
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**August 25, 2025****CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES**

The Council of the City of Milton-Freewater met for a Work Session on Monday, August 25, 2025 in the Albee Room of the City Library, 8 SW 8th Avenue at 6:08 p.m.

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

Councilor Jose Garcia was absent.

Staff members present were: City Manager Chad Morris, City Recorder Leanne Steadman, Finance Director Laurie Bubar, Library Director Lili Schmidt, Electric Engineering Technician Tina Kain, Public Works Engineering Technician Steven Patten, Public Works Assistant/Project Aid Krista Gannon and Conservation Specialist Ryan Westman.

Guests and citizens present were: Carol Irving, Megan Hoel, Claudia Osorio and Sheila Hagar via conference phone.

Representing the news media were: Sherrie Widmer of the Valley Herald and Dan Thesman of Elkhorn Media Group via conference phone.

Mayor Odman announced this was a council work session and public comment would be taken.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:**BUSINESS OWNER REPRESENTATIVE OPTIONS**

Councilor Koklich presented the City's organizational chart and showed where another advisory committee would be listed if one were to be created. He shared that he was not in favor of creating a Business Representative committee as he believed that was part of the service offered by the Chamber of Commerce.

Claudia Osorio, the Milton-Freewater Chamber Downtown Alliance (MFCDA) Executive Director shared that MFCDA was about serving the business community and helping businesses grow.

Councilor Koklich stated that MFCDA serves inside and outside businesses and the city collaborates with their activities. There has been a request for additional electrical outlets for the north main events and Freewater Park. He commended MFCDA by saying they do a lot and they are greatly appreciated.

Councilor Lyon asked if all businesses were members of MFCDA is they get a business license.

Ms. Osorio stated businesses needed to apply by application and pay for a membership.

Megan Hoel stated she wrote the proposal for a Business Owner Representative to have tax talks and levy talks. She wants to be part of those conversations, and not just told what to do with her business. She stated she didn't feel the council represents her best interest because she is not a city resident.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the committee being structured similar to the parks and recreation committee.

Councilor Holden stated the city planner position has been vacant for some time, having a city planner could help give direction and be involved with businesses.

Manager Morris stated he was getting ready to advertise for a Community Development Director.

Councilor Irving stated he believed that to be part of Community Development Partnership's (CDP) service.

Manager Morris stated that the Community Development Director would be responsible for land use planning, economic development, etc. He then asked what the council's direction was regarding a Business Owner Representative advisory committee.

Councilor Jensen stated she was in favor of creating an advisory committee.

Councilor Holden suggested having a draft ordinance to review at the September work session with possible adoption at the October regular city council meeting.

There was a consensus of the council to move towards the creation of an advisory committee that would represent Business Owners.

In other news, Councilor Koklich shared that Pilot Rock's fire department burned down. He said that M-F Rural Fire Department has loaned them a fire truck and he said he has spoken with Manager Morris about a fire truck of the city's that has been deemed surplus. He asked if the truck could be sold, rented or loaned to Pilot Rock.

Manager Morris said he has asked Fire Chief Shane Garner to contact Umatilla Fire District #1 to let them know we have a truck and to inquire if they were interested. He said the truck will pump water, but won't pass a pump test.

Councilor Koklich then shared information from a meeting he and Manager Morris attended in Boardman where Representative Greg Smith was hosting a town hall meeting.

Manager Morris shared he was working on getting a town hall meeting scheduled with Representative Smith in Milton-Freewater, currently looking at some time in the month of September.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the closure of the Cemetery Bridge.

Manager Morris asked about the other agenda item, "Collection of Council Questions for future Staff Survey".

Mayor Odman stated he believed the council was going a different direction.

Councilor Holden shared her list of question for a future staff survey which also included a list of policy requests. In summary her list included; panic button policy, employee complaint process to include Human Resource, City Manager and Council, policy body camera policy, police reporting requirements when a case is assigned to a different agency and standard community – Human Resource and City Manager.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the process and documentation of department trainings along with how to ensure communication among the city manager, department heads, supervisors and employees.

Councilor Holden stated she believed there to be a breakdown in communication that needs to be addressed.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the panic buttons.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Mike Odman, Mayor