BURNS CITY COUNCIL
July 8, 2026

The Burns City Council met in regular session on July 8, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Members present were as follows:

Mayor:	Jen Hoke
Councilor President:	
Councilors:	Susan Lowe
	Shane Brockmann
	Bryan Garo
	Chase Patterson - Excused
	Andrew Roy
	Tod Gahley

Also, in attendance were City Manager Brenda Engebretson, Public Works Director Ty Richardson, Police Chief Robby Tiller, and Fire Chief Scott Williamson.

SUMMARY

The council discussed several key issues and received updates from the Harney County Chamber of Commerce. Jess Hedges presented the chamber's quarterly update, highlighting recent initiatives including the Shop Harney jackpot program, Harney Nights events, community bike night, and regional dark sky meetings, while also requesting a $100 water and sewer gift certificate for the upcoming chamber benefit auction, which the council approved. The meeting included extensive discussion about concerns raised by Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) on R3. He expressed opposition to the city's involvement due to perceived liability issues and concerns about grant funding processes, leading to a debate about transparency and public perception of city decisions. The council also addressed technical issues with their meeting system's acoustics and accessibility for people with hearing disabilities, with Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) requesting accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The need for better communication about city meetings and events was further discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

AGENDA APPROVAL AND ADDED ITEMS

Mayor Hoke added a discussion on public meeting minutes to #3, concerns about R3 information to # 4, city getting the word out about issues or meetings to #5, and American Disabilities Act (ADA) regarding public Agencies providing effective communication and accessibility for people with hearing or other disabilities to # 6.

Councilor Brockmann made a motion to approve the agenda with the added items. Councilor Garo seconded the motion. All Ayes. (6/0)

CONSENT AGENDA

Regular City Council Meeting Minutes – June 24, 2026 –
Work Session Minutes June 22, 2026 -

Councilor Gahley felt there was a section that significantly needed to be re-worded on June 24, 2026, City Council meeting minutes. He thought it should read something more to the effect of, "from a current budget of $123,000, which had been reduced by $60,000 over the last four years, the proposed reduction of 16,000 and eventual phase out to zero would have significant impact on chamber services.

Councilor Gahley made a motion to approve the consent agenda with the changes. Councilor Garo seconded the motion. All Ayes. (6/0)

NEW BUSINESS

1. Harney County Chamber of Commerce Update – Harney County Chamber Director, Jess Hedges, provided a quarterly update on the Harney County Chamber of Commerce's activities, including the launch of Shop Harney Jackpot to drive local spending, production of Harney Nights events, and coordination of media opportunities with international reach. The Chamber has over 80 businesses participating in Shop Harney and recently hosted a regional dark sky meeting and tribal tourism meeting. Jess then proceeded to request a $100 water and sewer gift certificate for the upcoming chamber benefit auction.

   The Council discussed providing a $100 water and sewer gift certificate for the upcoming Chamber Benefit Auction, with a motion and second being recorded.

   Councilor Gahley made a motion to approve a $100 gift certificate for water and sewer to the Chamber Benefit Auction. Councilor Garo seconded the motion. All Ayes. (6/0)

2. Choose Council President – Mayor Hoke started off by explaining the responsibilities of the Council President.

   Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) came up to the podium and asked that the council consider nominating a younger council member stating he didn't have anything against the older council members but that they had mentioned before about getting younger people involved.

   Councilor Gahley made a motion to nominate Councilor Garo to be Council President. Councilor Roy seconded the motion. All Ayes. (6/0)

3. Discussion on Public Meeting Minutes –

   Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) addressed concerns about public meeting minutes not containing the information that he said the ORS required. He informed the council that everyone who speaks should be identified as well as what they said.

   Councilor Gahley said he disagreed with what he was saying concerning the minutes and gave them an example in the minutes. He directed them to the bottom of page 3 to where it says, Councilor Gailey clarified the parks budget spent approximately $30,000 last year, with $71,000 budgeted for the current year. He said he was identified when he made those comments, and it was accurate because he had made that comment. He said he hadn't seen examples of information in the written minutes being wrong. He disagreed with him last time, and he still

disagreed with him this time. He thought the written minutes still represent what happened in the meeting, and when they don't, they make corrections to them like they did that evening. He informed Mr. Rollins that if he ever sees something he doesn't think is accurate, then it would be appropriate for him to also point that out so the council can make those corrections. He believed the problem was not with the minutes, but it was a problem with being able to hear what was being said and accurately know what was happening. He said Mr. Rollins sort of gave an example of that at the beginning of his comments that evening.

