

**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, April 21, 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).
- b. To conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions.

Council Present: Mayor Graham and Councilors Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, and Hansen.

Staff Present: Johan Pietila, Scott Fleury, Bryn Morrison, Brandon Goldman, Sabrina Cotta, and Jordan Rooklyn.

Media present. Emma Maple with the Grants Pass Daily Courier.

II. Business Meeting

Council Present: Mayor Graham and Councilors Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, and Hansen.

Council Absent: Councilor DuQuenne

Staff Present:

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Sabrina Cotta | City Manager |
| Jordan Rooklyn | Deputy City Manager |
| Linda Reid | Housing Program Manager |
| Scott Fleury | Public Works Director |
| Bryn Morrison | Interim Finance Director |
| Tighe O'Meara | Police Chief |

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

- a. Land Acknowledgement**

Bloom read the land acknowledgement.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Hansen led the pledge of allegiance.

IV. ROLL CALL

V. MAYOR'S/ CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENT

- a. A Proclamation in Honor of Farmworkers

Graham read the proclamation into the record.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Minutes of the April 6, 2026 – Study Session Meeting
- b. Minutes of the April 7, 2026 – Business Meeting
- c. Minutes of the March 27, 2026 Council Called Special Meeting
- d. Minutes of the April 13, 2026 Council Called Special Meeting

Dahle moved to approve the minutes of April 6, April 7, March 27, and April 13, 2026. Kaplan seconded the motion.

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

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

VIII. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Graham presented awards to the local winners of the Oregon Mayor's Association "If I Were Mayor" essay contest. Award recipients were Olivia Lanning (Willow Wind, 6th grade), Hallie Schwedes (AMS, 7th grade), Zoe Nicholson (Willow Wind, 8th grade), and Cohen Nunes (Willow Wind, overall middle school winner). Graham noted the importance of engaging young people in local civic life.

IX. PUBLIC FORUM

Four community members addressed the Council during the public forum. One speaker conveyed concern about plans to discontinue inpatient care and the birthing center at the hospital, fearing other services might also diminish, and urged the Council to act to preserve the hospital's full-service capabilities. Another speaker highlighted procedural issues regarding the adoption of the 2025-2027 biennial budget, stating budget amendments were made illegally during a study session, contrary to Oregon laws and relevant city charters. A third community member stressed the need for Ashland to modernize its city operations, suggesting that this be prioritized alongside service cuts and revenue increases and advised the Council against increasing building permit fees without first reducing costs elsewhere. The fourth speaker brought attention to significant food insecurity among Ashland residents and urged the Council to consider the potential pressures from global supply chains.

X. PUBLIC HEARING

a. Public Hearing on 2026–2027 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Award and Action Plan

Reid presented the results of the City's request for proposals for CDBG funding. One application was received from the Maslow Project, requesting \$18,000 to continue their work with homeless and at-risk families in the Ashland School District. Both city staff and the Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee recommended a full award. The final allocation from HUD for program year 2026 was \$151,329 – a reduction from prior years – leaving \$22,699 available within the public service fund.

Council discussion centered on whether to award Maslow the full available public service amount of \$22,699 rather than the \$18,000 requested, given current economic pressures on families.

Public Hearing Open

No speakers

Public Hearing Closed

Bloom moved to award the competitively available 2026 Community Development Block Grant funds as follows: \$22,699 to the Maslow Project public service project. Kaplan seconded the motion.

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

b. Resolution Approving a Supplemental Budget

Cotta explained that cost overruns during renovation work on Pioneer Hall and the Community Center necessitated a transfer of \$200,000 from the General Fund contingency to the Capital Improvement Fund. Fleury explained that unexpected issues were discovered during construction – including additional asbestos mitigation, electrical upgrades, foundation repairs due to poor soils, and other unforeseen conditions.

Council discussion noted the importance of dedicated capital reserves separate from the operating general fund to better plan for and absorb these kinds of costs. Morrison clarified that the general fund contingency balance stood at just over \$2.5 million for the biennium, with no prior draws, making this the first expenditure from that reserve.

Public Hearing Open

No speakers

Public Hearing Closed

Bloom moved approval of Resolution 2026-03 approving a supplemental budget and budget appropriation adjustments for the 2025-2027 biennial budget period beginning July 1, 2025. Kaplan seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Sherrell, Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, and Hansen -Yes. Motion passed.

