

Wasco City Council

Meeting Minutes

January 20th, 2025

Call to Order

Mayor McCurdy called to order the Regular session of the Wasco City Council at 6:30 PM.

The following persons were present: Mayor Beth McCurdy; Council members Robert Anglin, Ben Altman, Ken DeGrange, and Bill Minter; City employees: Ian Melzer (City Clerk), Melissa Carlson (Assistant Clerk), Jessica Wheeler (Wasco Depot and Wasco School Events Center), and Tyler Henricksen (City Maintenance)

Visitors: Dee Jackson-Ashley (Resident), Jaime Crawford (Bell Design), Mary Bowen (Resident), Matt Bowen (Resident), Tom Barazza (Resident), Amy Phelps (Resident, MCCAC), Danee Rankin (Area Resident), Jennifer Smith (Resident, Wasco Fitness Center)

The following individuals attended remotely: Michelle Colby (MCCAC)

Flag Salute

Additions/Changes to the Agenda

- None

Consent Agenda

- Cnc. Altman moved to approve the December 16th, 2025 minutes as presented.
 - Cnc. DeGrange seconded.
 - In favor: Mayor McCurdy, Cncs Altman, Anglin, DeGrange, Minter
 - Motion passed.
- City Bills/Invoices
 - City Clerk Melzer noted the addition of the annual RVS charge and discussed increased laboratory testing costs related to recent coliformm sampling requirements, as well as weed spraying expenses and allocation considerations between funds. No changes to the bills were requested.
 - Cnc. Altman moved to accept and pay the November/December bills.
 - Cnc. Minter seconded.
 - In favor: Mayor McCurdy, Cncs Altman, Anglin, Minter
 - Cnc. DeGrange abstained.

- Motion passed.
- WSEC Bills/Invoices
 - See attached.
 - Cnc. Minter motioned to accept the bills.
 - Cnc. Altman seconded.
 - In favor: Mayor McCurdy, Cncs Altman, Anglin, DeGrange, Minter
 - Motion passed.

Visitors' Comments

- Tom Barazza expressed concerns regarding recent E. coli advisories and asked questions about how contamination could occur in the water system. City Clerk Melzer explained that recent detections were related to sampling methodology at building faucets rather than system-wide contamination, and noted that the City is installing dedicated sampling stations to improve testing accuracy.
 - Mr. Barazza also addressed the Council regarding water system issues and asked about the anticipated timeline for installation of water meters. CC Melzer explained that meter installation is expected to begin following bid approval, but that the initial phase will be a partial installation due to funding limitations. It was noted that additional funding sources are being explored and that installation is being advanced in part to meet regulatory and planning requirements.
 - Mr. Barazza commented on concerns regarding fairness in water usage, noting differences in household water consumption within the community and expressed support for moving forward with meters as soon as practicable. Mayor McCurdy noted that the installation of meters would be followed by a separate and gradual process involving rate studies and potential adjustments. No action was taken.
- Danee Rankin briefly expressed interest in reconvening the Community Cat Committee following the start of the new year. No action was taken.
- Jaime Crawford addressed the Council regarding work underway related to the housing code amendment. She noted that she is assisting with preparation of public-facing language and that she met earlier with the Council. Ms. Crawford indicated that additional updates would be provided later in the meeting and that one individual has expressed interest in participating on the advisory committee, who was also scheduled to speak on a later agenda item. No action was taken.

Public Hearing >>> Resolutions >>> Ordinances

- **2026 CEDS List Update - Mid-Columbia Economic Development District - Michelle Colby**
 - Michelle Colby and Amy Phelps, representing the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District provided an overview of the 2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) list update and reviewed the City's current project list and status. City Clerk Melzer discussed funded and unfunded projects and noted that some items remain in progress, including water meter installation.
 - Ms. Colby explained that all cities in Sherman County are reviewing their annual project lists and that a countywide meeting will be held on February 18, 2026, at the Sherman County Courthouse to finalize the consolidated list. She further noted that the five-year comprehensive review process will begin later in the spring. Council expressed comfort with the current list as presented. No action was taken.

Memorial Day/Depot/WSEC Report

- See attached.
- Jessica Wheeler reported that work is underway on signage updates for the Fitness Center and Events Center, including changes to contact information and procedures to ensure calls are answered during City Hall business hours. Mrs. Wheeler explained that City Hall will serve as the primary contact number for facility rentals, with applications submitted and processed through City Hall.
- Mrs. Wheeler also reported on planned upgrades to the WSEC access system, including implementation of a new door code system that will assign individual access codes to users to improve security, accountability, and tracking. She noted that the existing phone at the facility is outdated and incompatible with new camera and door access applications. Discussion followed about repurposing an existing City Hall phone line for WSEC use to avoid additional monthly costs, with implementation details to be coordinated later.
- Mrs. Wheeler advised that a comprehensive financial and operational report for the Events Center is in progress and anticipated for a future meeting.
- City Clerk Melzer presented bids received for the Depot improvement project. Bids ranged from approximately \$25,000 to \$47,000, with the lowest bid submitted by McKay Construction. Council discussed bid amounts, materials, labor considerations, and consistency with historic preservation standards. It was noted that all bids proposed materials consistent with existing construction and historic requirements.
- Council also discussed funding sources for the project, including a \$20,000 Preserving Oregon grant and available funds within the Depot account, as well as project timelines and grant deadlines. Mrs. Wheeler explained that grant reimbursement procedures are in place and that invoices would be submitted accordingly.
- Cnc Altman made a motion to approve the bid from McKay for decking and skirting for the Depot.
 - Cnc. DeGrange seconded.
 - In favor: Mayor McCurdy, Cncs Altman, Anglin, DeGrange, Minter
 - Motion passed.