Kim Rollins, 831 Riverside Drive, said that was one instance, but in one of the last two minutes, it says in one of the minutes that a counselor said, but he knew they were talking about Councilor Gahley because he was there and witnessed it. He said if he wasn't there and didn't know what happened, he should be able to look at those minutes and tell it was Councilor Gahley.

Councilor Garo asked Mr. Rollins if he had an example of the incorrect minutes on him that evening.

Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) said he did not have an example of those and would bring back examples as well as the specifics of what the minimum requirements are for that ORS.

Councilor Garo asked Mr. Rollins to please bring an example of a deficient set of minutes.

Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) said when somebody speaks and minutes are recorded, no matter whether it's the counselor, the administrator, or someone speaking during public comment, it is supposed to be represented in the minutes. He gave an example saying that when John Doe comes in and says, they are upset about the potholes and they talk for 3 minutes about that, all that is being represented is that John Doe came in and voiced concerns about the potholes on such and such street. He said they don't have to write down 3 minutes of the thing, but there's a reason for John Doe coming in there and they came in to be on the record.

Mayor Hoke said she wanted to look at this too, because she had done some SDAO training, and they were saying that they are coming away from who is making the motion and no longer using the names and things of that nature. She informed Mr. Rollins that she had done the training about 6 months ago but wanted to do a little bit more research on it. She understood that when there was a public comment, councilor comment, or anyone else speaking, they needed to be identified, but she thought some of the things had changed and she wanted to look in SDAO, which was the special districts because they fell under the special district guidelines.

Councilor Gahley gave another example from the minutes. He said there was a comment that doesn't specifically identify people, but it identifies general tone of what was happening. It said multiple community members spoke in support of maintaining current funding levels, etc., in discussing what they had talked about in the money for the chamber. He thought it would be interesting to know, because he wondered if each one of those members, when they're all basically speaking in support of the same thing, be identified, or would that make the minutes too cumbersome. He wanted to look into that and see if that's appropriate, or if they needed to be more specific.

Mayor Hoke said this is all coming up because of City Clerk Tiffany Leffler's time and figuring out how they can be more effective and efficient and still hit the mark of what they are required to do. She thought they could sum up what happened, but that if an individual person from the public was speaking, especially because they do ask them to identify themselves, she would say they should be identified if they spoke, but she would want to do some more digging.

Councilor Garo said they could continue to discuss it, but it was written down somewhere and whatever is stated there is what they need to do.

Mayor Hoke said she believed they needed to follow through on that.

4. Concerns about R3 Information –

Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) had concerns about R3 information and issues. He said he had spoken many times about his opposition to the City of Burns' involvement in R3 as part of the Governing Board. His opposition started before R3 was formed, but he is still opposed to the City of Burns' involvement, and the possibility of liability that comes with having somebody on that governing board. He informed the council he had seen the General Manager R3 (Nick Green) many times suggest something, but then say it is really up to the board. He said that when Nick Green says that he is putting himself at arm's length from any liability. The board is the one that will be liable. He said that he does it repeatedly and is known for it.

Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) continued to say that he believed that Councilor Gahley's recent R3 report was merely parroting of R3 General Manager Nick Green's words and may not be as sweet as the propaganda projects. Part of Councilor Gahley's report was on R3 assisting and putting out heat pump grants. He said this was true, they did that, but it possibly was not such a good thing. He believed that a big chunk of that money was funneled into a private consulting company owned by and controlled by the paid General Managers of R3. He said without bids put out for the services that company supposedly provided, he suspected that amount had gone to that consulting company. It may have been enough to put heating and air into many homes in the community, possibly as many as 10 to 15 more homes, but he believes when that was decided by the Board to allow 15% was to go to Catalyst Consulting for staff, that as far as he knew that staff at Catalyst Consulting was Nick Green. He informed them that might not be the case, but as far as he could find out, Nick Green is the general manager of R3, and he gets paid as the general manager, to take 15% of that.

Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) informed the council that the average heat pump costs would be far less than the ones at their home, but they had to have 2 units, and the bid ran over, $16,000. He said he didn't go through R3 and went through Smith Heating. They put everything into Eastern Oregon Development Corporation and avoided it going through R3. He said he had papers at home that he just got that show that somehow his project got $1,000 from funds from the state that were put into R3 and R3 did nothing for him. He did the application. He did the bid, he did all the deeds etc., and R3 did nothing. It took him about 50 minutes, maybe, to get the application filed and get all the dates and stuff together. He said at $16,000; Catalyst would get 15% of that, $16,000 if that project went through R3 and he did not think it was right.

Mayor Hoke said she thought they would need to look into more specific information to confirm any of that.

Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) said the issue he had with R3 and Burns being involved with it is that Burns has a liability for that, and he thought the liability is greater than gains. He said as far as he knows, the only thing that Burns has got from being involved with R3 is help in getting a $550,000 debt.

Councilor Gahley thought he would be the best person to respond to Mr. Rollins' questions. He addressed the liability issue, because he thought the whole organization of R3 is largely misunderstood, by Mr. Rollins and by many others. He informed Mr. Rollins that R3 is an organization that is intergovernmental, and it was formed with the intent to be able to get money from the State to be able to use to be used to help development in communities in

Oregon with a population of under 50,000. He said it was an intergovernmental agreement and for that to work, it requires representatives from multiple governments and multiple cities that are under 50,000. He said right now, they only have 2 governments that have been able and/or willing to be involved in it. They had 3, but Lakeview backed out. He was not sure why they backed out, but they did have lots of other issues that their city was dealing with. And so maybe it was just not the right time, or not having the resources to deal with it, and he wasn't sure of why. As of right now, there are only two and he said he would love to see more communities get involved in it.

Councilor Gahley informed everyone that R3 is intended to bring in money, and what they have successfully done is brought in money, multiple times, and there is more money coming from the state to be used for things for development for small towns. For that to be done, it needed some organization to be able to go after those funds, and that had to be managed by intergovernmental representatives. He is one of those, and there is another representative in the city of Baker who is the other one currently. He said it operates sort of like the city council. They have counselors (board members), and the city manager (Catalyst Consulting, which is Nick Green). The city manager has proposals or wants to do things, and the council hears those things and decides whether it's good for the city and Nick Green with Catalyst Consulting does for the R3 organization. The Chamber of Commerce is another example. When Jessica Hedges does the things that she wants to do, she takes those to the board, and the board says if it's a good idea or not. He said that in that respect, they are functioning the same way as any other organization. He said without R3, and without the board's involvement, he didn't believe R3 could exist anymore. Those monies would not be available, including the monies that made it possible for example for the heat pump program He said that the money for the heat pump wouldn't be there or available, and wouldn't have been used, if not for R3 because R3 got that money from the state and decided this was a good program for these cities to offer the heat pump rebate.

Councilor Gahley continued to say whether Mr. Rollins thought he had gone through R3 or not, the money that he got came from the grant that R3 obtained. There wouldn't have been a grant for that. The state would have had money, and they would have given it to somebody else, and it would have been used for some purpose, but because R3 exists, R3 got that money and used it for that purpose. They also used it for much of what's happening at Miller Springs, and for places in Baker, Lakeview, and in several other cities. I he gives his report on R3, he highlights what R3 is doing to benefit the City of Burns, because that should be their concern. As far as liability goes, R3 has liability within its own function, which has nothing to do with funding or anything else from the City of Burns. He said there is no legal ramification that he can see even being possible. He said if they really think it is important, they could check with legal and make sure that anything that may happen in R3 could not come back and affect the City of Burns. Unless the City of Burns has agreed to do it, which is what they did with the B Street extension. They agreed to run a street out to the Miller Springs subdivision. There were costs that weren't covered completely by grants that originally the city had thought were, but he felt that was really a separate issue from any liability that the city may have with R3.

Councilor Roy said he didn't think that was what Mr. Rollins was getting at. He understood how it worked but he had issues with things such as the B Street extension. He pointed out that the $3 million contract was given to Council the night before and it had never made it onto the agenda. He then informed them that while they were having that meeting, his big issue was there was no clear date on when it needed to be finished. It was blank. His other issue was R3 having the members at large also on council. He felt that was a huge issue, because if a counselor were to vote to take an agreement, they would in turn indemnify themselves as the member at large, which did take place. Councilor Roy had no prior knowledge that Nick Green would come on for R3, and he had raised this issue. The current City Manager at the time, Judy Erwin, had

asked Nick Green to come on and address the council because they had these issues. Councilor Roy felt there was an issue of not having the contract out to the public, yet the council voted on it. That goes against their charter as well as a lot of other things and that is where he takes this issue.

Councilor Roy said that the B Street extension was great, but his issue was clarity, and it keeps coming up in the community. The 2 houses out on B Street are owned by R3 and the city just took out a huge grant. The advisor to the city, Catalyst, advised them to sign over a grant and that gave his company $145,000 and also paved the road to Miller Springs, that now R3 has two houses on, and they plan to build more. He said he has been to John Day and spoken to plenty of people up there, and they just keep telling hm that the city should go run for the hills. He did not feel it was a good look, and now the cities and the taxpayers are now paying for that $500,000 debt.

