

**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, May 19, 2026**

I. EXECUTIVE SESSION 5:00 p.m.

a. To consult with counsel concerning the legal rights and duties of a public body with regard to current litigation or litigation likely to be filed pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2)(h).

Council Present: Councilors Sherrell, DuQuenne, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, and Hansen. Staff Present: Johan Pietila, Carmel Zahran, Sabrina Cotta, and Jordan Rooklyn. Media present. Damian Mann from Ashland.news

II. BUSINESS MEETING

Council Present: Mayor Graham (via Zoom), and Councilors Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, DuQuenne, and Hansen.

Staff Present:

Sabrina Cotta	City Manager
Jordan Rooklyn	Deputy City Manager
Johan Pietila	City Attorney
Bryn Morrison	Interim Finance Director
Brandon Goldman	Community Development Director

Chair Dahle called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

a. Land Acknowledgement**

DuQuenne read the land acknowledgement.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Sherrell led the pledge of allegiance.

IV. ROLL CALL

V. MAYOR'S/ CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENT

a. Proclamation in Honor of Building Safety Month

Dahle read the proclamation into the record.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Minutes of the May 4, 2026 – Study Session Meeting

b. Minutes of the May 5, 2026 – Business Meeting

Bloom moved to approve the minutes. Kaplan seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, DuQuenne, and Hansen –YES. Motion passed.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

a. *Pre-Approval For Grant Acceptance of an AIG and AIP Grant Offer from the Federal Aviation Administration*

b. *Beach Creek Property Transfer to Trusted Homes*

Hansen moved to approve the consent agenda. Sherrell seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, DuQuenne, and Hansen –YES. Motion passed.

VIII. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

IX. PUBLIC FORUM

Concerns highlighted procedural issues in the City's May 2025 budgeting session, focusing on the need for motions and votes as per the charter. The community stressed the economic importance of Ashland Community Hospital and backed efforts to find a new owner. Criticism of inadequate school safety led to an apology for prior remarks. Frustration was expressed over the limited public comment time at a study session. There was a proposal to leverage the crises at Ashland Community Hospital and Southern Oregon University as opportunities to create a health sciences program and potentially establish a second medical school at SOU.

X. PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing and First Reading – Ordinance Language Change (Set #3)

Pietila introduced the set of ordinances, noting they emerged from a staff code modernization working group aimed at streamlining, updating, and correcting issues in the municipal code.

a. 3299 An Ordinance Amending AMC 13.04 Construction, Repair and Alteration of Sidewalks, Section 13.04.020 Duty to Repair and Clear Sidewalks

Pietila explained the amendment clarifies that landowners are responsible for adjacent sidewalk maintenance even when a public right-of-way utility easement lies between the sidewalk and the property. Councilors discussed the concern that no clear and objective standards for sidewalk repair are referenced in the code and suggested adding a hyperlink on the City's AMC webpage to the applicable standards rather than incorporating them directly into the ordinance, allowing the standards to be updated without amending the code. Pietila confirmed this was feasible.

Public Hearing Open

No speakers

Public Hearing Closed

Bloom moved to approve the first reading of the following ordinance, and schedule second reading during the June 2, 2026, Council meeting: 3299 An Ordinance Amending AMC 13.04 Construction, Repair and Alteration of Sidewalks, Section 13.04.020 Duty to Repair and Clear Sidewalks. Sherrell seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, DuQuenne, and Hansen –YES. Motion passed.

b. 3300 An Ordinance Amending AMC Section 14.04.060 Water Connects Outside the City Limits

Pietila explained that this amendment shifts authorization for water connections outside city limits (but within the Urban Growth Boundary) from the Council to the Public Works Director, streamlining operational decisions. Council discussion clarified that the ordinance provision applies specifically to properties within 100 feet of the water line in cases where a well or water system has failed, rather than large-scale developments. It was noted that this application is limited to properties that are expected

to eventually be annexed, with the assurance that property owners will remain financially responsible for the connection costs.

Public Hearing Open

No speakers

Public Hearing Closed

Bloom moved to approve first reading of Ordinance 3300 An Ordinance Amending AMC Section 14.04.060 Water Connects Outside the City Limits, and schedule second reading at the June 2, 2026, Council meeting. Kaplan seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, DuQuenne, and Hansen –YES. Motion passed.

