ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, August 5, 2025

I. City Council Training Session and Informational Meeting 5:30 - 6:00 pm

Pursuant to ORS 192.360(1)(m) the City Council will receive training on Public Records, Public Meetings Law, and Government Ethics by the City Attorney. Pietila conducted the training.

II. 6:00 PM Business Meeting

Council Present: Mayor Graham, Councilors Bloom, Dahle, DuQuenne, Hansen, Kaplan, and Sherrell.
Council Absent: None
Staff Present:

Sabrina Cotta	City Manager
Johan Pietila	City Attorney
Alissa Kolodzinski	City Recorder
Marianne Berry	Finance Director
Molly Taylor	Human Resources Director
Brandon Goldman	Community Development Director

III. CALL TO ORDER

Graham called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

a. Land Acknowledgement**

Bloom read the land acknowledgement.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Sherrell led the pledge of allegiance.

V. ROLL CALL

VI. MAYOR'S/ CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENT

a. *Hiroshima Nagasaki Proclamation*

Graham presented a proclamation for Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day. Graham declared August 6 as Hiroshima Day and August 9 as Nagasaki Day, inviting citizens to the vigil at Lithia Park on August 6 at 8:00 AM.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Minutes of the July 14, 2025 – Study Session Meeting
b. Minutes of the July 15, 2025 - Business Meeting
c. Corrected minutes of the June 17, 2025 Business Meeting

Hansen moved to approve the minutes of July 14, July 15, and the corrected minutes of June 17, 2025. Bloom seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, DuQuenne, Kaplan, and Hansen, YES. Motion passed.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

a. *Requesting approval to purchase a van mounted sewer inspection camera system.*
b. *Award of Design Contract – Phase 2 & 3 of the Wastewater Treatment Plant*

Headworks Upgrade Project

c. *Requesting approval to purchase chemicals for the water and wastewater treatment plants from the lowest bidder.*
d. *2200 Ashland St. Facility Ad Hoc Committee Appointments*

Graham asked if any councilor wanted to remove any items from the consent agenda. No requests were made.

Dahle moved to approve the consent agenda as listed. Sherrell seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Dahle, Bloom, DuQuenne, Kaplan, Sherrell and Hansen. YES. Motion passed.

A question was asked about the not-to-exceed dollar amount for items to be placed on the consent agenda. Graham spoke that this was addressed as part of the procurement update process and requested that staff send the updated resolution or procedure to the council.

IX. PUBLIC FORUM –

Citizens addressed the council with various concerns. A citizen proposed a charter amendment requiring voter approval for non-utility fees to ensure public consent. Another opposed this, fearing it might delay city responses and spread misinformation. There were criticisms of the council's handling of a budget vote and the alleged misrepresentation of childcare grant fund changes. Another urged the council to prioritize current challenges over past priorities, especially given potential impacts of federal funding cuts.

X. PUBLIC HEARING

XI. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

XII. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND CONTRACTS

a. *Second Reading of ORD 3270 - Removing AMC 4.32 Alarm Systems*

Cotta explained that this was a follow-up to the first reading to remove the alarm system code as it's no longer applicable. Berry was present to answer questions.

Bloom moved to approve the second reading of Ordinance 3270, which removes Chapter 4.32 Alarm Systems from the Ashland Municipal Code. DuQuenne seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Dahle, Bloom, DuQuenne, Kaplan, Sherrell and Hansen, YES. Motion passed.

b. *Second Reading of and adoption of Findings for Ordinance 3261: "An ordinance amending the officially adopted physical and environmental constraints map removing the locally adopted Ashland modified floodplain from Hamilton Creek" (Planning Action #PA-T3-2025-000012).*

Cotta explained that this was the second reading of the ordinance amending a map, which had been approved at a previous meeting. Goldman was present for questions.

Bloom moved to approve the second Reading of Ordinance #3261 Amending the officially adopted Physical and Environmental Constraints Map removing the locally adopted Ashland Modified Floodplain from Hamilton Creek, and adopt the attached City Council findings and conclusions of law. Hansen seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Hansen, Dahle, Bloom, DuQuenne, Kaplan, and Sherrell, YES. Motion passed.

XIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

c. *Ratification of 3- Year Labor Agreements between IBEW Electrical Union Local 659, IBEW Clerical Union Local 659, LiUNA Local 737, and Resolution No 2025-22. Clarifying Certain Employment Conditions for Management, Confidential and Non-Represented Employees*

Bloom moved to divide the topic so as to consider separately the three labor union contracts and then Resolution 2025-22, in that order. DuQuenne seconded the motion.
Roll Call Vote: Hansen, DuQuenne, Kaplan, Bloom, Dahle, and Sherrell, YES. Motion passed.

Taylor provided follow-up information from the previous day's study session, including information from McGrath Human Resources Group explaining how the salary schedule adjustment was developed (presentation attached). Market data was analyzed with outliers eliminated to develop an average market rate. The salary adjustment was designed so that the midpoint represents the average market rate for a position which an employee should reach within 3-5 years once fully capable and competent in performing their duties. The study also reviewed and suggested adjustments to benefits, job descriptions, and the scope and responsibility of every position in the city. Additional information on comparable cities' non-represented salary ranges was also reviewed.

Cotta explained that wage increases had been expected at around 2% across the board, but the compensation and classification study showed some positions had fallen significantly behind market rates. The last study was conducted in 2008. This study has been important to ensure internal pay equity and to recognize that the city's positions are often different given the scale of services provided. Taylor noted that none of the positions evaluated came back as frozen or overpaid.

Council discussed and asked how to consider these agreements relative to the recently adopted budget and potential for additional employee unionization. They were advised to only consider the unions that currently exist, clarifying that any future negotiations would come before the Council. Council discussed the difference between the Cost-of-Living Adjustments (COLA) and the wage adjustment recommended by the Comp and Class study. The purpose of the Compensation and Class Study approved by the Council during the 2023/25 biennium was to address the difficulty in recruiting and retaining certain positions that had fallen behind market rate. It was also needed to provide solid market data for the City to use in negotiations moving forward. Council clarified that the wage adjustments reflected in these agreements and resolution aimed for mid-market compensation and discussed how to remain competitive as an employer of choice.

Public Comment. Several citizens spoke against increased non-represented salaries after recent fee increases and reductions in service and expressed concern with the City's spending. Other citizens spoke of the suggested wage adjustments as a necessary investment in Ashland's future and to remain a competitive employer for crucial roles.

Council spoke of the labor negotiations as undertaken in good faith and in support of the appropriate compensation for staff. Concern was expressed about Ashland residents bearing the cost of these increases.

Kaplan moved to approve the three-year labor agreement with IBEW Electric Union. Seconded by Bloom.

Roll Call Vote: Kaplan, Sherrell, Bloom, and Hansen, YES. Dahle and DuQuenne, No. Motion passed.

Council praised the collective bargaining process and the efforts of staff, stressing the significance of maintaining unity instead of division. They dismissed concerns that a "no" vote reflected mistrust in staff and rejected direct comparisons with other cities due to differing structures. Concerns were noted about the budget's reliance on fee increases and service cuts, questioning the long-term viability.

Hansen moved to approve the three-year labor agreement with IBEW Clerical/Technical Union. Seconded by Bloom.

Roll Call Vote: Bloom, Kaplan, Sherrell and Hansen. YES. Dahle, and DuQuenne No. Motion passed.

Council reiterated support for the negotiated agreement, emphasizing that it was grounded in sound financial considerations. Expressed strong backing, underscoring the critical role these workers play in managing essential city services like water, sewer, and power.

Kaplan moved to approve the three-year labor agreement with LIUNA Laborer Union. Seconded by Sherrell.

Roll Call Vote: Kaplan, Sherrell, Hansen and Bloom. YES. Dahle, and DuQuenne No. Motion passed.

Recess taken 7:37- 7:45

The reflection on previous budgeting processes highlighted the need to compete in the labor market, noting that Ashland is complex for its size by managing its own utilities and systems. The comp and class study revealed the city had fallen behind despite previous COLAs. The unfortunate timing amid national chaos was acknowledged, but it was argued that this was why experienced leadership was important, viewing this as both a short-term and long-term investment in the health, stability, and resilience of the city.

It was noted that the city's healthy financial condition with increased fund balances, reserves, and a double A3 credit rating, make the agreements within financial capability. Additional concerns were voiced over a fragile budget balanced with increased fees, service reductions, and other modifications that might have unforeseen impacts. The importance of solid leadership was highlighted and staffs' ability to navigate anticipated changes in workforce and financial contexts in the coming years. Concern was expressed on raising management salaries without first completing financial and strategic planning.

