

The City Council for the City of Junction City, met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, in the Council Chambers, 680 Greenwood Street, Junction City, Oregon and in a virtual meeting format via internet and phone.

**PRESENT:** Mayor, Kenneth Wells; Council President, Karen Leach; Councilors Sandie Thomas, Sidney Washburne; Andrea Ceniga, Ken Jamieson, and Ken Hancock; City Administrator, Jason Knope; City Attorney, Carrie Connelly; Police Chief, Mark Waddell; Public Works Director, Gary Kaping; and City Recorder, Kitty Vodrup.

**1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Wells opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m., led the Pledge of Allegiance, and took roll call.

**2. Changes to the Agenda.** None.

**3. Approval of Minutes – January 13 and 27, 2026**

**MOTION:** Councilor Washburne made a motion to approve the January 13 and 27, 2026 minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilor Ceniga and passed by unanimous vote of the Council: Thomas, Washburne, Ceniga, Leach, Jamieson, and Hancock.

**4. Public Comment on Items not Listed on the Agenda**

A. Follow-up from Staff on Previous Comments. None.

B. New Comments from Public.

Stephanie Plumlee stated, “Good Evening Mayor Wells and members of the City Council. My name is Stephanie Plumlee, and I was elected to speak on behalf of AFSCME Local 3754, representing City of Junction City employees. Our union is formally requesting that City Council place on the agenda a vote of no confidence in City Administrator Knope. At our most recent union meeting, members voted unanimously that there is a lack of confidence, due to ongoing operational concerns impacting transparency, oversight, and employee protections. Please understand that this takes significant courage for employees to speak collectively tonight, and we really appreciate Council’s prior encouragement of staff communication, and because of the time limits, we are going to present key points, in hopes of touching on some major topics and highlighting systemic issues, not each individual grievance. This is with the goal of improving accountability, checks and balances, and transparency within City management. While this may feel like a lot of information, we believe it is necessary for Council to make an informed decision effecting the long-term health of our city. First, employees consistently struggle to receive clear and timely answers to basic budget questions. Responses are often delayed or incomplete, preventing responsible planning and meaningful review. This lack of clarity puts the city at risk of losing experienced and valued staff. Second, the City Administrator controls multiple critical functions, including Human Resources, budgeting, IT, and Administration. This concentration of authority creates conflict of interest and eliminates essential checks and balances. Employees are uncomfortable reporting concerns to HR when HR managers report directly to our City Administrator. Although this issue has been raised by Councilor Hancock, no alternative reporting process has been offered to our knowledge. Third, there are serious concerns regarding IT authority and monitoring practices, including access to employee computer activity and emails without clearly defined policies or documentation. And without that transparency and safeguard, trust and accountability are undermined. Fourth, employees are concerned that information provided to Council is being filtered, including when it is a staff communication with Council. This restricts the flow of critical information necessary for effective governance. For example, staff was informed only after the December 16<sup>th</sup> Council meeting that Sanitation is projected to fall below the 25% budget threshold in 2026, due to the moratorium. When staff asked whether Council had been informed, the discussion was deferred. We also believe earlier engagement in regional networking related to our sewer project could have probably prevented our current delays that we are in right now. Comparable cities such as Creswell, have benefited from regular regional collaboration. Given these shortcomings, we strongly question whether placing the City Administrator in charge of a major sewer project, one affecting our community for decades, is in the city’s best interest. Due to fear of retaliation, we respectfully request that Council adopt an interim work plan, effective immediately, eliminating the City Administrator’s authority to discipline or take adverse action against employees while this matter is under review. For these reasons, we formally request a vote of no confidence and appropriate Council action. We are prepared to provide documentation, timelines, and statements as requested. While we respect the Council’s authority, our union questions if our City Administrator should have any role in the city moving forward. Thank you for your time and allowing us to speak tonight.”