XI. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND CONTRACTS

a. Approval of a Construction Contract with Insituform Technologies, for the Wastewater Collection Rehabilitation-CIPP Construction Project (PW 2024-28)

Fleury presented the staff recommendation to award a construction contract to Insituform Technologies for Cured-In-Place Pipe (CIPP) lining of approximately 9,524 linear feet of wastewater collection and storm drainpipe. The project was formally bid through Oregon procurement rules, with two responsive bids received and Insituform submitting the lowest responsive bid. Fleury explained the CIPP process and a video of the process was shown. Fleury noted that the contract amount exceeds what was originally budgeted in the Capital Improvement Plan, but sufficient funds exist within the infrastructure line and from another capital project not expected to proceed within the current biennium. The project is expected to resolve approximately 70 percent of the City's known sewer issues, reduce inflow and infiltration to the wastewater treatment plant, and avoid the significant costs and disruption associated with open-trench replacement.

Council discussion included noting the cost savings over open-trench alternatives (estimated at 3 to 4 orders of magnitude), the expected lifespan of the liner (50-75 additional years), the applicability of the technology to concrete and clay pipes, warranty provisions, on-site inspection protocols, and a quality assurance process ensuring laterals are properly restored after lining. Acting as Contracting Review Board, the Council voted to approve the contract:

Hansen moved to approve the construction contract with Insituform Technologies for the wastewater collection rehabilitation CIPP project for a contract amount not to exceed \$897,905. Dahle seconded the motion.

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

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Social Service Grant Awards

Cotta introduced the item, noting that social service grant funds are dedicated annually from the General Fund to support social service programs in the community. Reid confirmed that a Request for Proposals was issued, ten applications were received, and the Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee (HHSAC) reviewed all applications and heard presentations from applicants in February. She noted a typo in the Council communication – the available amount was \$99,000 for the biennium, not \$134,000. The HHSAC's recommended allocations were consistent with the correct amount. There were no questions for staff.

Public Comment Open

No speakers

Public Comment Closed

Kaplan moved to accept the Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee's award recommendations, allocating the Social Service Grant funds as follows: Ashland Community Food Bank, \$7,500; Center for Non-Profit Legal Services, \$5,100; Community Works Inc. (Dunn House), \$10,180; Jackson County SART, \$7,220; RVCOG – Food and Friends, \$8,740; Rogue Valley Mentoring, \$4,500; OHRA, \$25,100; Southern Oregon Jobs with Justice, \$8,060; St. Vincent De Paul, \$15,900; and United Way, \$6,700. Bloom seconded the motion.

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

b. Affordable Housing Trust Fund Evaluation and Award

Reid presented the results of the City's Request for Proposals (RFP's) for \$200,000 in Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) dollars, funded through marijuana tax revenue. Four applications from three applicants were received and reviewed for eligibility and consistency with Resolution 2008-34, the Consolidated Plan, and Council goals. The HHSAC deliberated extensively and its recommendations differed slightly from staff's recommendation, primarily regarding whether to fund a capacity-building application from Sunstone.

Staff had reservations about the merit of the Sunstone capacity-building application and preferred to maintain a modest fund balance that could be deployed through a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) process if needed. The HHSAC, however, felt that supporting capacity building for emerging local housing organizations was particularly important given the current reduction in federal and state housing funding.

Regarding the Trusted Homes application and its connection to Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) LIFT program funding: Trusted Homes had applied for and been wait-listed for LIFT program funding in the February/March cycle, which operated on a first-come, first-served basis. The September cycle will be scored competitively. OHCS indicated the Trusted Homes application scored among the highest of all applicants and is very likely to be funded. Jessica Therkelsen, Executive Director of Trusted Homes, addressed the Council to clarify the LIFT program dynamics and explain that meaningful organizational expenses (including LLC setup, insurance, and stewardship finalization) would be incurred through September, making at least some of these AHTF dollars helpful.

