
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
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES****July 28, 2025**

The Council of the City of Milton-Freewater met in a work session on Monday, July 28, 2025 in the Albee Room of the City Library, 8 SW 8th Avenue at 6:00 p.m.

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

Staff members present were: City Manager Chad Morris and City Recorder Leanne Steadman.

Guests and citizens present were: Sally Babcock, Lili Schmidt, David Prock, Kay West, Megan Hoel, Laurie Bubar, Tracy Martinez and Joe Shurtz.

Youth Representatives Zak Lamb and Norma Rodriguez were absent.

There were no representatives of the media present.

Mayor Odman announced this was a council work session and he would be staying with the decorum of no public comment.

CITY MANAGER EVALUATION PROCESS

Councilor Holden suggested an annual expectation that there would be a community and employee survey done prior to the city manager's evaluation each year. Originally it was suggested that the survey go out in August/September then again April/May, and have the survey results back prior to the city manager's evaluation. She suggested that Human Resource present the council with the questions.

A brief discussion ensued.

Councilor Holden then recommended that the council submit questions as a starting point within the next two weeks, prior to the next council meeting.

Mayor Odman stated due to the time constraint before the city manager's evaluation, and the next city council meeting, he recommended moving forward with the city manager's evaluation as planned in August and then work on the additional surveys as recommended by Councilor Holden.

COMMUNICATION

Councilor Holden stated she met with a representative of school district to learn how they handle public comments, she also talked to them about how they handle anonymous complaints.

Councilor Lyon shared that Walla Walla County subscribed to a 1-800 phone number that people could call in concerns or complaints. There were department heads that were assigned to respond. He said they don't offer that now, but he remembered the phone number getting a lot of use when it was offered.

Mayor Odman shared he had reached out to the Mayor's list serve and asked how other mayors/councils handled anonymous complaints. He has received two responses; one response was that they ignored them and the other response was that they don't accept complaints that are anonymous.

Councilor Jensen said it could be looked at like a whistle blower situation and there could be concern of retaliation. She commented on the subject of public comment and recommended that the council receive the information, but not get into a dialogue.

Councilor Koklich stated the issues being brought forward need to be looked into to see if they are credible.

Mayor Odman stated to verify and validate the information. If its serious, then outside investigation should be brought in.

Councilor Holden recommended compiling a policy, running it by the city attorney, then adopt and put into place.

CHARTER REVIEW AMENDMENTS RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMITTEE

Councilor Irving stated that the Charter Review Committee did a good job.

Mayor Odman asked if the council felt like there was anything that was missed.

Councilor Koklich shared that he would like to see more of the councilor's role in the Charter. He then shared his belief that the council should have been involved with the decisions regarding the new recycling mandate put forth by the State. He also shared that he felt the council should be more involved with the day-to-day operation of the city.

Mayor Odman asked how the council is made aware of these items and was that the duty of the city manager.

Councilor Koklich shared information about the new wildfire maps.

Councilor Jensen asked Councilor Koklich if what he wanted to be added to the Charter was to list more of the powers and duties of the council. She then suggested having a work session regarding the new recycling mandates.

Councilor Koklich shared that Oregon Department of Transportation was proposing to layoff 900 employees due to budget shortfalls.

Councilor Koklich stated he would like a tour of city departments to meet employees.

City Recorder Leanne Steadman shared years ago there used to be tours done of city facilities that included the city farm, landfill, golf course, aquatic center, etc. She said that could be scheduled if the council was interested.

Manager Morris stated that could be done.

Councilor Jensen asked if she could visit the different departments and talk to employees.

Manager Morris stated that it wouldn't be illegal to do that.

There being no further business the work session was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Mike Odman, Mayor