Katherine Bose, High Pass Road, stated that she was present regarding the proposed RV Park at Lyle Day Park. Her understanding was the cost estimate was \$89,927.35 and the spots were supposed to bring in income, with a suggested \$20 a night. The proposal was people could have a 10-night stay, and the taxpayers would be paying for this project, but would they receive the benefits. She continued that this area could benefit Junction City citizens without such a large output of money, such as a Saturday or Sunday market, which would almost be costless from the start. There were many expenses that the Council did not address, including costs for electricity, water usage, trash, insurance, maintenance and repairs, etc. There would need to be a park manager, someone to enforce the proposed laws and address security, and a solid policing system to protect both the campers and the residents of Junction City. From what she had researched, the average availability of temporary camping spaces in Oregon ran at approximately 62% occupancy rates. With that in mind, it would take approximately 10 years to recover the cost of \$89,927.35. The RV Park would not have amenities that other large parks had such as showers, fire pits, hiking trails, laundry services, and other tourist attractions. Another big issue would be having a pet area, as that would need to be added for users of the park that had service animals. Without that, the discrimination act could be thrown at the city, which would incur more costs. She had talked to several of her neighbors, and they did not like this idea, as it did not show a good expenditure of tax dollars, which she agreed with. She asked why taxpayers would be paying for short term camping of tourists. She added that the age of an RV should not be a deciding factor, as a restored Airstream would be much more pleasing than a duct taped 2020 Winnebago and age did not automatically mean functionality. She hoped the Council would take into account these issues, and she thanked the Council for their time.

Julie Nowacki stated that she was representing Junction City Local Aid, and the Council would be considering reducing or waiving their utility fees. She noted that they provided services to people in the community that were in need through food, clothing, hygiene, along with referrals and resources. She continued that they actually did a service to the City of Junction City Public Works because they also helped provide \$100 towards resident's utilities when they were past due, about to be disconnected, or were disconnected. From January 2025 to date, they had given \$1900 to Public Works to assist people in need with their utility bills. Local Aid's monthly utility bill was about \$180, so they were just asking for a waiver or reduction in that monthly fee. Other non-profit agencies had asked that Local Aid contact the City on this, because they had received this from their own city. She thanked the Council for their consideration.

## 5. Local Aid Request

Director Kaping presented the request from Junction City Local Aid to reduce or waive their utility rate for water, sewer, and sanitation. He distributed an additional email and document that was provided by Local Aid. He continued that the utility department operated on a very tight budget, trying to keep costs down for all of the customers. Staff did not believe at this time with the current budget, that it was in the best interest of the City to waive or reduce a rate for a non-profit, as that would open the door for every other non-profit. This was a Council decision, and he would be happy to do whatever the Council would like him to do.

Councilor Thomas said that she had called the Mission and a few other non-profits in smaller towns and they received no discounts on water, sewer, and garbage. She added that the City's budget was tight.

Councilor Leach shared that the City had went through this several years ago with the Grange asking for a reduction in their garbage fees, but the request was denied because the City could not do that for all of the other organizations in town, such as the Chamber, Scandinavian Festival Association, Moose Lodge, churches, etc. and it would not be fair to do for one and not for the others. Like Councilor Thomas had said, the City's budget was really tight and the City was just not able to do this right now.

Councilor Ceniga noted that she really wanted to see if there was a way that they could help. She asked if they could use Revolving Loan Funds for even a one-time waiver or reduction to help out.

Councilor Leach asked who the City would say no to and where would this would stop if the City extended this to Local Aid, as there were so many deserving organizations in town.

Councilor Ceniga stated that Local Aid was the only one asking right now and maybe the City could help a little bit.

Councilor Jamieson asked how Local Aid was funded. Julie Nowacki responded through donations and grants.

Councilor Jamieson stated that it would be nice if the City could do something, but the City did have a tight budget. Like Councilor Leach said, what if everybody came out and the City had given Local Aid a break but did not give anyone else a break.

Councilor Washburne said that he agreed with Councilor Leach. The City was on such a tight budget right now, and once they opened the door, who else would come in and ask for the same, which the City could not afford right now.

Councilor Hancock noted that this was a difficult question, and he did want to help Local Aid, as they provided a critical service to the community, and he wanted to help every single agency and citizen in the City. The only area that they had any money was in State Revenue and that would not cover all of the non-profits in the City, so he was reluctant to help one if they could not help them all.

Councilor Thomas asked if everyone who worked at Local Aid were volunteers. Julie responded that there were 3.1 part time employees and 40 volunteers. Local Aid served about 150 households per week in the 12 hours per week that they were open.

Mayor Wells noted that since this was an agenda item, Julie could have an opportunity to speak here if she wanted to.

