

City of Prairie City
Council Meeting
July 22, 2026

Attendance:

Mayor Bradford
Councilor McClung
Councilor Davis
Councilor Ed Clark
Councilor Bernard
Councilor Coburn
Shonalie Oakes, City Recorder
Mike Patterson, Public Works
Ben Richardson, Museum Director

Visitors:

Steve Patterson
Wanda Patterson
Sue Malaney
Sandy Murray, Downtown Beautification Committee
Fran Bunch
Mary Brown
Roark
Joe Hitz, Engineer
Frances Preston
Cheryl Hoefner

Mayor Bradford called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm, the pledge of allegiance was recited, and the roll was called. Councilor Scott Clark was not present with an excused absence.

Visitor Comment: Steve Patterson asked about status of surplus/auction plan; Mayor noted delay, plans to work on it next week and will follow up directly.

Minutes: MSP: To approve June 22, 2026, council meeting minutes. Councilor McClung/Bernard. Motion passed. **Yes:4 No:1**

Water Meter Project Update

- Vendor Selection: Core & Main selected at prior meeting. Contract under legal review.
- Funding/Grant:
 - EPA-controlled grant expected to cover all project costs, including:
 - On-site server for data backup and system operations.
 - Communication infrastructure (receivers on city tower and at hill/tanks).
 - Two large meters (tank inlet and outlet) for system balance/leak detection.
 - Temporary part-time IT support (wages reimbursable through grant).
 - Staff installation labor reimbursable.
 - Potential excess grant funds may be used for related items if pre-approved by EPA. Treatment plant upgrades are likely not eligible unless clearly tied to meter system; will seek EPA approval before any additions.
- Data/Security:
 - Meter data encrypted; must route through Core & Main. City system will associate meter IDs with addresses internally; Core & Main will only see meter ID and consumption.
 - Public Works to use tablets/phones to read meters; internal system to display customer info securely (firewall, access control).

- Communications/SCADA:
 - Add town-wide city-use wireless coverage to back up existing twisted copper line between tank and plant (line may be abandoned by telecom; Wi-Fi acts as fallback for reservoir level and signals).
- **Temporary IT Hire:**
 - Proposal: Hire David Keebler as temporary part-time IT to set up meters/system; costs covered by grant.
 - Council Consensus: Supportive; concerns noted about post-6-month support. Options: ensure documentation/manual, cross-train another resource, coordinate with other municipalities, keep system simple and maintainable.
- Admin Access:
 - Correcting SAM.gov and domain admin access for compliance and payments.

Downtown Beautification Update

- Completed:
 - Last 3 trees were planted.
 - Boulders delivered/placed (thanks to volunteers and Public Works).
- Remaining:
 - 10 planters need flowers and bark; defer planting to late September (cooler weather, fall stock; reduce watering load).
 - Plan to replace old trash receptacles with new units in September.
 - Expect watering through October.
- Watering/Operations:
 - Current Year: Public Works (Brian) to continue watering given late season; potential temporary help if hired.
 - Future Plan: Discuss hiring/advertising for next year; options include flyers, social media, radio.
 - Liability/Equipment Use: Prefer contractor provides own equipment (like prior arrangement with licensed/bonded contractor). If city trailer is used, volunteers can be covered under city volunteer policy. Using city vehicles may require payroll/insurance.
- Volunteers/Schools:
 - Explore engaging football/basketball teams or grad night committee for weeding/cleanup/watering in exchange for donations. City to contact school (Mr. Gonzalez) to gauge interest. Sandy offered to train volunteers.
- Responsibility Discussion:
 - Comment raised about business owner responsibility for sidewalk/streetscape vs. city role. Response: Most cities maintain public trees/planters; downtown has limited or no building water access for planters; need continuity for downtown to be nice.
- Memorial Bricks:
 - Many bricks have excessive concrete and were removed during prior work. Proposal to consolidate into a single memorial area with signage (e.g., near a tree across the street).
 - Concerns: Bricks were purchased/dedicated; verify original intent/locations; contact families when possible. Some locations changed with new sidewalks; some planters removed. Further review needed; likely a 2027 task

COLA Approval

- Motion: Approve COLA at 3.1% (consistent with budget).
- Vote: Unanimous. Passed.

Small City Allotment Grant Update:

- Status: Out to bid; advertisement expected July 29; bids due August 11 (day before next council meeting).
- Scope:
 - New curbs along South Bridge Street (by park).
 - New sidewalks from US-26 to next intersection.
 - Replace/upgrade City Hall concrete entry/handrail to ADA-compliant; address deterioration.

Hauled Waste (Gray Water) Plan and Rates:

- Purpose: Establish fees/process to accept hauled gray water (fire camps).
- Authority: Existing ordinance allows hauled waste per an approved hauled waste plan; plan must be approved by DEQ, Public Works, and engineer.
- Method:
 - Base equivalency: Average residential contribution $\approx$ 14,000 gallons/year; 2,500-gallon truck $\approx$ fraction of a service.
 - Strength Adjustment: Compare to city average Fees scale
 - Operational Costs: Include testing (\$130/sample), admin time (1.5 hours per truck for logging, sampling, billing).
 - Sampling: For multiple loads (fire camps), composite up to 5 loads for an average; retain split sample for trace-back if needed.
- Example Fee: Approx. \$355 per 2,500-gallon load (variable by strength and truck size).
- Comparisons: Mount Vernon $\sim$ \$0.30/gal; Baker City $\sim$ \$0.23/gal (black water). Proposed structure is competitive and cost-covering.
- Action: Engineer to send plan to DEQ for approval. **MSP: To approve the hauled waste plan by DEQ's approval, authorizing the Mayor to sign once approved. Councilor McClung/Coburn. Unanimously passed.**