Hansen moved to approve Resolution 2025-22 and repeal and replace the resolution of the same title. Kaplan seconded.

Roll Call Vote: Kaplan, Sherrell, and Hansen, YES. Bloom, Dahle, and DuQuenne, No. *In the case of tie, the Mayor votes*. **Graham, Yes. Motion passed.**

Bloom moved to adjourn. Seconded by DuQuenne
Roll Call Vote: Dahle, Bloom, and DuQuenne, YES. Sherrell, Kaplan, and Hansen, No. Graham, No. Motion failed.

XIV. NEW BUSINESS

XV. CITY MANAGER REPORT

Cotta reported that:

- The City Recorder's office successfully shredded over 400 boxes of records that were no longer needed and cleared out a storage unit, eliminating that expense.
- The City is in the process of distributing the Affordable Child Care Grant Program funding: $50,000 to the YMCA, $30,000 to Avery Street, and $20,000 to Mountain Star.
- Cotta reminded the community to sign up for Jackson Alerts and noted an agreement was in place with the Methodist Church to run a cooling shelter if needed and thanked them for their partnership.

XVI. OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS/REPORTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISONS

Hansen reported that Parks would be bringing up the subject of East Main Park, and neighbors should pay attention to any public notice meetings happening shortly.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Bloom moved to adjourn. Seconded by DuQuenne
All Ayes. Motion passed.
The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski

Mayor Tonya Graham

City Council Business Meeting

8/5/2025

At the 8/5/2025 City Council Business Meeting Council we will be asked to approve three collective bargaining agreements and a Resolution outlining employment conditions for unrepresented employees.

Last Approval on this topic: August 16th, 2022

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager and Mayor to sign the three-year contracts, ratifying the tentative agreements reached in negotiations with the IBEW Technical/ Clerical Union and IBEW Lineman Union as well as repeal and replace Resolution 2021-18 with Resolution 2022-26.

ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS

I move to approve the three-year labor agreement with the IBEW Clerical/Technical union, the IBEW Electrical Union, and Resolution 2022-26 and repeal and replace Resolution 2021-18 of the same title and authorize the City Manager to sign the three-year agreements.

Timeline of Council Discussion / Action

- August 16, 2022, Council approved prior agreements covering the past three fiscal years FY 2022-FY2025
- Council funded a Compensation and Classification Study during the 23/25 biennial budget process.
- May 6, 2025, Executive Session: To conduct deliberation with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(d).
- May 20, 2025, Executive Session: To conduct deliberation with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(d).
- May 20, 2025, Compensation and Classification study presented to City Council
- June 17, 2025, Council tabled a decision on the Resolution clarifying certain employment conditions for non-represented employees.

Collective Bargaining Agreement Process

- Near end of current Collective Bargaining Agreement Term, City receive a letter from union requesting to open negotiations
- Union typically presents contract changes and compensation requests based on union produced comps and requests.
- Over several months City and Union meet to discuss and negotiate terms for updated agreement
- Once a tentative agreement is reached between the City and Union, Union returns to the members to hold a vote to uphold or return to the bargaining table.
- Once Union vote affirmative, Collective bargaining agreement goes to Council for consideration and vote.
- Based on union negotiations updates to the Non-represented Resolution are drafted to ensure pay equity throughout the City.

Background Information:

Year	Turnover Rate
2022	17%
2023	8%
2024	8%
2025 through July	9%

City of Medford Range-Non-Rep.	City of Ashland Range- Non-Rep
$60,000 - $168,000	$51,000- $136,000
City of Medford Executive Staff	City of Ashland Executive Staff
$148,000- $233,000	$131,000- $208,000

Summary of Average Wage Increases

- 2025- No COLA, NO Raises- wage adjustment to place employees at mid-market range for each respective position per comp and class study
- 2026- COLA 2%
- 2027- COLA 2%

	Average % increase	Average increase per hour	Average Annual $ Difference
2025	5%	$2.87	$5,960.30
2026	3%	$1.78	$3,708.39
2027	3%	$1.59	$3,297.24

IBEW Clerical

	Average % increase	Average increase per hour	Average Annual Difference
2025	4.0%	$1.31	$2,732.89
2026	2.0%	$0.70	$1,424.94
2027	2.0%	$0.72	$1,453.44