Julie noted that it took a lot for a person to come into Local Aid to ask for help with their utility bills. They had to fill out a resource application and provide statements, and then Julie followed up with Public Works, so it was not just a handout. Local Aid did not pay the whole bill, but put \$100 towards their account, in hopes that it would prevent disruption of services. Local Aid had helped provide funding for customers of Public Works, so they did not get disconnected, therefore Local Aid was helping fund Public Works. She added that Local Aid was just asking for a good faith community member partnership, but the Council would make the decision.

Councilor Ceniga stated that she wanted to help and that the City was on a tight budget, so she did not know what the right answer would be. She noted that they would have budget meetings coming up, so maybe they could figure something out and maybe something would not start until after July. She added that she did not want Local Aid to give up and wanted them to keep trying.

Mayor Wells noted that the Council had three options listed on the Agenda Item Summary. He expressed agreement with Councilor Ceniga and noted that this was a need not only for our citizens, but also in neighboring cities. The City would be looking at the budget, starting in the next several months, and if no action was taken tonight, they could look to see if there were other options for things they were not thinking about tonight that maybe staff could look at.

**MOTION:** Councilor Thomas made a motion to deny the request.

Councilor Thomas noted that the denial was because of lack of funds and not because they did not want to help the citizens. She asked Director Kaping if Public Works had held off on somebody losing their utility service. Director Kaping responded that Public Works did set up payment arrangements and gave people several chances before they were disconnected.

**SECOND AND VOTE:** Councilor Leach seconded the motion and it passed by a vote of 5 to 1, with Councilors Thomas, Washburne, Leach, Jamieson, and Hancock voting in favor and Councilor Ceniga voting against.

## 6. LOC Lobbying 101 Training

Staff distributed LOC Informational and Lobbying 101 documents. Jayme Pierce, General Counsel for the League of Oregon Cities (LOC), provided an overview of LOC, including basic information, vision, mission, LOC Committees, affiliates and caucuses, departments, and services. Michael Martin, LOC Lobbyist, presented the Lobbying 101 training.

## 7. Lieutenant Job Description

Chief Waddell presented the resolution to create the position of Police Lieutenant.

A. Resolution No. 1 – A Resolution to Create the Position of Police Lieutenant, Pursuant to Personnel Policy Section 4(K) and Assigning a Range within the City's Compensation Schedule.

**MOTION:** Councilor Hancock made a motion to approve Resolution No. 1. The motion was seconded by Councilor Leach and passed by unanimous vote of the Council: Thomas, Washburne, Ceniga, Leach, Jamieson, and Hancock.

Chief Waddell and Officer Thaddeus Fanning introduced Hali, the new police dog provided by Working Dogs of Oregon to the Police Department.

#### 8. **Project Management Discussion**

Mayor Wells shared that he and Councilor Hancock had followed direction from Council from the January 13, 2026 meeting, and several meetings had taken place over the last two weeks. He noted that this was the opportunity for Council to ask questions or provide comments.

Councilor Hancock stated that in looking at the overall picture, they studied how they could come up with positive solutions for a number of issues. In meeting with Administrator Knope (Jason), the first thing that was positive was that he had said that he would resign from his City Administrator contract. That was important because if he had been released from his contract, he would get six months of severance pay (\$125,000). By resigning, Jason was forfeiting that, which he knew, and he did that for the City. In addition, he would be taking a cut in salary by moving to the Project Manager position. Number two, the City had an MAO (Mutual Agreement and Order) with DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) that it did not ask for, which laid out steps that the City had to follow. The tasks were a significant burden and came with significant fines if the City failed in any of those categories. By Jason moving to a Project Manager employment contract, it would be his job to watch all of that and have a very focused strategy on how to move forward, without having to worry about all of the other things that City Administrators were supposed to take care of. Councilor Hancock continued that he was confident that they would have very positive returns on that, and he believed that would be successful. He asked who would know all of the problems that the City had to oversee and take care of and handle better than Jason. The most important thing was to take care of the community and they had a MAO that had to be taken care of. They had a person that they believed in, in terms of being able to move to that position and oversee this contract and keep the City out of hot water. The Project Manager would be a non-supervisory position, but one in which they would listen very closely to the advice he was giving. Jason had eloquently said at the last meeting that this would give the new City Administrator the opportunity to come in and learn all that there was that the City Administrator needed to know and would relieve them of the burden of watching the MAO. The new City Administrator would still need to know about the MAO and be brought up to speed. This would provide a smooth transition for the City and would provide the opportunity to bring somebody into the interim City Administrator role, who would be a different set of eyes to review the budget and other things, answer questions, and help them find a permanent City Administrator. Councilor Hancock believed this was a good thing and would be in favor of this happening tomorrow.