Public Comment Open

Three speakers addressed the Council on this topic. Amy Gunter of Rogue Planning and Development Services spoke in support of the Caldera Oaks affordable housing project at 300 Clay Street, noting that the project is ready to proceed and that for-profit developers play a critical role in affordable housing delivery. She flagged that building permit fees had increased to \$73,000 (from the \$49,525 quoted in the application) and expressed support for the staff recommendation. Therkelsen provided an overview of the Trusted Homes community land trust (CLT) model – separating land ownership from home ownership through a 99-year ground lease – emphasizing that the City's investment would remain permanently embedded in the land, serving generation after generation of homeowners. Linda Adams, Board Secretary of Trusted Homes, spoke to the rigorous stewardship and financial stability of the CLT model, noted historical foreclosure rates were ten times lower than the national average, and urged Council to approve the full funding request.

Public Comment Closed

Council members expressed strong support for all applicants, noting the importance of both nonprofit and for-profit housing partners working together, and thanked HHSAC for navigating difficult funding trade-offs. Graham reflected on the Housing Trust Fund, the housing production strategy, and seeing organizations step up to the RFP.

Bloom moved to award the 2026 Affordable Housing Trust Fund funds as follows: Sunstone Ashland Attainable Housing Project, \$25,000; Sunstone Capacity Building, \$25,000; Trusted Homes, \$75,000; and Bentella LLC, \$75,000. Sherrell seconded the motion.

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

c. Request for Council to reconsider direction on lawn hours

Cotta explained that feedback had been received from police, service providers, and advocates suggesting a recalibration of the hours established by Council at the April 13 special meeting. Staff recommended moving the Night Lawn operating hours to 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., while maintaining 24-hour occupancy on weekends and federal holidays.

O'Meara noted that police tools (including park exclusions, which had already been upheld on appeal in at least one case) had been used effectively and that negative behavior in Garfield Park had begun to decrease. He flagged that the Night Lawn was approaching the threshold for classification as a

"chronic nuisance property" under City code and that enforcement responsibilities continue to fall to police officers without dedicated management. O'Meara noted this was not ideal for either officers or the unhoused individuals on the lawn. O'Meara referenced the success of Rogue Retreat's managed sites in Medford as a positive model, contrasting it with the less structured approach in Grants Pass where police are tasked with daily attendance-taking at camping sites.

Council discussion included questions about what tools could supplement or replace police enforcement. O'Meara expressed openness to cross-trained staff or co-deployment with social service workers but emphasized the ideal solution would have social service professionals managing the site with police in a supportive role. The Council discussed professional site management and Cotta suggested that informal conversations with Rogue Retreat and OHRA could help determine whether either organization would be willing to manage the site (OHRA is currently assisting with daytime storage services but is not actively managing the lawn).

Public Comment Open

Four community members addressed the Council. Recommendations included adjusting hours to 4:30 PM to 10:00 AM to allow enough time for people to get off the lawn consistently and moving away from police oversight toward management by a social service organization. The complexities of managing the lawn were acknowledged and ongoing communication with the population living on the lawn regarding enforcement changes was emphasized.

Public Comment Closed

O'Meara explained how police officers allow approximately one hour of grace before enforcing departure times and cautioned that a 10:00 a.m. departure time combined with that grace period could effectively eliminate a meaningful daytime reset. The proposed 8:00 a.m. departure time was presented as a more workable middle ground.

The council expressed sympathy regarding packing up in the early morning and some noted they would have preferred keeping the 10:00 a.m. time to gather more data before reversing course. However, there was broad deference to the subject-matter expertise of police staff in managing the operational realities of the lawn. Council members indicated that the larger questions — including whether the lawn should continue in its current form, what professional management might look like, and what level of city funding is appropriate — would be addressed at the May 18 study session and requested that the City Manager include brief lawn updates in future council packets.

Dahle moved that Council issue staff direction that Lawn operating hours are at the discretion of the City Manager while keeping in mind an intent to minimize negative interactions between occupants of the lawn and surrounding neighborhoods. Operating hours to be initially set at 4:30 p.m. to 8:00 a.m., plus 24-hour occupancy on weekends and federal holidays. Bloom seconded the motion.