Gaslin Contract Renewal:

- Contract mirrors prior agreement; updated pricing aligns with budget.
 - Includes 30-day written notice termination/modification clause.
- MSP: Approve renewal with Gaslin Accounting. Councilor McClung/ Coburn. Unanimous. Passed.**

Burn Pile Operations:

- Status: Reopened after temporary closure due to:
 - Fire danger over July 4th.
 - Illegal dumping (household trash, diapers).
- Enforcement:
 - Additional cameras installed; clear night imaging; more signage planned.
 - One violator identified; initially asked to retrieve material; partial compliance; Violator illegally moved remaining trash onto mill property; referred to Prairie Wood Products and Sheriff's Office.
 - Council consensus: Pursue strict enforcement and fines for future violations; report to Sheriff; use camera evidence (plates).
- DEQ/Legal:
 - DEQ can order closure if misuse continues.
 - Illegal dumping is criminal (Offensive Littering) and civil (DEQ penalties up to \$25,000/day for serious violations).
- Access/Hours:
 - Consider posting hours (e.g., sunrise to sunset) and "No Trespassing beyond this point outside posted hours; violators subject to prosecution," to deter after-hours activity and provide enforcement basis.

- Explore installing a sign near highway access (coordinate with ODOT if in right-of-way).
- Signage to include allowed materials list and ORS references/penalties.
- Coordination with Prairie Wood Products:
 - Mill has enhanced security/cameras; placed logs and no-trespassing signs.
 - City road to burn pile is city right-of-way; materials moved onto mill property handled by mill and Sheriff.
 - Mill exploring restart options; city to continue coordination.

Sewer Rate Study

- Consultant: Kim Anderson and Dessa Wells.
- Materials distributed; council to review.
- Plan: Invite consultant to present at August 12 meeting if available; if not, schedule a special meeting or defer to September.

Parks & Recreation Master Plan

- Final draft copies distributed; issues noted:
 - Incorrect council/committee names.
 - Priorities not aligned with council/committee decisions.
- Next Steps:
 - Mayor to contact consultant (Jesse) to:
 - Confirm incorporation of all council-provided corrections (names, priorities).
 - Provide corrected final draft for review.
 - Clarify funding application deadlines (believed September).
 - Target: Address at August meeting; if heavy agenda, defer sewer rate study to September to allow P&R plan adoption.
 - Payment to consultant contingent upon receiving corrected final document.

Public Works Report:

- Routine operations are ongoing: sampling, water/sewer operations, parks.
- Lagoon pivots down; working on repairs.
- Frequent fuel trips to generator at Faiman.
- Staffing/On-Call:
 - Current two-person rotation strains coverage and projects.
 - For training a new hire for on-call competence estimated at ~2 months.
 - Discussion held on hiring approach (full-time vs. seasonal/part-time); considerations:
 - Seasonal may limit applicant pool; full-time improves recruitment and on-call coverage.
 - Output and workload justification for 3 FTE debated.
 - Potential temporary outside assistance for weekend checks discussed.
 - Decision: Mayor to determine hiring type; proceed to advertise promptly.

Hiring: Public Works Utility Position

- Agenda amended to discuss posting.
- Direction:
 - Mayor to finalize job type (seasonal vs. full-time).
 - Job ad to run via radio, newspaper, Oregon Employment Department; also local postings as needed.
 - Timeline (target): Accept applications through Aug 10–14; interviews mid-August. Exact dates to be finalized by staff.
 - Wage and ad duration to be set by Mayor (personnel matter).

Accounts and Finance

- Cash Balances (End of Month):
 - Total: \$1,944,208 (down from \$1,972,066).
 - LGIP: \$1,848,795 at ~4% interest.
 - Checking: ~\$95,000.
- Highlights:
 - Water Fund income up ~\$69,000 YoY (above target).
 - Water Fund operating income ~ \$37,000; reflects increased expenses.
 - Law enforcement YTD expenses: \$0.
 - LGIP YTD interest: \$67,000.
 - Insurance premium paid: \$52,591.
 - Museum income YTD: \$7,482 (prior year \$6,398).
 - Museum sales/admissions/gift shop YTD: \$1,961 (prior year \$2,506).
 - Water fund loan payment: \$88,955.
- **MSP: Approve accounts payable, to pay the City's bills. Councilor Coburn/McClung. Unanimously approved.**
- **Attorney Invoices:**
 - Authorize Mayor to pay attorney invoices outside of normal billing cycle.

MSP: Approve payment of legal invoices outside of normal billing cycle. Unanimous. Passed.

Recurring Bills – Early Payment Authority:

- To avoid late fees and capture prompt pay discounts:
 - Authorize Mayor to approve early payment of electric and fuel invoices when due dates precede council meetings.
 - These payments will appear with documentation in next AP packet.

MSP: Approve authority as described Councilor Davis/Bernard.: Unanimous. Passed.

- Note: Will monitor other recurring bills (credit card, phone).

Additional Notes

- Museum Donation: Local student donated the revenue from her senior project ~ \$400 from Color Run proceeds to museum.
- Public Communications: Positive feedback on website availability of agendas/minutes and July 4th event communications.

Adjourn: MSP: To adjourn the meeting. Councilor Coburn/Bernard. Unanimous.

Approved by the City Council on this 12th day of August 2026 and signed by the Mayor.

Mayor Colby Bradford

Attested:

Shonalie Oakes, City Recorder