



# Council Study Session Meeting Agenda

ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL

STUDY SESSION AGENDA

Monday, February 2, 2026

Council Chambers, 1175 E Main Street

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Live stream via RVTV Prime at [rvtv.sou.edu](http://rvtv.sou.edu) or broadcast on Spectrum 180.

Public comment is welcome on agenda items.

To **speak electronically** during the meeting or to submit **written comments** in advance, please complete the online [Public Comment Form](#) by 10 a.m. the day of the meeting.

## 5:30 p.m. Study Session

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS
  - a. Potential Charter Updates
- III. ADJOURNMENT

*If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Alissa Kolodzinski at [recorder@ashlandoregon.gov](mailto:recorder@ashlandoregon.gov) or 541.488.5307 (TTY phone number 1.800.735.2900). Notification at least three business days before the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.*

\*\*\*Agendas and minutes for City of Ashland Council, Commission and Committee meetings may be found at the City website, [ashlandoregon.gov](http://ashlandoregon.gov),



# Council Study Session

Date: February 2, 2026

|             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| Agenda Item | Potential Charter Updates |
| Department  | City Manager's Office     |
| From        | Sabrina Cotta             |

## **TIME ESTIMATE**

20 Minutes

## **CATEGORY**

Staff Direction - provide direction to staff on the body's desired next steps.

## **SUMMARY**

Over time, changes in City operations and state law have created a need to review and modernize certain provisions of the Ashland City Charter. Staff have identified two areas where updates would improve clarity, consistency, and transparency in City governance: ordinance notice requirements and qualifications for elected officials.

Staff recommends that Council consider placing two ballot items on the upcoming spring ballot to address these issues by:

1. Updating the language in Article X, Section 2, Mode of Enactment, subsection (c) to align ordinance notice requirements with current Oregon state statute; and
2. Clarifying the language in Article III, Elective Officers, Section 2, Qualifications to more clearly define eligibility requirements for individuals seeking elected office.

Together, these proposed Charter amendments are intended to modernize outdated provisions, reduce ambiguity, and support effective and accountable local governance.

## **POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED**

- Excellence in governance and City services by ensuring Charter provisions are clear, current, and legally consistent.
- Sustainability through creativity, affordability, and right-sized service delivery by reducing administrative inefficiencies and minimizing the risk of procedural errors or legal challenges.

## **BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### 1. Ordinance Notice Requirements (Article X, Section 2(c))

Benefits of the Proposed Change:

- Aligns the City Charter with current state public meeting laws, reducing the potential for conflicts between local and state requirements.
- Improves administrative efficiency by allowing the City to rely on a single, consistent legal standard rather than maintaining outdated or duplicative notice procedures.
- Enhances transparency and public access by ensuring ordinance notice practices continue to meet state-mandated public meeting standards.
- Reduces legal risk by minimizing the chance that ordinances could be challenged due to noncompliance with evolving state law.

This amendment does not change the City's authority to adopt ordinances; it solely updates procedural language to reflect current law. Many Oregon cities have updated noticing requirements to align with state regulations and to ensure compliance, as print newspapers are not available in all areas.

Not putting this charter update on the ballot maintains the current charter language, requiring that three copies of



## Council Study Session

an ordinance be available for public inspection in the City Recorder's office at least one week before first reading, and that notice be posted at City Hall and published in a newspaper of general circulation.

### 2. Qualifications for Elected Officials (Article III, Section 2)

Benefits of the Proposed Change:

- Provides clear, objective eligibility criteria for candidates, reducing uncertainty for prospective candidates, election officials, and voters.
- Promotes informed and representative governance by ensuring elected officials have an established connection to the community they serve.
- Supports election integrity by clarifying residency verification and ongoing residency requirements.
- Helps prevent disputes or challenges related to candidate qualifications by defining expectations in the Charter rather than relying on interpretation.

Most city charters require some period of residence in the city prior to seeking elected office, with one year being the most common. Here is a sampling of other Oregon cities with residency requirements: Portland, Eugene, Beaverton, North Bend, Gladstone, Corvallis, Salem, and Newport.

Not putting this charter update on the ballot would leave the current Charter language unchanged, which generally requires elected officials to be residents and qualified voters of the City but does not define a minimum residency period or explicitly require continued residency throughout the term of office.

### **FISCAL IMPACTS**

#### 1. Ordinance Notice Requirements (Article X, Section 2(c))

As print newspapers have come and gone in our region, the City has provided notices through several organizations, including RV Times, Grants Pass Daily Courier, and Ashland/Medford Daily Tidings. The cost of noticing from 2021 to the present is about \$25,300. The city has spent about \$3,890 on ordinance notices so far this fiscal year.

#### 2. Qualifications for Elected Officials (Article III, Section 2): No fiscal impact.

2026 Spring Election Cost: No fiscal impact on the City of Ashland. When a ballot measure is included in a Primary or General Election in even-numbered years, the County Clerk budgets and pays for election costs.

