
CITY OF MILTON-FREEWATER GOVERNING BODY

Destiny Jensen At Large, Position 1
Steve Irving - Council President At Large, Position 2
Wes Koklich At Large, Position 3

Mike Odman
John Lyon
Emily Holden
Jose Garcia

Mayor
Ward 1
Ward 2
Ward 3

CITY OF MILTON-FREEWATER**May 12, 2025****CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**

The Council of the City of Milton-Freewater met in regular session on Monday, May 12, 2025 in the Albee Room of the City Library, 8 SW 8th Avenue at 7:00 p.m.

The following members were present: Mayor Mike Odman, Councilors John Lyon, Wes Koklich, Destiny Jensen, Jose Garcia, Steve Irving and Emily Holden.

Youth Representatives Norma Rodriguez and Zachary Lamb were absent.

Staff members present were: City Manager Chad Morris, City Recorder Leanne Steadman, Finance Director Laurie Bubar, Police Chief Joe Shurtz, Fire Chief Shane Garner and Library Director Lili Schmidt.

Guests and citizens present were: Kay West, Paul Seaquist, Tammy Seaquist, Ryan Westman, Barney Barcroft, Dennis Radke, Kate York and Tina Kain.

Representing the news media were: Sherrie Widmer of the Valley Herald and Sheila Hagar with the East Oregonian.

CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS:

The consent calendar items consisted of:

- Regular Session Minutes from April 14, 2025
- Executive Session Minutes from April 14, 2025

Councilor Irving motioned to approve all items on the Consent Calendar. Councilor Lyon seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

BUSINESS ITEMS:**REQUEST – KIWANIS CLUB OF MILTON-FREEWATER REQUESTING AN EXEMPTION TO CITY CODE 8-2-19 TO ALLOW ALCOHOL IN YANTIS PARK FOR WEEKEND AT THE BLUES FESTIVAL IN AUGUST 2025**

The Milton-Freewater Kiwanis Club is requesting a waiver to city code 8-2-19 to allow alcohol to be sold and consumed in Yantis Park during the Weekend at the Blues Festival in August 2025.

Councilor Lyon motioned to allow the Milton-Freewater Kiwanis Club request for an exemption to City Code 8-2-19, allowing them to lawfully sell and consume alcohol in Yantis Park for the Weekend at the Blues Festival Event. Councilor Holden seconded the motion. The motion passed with Councilor Jensen being the only dissenting vote.

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO APPROACH THE COUNCIL WITH ISSUES NOT ON THE AGENDA

Sheila Hagar, 704 College Street – spoke about her concern of the tall weeds in town including the sidewalks. She listed areas of concern and asked if the city spray program has stopped. She handed out an information sheet that listed issues/concerns of tall grass/weeds.

Barney Barcroft, 115 Orchard – asked why the upcoming elections information was not on the city website.

It was explained to him that it's Umatilla County Elections Division that would produce that information not the city. Umatilla County Elections Division is also the one who decides whether or not there is a voters' pamphlet that would contain that information if the candidate paid to be included.

Councilor Koklich informed Mr. Barcroft of a location where he could obtain that information.

Mr. Barcroft asked about the Local Option Tax measure for Public Transportation in the amount of \$100,000 that was listed on the ballot.

Manager Morris stated that was for the Senior & Disabled Transportation Program.

A brief discussion ensued.

Paul Seaquist, 684 College – said he didn't notice a response from the city council to Ms. Hagar's comments earlier spoken. He stated the Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) wasn't doing his job, he then made a reference to a house on DeHaven Street. He said he wants the CEO "out there" everyday tagging properties because he wants this town clean.

Councilor Irving stated there was a physical reaction, which was shown by filling up the dumpster on Make a Difference Day.

A brief discussion ensued regarding a \$125,000 grant from the Port of Umatilla for the north entrance to town.

Mayor Odman asked the City Manager to look at the current abatement program.

Dennis Radke representing the Bread Basket spoke about the struggle of communities navigating the effects of increased food costs, inflation, and federal funding reductions. He shared they were looking for help, either food or monetary donations.

Councilor Koklich shared the Bread Basket was open Monday and Friday's from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. He stated his concern was their rising cost in utilities. With the amount of refrigerators and freezers in their building, he asked if the Conservation Specialist could take a look at their location for any possible cost saving measures.

Mayor Odman recommended looking at their power consumption and any weatherization improvements that could be made.

