

ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL STUDY SESSION MINUTES
Wednesday, January 14, 2026

Mayor Graham called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Council Present: Mayor Graham, Councilors Dahle, DuQuenne, Kaplan, and Sherrell

Council Absent: Councilors Bloom and Hansen

Staff Present:

Sabrina Cotta	City Manager
Alissa Kolodzinski	City Recorder
Scott Fleury	Public Works Director
Jordan Rooklyn	Deputy City Manager

I. Call to Order

II. Reports and Presentations

a. Facility Planning Study Overview

Cotta introduced item as a topic that was not discussed at the retreat due to lack of time. The request of council is to provide direction on next steps. Fleury provided a presentation (included in the agenda packet).

Fleury presented the Facility Planning Study, consisting of a facility condition assessment and a space needs optimization planning study prepared by ORW Architecture with McKinstry as a subcontractor. The last facility plan for the City of Ashland was completed in 2008 and since then, there have been significant changes including structural, operational, staffing, and facility changes. Funds were appropriated in the last budget biennium to undertake a facility space needs planning study and a full facility condition assessment.

Fleury explained that the facility condition assessment evaluated all city facilities and equipment, itemizing capital maintenance costs for a 30-year window. McKinstry assigned each facility a condition rating on a scale of 1-5 (1 being good, 5 being very poor) and provided maintenance cost projections for 5 and 10-year periods. This data is being incorporated into the city's asset management system called Cartograph, which helps staff track maintenance schedules through QR codes and automated reminders.

The assessment revealed that many city buildings have fire life safety issues, ADA compliance problems, and general maintenance needs. In response to questioning, Fleury clarified that the current cost estimates are based on in-kind replacement of equipment and don't yet account for the city's policy to shift from natural gas to electric systems. He noted that recommendations have been included for examining electrical systems in anticipation of this shift.

The facility space needs planning study considered how city operations could be reorganized for greater efficiency. Fleury presented two viable options developed by the consultants:

1. **Briscoe School Option:** Convert Briscoe School into a centralized campus for administrative functions, requiring significant structural modifications and a multi-level parking structure. This option would still require maintaining the service center on North Mountain for electric, water, and some operational staff.
2. **Civic Center Campus Option** (90 North Mountain): Create a consolidated civic complex at the current service center location by modifying existing buildings and constructing some new ones. This was the staff's recommended option as it would allow most city staff to be in one location and offer the greatest efficiency.

Both options would involve multiple phases over 5–10 years and will require significant investment. Each option included relocating the B Street Yard operations to the Hardisty property, which would open opportunities to either sell the B Street property or redevelop it for another city function.

Cotta emphasized that the city has reached a critical point with its facilities, noting that some buildings have serious safety issues affecting staff, including a staff member experiencing seizures due to poor electrical wiring in City Hall. Regardless of which direction Council chooses, significant funding will be required, likely through a bond measure. Fleury highlighted the deteriorating condition of numerous city buildings stemming from outdated infrastructure. The necessity for action was underscored, emphasizing that current facilities are not sustainable in their present state without considerable improvements. The Council was urged to prioritize and provide a vision for the city's future, regarding either maintaining the status quo or consolidating operations.

Council members expressed concerns about making decisions without more detailed cost estimates and questioned the economic development assumptions about divesting downtown city buildings. Caution was expressed about removing civic anchors from downtown that bring activity. These perspectives emphasized the trade-off between consolidating city operations for greater efficiency and maintaining downtown vibrancy to meet economic needs. They highlighted the necessity for a balanced approach informed by comprehensive data, community engagement, and strategic analysis.

Rooklyn addressed economic development considerations, noting that according to the city's economic opportunity analysis, commercial downtown square footage is in high demand and low supply. City-owned buildings in prime downtown locations could potentially better serve the community if they were available for retail or high-access office space.

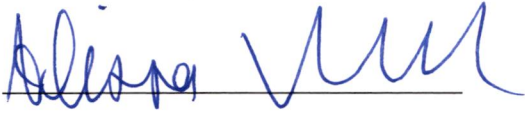
The Council discussed the need for:

- Better understanding of the cost of the status quo vs. consolidation options
- Appraised values of city properties that might be divested
- Community engagement to determine priorities and values
- Creating a dedicated facilities fund with proceeds from property sales
- Balancing operational efficiency with downtown vibrancy

No formal action was taken, but Cotta requested direction from Council by the next budget season (July–August) and will work with Finance to create a facilities fund with appropriate financial policies and develop a project page to share information with the public.

III. **Adjournment of Study Session.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alissa', followed by several stylized, overlapping loops.

City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tonya', followed by a long, horizontal, wavy line.

Mayor Tonya Graham