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

d. *Citizens' Budget Committee Appointment*

Cotta explained that three positions on the Citizens' Budget Committee were to be filled: one term ending June 30, 2028, and two terms ending June 30, 2029. Councilors cast ballots, with votes read publicly per state law. Following the tally, Carol Cohen and Mike Gardiner were appointed to terms ending June 30, 2029, and Eric Britten was appointed to the term ending June 30, 2028.

Mayor Graham thanked all applicants for their willingness to serve and encouraged those not selected to explore other advisory committee opportunities.

**Kaplan moved to appoint Carol Cohen to the term ending June 30, 2029; Mike Gardiner to the term ending June 30, 2029; and Eric Britten to the term ending June 30, 2028. Bloom seconded the motion
Roll Call Vote: Kaplan, Sherrell, Bloom, Dahle, and Hansen – Yes. Motion passed.**

XIV. CITY MANAGER REPORT –

a. *Look Ahead*

Cotta announced two updates to the Look Ahead since the packet was published: at the May 5 Council meeting, the 2200 Ad Hoc Committee recommendations will be presented, and Jackson County SART will provide a special presentation.

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

Kaplan reported on behalf of the Climate and Environmental Policy Advisory Committee that the first six packaged terminal heat pump units had been installed this week, marking the launch of the program approved by Council to replace less efficient PTAC units in residential buildings. Additional units are expected to be installed at the same complex.

Hansen noted the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) has been working on SeeClickFix, a Transportation System Plan update, mini roundabouts, and unfinished business on the intersection at Oak Street and A Street/Van Ness.

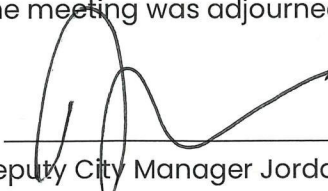
Graham reported on her service on the Jackson County Public Safety Coordinating Council. The body has been hearing presentations about innovative programs occurring at the county jail through social service organizations linked with the Sheriff's Office, which would be brought to Council in the future.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT


Bloom moved to adjourn. Seconded by Hansen

All Ayes. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.



Deputy City Manager Jordan Rooklyn



Mayor Tonya Graham

Round 1

Citizen Budget Committee

Vote for 4.21.2026

Mayor Graham

Michael

- 1) ~~Mike~~ Gardiner
- 2) Carol Cohen
- 3) Craig Britten

Round 1

Citizen Budget Committee
Vote for 4.21.2026
Councilor Hansen

- 1) Gardner
- 2) Charles Cohen
- 3) Larsen

Round 1

Citizen Budget Committee
Vote for 4.21.2026
Councilor Dahle

- 1) Britten
- 2) Larsen
- 3) Cohen

Round 1

Citizen Budget Committee
Vote for 4.21.2026
Mayor Graham

- 1) ^{Michael} ~~Mike~~ Gardiner
- 2) Carol Cohen
- 3) Craig Britten

Round 1

Citizen Budget Committee
Vote for 4.21.2026
Councilor Sherrell

- 2) Jenner
- 3) Gardner
- 1) Wertheimer

Round 1

Citizen Budget Committee
Vote for 4.21.2026
Councilor Bloom

- 1) Britten
- 2) Cohen
- 3) Wertheimer

Round 1

Citizen Budget Committee
Vote for 4.21.2026
Councilor Kaplan

- 1) Carol Cohen
- 2) Noah Wertheimer
- 3) Mike Gardner



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
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- 5) Speakers are solely responsible for the content of their statement

Date: 4/20/26

Name: (Please Print)
Nick David

Ashland Resident:
 YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):
Strategic Plan

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: 21 April 2026

Name: (Please Print)

Nathan Carnley

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: Ashland

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

N/A

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Food security in context of increased fuel prices
+ decreased fertilizer supply

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:

4-21-26

Name: (Please Print)

Amy Gumber

Ashland Resident:

YES

NO

City: Medford

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public forum XIII b.

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Housing

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Date:

4/21/26

Name: (Please Print)

Jessica TherKelsen

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

XIIIa.1 ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ AHTF

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

4/21/26

Name: (Please Print)

LINDA ADAMS

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

XIII A 1. (B. Affordable/Hg) TF

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date: 4/21/26

Name: (Please Print)
Debbie Neusewander

Ashland Resident:
 YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):
Nite Lawn Hours

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Date:

4/21/26

Name: (Please Print)

ERIC MADICKAS

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

XIII c. Night Lawn

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

4/21/26

Name: (Please Print)

Cate Hartzell

Ashland Resident:

YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Night Lawn

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date: 4/24/26

Name: (Please Print) CHRISTOPHER NADER

Ashland Resident: YES NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number: 1175 E. MAIN (11 MEET CAMP)

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item): COST OF LEVING

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:

4/21/26

Name: (Please Print)

DAUL 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.