Councilor Holden requested a list of expenditures from the community support budget line item.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Morris reported Russ Woodward has been hired as the Aquatic Center Manager for the 2025 season; he will be getting his Certified Pool Operator Certificate the week of May 12th. There have been five applications turned in for the lifeguard position and fourteen applications turned in for concession/cashier. The pool opening date is still unknown as well as whether or not open swim, lap swim or swim lessons will be available. The pool heaters are scheduled for maintenance on May 28th. Planning for the tennis courts reconstruction is set for June, with late summer, early fall construction. He reported he is not expecting any grant money from the state by this fall, but focus will be on the courts receiving a new base and new surface. He asked the council if they wanted him to bring an updated ordinance regarding nuisance and graffiti for them to consider at a future work session. The city's mission/vision statement will be a work session topic again in the near future. The Mutual of Understanding Agreement in support of the US Army of Corps of Engineers General Investigation study for the Milton-Freewater Water Control District will be voted on in June or July, he will disseminate and ask for comments beforehand.

Manager Morris announced that Mayor Odman submitted question prior to the council meeting asking for updates from him during his manager's report. He reported he planned to create a digital city newsletter which would be posted on the city website and Facebook along with the web link being included on the utility bills. He is planning to have the first edition out in January 2026. He answered the question on how the city communicates meeting notices with advertisement in the Valley Herald, flyers and Facebook. There was a question on the netting at the golf course, he stated the parks supervisor is getting a list of the netting that needs to be replaced and will be getting price quotes. Next was a question on the baseball fields and the disposition of the repairs needed. He reported the following repairs have been completed; the dugout benches at Rotary Field have been replaced, electric has been restored to the mounds at Rotary Field, the bleachers at Rotary Field were repaired by Little League volunteers, the lighting in the restrooms at Yantis have been replaced, the doors on the restrooms at Yantis have been installed, the roof on Yantis Little League building has been replaced. Staff has purchased the wood to replace the bleachers at Yantis. He had a report that the floor in the announcer's booth needed repair, after his visit, he didn't see anything that needed immediate attention. There's been a report of low spots in the outfield at Yantis, he reported this was due to the irrigation main which will have to be repaired at the end of the season since the field will need to be dug up to repair. He stated staff will look into the sink being relocated in the concession stand which has been requested to be moved by the Little League President. Next, he reported on the Freewater Park renovation, so far, the asphalt has been done, irrigation modifications are in progress, fencing bids are due May 29th, waiting on concrete curb cuts for ADA ramps, the bathroom doors, lighting, ADA sinks and door locks have been installed. The water for the splash pad will be turned back on Memorial Day weekend. The next item was the status of the police station project. He reported the project was not closed out. He stated contractually there was \$5,000 owed. The general contractor feels that more is owed to them. He is waiting for a response from the contractor.

Mayor Odman asked what the general contractor was asking for.

Manager Morris stated \$700,000, but they would settle for \$300,000. The city has withheld \$60,000 in liquidated damages and he has offered them \$16,000. He has not heard back from them, but he hasn't followed up with them either.

Next was an update on the grants/lobbyist consultant that he has contracted with. He reported that nothing has been awarded. The T-Mobile grant for cameras looks promising, but not official word. The consultant is working on an ICMA grant that would pay for an Economic Development position paying full salary and benefits for thirty months. They are awarding fifteen rounds. He stated that he knew when he engaged the consultant that it wouldn't be a fast turn around on grants. The Charter Review Committee will be adopting their final report and amendment recommendation the week of May 12th and will be presenting that to the council at a future council meeting. The last item reported on was a sound variance application that he approved for Freewater Cider for May 17th. He received an email from them stating they have changed their layout to help with the sound and the effect to the neighbors. He announced that if there are any concerns regarding this sound variance to call him directly.

COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilor Holden announced the Kiwanis festival was being held Saturday, May 17th at Yantis Park and the first Friday Night's on Main was May 23rd. She said she was still looking for a pie judge.

Mayor Mike Odman volunteered to be a judge.

Councilor Irving announced May 14th will be the first Farmer's Market of the year held at Orchard Park.

Barney Barcroft, representing the local American Legion announced he was looking for volunteers to help set flags out at the Milton-Freewater cemetery on Memorial Day starting at 6:45 a.m. He will be hosting a breakfast for the volunteers, veterans and family the same day after placing the flags.

The council adjourned to executive session at 8:22 p.m. pursuant to 192.660 (2) (d) to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on labor negotiations.

The council returned to open session at 9:30 p.m.

Councilor Irving motioned to ratify the IBEW 125 – Outside Bargaining Agreement as orally presented. Councilor Holden seconded the motion which passed with Councilor Koklich voting “present”.

Councilor Holden motioned to ratify the Police Association Bargaining Agreement as orally presented. Councilor Irving seconded the motion which passed with Councilor Koklich voting “present”.

Councilor Holden motioned to ratify the Supervisors and Technicians Bargaining Agreement as orally presented. Councilor Jensen seconded the motion which passed with Councilor Koklich voting “present”.

City Recorder Leanne Steadman inquired about the council work session for May.

There was a consensus of the council to schedule a work session for Tuesday, May 27, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. due to Monday, May 26th being a holiday. The preliminary subjects were; the city's mission statement, graffiti ordinance, nuisance/weed abatement ordinance and review local historical events for future events.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

Mike Odman, Mayor