Councilor Jamieson asked if switching positions and looking for a new City Administrator would help the Public Works Department and if that would put Jason in charge of the same projects that Public Works staff was working on now. Councilor Hancock responded that the Project Manager would be a non-supervisory position.

Director Kaping stated that he had reviewed the Project Manager job description, and it would have Jason strictly working on projects for Public Works, with no supervisory authority. Director Kaping added that this position would absolutely help him, as it would take a number of things off of his plate.

Mayor Wells noted that Director Kaping had been directly involved with review of the job description and had been comfortable with it.

Councilor Thomas stated that to her, this seemed like the answer to the whole problem. Things would get done and they would get a new administrator. Jason knew all about the sewer and water projects, and they needed somebody to take care of that.

Mayor Wells noted that they would need to find an interim City Administrator through League of Oregon Cities or Lane Council of Governments. The interim would then assist the City with hiring a new City Administrator.

Councilor Leach shared that one of her main concerns was if Director Kaping had been included in all of this. Director Kaping responded that he had been and had reviewed the job description and provided feedback. Director Kaping added that he was perfectly happy with what he saw.

Councilor Leach continued that she was also happy with the employment agreement and what was going to happen. She agreed with Councilor Hancock that this would take care of a lot of issues. She thought Jason was very knowledgeable in all the things going on with DEQ and MWMC (Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission) and this would relieve a lot of pressure on Director Kaping.

Councilor Ceniga noted that only one Councilor was involved with this process and there were five Councilors who were not included until right now. She thought that they had people currently working in Public Works where positions were created to help with some of this that were probably not being utilized or included on some concerns with DEQ. She thought Jason may have some knowledge in some of this but this was all stuff that should have been addressed over the last several years, so she did not see why they would create a position right now to put somebody in when these things could be done by a good majority of Public Works staff right now. She did not see why they were not looking at other options to maybe bring in somebody with some more knowledge who was currently doing this same exact thing for other cities. She noted that staff came to Council in December and said they wanted to cut five positions from Public Works because of funding, so she did not understand how all of a sudden they had enough money now to create a position to work strictly on this topic that had not been addressed until more recently, until their hands were tied and the City was forced to have to start doing things. She did not think this was right. She understood what Councilor Hancock was saying about not having to pay severance, but now they were going to pay \$12,100 a month to do what should have already been done over the last several years. She asked why they did not have this money before where they did not have to put fear in our Public Works employees on whether they were going to have a job the next day.

Director Kaping responded that this discussion was going down a path that was going to make him upset. He continued that staff was asked by Council to bring back solutions without raising rates, so that was what they did. He did not want to have that thrown back on staff, saying that staff asked to cut five positions, because that was not what they wanted to do.

Councilor Ceniga stated that staff had started with cutting five positions. Director Kaping responded that was the only choice the Council gave staff. The only two choices were cutting O and M (Operations and Maintenance) or cut staff, so there was no other choice. He did exactly what Council had asked him to do, but then it was being thrown back on staff like they caused the problem.

Administrator Knope added that at the meeting where this was discussed, he was prepared to share his recommendation to raise the rates to cover what Public Works had and then as vacancies came up at Public Works, they would reduce staffing over time; however, he never got to that point in the meeting because everyone was upset over cuts. He ultimately took the blame for everything, but he was told by Council that there were certain parameters. If he had been asked for his recommendation, he would have said let's figure out what the rate increase needed to be to keep staff as it is, because ultimately in the original rates that everybody had looked at, it was already factored in there. To say that he wanted to cut was misleading and there was only so much verbal abuse that he could take. Saying that made Public Works staff think that he wanted to cut them which was not true and was something he did not want to do and would never do. He was told to fix this, but to not raise rates, so he came back with what he thought he was asked to bring back. He had other options to present but it became clear at the meeting that it was only about that he wanted to cut staff, which he would never do. He continued that they had amazing people at Public Works. He stated that for the record, it was obvious that he had made a bunch of people mad at Public Works and he apologized, as that was not his intent, and he did not want Public Works staff to walk out of here thinking that he wanted to cut them, because he never would do that. Public Works staff were great at what they did, and they did amazing things for this community day in and day out, without asking for anything in return. He asked why he would want to change that, and he said that he would not want to. He added that he may have been misunderstood and could have said things better, but he did not want to cut staff in this lifetime.

