before, so she didn't even know how to charge it properly. She didn't know she had all these extra pigtails. But, long story short, that got me thinking, and most of these*



are being put in in good commercial areas, just for that reason. High visibility, and they help provide, most these cars have to charge at least an hour, some of them an hour and half, or whatever, and so they like them close to businesses where they can go in and have lunch or dinner or a cup of coffee, so, after thinking about it, it might be a good idea for the Council to use a couple three of the spots against Depot Lane. I don't think we want to put them up close to the buildings. Most of you that have been around quite a while that when there's stuff going on, doing business, most that parking lot against Depot Lane is vacant anyway. Anyway, I asked them to send me this information so I could get it to you because I didn't want to go through, have them spend all the money on the study and see if it's even feasible and write up a contract. I had them send me a sample contract, so I could review it and see what the rules are. But basically, if you think about letting them put it there, then there would be no cost to the city at all. They, under their grant that they got from the government to put all these in, they have a minimum of a six-year operation and maintenance contract in there. Under that grant requirement if you showed up to charge at that station and the card reader wouldn't work, couldn't do it, they have to let you charge for free. I guess there's a safety system in there. But under the grant they can't just say well I couldn't get the card to operate, the reader was down, then they'd have to go find another one. Under this agreement, they have to allow them to charge for free. So, anyway, again, I just wanted to see if the Council thinks that's a good use of our property back there, to allow these charging stations that, in my mind, could help our downtown businesses, maybe.

Mayor Folden stated the thought it would bring people into town, to downtown, and they might stop and eat, or do some shopping, while charging.

Mr. Cummings stated the only one he was aware of in Ontario was at the Ontario Marketplace.

Councilor Hart asked if they leased the space from the city?

Mr. Cummings stated no. They were providing a benefit to the community. In a quick review of the proposed agreement, the company would have to maintain everything over the first six years. Then the city would have the option of taking ownership. He didn't think they'd want that, but that was his opinion. Maybe let them stay there and take care of them. If they didn't want them anymore, remove them and restore the area back to what it was prior to the installation of the stations. He didn't think the city needed to get into the EV business.

Councilor Kirby stated the Idaho legislation was contemplating doing the same thing. He believed their mandate was that they have charging stations every 50 miles. Because of Ontario's proximity to Idaho, they might let them know that, if this action moved forward, there were charging stations available here.

Mr. Cummings stated that as this was from grants, not private businesses, everyone who had the EV would have an app that showed where all the charging stations were located.

Given no more discussion, Mr. Cummings stated he would move forward with the action.

Malheur County IGA

Dan Cummings, City Manager, stated: *I was contacted by the county attorney, Stephanie Williams, to ask if the city would be interested in going into an IGA to, she didn't come right out and say it because I stole their Planner, but she was hinting close at it, but they're without a Planner right now so therefore they don't have a Floodplain Administrator that really has any background right now. Their Building Official, City Attorney, and the Judge is trying to cover things and none of them really have the true background. Now, Adele, with the Building Department, because she has to deal with floodplain stuff in the Building Code, she's familiar with them, but again, she's loaded just trying to just do her part of it. Anyway, they asked, I told Stephanie, send me a sample IGA, then Tatiana and I edited it somewhat to fit what we say needs because if we do this we don't want to do it long-term. We'll do it until they get a Planner. At first, Stephanie said well if we don't get a Planner that has it, we'll want to continue it, and I said, no, we're saying that when you get a Planner, this goes away because, again, we want to stress that you need to find a Planner to cover that. We can't cover the whole county, and we don't want to. We're busy enough without it. But, being a good neighbor thing again, staff's not against doing this. You'll see in there, the rate charge, again, that's open for discussion. All I put in there, I found, I got what Tatiana's fully-burdened cost is and rounded it up to the nearest dollar, but that's, again, that's up to the Council if they so, do they want to do it for our cost only, or whatever. That's totally up to you. I wanted to bring it to you to see if you want to do it. If you choose not to even want to do it, that's fine too. I'll tell them that.*

Mayor Folden asked if the \$75 per hour listed was....



Mr. Cummings stated it was the fully-burdened. He just rounded it up.

Councilor Hart strongly suggested they do a cost plus 10%. That covered the city having to do billing with them and whatever, and that was reasonable. That way, if there was a salary adjustment or something for city staff, the contract would not have to be redone.

Mr. Cummings stated that was in there.

