

**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
STUDY SESSION MINUTES
Monday, May 4, 2026**

Mayor Graham called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

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

Staff Present:

Sabrina Cotta	City Manager
Jordan Rooklyn	Deputy City Manager
Scott Fleury	Director of Public Works

I. Call to Order

II. Reports and Presentations

a. Facility Planning Study Next Steps

Cotta introduced the topic, noting that the facility planning study was requested and funded in the previous fiscal biennium and the goal of the study session was to provide staff guidance moving forward. Fleury presented an overview of two phases:

Phase 1 – McKinstry conducted a full facility condition assessment of all city buildings, producing itemized cost estimates for maintenance and improvements.

Phase 2 – RW (ORW) developed a space needs and facility plan addressing how the city should use, manage, or divest its facilities going forward.

City Hall status – Since the January special study session, planning-level cost estimates were obtained for City Hall repairs, including roof replacement, electrical upgrades, and HVAC replacement. A cracked rafter had already been repaired by Vitus Construction. Staff noted that cost estimates did not include permitting, structural calculations, or MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing) analysis. Staff do not recommend patching the roof, as contractors and in-house facilities staff concur that full membrane replacement is the appropriate course of action.

Civic campus options – Two potential consolidated campus locations were previously identified: Briscoe School and 90 North Mountain (the current service center site). A community survey of 159 respondents showed approximately 70% in favor of a civic campus concept.

Divestment properties – Appraisals for the Imperatrice property, B Street Yard, Briscoe School, North Mountain, City Hall, and the Hardesty property were included in the packet. Proceeds from any divestment would flow into the newly established Capital Improvement dedicated facilities fund.

Councilors asked for clarification regarding the City Hall roof. Staff confirmed that both contractors and the city's own facilities personnel do not recommend patching, as it would not prevent continued moisture intrusion into the substructure, especially given that HVAC rooftop units would also need to be disturbed. Councilors inquired if some elements—such as minor electrical and pest control—could be handled in-house to reduce cost. Staff confirmed that minor electrical splicing, hot water heater

replacement, and pest control could be addressed internally. Councilors also discussed a 2014 partial roof warranty from Bleser Built Roofing and requested that they be contacted.

A broad discussion followed on whether to pursue a consolidated civic campus, and if so, at which site. Topics discussed included:

- A suggestion was made to table the civic center discussion until the adoption of the next (2027–29) budget due to economic uncertainties and potential risks of having to fill a general fund gap.
- Another proposal involved selling some properties to build the facilities fund, with plans to revisit the civic center question in the next biennium.
- The potential for future availability of SOU buildings was mentioned.
- There was emphasis on the need to understand the complete budget picture before making any decisions, with a strong stance against delaying facility maintenance further.
- The idea was presented to take the civic center entirely off the table, citing the city's structural deficit and the potential of residents' inability to afford a bond.
- Alternative suggestions included proceeding promptly with the divestment of certain properties and using the funds to repair existing buildings.
- There was interest expressed in having a financial model and phased plan for the civic center, which included building a capital fund, divesting certain properties, and tackling City Hall issues in the short term while still maintaining the civic campus option.
- Concerns were raised about the financial burden on ratepayers, highlighting that proceeds from divested properties would barely cover the existing buildings' deferred maintenance costs.
- There was advocacy for exploring partnerships with other institutions like SOU, the school district, or OSF, which face similar financial challenges.
- A request was made for a clearer business case analysis to specify which staff roles would benefit from co-location versus those requiring dedicated locations.

Dahle moved to extend the Study Session until 7:15 p.m. DuQuenne seconded the Motion. All in favor. The motion passed.

Staff noted that ORW's feasibility analysis placed the 2018 Briscoe construction cost at approximately \$15 million, while a comparable build-out at 90 North Mountain was estimated in the \$20 million range. Staff noted that 90 North Mountain would better serve operations by consolidating more staff at a single location, whereas Briscoe would still leave a bifurcated campus.

The Council reached consensus to remove Briscoe School as a civic campus option, freeing that property for a future divestment discussion, and provided the following direction to staff:

- Staff are to refine and present information on which departments and functions are highest priority for co-location, what efficiencies that would create, and which functions must remain at specialized locations.

- Staff to provide numbers for a civic campus at 90 N Mountain based on the McKinstry report and current construction costs for discussion at the July Council meeting.
- Staff to remain alert for opportunities to consolidate operations into existing or available spaces without new construction or reducing current service levels, and to bring those opportunities forward as they arise.

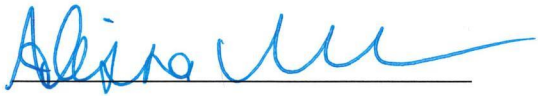
Additional discussion on safety-related repairs to City Hall including the roof, electrical, HVAC, water heater, and pest control. Discussion to be continued at a later date.

b. *Review of City Council Budget*

This agenda item was not reached. The Council agreed to postpone it to a future meeting.

III. **Adjournment of Study Session.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 pm.



City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski



Mayor Tonya Graham