Mayor Wells noted that the Council did direct staff, and they were doing just what the Council had directed them to do. The meetings they had held over the last few weeks on the new

contract and job description had been done, as directed by the Council and included Director Kaping, Director Green, and the HR Manager. Director Green found a way for the City to have funding for the new position out of a fund that normally would not be used for labor because this would be a temporary position working on a special project. All of the Council received this information in their packets on Friday and had the weekend to review, just as they normally did with packet items.

Councilor Ceniga responded that was not what she had meant. Mayor Wells responded that was the way he had interpreted that.

Councilor Washburne stated that he thought they ought to table this until they figured out the other problems that were brought up under Public Comments tonight. He thought they needed to address that before they went anywhere and noted that when you get a vote of no confidence with people, there was something wrong and they needed to look at that issue and get to the bottom of it.

Councilor Thomas shared that she could see the frustration from some staff, because they were informed to come to a meeting and that the Council was going to fire five people, which was not so. It was a work session, where nothing would be solved and where public comments were not taken. Public Works staff were told to come to the meeting but were frustrated that they could not speak. Somewhere, there were rumors and gossip, and she encouraged everyone to look for facts and not rumors. She added that it was the 8,000 people in town that the Council was supposed to be here to support.

Councilor Leach noted that Director Kaping was 100% correct and that was the direction that he had to not raise rates and figure out something. She had heard the rumor too that the Council was going to lay off five people, and someone had put the fear of God into the Public Works staff which did not make her happy and was not right. She continued that she was not a happy camper and for any Public Works staff to be put in that position due to rumors was not right. The Council had never talked about wanting to lay off five people. The Council's job was to take care of the entire City, the 8,000 people who looked to them to make the right decision. The budget was tight, and they were working hard to do the right thing for everybody.

Mayor Wells asked if Attorney Connelly had any input, as she was involved with review of the process and new position. Attorney Connelly responded that at the last meeting that she attended, she expressed the need to have some time to make sure that the City was able to move forward with the way that Councilor Hancock had proposed. She worked closely with Attorney Wolf, Mayor Wells, Councilor Hancock, Administrator Knope, and Director Kaping. She and Attorney Wolf came back, not as a proponent of a particular approach or with policy input, but to enable the Council to have full materials for this meeting that she believed were legally sufficient and in compliance with Administrator Knope's current contract and City policies, if the Council wanted to consider this or take action tonight or at a future meeting.

Councilor Hancock asked if Attorney Wolf had reviewed the Project Manager contract. Attorney Connelly responded yes and the job description as well.

Councilor Hancock stated that the issue that Councilor Washburne brought up could be resolved by taking this action tonight and having a new City Administrator. Councilor Hancock did not think they would have to cut anybody, and it had made him sick that since the two weeks before Christmas, people had been hanging on the edge of their seats and did not know if they were going to work. He saw the Projects Crew and they could really work, and he did not want to lose any of that. Director Kaping responded that he would vouch for his crew every day.

**MOTION:** Councilor Hancock made a motion to adopt the Project Manager Job Description and to approve the Temporary Employment Agreement for Jason Knope to transfer his employment from City Administrator to Project Manager on February 11, 2026. The motion was seconded by Councilor Leach and passed by a vote of 4 to 2, with Councilors Thomas, Leach, Jamieson, and Hancock voting in favor and Councilors Washburne and Ceniga voting against.

Mayor Wells thanked the Council for the time and input on this. When this was first brought to them a month ago, they were all surprised and a lot of work had gone on in the last month. He thought that when they looked at the big picture, the right thing was done for the City tonight, and it was up to all of them to make sure that it was done correctly.

**9. Council Agenda Forecaster**

Administrator Knope presented the forecaster. At the upcoming work session, he would add a regular session item for the Council to meet with Local Government Personnel Services.