- c. *3301 An Ordinance Amending AMC 14.08 Sewer System – Rates, Section 14.08.030 Connection Outside City, Inside Urban Growth Boundary And Section 14.08.031 Connection Outside Urban Growth Boundary*

Pietila explained this is the sewer equivalent of Ordinance 3300, shifting connection authorization from the Council to the Public Works Director under the same rationale.

Public Hearing Open

No speakers

Public Hearing Closed

Hansen moved to approve first reading of 3301 An Ordinance Amending AMC 14.08 Sewer System – Rates, Section 14.08.030 Connection Outside City, Inside Urban Growth Boundary and Section 14.08.031 Connection Outside Urban Growth Boundary. Bloom seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, DuQuenne, and Hansen –YES. Motion passed.

- d. *3302 An Ordinance Relating to Wastewater Regulations Amending AMC 14.09 to Include Section 14.09.030 & 14.09.040*

Pietila explained that the City currently lacks a provision prohibiting harmful wastewater discharges. This ordinance regulates fat, oil, and grease (FOG) discharges into the collection system, which have caused blockages and increased maintenance costs. Councilors discussed the implementation timeline, related cost burden to restaurants, grease traps as an industry-standard and legal requirement with an existing central dump station on the Plaza and private pickup services available to businesses.

Public Hearing Open

No speakers

Public Hearing Closed

Kaplan moved to approve first reading and schedule second reading during the June 2, 2026, Council meeting for Ordinance 3302 An Ordinance Relating to Wastewater Regulations Amending AMC 14.09 to Include Section 14.09.030 & 14.09.040. DuQuenne seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, DuQuenne, and Hansen –YES. Motion passed.

- e. *3303 An Ordinance Amending AMC 15.04 Buildings and Construction, Section 15.04.210 Demolition or Relocation of Structure*

Pietila explained that the amendment streamlines regulations by updating definitions and shifting decision-making to the Community Development Director, with appeals handled by a hearings officer. It modernizes notice procedures and adds redevelopment flexibility, allowing dwellings of any size. Goldman highlighted key changes: eliminating an old demolition review committee in favor of the hearings officer, transferring public notice duties from applicants to the City, and removing the need to advertise structures for relocation, saving applicant time. He clarified the shift from "economic feasibility" to "economic viability" requires a professional to evaluate rehab costs, aligning with policy intent. Councilors discussed whether it was the City's role to prohibit an owner from demolishing their own property, but noted the amendment represented a procedural improvement over existing code.

Public Hearing Open

No speakers

Public Hearing Closed

Kaplan moved to approve first reading and schedule second reading during the June 2, 2026, Council meeting for Ordinance 3303 An Ordinance Amending AMC 15.04 Buildings and Construction, Section 15.04.210 Demolition or Relocation of Structure. Sherrell seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Dahle, Kaplan, and Hansen –YES. Bloom and DuQuenne – No. Motion passed.

f. 3304 An Ordinance Amending AMC 15.28 Fire Prevention Code

Pietila described this as a housekeeping ordinance that updates the fire prevention code reference to the most current edition, makes grammatical corrections, and correctly names the Fire and Life Safety Division. Councilors asked whether the ordinance could reference the "current" fire code rather than a specific edition year and Pietila noted the Fire Marshal had recommended the specific edition reference, which includes language covering future amendments.

Public Hearing Open

No speakers

Public Hearing Closed

Hansen moved to approve first reading of the following ordinance and schedule a second reading during the June 2, 2026 Council meeting for Ordinance 3304 An Ordinance Amending AMC 15.28 Fire Prevention Code. Sherrell seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Dahle, Kaplan, Bloom, DuQuenne, and Hansen –YES. Motion passed.

XI. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND CONTRACTS

a. Resolution Adopting Miscellaneous Fees for Fiscal Year 2027

Morrison presented the annual resolution adopting miscellaneous fees and charges effective July 1, 2026. It was noted that most fees were adjusted using the CPI-U West Region index at 3.1%, with Public Works and Electric using the Engineering News Record Construction Industry Index at 2.7%, and airport fees using the All-Urban Consumers CPI at 2.73% per lease contract requirements. There were no new fees; ambulance fees (set by Jackson County) and an infrequently used municipal court default judgment fee were removed.