Mayor's, Council, and City Staff Reports

Maintenance Report

- See attached.
- Maint. Tech Henricksen discussed protection of City-owned pipe materials through the purchase of UV-resistant tarps, pending future installation of a pipe rack. Bids were received and reviewed, and that project is being considered for inclusion in the next fiscal year budget due to current funding constraints. Temporary protective measures are in place to prevent material deterioration.
- New power transformer has been received, with testing and installation coordination underway. It was noted that a final controller installation will occur once system testing is complete.
- Pacific Power has approved the Depot Park restrooms and meter connection has been scheduled. Completion is anticipated within the coming weeks.
- Council discussed future considerations for lighting and safety improvements in the Depot area, including potential lighting near trees and walkways. These items were identified as possible future considerations and were not acted upon at this time.
- Maint. Tech Henricksen reported progress toward required certification testing, noting that prerequisites have been completed and that testing locations are now available year-round. No action was taken.
- City Clerk Melzer provided updates on water system sampling infrastructure, noting that several sampling stations have been installed and are operational, with additional cleaning required before full use.

- Maint. Tech Henricksen reported that winter operations readiness is in place, including snow removal planning, with equipment staged and maintenance underway on the plow truck, including installation of a transmission cooler to prevent equipment failure. Repairs are expected to be completed within the coming week.
- Council needs to discuss Preston Bartlett before spring.
- Cnc DeGrange made a motion to accept the bid from Tarzan for the stump grinding and removal.
 - Cnc. Altman seconded.
 - In favor: Mayor McCurdy, Cncs Altman, Anglin, DeGrange, Minter

City Hall Report

- Asst. City Clerk Carlson reported continued review of the FY 2025-26 budget and operations, including correction of payroll-related cost allocations within the Water, Sewer, Street, and State Tax Street funds, with no anticipated impact to service levels. Utility operations and maintenance staffing needs are being monitored with a focus on continuity planning. City Clerk Melzer will continue preparing for FY 2026-27 budget development and return to Council as appropriate.
- ACC Carlson provided an update on preliminary planning for City-owned facilities, including a covered picnic shelter at Old City Park, early review of potential improvements at the WSEC site, and evaluation of Fitness Center maintenance needs. Volunteer outreach strategies are being adjusted for community events and facility support.
- Upcoming professional development includes virtual attendance at the CIS Conference in February and attendance at the League of Oregon Cities Spring Conference in April.
- City Clerk Melzer clarified that a payroll budgeting error related to omission of state unemployment costs was identified and corrected through internal review, resulting in approx. \$5,000 in adjustments across multiple funds.

Council Reports

- Council discussed the importance of early preparation for the upcoming budget cycle and committee assignments. Council members provided updates on parks, community garden maintenance, and local development projects, including progress at the Rufus Fire District site. Ideas were shared regarding Memorial Day planning and potential commemorative flag displays.

Mayor's Report

- None

HB 5202 Community Development Funds

- None

Old/Unfinished Business

- **Projects Update**
 - Cnc Altman will give updates going forward.
- **Pipe Storage**
 - This item has been discussed.
- **Housing Advisory Committee**

- Cnc Altman went over scope of work for DLCD. Updating Comprehensive Plan and Development Code related to housing.
- **Employee Policies Update**
 - **Compensatory Time Clarification**
 -

New Business

- **Water Meter Bids - Acceptance of Bid**
 - City Clerk Melzer presented bids for replacement of approximately 130 water meters, noting that bids were revised following re-advertisement. Bids included ultrasonic, positive displacement, and electromagnetic meter options. After review with engineering support, CC Melzer recommended the ultrasonic meters based on reliability, cost, and positive feedback from comparable cities.
 - Cnc. DeGrange motions to accept the bid from Correct Equipment in the amount of \$153,733.31 for water meters.
 - Cnc Minter seconded.
 - In favor: Mayor McCurdy, Cncs Altman, Anglin, DeGrange, Minter
 - Motion passed.
- **Proposal to Raise Sewer/Water Connection Fees**
 - CC Melzer presented cost analyses for water and sewer connection installations, noting that current fees do not fully recover actual installation costs. Council was requested to review the information and provide feedback.
 - This has been tabled until the February council meeting.
- **Approval of Purchase of Sewer Treatment Plant Influent Flow Meter**
 - Cnc. Altman provided an update regarding replacement of a failed influent flow meter at the sewer treatment plant. It was noted that installation plans must be submitted to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for approval prior to installation. The estimated cost includes \$41,652.62 for equipment and \$25,000 for installation.
 - Cnc. DeGrange moves to approve payment of the \$1,500 DEQ processing fee and proceed with the influent flow meter project as presented.
 - Cnc Minter seconded.
 - In favor: Mayor McCurdy, Cncs Altman, Anglin, DeGrange, Minter
 - Motion passed.

Adjournment

Mayor McCurdy adjourned the meeting at 8:15 PM.

Minutes submitted by: Melissa Carlson, Asst. City Clerk

Signed  _____

Signed  _____