Councilor Ceniga asked if there needed to be a point of contact for City Administrator tasks, if Administrator Knope's transition from City Administrator to Project Manager was effective tomorrow. Administrator Knope responded that typically what had happened in the past was the City Recorder's office collected things and got them to the appropriate area, whether it was Public Works, Police, or back to Council. He added that if the Council was not meeting every two weeks, he would maybe recommend appointing an interim, but he did not think that was necessary.

Councilor Hancock asked for an agenda item request. He noted that in the old days, a department was not allowed to have a budget that was in deficit, so he thought they needed to have a resolution that said that they could not have the budgets from any of the departments in a position that they had to raise rates to keep people because those people should be employed based upon the rates that you have that day and that year. He just thought they needed to make a very clear rule and put it in place, so they did not go through this again.

Director Kaping responded that one way to avoid that was to put something in place that raised rates automatically. That way, you would not have to bring it to Council for a vote and upset people.

Councilor Hancock responded no, because then they were balancing current employees based upon future rates.

Director Kaping responded that the cost of everything had went up.

Administrator Knope added that the vehicle that Councilor Hancock was looking for would be a fiscal policy. The City already had a number of them. He would suggest creating a fiscal policy to reflect whatever the Council's desire was. That way, it would be clear and also part of the budget document rolling forward that would become a rule that the creation of the budget was applied to.

Councilor Hancock asked if that was something Attorney Connelly could help with. Administrator Knope responded that Attorney Connelly and Director Green should be able to create that fiscal policy.

Attorney Connelly added that she would defer to Director Green to start on that and then she would work with her. She asked what Council meeting this item should come back to.

Councilor Hancock responded a month from now, and Councilor Leach added the March meeting.

**10. Staff Reports**

Chief Waddell reported: Police officer candidate was in backgrounds; Detective Ware was doing backgrounds for some Reserve Officer positions, as the department was trying to get the Reserve Program up and running; ran first set of stats through new software program, and officers wrote 108 citations in January 2026 versus 16 citations in January 2025. The advantage of having more officers was being able to address traffic concerns, etc.; Hali, new department K9, was provided through Working Dogs Oregon, and they connected JCPD with the Gresham Police Department, who offered a free K9 equipped 2015 Ford vehicle to JCPD; and JCPD was presented with an opportunity to purchase two used 2022 vehicles, each with around 75,000 miles and cost was \$13,000 each; hopefully that would come to Council at the next meeting.

Administrator Knope added that he had asked Chief Waddell to put together a proposal to purchase the vehicles that would suggest that Council look at funding through the State Revenue Sharing To be Determined line item, as that could easily cover this expense and was typically the type of thing that Council used for that line.

Director Kaping reported: Public Works was flushing the entire system this week and catching up on some general maintenance; management staff had been working on budget and a Request for Proposal, and he and Administrator Knope continued to work on steps to move forward with MWMC (Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission).

Attorney Connelly reported: She noted that the Project Manager/City Administrator conversation was unique, as that issue came to the Council as a whole because the Project Manager was actually going to be under the City Administrator, who by Charter had the authority over City staff. It came to Council because this was a transition piece, and she wanted to make sure everybody understood that so there was no confusion in the future about why Council was not consulted or had input on various hiring decisions.

Councilor Hancock asked if the Council needed to authorize the Mayor to sign the Project Manager contract tomorrow. Attorney Connelly responded yes.

**MOTION:** Councilor Hancock made a motion that Mayor Wells be authorized to sign the employment contract for Jason Knope on February 11, 2016. The motion was seconded by Councilor Leach and passed by a vote of 4 to 2 with Councilors Thomas, Leach, Jamieson, and Hancock voting in favor and Councilors Washburne and Ceniga voting against.

Councilor Hancock stated that they would normally turn to Recorder Vodrup to find an Interim City Administrator and asked if they needed to authorize her to begin that search. Attorney Connelly responded that she thought that was implied by the Agenda Item Summary, but she would defer to staff on what kind of authorization they felt was needed at this point.

Councilor Hancock noted that it would be nice if Recorder Vodrup could make contact with League of Oregon Cities and Lane Council of Governments to see if there were some candidates and then for the Council to do interviews in two weeks so they could move quickly. He added that right now, the Department Heads would be answering directly to the Council, and he thought that should be a short-lived process.

Administrator Knope said that he did not think a motion was needed and it was pretty clear on the record what the Council wanted to see happen.

