

BURNS CITY COUNCIL
March 11, 2026

The Burns City Council met in regular session on March 11, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Members present were as follows:

Mayor: Brad Erbe
Councilor President: Jen Hoke
Councilors: Susan Lowe
Chase Patterson
Andrew Roy
Tod Gahley

Also, in attendance were City Manager Brenda Engebretson, Public Works Director Ty Richardson, Police Chief Robby Tiller, and City Clerk Tiffany Leffler. Also, in attendance via Zoom was the city's Contract Planner Jay Harland.

SUMMARY

The City Council meeting on March 11, 2026, focused on several key topics, including the approval of the Wastewater Facilities Master Plan and the decision to vacate certain rights-of-way for the B Street project. The council also discussed a donation request for the Harney County Little League and addressed concerns about the city's audits, with Savannah Halter providing an update on the delayed 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 audits. The council reviewed the application for a 4th of July parade permit and discussed the reposting of the open council seat position. Additionally, the council expressed appreciation for Brenda's efforts in building relationships with other agencies and discussed the passing of very dedicated community members Jim Withee and Merle Reid.

AGENDA APPROVAL AND ADDED ITEMS

Mayor Erbe removed #4 for Construction Service Contract for South Kearney Avenue Improvement Project from new business and added Duana Woodfin with an event permit for the 4th of July parade in its place.

Councilor Patterson made a motion to approve the agenda with changes. Councilor Roy seconded the motion. All Ayes. (6/o)

CONSENT AGENDA

Work Session Minutes - February 18, 2026 –
Regular City Council Meeting Minutes - February 25, 2026 –

Councilor Hoke made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilor Roy seconded the motion. All Ayes. (6/o)

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Erbe opened the Public Hearing at 6:14 p.m.

The Public Hearing was to propose to vacate portions of West 'A' Street, West 'B' Street, West 'C' Street, North Imperial Avenue, North Juntura Avenue, North Kearny Avenue, North Liberty Avenue, North McGowan Avenue, North Nevada Avenue, North Oregon Avenue, North Piute Avenue, North Quebec Avenue, North Rock Avenue, North State Avenue, and two public alleys, as shown in Exhibit A.

Mayor Erbe asked if there were any conflicts of interest or ex-parte contacts to report. There were none.

Jay Harland, the city's Contract Planner, gave an admonishment for the public hearing.

Jay then gave the staff report and discussed that the vacation of right-of-way in the B Street project area was to align with a replat of the area. He explained that the replat process was driven by the B Street project requirements and resulted in no reduction of lots with right-of-way access, with an additional 12 residential lots added.

Jay informed the council that the big land use process for this had already happened and the council had already approved the replat of these existing lots in this area. The reason for the replat was primarily driven by the B Street project, because, essentially, this area was planted a long time ago, and maybe back then, building street intersections wasn't as expensive as it is now. The city's improvement standards state that if you're building a new street and there's an intersection there, you must build the intersection. This means every time you build an intersection it would need to have water or sewer stubs put in at those intersections. The road would also have to be designed for it to be extended in the future and every single one of those would add a lot of additional costs. In this instance, the blocks were short in this area, and it would have resulted in a very significant increase to the B Street project to have to build an intersection at every one of those rights-of-way.

Mayor Erbe asked for any public testimony in support of, or opposing the right-of-way vacation. There were none, nor were there any additional comments.

Mayor Erbe closed the Public Hearing at 6:24 p.m.

Councilor Gailey made a motion to approve the vacation as proposed. Councilor Roy seconded it. All Ayes. (6/o)

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Donation Request for Harney County Little League** –Councilor Patterson made a motion to donate \$150.00 to renew the City of Burns banner. Councilor Gahley seconded the motion. All Ayes. (6/o)
2. **Savannah Halter – Umpqua Valley Financial Auditor** – Savannah Halter, the financial auditor from Umpqua Valley, provided an update on the city's audits for 23-24 and 24-25, noting that while the 22-23 report was filed late, the 23-24 audit documents are available but some items are still pending. For the 24-25 audit, significant information is still missing, with only a few items checked off on the required checklist, and the auditor requested guidance on how to improve communication to move the process forward. The council discussed receiving updates from Savannah Halter regarding audit progress, with the Financial Clerk Mindy Clemens being expected to provide an update at the first meeting in April.