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Regarding the Council's actions while adopting the 2025-2027 Biennial Budget:

On May 19, 2025, at a study session, the Council amended the 2025-2027 biennial budget. This Item was not on the agenda and this action violated Oregon's Open Meetings laws, as I explained in detail in this article: <https://theashlandchronicle.com/guest-opinion-part-3-what-is-wrong-with-amending-the-budget-at-a-study-session/>

Then, at the June 3, 2025 business meeting, the Deputy City Administrator, Jordan Rooklyn, falsely claimed that the Council had amended the budget "via Motion." There was no motion or vote, yet the Council memorialized this lie when they approved the minutes for the meeting two weeks later.

Furthermore, the Council never had a motion or vote on the amendments to the 2025-2027 biennial budget that they made on May 19—in violation of two sections of the Ashland Charter.

<https://ashland.municipal.codes/Charter/VIII-6> "Section 6.

Proceedings to be Public.

No action by the Council shall have legal effect unless the motion for the action and the vote thereon take place at proceedings open to the public.

<https://ashland.municipal.codes/Charter/VIII-9> "Section 9.

Vote Required.

Except as this Charter otherwise provides, the concurrence of a majority of the members of the Council present at a Council meeting shall be necessary to decide any question before the Council.

I have written a dozen articles on this, which you can find on The Ashland Chronicle website:

https://theashlandchronicle.com/page/1/?swp_form%5Bform_id%5D=1&s=paul+mozina#038;s=paul+mozina

The document below is a response from the Oregon Department of Revenue to my request that they look into the timing of the Council's amendments to the budget and the public hearing. I asserted that the Council violated ORS 294.453 and the DOR agreed. Please see the letter from the DOR attached below.



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Revenue
Property Tax Division
955 Center St NE
PO Box 14380
Salem, OR 97309-5075

April 13, 2026

City of Ashland

ATTN: Bryn Morrison, Interim Finance Director

Sent via email: bryn.morrison@ashland.or.us

The Department of Revenue is responsible for providing municipal corporations with information on budgeting practices, Local Budget Law, and the laws relating to property taxes. As part of our oversight role under ORS 294.495, we will review a district's budget process upon request of a citizen to ensure compliance with Local Budget Law. We have recently received an inquiry into the city of Ashland's budget hearing and adoption process for the 2025-2027 biennium. I have reviewed your 2025 process and am bringing forward the following issue:

- ORS 294.453 requires the governing body to hold a hearing on the budget as approved by the budget committee. ORS 294.456 allows the governing body to make changes to the approved budget only after that budget hearing. That amended budget can then be adopted by the governing body (although in some cases a second hearing may be required).
- Based on a review of the minutes and video from the budget hearing and adoption at the June 3, 2025, City Council Meeting, the hearing was held on an amended version of the budget rather than the budget as approved by the budget committee. While the changes were within the authority of the council to make and did not require a second hearing, they could only be made after the budget hearing and prior to adoption.

We are not directing the city to make any changes to the budget for the 2025-2027 biennium. However, the city will need to revise its budget process to ensure the proper order is followed in the future.

If you have any questions or wish additional assistance, call or email me at the numbers listed below. If you need a copy of the *Local Budgeting Manual*, you can access the current version online at <https://www.oregon.gov/dor/forms/pages/default.aspx>.

In addition, we will be providing a free Local Budget Law workshop in Medford this coming July. If you have not already done so, feel free to sign-up for our email list at <https://omls.oregon.gov/mailman/listinfo/localbudget> to be notified once details are finalized.

Regards,

Danette Benjamin, Revenue Manager 2
Property Tax Division
Oregon Department of Revenue
(971) 301-1149
danette.m.benjamin@dor.oregon.gov

Together, we collect the revenue that Oregon counts on.