Recorder Vodrup asked if there would be a particular point of contact on Council that she should follow up with if questions came up outside of a public meeting. The Council consensus was that Recorder Vodrup could contact Mayor Wells or Councilor Hancock.

Recorder Vodrup asked if there was a particular date that the Council would like to have interviews. The Council consensus was February 24, 2026.

Attorney Connelly reported: There were two bills at the legislature: HB 4161 addressed food and beverage benefits and items of minimal value and the second was HB 4177 that addressed a number of changes in the public meetings law, serial meetings in particular.

**11. Previous Month's Expenditures.** None.

**12. Councilor Comments/Questions**

Councilor Thomas noted that the City had accomplished a lot. She thanked staff for all they did and for attending the meetings.

Councilor Cengia said that she wanted to let Public Works staff know that she heard them and saw them out there working hard. She heard that the crew recently had worked a 12-hour shift to fix something. Director Kaping responded that was not uncommon and that was probably when they had to change all the valves in the water plan.

Councilor Ceniga continued that she appreciated all the hard work that Public Works staff did to make sure water, sewer, and other were operating and done correctly. She thanked the Police Department for all of their hard work and for looking for funding for the department's needs. She was happy about getting Hali and thought Hali would benefit the department, staff, and community really well. She appreciated court staff and all they were doing and expressed appreciation to all other staff in the city for working hard.

Councilor Leach thanked staff and other citizens for attending the meeting. She expressed appreciation to the four Police Department members who participated in the recent "Polar Plunge." She saw Public Works staff out working hard every day and appreciated every single one of them. She expressed appreciation to Stephanie at Public Works, who was always so receptive to everything, to the Police Department for working hard to try and get everything solved with the IT problem, to Recorder Vodrup for the minutes and other work, and to Director

Kaping for all the information he provided. She added that it had been a rough month or two, and everyone was working hard, which she appreciated.

Councilor Jamieson expressed appreciation for everything that everybody did, specifically recognizing Public Works staff and expressing appreciation to the Police Department for how they continued to evolve and make things better.

Councilor Hancock stated that he believed in the First Amendment rights, and he was thankful that staff came tonight and said what they said to make the Council aware, as that was their right. One failing was the City did not have a policy in place to address complaints against the City Administrator, and without that process, they ended up exercising their First Amendment right to let the Council know. He acknowledged that there were some things they needed to fix, and the City Attorney would be providing a draft policy.

Attorney Connelly added that the draft policy would be on the next Council agenda.

Councilor Hancock responded that was great and he looked forward to that review. He continued that a citizen had provided comments about the RV Park, and he wanted to share more information. As they had mentioned at the last meeting, the RV Park would be developed out of funds that could not be used for wages and could only be used for development, and these were not tax dollars. The reason he found the RV Park to be so attractive was that it would generate park revenue, and he could not think of another scenario where that would occur, and noted no other scenarios had been presented. He thought this was a really good opportunity for the City, and the lot had been sitting there for 10 years doing nothing. He noted that he had known many of the Public Works staff for their whole lives and their presence at the meeting meant a lot. Every time he saw the Public Works staff out working, he saw that their work was incredibly valuable. He thanked each for that hard work and for bearing with them throughout this. He added that they might not really appreciate the answers that they came to tonight, but it was a solution.

### 13. Mayor's Comments

Mayor Wells thanked all of the Councilors for their comments tonight. He noted that the RV Park issue would be on the March 10<sup>th</sup> Council agenda, and no decision had been made yet. He appreciated the input from Katherine Bose, and he appreciated everybody being at the meeting and speaking their minds. He noted that they had quite a few people also online, and it was nice to see people care and be a part of the process. He recently spoke with a gentleman who had submitted comments about a utility trailer being illegally parked. The gentleman was so impressed that the City responded to his comments and resolved the issue, with the Police Department calling him within a day. Mayor Wells had told the gentleman that they had a whole new Police Department, and he thanked Chief Waddell for the job the department was doing.

Mayor Wells continued that he appreciated everybody at the meeting and expressed appreciation to Lane County Commissioner Ryan Ceniga for attending the meeting. Mayor Wells noted that Commissioner Ceniga was welcomed to drop in and see them anytime. Commissioner Ceniga thanked Mayor Wells for his comments.

### 14. Adjournment

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kitty Vodrup, City Recorder

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kenneth Wells, Mayor