Councilor Hart reiterated his suggestion for cost plus, and 10% was very reasonable. In addition, was this additional time on top of the 40-60-90 hours she was already working for the city every week? How was that balanced? Or was this ultimately going to save the city money? Like the city was going to allocate .10 for FTE, then to them, did that overburden her, or whoever was doing it. How was that approached?

Mr. Cummings stated he asked Tatiana about how many permits per year there were, and she indicated there was about 20, or approximately one to two per month. The city itself jumped around, maybe doing four or five a year. It would be extra work for Tatiana, yes, but it would be during normal business hours. She would not be asked to go above and beyond, but to just fit it in during the regular workday. It would also be written that at any time it didn't work out, the county would be given notice that it was done. He put the billable hours in the IGA, and then cost plus 10% for any other things. It did have the clause that the city would not have to redo the IGA if Tatiana's wages increased, so did the IGA fee. That was all in there. The county had an IGA with Jordan Valley and Adrian, and Stephanie asked him if the city wanted to take those over, and he told her no., to just keep the IGA, and the city's IGA would be with the county. It was also in the IGA that the city was only responsible for the permits that the city reviewed and issued. The city would not be responsible for any other floodplain violations in the county. The city didn't have the staff for that type of activity. The advantage for the city with this IGA was making sure that any building permits within the UGB were following the rules. This gave the city more hammer to ensure the floodplain permits required by FEMA and DEQ were being done in the UGB. If the Council didn't think this was a good idea, he'd tell the county no.

Councilor Hart verified it was just cost on the salary, fully loaded, and then any other cost was?

Mr. Cummings stated cost plus 10%.

Councilor Hart stated it was not 10% on her salary.

Mr. Cummings stated no, but they could. He wanted the Council to tell him what they wanted.

Councilor Hart stated the city had to do all the billing associated with it, and if that was covered, that was appropriate, but it would be his recommendation that the contract would be for her time and expenses, and then the city would bill the county, the county would pay the invoice, plus 10% on top of that. It gave the county more incentive to get the position filled.

Mr. Cummings stated agreed they needed an incentive.

Mayor Folden stated it looked like that was in the IGA already.

Mr. Cummings stated the cost plus 10% was for all the other incidentals. It was his understanding that Councilor Hart wanted to include that 10% on the hourly fee being charged.

Councilor Braden stated he had asked Mr. Cummings some questions about this today, and he had two to voice. Did the city have proper indemnity under this IGA? For Tatiana doing the work as a city employee, was that potentially binding under an error that was made on the floodplain work in the county, because the city was under contract to do that work?

Mr. Cummings stated that would part of the cost plus if the city chose to move forward. His next step would be for him to contact the city's insurance carrier to ensure there was coverage for the city employees working outside of the city limits. It was covered in the contract, but was part of the steps he'd have to take. The city's insurance carrier could say no, no coverage, or maybe a rider costing "x" amount. That would be an additional cost, plus 10% the county would have to pay. The liability was limited to the projects the city worked on.

Councilor Braden stated he felt possessive of the city's Planner after obtaining from the county. The county contacting him to try and get her services and expertise that the city invested in and maintained, and the city was very thankful for, he wanted to ensure this stayed short term in duration. They wanted to be a good neighbor and help them out. They've reached out to Dan, and he wanted to be a good neighbor. But he was thinking, not knowing if he'd be a jack* saying cost plus 100%, but he wanted to make sure the city had a way to sink teeth into this and make it stay short term in duration. Councilor Hart proposed cost plus 10%, and he'd present cost plus 100%, and they could carry that for three months, six months, if needed, but finding a Planner is on them.

Mr. Cummings verified that he was saying on the wages, instead of the \$75, it'd be \$150. And any incidental costs would also be cost plus 100%.

Councilor Braden stated yes, that was his proposal. Yes, that might be steep and not good neighborly, but he shared his reasons for making that case.

Mr. Cummings stated he just needed Council approval. He suggested putting the \$150 rate in the agreement, and increase whatever percentage her increase was. And the other items cost plus 100%.

Councilor Hart stated Mr. Cummings did have the ability at any time to say this was too much, or more than originally thought, and he could pull it back. The Council needed to trust staff to say they could take on this extra work and be helpful, but if it continued on and on, then they'd need to pull the plug. He'd lean more toward his proposal because that other would not look very neighborly. They needed to make it very clear this was not a long-term solution.

Councilor Braden stated he had voiced dissent, and made his point, but cost plus 10% was feasible for him.

Mr. Cummings stated Stephanie had already taken it to the County, the City of Adrian, and the City of Jordan Valley.