Councilors asked whether a written cost allocation methodology document existed, when a cost-of-service study had last been conducted across departments, and expressed concern about escalating

fees. Councilors also asked about the relationship between fee levels and participation/commerce activity and discussed the difference between cost allocation methodology (the internal framework for how costs are distributed across departments) and cost recovery policy (how much of a service's cost should be charged to users). It was noted that cost allocation activity visible in OpenGov showed significant year-over-year variation in some funds that a flat 3.1% fee increase would not address. It was acknowledged that while an internal cost allocation plan exists for enterprise funds, a comprehensive methodology documenting cost recovery assumption for all miscellaneous fees does not currently exist and developing one would require significant staff time across departments.

A suggestion was made to separate the question of procedure for cost allocations from the broader policy conversation about cost recovery levels and proposed moving forward with the existing fee schedule while establishing a process for deeper review. Staff confirmed that if the resolution were not passed, fees from the prior resolution would remain in effect, resulting in minimal short-term disruption.

After further conversation and amendment, the following motion was adopted:

Hansen moved to approve Resolution 2026-07 adopting the miscellaneous fees and charges schedule for Fiscal Year 2027 and repealing prior fee Resolution 2025-26, as amended to exclude building and community development/planning fees. Kaplan seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Kaplan, Hansen, and Graham – YES. Bloom, Dahle, and DuQuenne – NO.

Motion passed.

b. Personal Services Contract Renewal for Ashland Chamber of Commerce (DBA Travel Ashland) Destination Marketing Activities

Rooklyn introduced the item, noting that Travel Ashland had been contracted for destination marketing on a one-year basis at the start of the biennium following significant contract restructuring, and was returning to seek a one-year renewal. Travel Ashland's partnership and data-sharing over the past year was commended.

Katherine Cato, Executive Director of Travel Ashland, presented the year's performance highlights, including:

- 9% increase in visitor days, surpassing 1.3 million, with visitor spending rising 22% to over \$91.7 million.
- TLT tax collections matched or surpassed pre-pandemic levels; July–December 2025 exceeded 2019 figures.
- Main visitor hubs include Portland, Sacramento, and Eugene, while Los Angeles leads Use of TravelAshland.com.
- Younger visitors on the rise, with 29% aged 25–44.
- Hotel occupancy paced year over year; vacation rentals increased by 4%.
- Over 9 million Google ad views and 500,000 impressions on social media.
- Ashland is among 22 Oregon locales verified by Wheel the World for accessibility.
- Initiation of the Amplify Ashland program, aiding four local businesses in marketing enhancement.

Rooklyn noted that TLT tax collections had grown 12% in the same period against 9% visitor day growth, suggesting approximately 5–7 percentage points of the spending increase were inflation-driven. Councilors asked whether a conference-focused grant program should be considered for the next biennium and sought suggestions for improvement. Travel Ashland operates with one of the smallest destination marketing budgets in Oregon and urged continued and increased investment in tourism infrastructure and marketing.

Bloom moved to renew the personal services contract with the Ashland Chamber of Commerce for the provision of destination marketing services for an additional year. Kaplan seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, DuQuenne, and Hansen –YES. Motion passed.

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Review Of Pedestrian/Bicyclist Wayfinding Signage Design Costs

Rooklyn presented a cost breakdown for wayfinding signage as requested by the Council. The options for kiosks included a custom Corten steel kiosk (\$12,920/unit installed with lighting), off-the-shelf steel kiosk (\$10,413/unit without installation/lighting), and a lower-cost wood option. Rooklyn focused on kiosk designs, with pedestrian signs dependent on site conditions. For Phase 1, they anticipate 16–20 pedestrian signs for routes from downtown to the Railroad District, watershed trailheads, and the University District. Approximately 30 sign toppers are planned, with potential involvement from Ashland High School's metal fabric class for cost-effective production. Discussions also touched on gateway signage for the south end of Ashland, near Exit 14. Feedback indicated interest in larger pieces, and staff will further explore an "Ashland, Oregon" gateway sign.