Councilor Roy mentioned that early last year the council was cc'd in an email to the current City Manager at that time trying to verify they had the correct email for their contact at the city because they had not received a response in some time. He informed the council that he had raised concerns with Umpqua regarding communication issues in the city when he had requested financial information and audit requirements, noting that previous requests for adjusted journal entries had not been addressed. While asking these questions he was notified by Umpqua (Savannah Halter) that someone had informed them that they were not to speak with

him anymore. He expressed his concern for the city and how a failed audit could affect them in the long run.

3. **Waste Water Facilities Master Plan** – Councilor Hoke made a motion to adopt the Wastewater Facilities Master Plan. Councilor Gahley seconded the motion. All Ayes. (6/o)
4. **Construction Service Contract for South Kearney Avenue Improvement Project** – This item was removed and postponed for a later meeting.

Councilor Gailey still expressed concerns about the change orders and seeking clarification on the approval process for something like this after the last change order issue with the B Street extension. City Manager Brenda confirmed the contract is being completely redrafted with new requirements.

5. **Duana Woodfin - Event Permit for 4th of July Parade** – She presented a request for an event permit for the 4th of July parade as part of Oregon's 250th birthday celebration, committing to work with city departments for proper planning and coordination.

Councilor Hoke made a motion to accept the application and approve the event permit for the 4th of July Parade so that Duana Woodfin could move forward with requesting ODOT's approval to close the highway down Broadway. Councilor Patterson seconded the motion. All Ayes. (6/o)

6. **Kim Rollins City Charter and Roberts Rules of Order – 831 Riverside Dr.** – He urged the importance of following the city charter and Robert's Rules of Order in Council meetings, suggesting training options including free online videos and potential workshops with local FFA students. The Council discussed implementing Robert's Rules of Order training, with City Manager Brenda Engebretson saying she would look into training options including the possibility of working with FFA students. She also notified council that she had ordered each of the councilors' Robert's Rules of Order books that they could refer to during their time on council.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Decision on Candidates for the Open Council Seat** – They reviewed the candidacy of Mr. Nick Planinz for an open council seat, with Councilor Gahley explaining his decision not to support his application due to concerns about his collaborative approach and past actions. There was no motion carried.

RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES

1. **Ordinance No. 26-908** – An Ordinance vacating portions of West 'A' Street, West 'B' Street, West 'C' Street, North Imperial Avenue, North Juntura Avenue, North Kearney Avenue, North Liberty Avenue, North McGowan Avenue, North Nevada Avenue, North Oregon Avenue, North Piute Avenue, North Quebec Avenue, North Rock Avenue, North State Avenue, and two public alleys.

Councilor Hoke made a motion to read Ordinance No. 26-908 by title only. Councilor Gahley seconded the motion. All Ayes. (6/o)

Councilor Gahley made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 26-908. Councilor Roy seconded the motion. All Ayes. (6/o)

2. **Resolution No. 26-820** – A Resolution declaring certain city equipment owned by the City of Burns to be surplus property and indicating the intent and method for the disposal of such surplus property.

Councilor Gahley made a motion to read Resolution No. 26-820 by title only. Councilor Patterson seconded the motion. All Ayes. **(6/o)**

Councilor Hoke made a motion to approve Resolution No. 26-820. Councilor Gahley seconded the motion. All Ayes. **(6/o)**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The council meeting included tributes to community members Jim Withee and Merle Reid, who had sadly passed away.

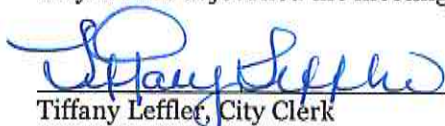
The council also agreed to repost the open council position with a 30-day application period ending April 8th, with final votes scheduled for April 22nd.

NEXT STEPS

1. City Staff: Repost the open City Council position vacancy with a deadline for letters of interest by April 8th.
2. City Manager: Provide an update at the first April meeting regarding the status of the audit checklist and progress on providing required documentation to the auditor (Umpqua Valley).
3. City Manager: Connect with the FFA instructor (and possibly Burns High School) to coordinate Robert's Rules of Order training session for the Council with students.
4. Staff: Order and distribute Robert's Rules of Order books to councilors for ongoing reference.
5. City Manager: Ensure the Kearney contract agreement is fully redrafted with required provisions and brought back for Council review after legal counsel review.

ADJOURN

Mayor Erbe adjourned the meeting at 7:31 p.m.


Tiffany Leffler, City Clerk


Brad Erbe, Mayor