Mr. Cummings stated there were three clauses in the IGA. First, the IGA could be annulled by an agreement through both parties without any notice. Second, if the city wanted out, we'd be required to give a 90-day notice. And, third, when the county hired a County Planner, the IGA would be over. But, this could take time as good Planner's were hard to find.

HAND-OUTS

Minutes

Airport 10-06-2025, 11-03-2025; County Court: 10-29-2025, 11-05-2025, 11-12-2025

Check Register(s)

October 2025 and November 2025

CORRESPONDENCE, COMMENTS, AND EX-OFFICIO REPORTS.

Councilor Kirby stated he had received a news article from a constituent, and it was a release from the Oregon Department of Transportation. It read, in part: *Vital bus service returns on I-84. Federal funds awarded by ODOT help restore bus service between Portland Union Station and the Boise Airport, December 9, 2025.* It had contact information with Jenny Cherrytree in Portland. *Portland, Oregon. The Oregon Department of Transportation awarded Northwestern Stagelines with a federal grant to restore vital intercity bus service for rural cities between Portland, Oregon, and Boise, Idaho on Interstate 84. Since January, many rural Oregonians have had no long distance bus service to travel to doctor appointments, to work, or to visit family and friends outside their local town. This grant helps fulfill a gap, giving Eastern Oregonians access to travel options, said Susann Carlson, ODOT Public Transportation Division Administrator. Residents rely on transit to reach vital services from health care and employment, to education and family support. This new bus route restores access, connecting travels to Amtrak, airports, and regional and national bus lines, opening the door to (someone coughed)...across the United States. The \$600,000 ODOT grant funds, a portion of the route between The Dalles and the Boise Airport for one year. This service is funded through the Federal Transit Administration Intercity Bus Program Grant.* The rest of the article was just fill, but it was here, and it showed up on Facebook and had been forwarded to him. At some point, the Council should receive it.



Councilor Folden invited everyone to attend and support her and the Oregon Food Bank during the Karaoke for a Cause event, Saturday, December 13, 2025, at 6:00pm, at the Frosty Badger, 505 NW 1st Street. She didn't sing, but agreed to do it to help raise money.

Mr. Cummings stated he received an email from the Basque Club, who invited the Council to the Depot so they could show all the remodeling they'd done. And they would be providing hors d'oeuvres. They suggested January 20th, at 6:00pm or 7:00pm. If they'd all look at their calendars to see if they were available, please get back to him. They opted for a date between Council meetings; however, they weren't locked into that date.

Mr. Cummings provided an update on a few things from the departments:

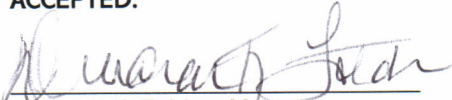
- Matsy's Restaurant would be closing on December 20th, but would continue doing the catering service. The Council approved a liquor license to be transferred over to that building, so someone else would be operating the restaurant portion.
- Edge Performance was expanding their facility on North Oregon.
- Veteran's Village on Alameda had all their structural permits issued.
- The Alameda Schoolyard Project – they were upgrading their playground equipment;
- For Police, the city had received the final report from the company who addressed red light issues, and those documents were being reviewed. Chief Cooper was working on a presentation for that.
- The city submitted the RFP for the body cameras, opening December 8th and closing December 22nd.
- There was a lateral police officer candidate who passed the background and psych test, and would have medical/hearing/drug testing this next week. Maybe a start date of January 2, 2026. Another police officer candidate was in background, about 50% complete. There was an oral board and two police officer candidates were selected and submitted for background.
- The Code Enforcement candidate was also in background. The permitting process, Accela, also used in planning, which was free, had a module for Code Enforcement, so staff was in training on that.
- For fire, the dorm privacy project, fire bay remodel into the new police sergeant area, and the locker project had been reviewed by the Building Official, and Pat Woodcock with Northwest Engineering was designing the plans. 95% of the plans were submitted for review. That was all budgeted.
- For Public Works, the NPDES permit was under negotiation, hoping for resolution.
- The water tank booster station RFQ had been reviewed, and a selection made for the design engineer.
- The Airport had two projects being closed out: the jet apron expansion, and the east fence and gate project was close. However, the gate had been malfunctioning, so that wasn't ready to close completely.
- Also, the helipad project, which had been discussed earlier that evening.
- The city attorney was still working on the Code Enforcement issue.

Councilor Mills commented on how nice Moore Park looked with the new sod.


ADJOURN

MILLS moved, HART 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 8:31 p.m.

ACCEPTED:


Deborah K. Folden, Mayor

ATTEST:


Tori Barnett, MMC, City Recorder