### **SUGGESTED ACTIONS, AND/OR OPTIONS**

#### **Council Direction to Staff**

If Council agrees, direct staff to prepare the necessary resolutions to place the proposed City Charter amendments on the upcoming spring ballot.

Staff shall bring the draft resolutions, ballot titles, and explanatory statements to the February 17 business meeting for Council consideration and possible action. To meet the County filing deadline, Council action is required at the February 17 meeting.

### **REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS**

1. Reso 2026-XX Notice requirements
2. Reso 2026-XX Qualifications

**RESOLUTION NO. 2026-XX**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND SUBMITTING TO THE VOTERS  
AT THE MAY 19, 2026, PRIMARY ELECTION A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO  
ARTICLE III OF THE ASHLAND CITY CHARTER**

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, OREGON,  
RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** The City Council submits to the qualified voters of the City the question of approving or rejecting an amendment to the Ashland Municipal Charter to update the ordinance notice procedure to conform with Oregon Public Meeting Law.

**SECTION 2.** The City Council refers this question to the ballot of May 19, 2026.

**SECTION 3.** The City Recorder shall cause to be delivered to the Elections Officer of Jackson County, Oregon, the attached ballot measure notice, not later than 61 days prior to the election. The Election Officer is requested to give notice to the electorate of the City that the election shall be conducted by mail, pursuant to Oregon law;

**SECTION 4.** The City Recorder shall give notice of the election as provided in the laws of the State of Oregon and the Charter and ordinances of the City of Ashland.

**SECTION 5.** The ballot title for this measure is set forth in Exhibit A, attached.

**SECTION 6.** The proposed amendment to the city charter is set forth in Exhibit B, attached.

**SECTION 7.** The City Attorney is authorized to alter the language of the ballot title only for the purpose of complying with any rules, procedures, and practices of the Election Officer of Jackson County to implement the requirements of Oregon law, but shall make no changes to the Charter amendment language in Exhibit B without the consent of the Council.

This resolution is referred to the electors of the city of Ashland for approval at the Primary Election in Jackson County, set to occur on May 19, 2026.

This resolution is effective upon signing by the mayor.

ADOPTED by the City Council this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

ATTEST:

SIGNED and APPROVED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Alissa Kolodzinski, City Recorder

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tonya Graham, Mayor

Reviewed as to form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Johan Pietila, City Attorney

**EXHIBIT A**  
**(Ballot Title)**

Amending Ashland City Charter Ordinance Notice Requirements

Shall the Charter be amended to update ordinance notice procedure to conform with Oregon Public Meeting law?

A “Yes” vote amends the Ashland City Charter to update the notice requirements for the enactment of city ordinances. The amendment revises Article X, Ordinances, Section 2, Mode of Enactment, subsection (c), to provide that notice of ordinances shall be given as required by Oregon law, including Oregon Revised Statutes 192.640. ORS 192.640 governs public notice requirements for meetings at which ordinances are considered or adopted. The amendment does not change the City’s authority to adopt ordinances but aligns the Charter’s notice provisions with current state law.

“No” vote retains existing Charter provisions requiring that three copies of an ordinance be available for public inspection in the City Recorder’s office at least one week before first reading, and that notice be posted at City Hall and published in a newspaper of general circulation.

**(Explanatory Statement)**

A “Yes” vote amends the Ashland City Charter to update the notice requirements for adopting City ordinances to align with current Oregon public meeting law. The amendment revises Article X, Ordinances, Section 2(c), to require that notice of ordinances be given as required by Oregon law, including Oregon Revised Statutes 192.640, which governs public notice for meetings where ordinances are considered or adopted. This change does not alter the City’s authority to enact ordinances.

A “No” vote retains the existing City Charter notice requirements, which require that three copies of an ordinance be available for public inspection in the City Recorder’s office at least one week before the first reading, and that notice be posted at City Hall and published in a newspaper of general circulation.

## EXHIBIT B

The following amendments are proposed to the Ashland City Charter. Only these articles and sections as delineated herein are amended by this Resolution. Except for otherwise proposed amendments to the Charter by separate resolution and Ballot Title, all other language in the Charter shall be unchanged.

Annotated to show deletions and additions to the Ashland Municipal Code sections being modified. Deletions are **~~bold lined through~~**, and additions are **bold underlined**.