	Average % increase	Average increase per hour	Average Annual Difference
2025	3.9%	$1.21	$2,521.48
2026	2.0%	$0.65	$1,359.46
2027	2.0%	$0.67	$1,386.06

Unrepresented

	Average % increase	Average increase per hour	Average Annual Difference
2025	5.0%	$2.18	$4,533.84
2026	2.0%	$0.95	$1,981.87
2027	2.0%	$0.97	$2,021.52

By position detail can be found in the Council packet

Compensation package comparison last contract period versus current proposal

2022-2025	2025-2028
Total COLAs: 11% (CPI Increase 15.7%)	Total COLAs: 4% plus wage adjustment (Average wage adjust 4.475% for an average total of 8.475%)
HRA VEBA increase: 1%	HRA VEBA increase: 0.5%
Deferred Compensation: No change	Increase of $50 per month
Longevity Pay: 5 - 9 years: $1000 annual 10-14 years: $1250 annual 15+ years: $1500 annual	No change
	Personal days (3)* In recognition of SERJAC recommendation to allow for flexibility around various religious holidays beyond mainstream
	Christmas Eve Holiday
Step Increase: Average of 5%	Step Increase: 3% (uniform across the board)

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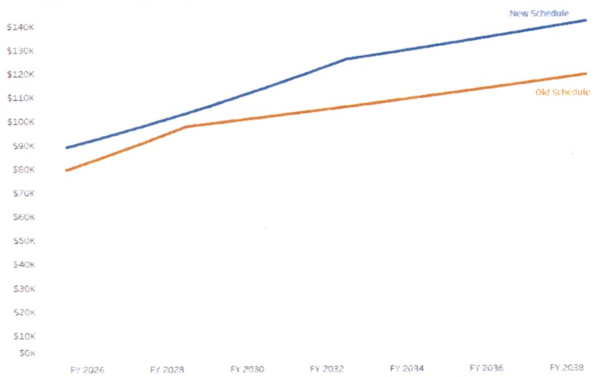
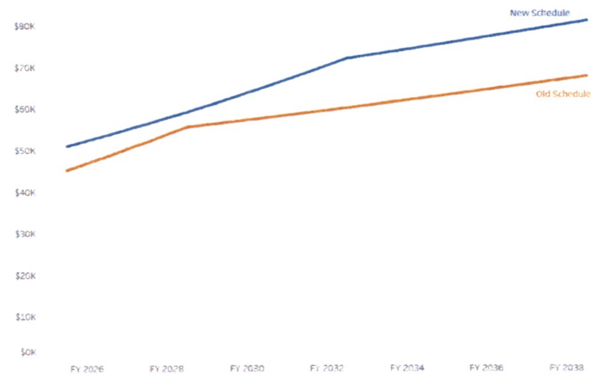
Wastewater Collections Supervisor: Annual Salary by Salary Schedule Type

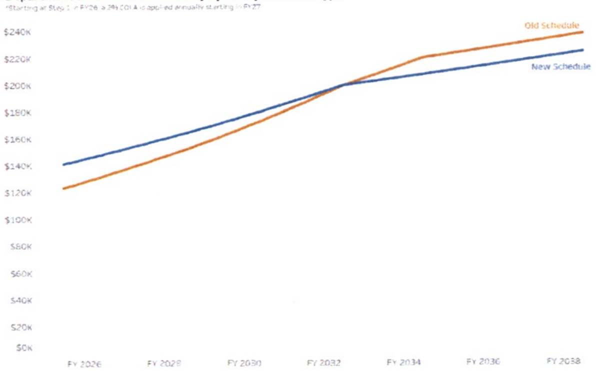
*Starting at Step 1 in FY26, a 2% COLA is applied annually starting in FY27.