Bloom moved to direct staff to move forward with the custom Corten kiosk design and the "A" option for the pedestrian signs. Hansen seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, DuQuenne, and Hansen –YES. Motion passed.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

XIV. CITY MANAGER REPORT –

a. Look Ahead

The camping ordinance and houseless services discussion was rescheduled to June 1; the south side development conversation was moved to July 20.

b. May City Manager Report

- Staff is conducting an internal review of potential community impacts from the SOU situation on the community and city services; findings will be presented at the joint meeting on June 3.
- Ambulance Service Area: A deep-dive analysis will be presented in August/September.
- Insurance pre-renewal efforts are underway to prevent future cost increases.
- The City has signed on to a three-year study with ECO Northwest (shared with a group of cities and school districts) to explore reducing pension liability, costing \$2,400.
- UKG payroll/HR software implementation is progressing; utility billing software evaluation is near completion.

- Strategic Plan Engagement is underway. As of May 4, over 1,000 survey responses had been received, with outreach continuing at markets and community events.
- Water Treatment Plant: An owner's representative/project manager has been selected. The construction contract is expected before Council in October/November.
- East Main Park is out for rebid with construction expected this summer; Hunter Tennis Courts bid closes May 26; fountain work is progressing; the driving range redesign is underway.

The pension obligation bond study is designed for the City to act when market conditions are favorable, ensuring preparedness without delay. The impact of increasing fuel costs, which have doubled from budgeted figures, was inquired about. It was stated that a detailed financial analysis of this impact, especially on the general fund, would be provided at the June 3 joint meeting.

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

Bloom reported that the early learning grant application window is open. He urged anyone aware of childcare providers to direct them to the application.

Sherrell announced that it is Historic Preservation Week, with the following upcoming events:

- May 20: Tombstone Tales at the Ashland Cemetery, 2:00–5:00 PM
- May 21: Historic Preservation Award Ceremony at Pioneer Hall
- May 22: Self-guided tour of Mountain View Cemetery.

He also reminded the community that fire season has been declared, urging residents to remove shrubs near structures and contact the Ashland Forestry Division for defensible space guidance.

Graham announced that the Ashland School District is moving forward with its Transformation Steering Committee. Kaplan will serve as a member of that committee in his capacity as the Council's long-standing school district liaison, and Mayor Graham will serve as an honorary community adviser.

Dahle noted that Airport Day is scheduled for June 6 and encouraged families to attend.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Bloom moved to adjourn. Seconded by DuQuenne

All Ayes. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski

Mayor Tonya Graham



SPEAKER REQUEST FORM

Submit this form to the meeting Secretary prior to the discussion item.

- 1) You will be called forward when it is your turn to speak
- 2) State your name and speak clearly into the microphone
- 3) Limit your comments to the time allotted
- 4) Provide any written materials to the meeting Secretary
- 5) Speakers are solely responsible for the content of their statement

Date: 5/19/26

Name: (Please Print)
PAUL MOZINA

Ashland Resident:
 YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):
2025-2027 Biennial Budget

Please respect the order of proceedings and strictly follow the directions of the presiding officer. Behavior or actions which are loud or disruptive are disrespectful and offenders will be requested to leave.

Disclaimer: By submitting this request to address the Public Body, I agree that I will refrain from the use of any obscene, vulgar, or profane language. I understand that if I do not follow procedure my speaking time may be terminated, and I may be requested to sit down or leave the building.



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Date: 5/19/2026

Name: (Please Print) Suzanne Haveman

Ashland Resident: YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number: NO

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item): Ashland Comm. Hospital

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Date:
5/19/2026

Name: (Please Print)
Alex Sol

Ashland Resident:
 YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):
Public speaking

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Date: 5/19

Name: (Please Print) Debbie Nissewander

Ashland Resident:
 YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:
1

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):
Rant

Please respect the order of proceedings and strictly follow the directions of the presiding officer. Behavior or actions which are loud or disruptive are disrespectful and offenders will be requested to leave.

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Date: 5/19/26

Name: (Please Print)

John Maurer

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Health Care

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Date:

5/19/26

Name: (Please Print)

Lauri Hoagland

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Ashland Community Hospital

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