### ARTICLE X Ordinance

#### Section 2. Mode of Enactment.

(a) Except as the second and third paragraphs of this Section provide to the contrary, every ordinance of the Council shall, before being put upon its final passage, be read first fully and distinctly in open Council meeting and then on a different date by title only, unless a Council member or the public requests that it be read in full for a second time, and it shall then be read fully and distinctly. (b) Provided all conditions set forth in Paragraph (C) have been met, an ordinance may be enacted at a single meeting of the Council by unanimous vote of all Council members present upon being read first in full and then by title. (c) The first reading may be by title alone if no Council member present at the meeting, or the public, requests to have the ordinance read in full, and if a copy of the ordinance is provided for each Council member and ~~three (3) copies are provided for public inspection in the office of the City Recorder not later than one (1) week before the first reading of the ordinance and if notice of their availability is given forthwith upon the filing, by written notice posted at the City Hall and by advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation and published in the City. To provide that notice of ordinances shall be given as required by Oregon law, including Oregon Revised Statutes 192.640. ORS 192640 governs public notice requirement for meetings at which ordinances are considered or adopted.~~ An ordinance enacted after being read by title alone may have no legal effect if it differs substantially from its terms as it was thus filed prior to such reading, unless each section incorporating such a difference is read fully and distinctly in open Council meeting as finally amended prior to being approved by the Council. (d) Upon the final vote on an ordinance, the ayes and nays of the members shall be taken and entered into the record of the proceedings. (e) Upon the enactment of an ordinance, the Recorder shall sign it with the date of its passage and his/her name and the title of his/her office, except as provided in Article [IV](#).

**RESOLUTION NO. 2026-XX**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND SUBMITTING TO THE VOTERS  
AT THE MAY 19, 2026, PRIMARY ELECTION A PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO  
ARTICLE III OF THE ASHLAND CITY CHARTER**

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHLAND, OREGON,  
RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** The City Council submits to the qualified voters of the City the question of approving or rejecting an amendment to the Ashland Municipal Charter to require Ashland elected officials to be city residents for 12 months before election and while in office.

**SECTION 2.** The City Council refers this question to the ballot of May 19, 2026.

**SECTION 3.** The City Recorder shall cause to be delivered to the Elections Officer of Jackson County, Oregon, the attached ballot measure notice, not later than 61 days prior to the election. The Election Officer is requested to give notice to the electorate of the City that the election shall be conducted by mail, pursuant to Oregon law;

**SECTION 4.** The City Recorder shall give notice of the election as provided in the laws of the State of Oregon and the Charter and ordinances of the City of Ashland.

**SECTION 5.** The ballot title for this measure is set forth in Exhibit A, attached.

**SECTION 6.** The proposed amendment to the city charter is set forth in Exhibit B, attached.

**SECTION 7.** The City Attorney is authorized to alter the language of the ballot title only for the purpose of complying with any rules, procedures, and practices of the Election Officer of Jackson County to implement the requirements of Oregon law, but shall make no changes to the Charter amendment language in Exhibit B without the consent of the Council.

This resolution is referred to the electors of the city of Ashland for approval at the Primary Election in Jackson County, set to occur on May 19, 2026.

This resolution is effective upon signing by the mayor.

ADOPTED by the City Council this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

ATTEST:

SIGNED and APPROVED this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Alissa Kolodzinski, City Recorder

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tonya Graham, Mayor

Reviewed as to form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Johan Pietila, City Attorney

**EXHIBIT A**  
**(Ballot Title)**

Amending Ashland City Charter to update qualifications for elected Officials

Shall the Charter require Ashland elected officials to be city residents for 12 months before election and while in office?

A "Yes" vote for this measure amends the City Charter to state Article III Elected Officers, Section 2. qualifications of an elected official shall be a resident who has lived in Ashland for at least 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the election and is registered to vote in Ashland, with residency verified by Jackson County. An elected official must remain a resident of Ashland for the duration of their term in office.

A "No" vote means the existing language in the City Charter remains stating that the qualifications of elected officials shall be residents and qualified voters in the City.

**(Explanatory Statement)**

A “Yes” vote amends the Ashland City Charter to require that candidates for elected City office have lived within the City of Ashland for at least 12 consecutive months immediately before the election, be registered to vote in Ashland, and have their residency verified by Jackson County. The amendment also requires elected officials to remain residents of Ashland for the entire duration of their term in office.

A “No” vote retains the current City Charter language, which requires elected officials to be residents and qualified voters of the City of Ashland, without specifying a minimum length of residency prior to election or requiring continued residency for the full term of office.

## EXHIBIT B

The following amendments are proposed to the Ashland City Charter. Only these articles and sections as delineated herein are amended by this Resolution. Except for otherwise proposed amendments to the Charter by separate resolution and Ballot Title , all other language in the Charter shall be unchanged.

Annotated to show deletions and additions to the Ashland Municipal Code sections being modified. Deletions are ~~**bold lined through**~~, and additions are **bold underlined**.

### ARTICLE III Elective Officers

#### Section 2. Qualifications.

All elective officers except the Municipal Judge shall be ~~residents and qualified voters in the City~~ **a resident who has lived in Ashland for at least 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the election and is registered to vote in Ashland, with residency verified by Jackson County. An elected official must remain a resident of Ashland for the duration of their term in office.**