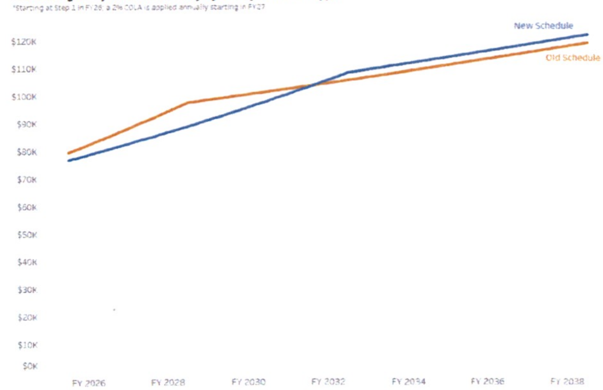
Parks Technician I: Annual Salary by Salary Schedule Type



Department Director: Annual Salary by Salary Schedule Type



Accounting Analyst: Annual Salary by Salary Schedule Type



Impact by fund- total compensation (wage and benefits)

Fund	Cost Difference from Budget (BN)	Identified Savings to Offset Impact (BN)
General Fund	$881,500	$1,001,275
Electric Fund	$448,635	$570,000
Water Fund	$185,000	$200,000
Wastewater Fund	$92,700	$100,500
Stormwater Fund	$25,700	$25,575
Street Fund	$76,200	$78,000
Telecommunication Fund	$101,700	$105,000

General Fund	FY26	FY27	Total
Eliminate Finance Manager Position*	$148,306	$159,915	
Delay hiring Park Tech I	$100,000		
Healthcare Premium Savings	$49,000	$49,000	
Shift to fully insured PLO Plan*	$455,000		
Reduction in HR Professional Services	$40,000		
			$1,001,221
Electric Fund			
Clean Fuel Credit Sale	$570,000		
			$570,000
Water Fund			
Eliminate Generator Replacement	$200,000		
			$200,000
Wastewater Fund			
Healthcare Premium Savings	$9,500		
Reduction in Professional Services	$70,000		
1% Vacancy Rate Savings	$21,000		
			$100,500
Stormwater Fund			
Healthcare Premium Savings	$1,575		
Reduction in Professional Services	$24,000		
			$25,575
Street Fund			
Delay in Vehicle Replacement	$78,000		
			$78,000
Telecommunication Fund			
Delay in Vehicle Replacement	$75,000		
Bandwidth Contract Renegotiation	$30,000		
			$105,000

* on-going savings

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Financial Stabilization

- Appropriate utility rates (on-going)
  - Forthcoming- Electric, Wastewater & Stormwater.
    - Regular rate adjustments ensure proper funding of enterprise funds
- Right size staffing (on-going)
  - Balance of technology and manual processes
    - Payroll software, utility billing software, AMI, pesticides
- Ratio of manager to front line staff (on-going)
    - Finance and Parks department are currently adjusting
- Fleet Evaluation (on-going)
    - Right size fleet/ right size replacement schedule
- Contract evaluation (limited on-going)
  - Reviewing vendor contracts to ensure necessity and discussion with vendors for price adjustments
- Building Department Fund (on-going but details and impact TBD)
- Consideration of contractual services (on-going)
- Building Consolidation and Divestment (on-going (maintenance)/ one-time (divestment))
- Single Role Program/Fire staffing levels/ Reginal Fire Study (on-going)
- Long-term financial planning
  - Essential versus non-essential/ community service level desire

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Additional Information:

[EXTERNAL SENDER]
The market data, once gathered, is analyzed by each position. With a proprietary formula, outliers are eliminated (either high or low) to develop an average market rate. The salary schedule is developed so that the midpoint, or Step 5, represents the average market rate of the position. An employee should reach the average market rate, within three to five years – once they are fully capable and competent of performing the duties of the position. Step 1 aligns with the average market minimum – representing what the market has determined to be the minimum salary for the position.

Position placement is accomplished through four different data points: The point factor system, the market, compression and internal equity. Thus, there is not one factor when placing the position within the salary ranges.

Please let me know if there is any further information I can provide.

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Additional Information:

Non-Represented Salary Range - Comparables	
City of Roseburg	$52,000 - $187,000
City of Klamath Falls	$62,000 - $222,000
City of Milwaukie	$56,000 - $207,000
CITY OF ASHLAND	**$51,000 - $208,000**
City of Lebanon	$44,000 - $202,000
City of Sherwood	$64,000 - $202,000
City of Central Point	$48,000 - $190,000
Non-Represented Salary Range – Competitor	
City of Medford	$60,000 - $233,000

Suggested Actions, Motions, and/or Options:

- I move to approve the three-year labor agreement with IBEW Electric Union.
- I move to approve the three-year labor agreement with IBEW Clerical/Technical Union.
- I move to approve the three-year labor agreement with LiUNA Laborer Union.
- I move to approve Resolution No. 2025-22 and repeal and replace the Resolution of the same title.

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QUESTIONS?

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