Councilor Roy informed everyone that Jay Harland, the city's Contract Planner, had come to Burns to speak with the Council as well as the Planning Commission, but he believed only Councilor Gailey, himself, and a few others attended. It was not recorded but Jay had brought up that they had done a good job of limiting their exposure by not taking out tons of loans and grants like Lake County and John Day because they are now having to make cuts.

Councilor Garo said he understands the sentiment behind being involved with Projects that Nick Green's involved in, because he felt his track record was not a phenomenal track record. From Promising John Day a swimming pool and 3D printed houses, that never came about. Regardless of the nuance behind it, the public perception of Nick's projects is largely sour. He understood why members of the public; some members of the council would want to limit dealings with Nick Green.

Councilor Garo wanted to know, with all the complaints that have been brought up thus far, what was actually actionable, what could they remedy, or what could they rectify from each of these things that have happened. He said there was a lot of uneasiness being thrown out and they are just not sure if they should move forward, but he wanted to know what they should do about it now because they are already in an agreement with R3. They are on that board. They do have programs in place, and they do have commitments out there. Aside from the general feeling of uneasiness, he wanted to know what they were going to do about it that evening.

Mayor Hoke said she believed they needed to have an educational session because they have 3 new councilors who have not heard everything that R3 has to offer, and she thought they needed to educate themselves. She has been learning to look for the facts because there's a lot of misinformation that is put on social media about a lot of different things, so she thinks they as a council should educate themselves on R3, the ins and outs of it, and what they are in for. She thought they should get Nick Green. She said it was great from everything that she had learned about it, but thought they needed to come together, because right now there was a lot of speculation. They just need to go to the source and educate themselves as a council and then decide how they want to move forward together.

Mayor Hoke didn't feel like they were going to solve anything that evening but was open for discussion. She thought everyone should have a voice. She thought it was something they needed to reach out and do because like Councilor Garo said they are here and there's a lot of great things that potentially could happen, but there is also a lot of mistrust. This is why they need to educate themselves and make sure they are learning what is right.

Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) said they needed to educate themselves. He had brought in 300 pages of a dossier on the man that runs R3 (Nick Green), and as far as he knew, only one

counselor has viewed those. He then disagreed with Councilor Gahley had said earlier in the meeting. He said R3 got a small percentage of the grant that the state had that was available and if he remembered correctly, it was $10 or $12 million. R3 just got a million dollars or a million and a half and that money would have been available without R3. And without R3, the 15% to the Catalyst Consulting, might have gone into additional heat pumps. He finished by saying that he has asked this council several times this year to consider withdrawing from R3, but he hasn't seen any action towards discussion or action on his request. He again urged the City of Burns to withdraw from R3. The possible liability might be greater than the gains of having a member on the board. The only thing they have helped in getting is the $550,000 debt. He believes multiple cities use R3 without the liability of having Board member on there.

Mayor Hoke said there was a comment online about educating the community on R3 as well and she informed them that when they have that work session the community will be invited.

5. Discussion on the city getting the word out about issues or meetings –

This portion of the meeting focused on discussing how to communicate information about city meetings and issues to the community better.

Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) explained that he voluntarily shares information about city events on his Facebook page, Harney County Informed, and helped promote the recent work session.

There was clarification that while Kim is effective at getting the word out, the city's official communication system needs improvement, as not all information is consistently shared through official channels.

6. Discussion on the American Disabilities Act (ADA) regarding public meetings agencies providing effective communication and accessibility for people with hearing or other disabilities –

The meeting focused on accessibility concerns related to the Americans with Disabilities Act, specifically regarding communication and hearing assistance in public meetings.

Kim Rollins (831 Riverside Drive) shared experiences about hearing difficulties with the current meeting systems. He said they had all probably seen the letter he had written concerning this subject prior to the meeting. He mentioned visiting Linn County's court system, where they were able to offer him headphones to help address his hearing needs. He also spoke with Harney County who informed him that they use a system called Listen that probably would have effectively addressed his hearing needs if he had chosen to use them. He also mentioned previously purchased but unused laptops that could potentially be repurposed for meeting audio systems, with him suggesting a simple microphone setup similar to the ones congressional systems have. He wanted to make it clear he was there that evening to ask for help with his hearing needs so that he may fully participate in the public meetings. He then informed them that he could provide the city with some information on the county's system. He said he had a state number that provided Linn County's courts with theirs, but he was not sure that wasn't just specific to courts, and somebody would have to check on that. He thanked the council for letting him voice his opinion, and for putting him on the agenda.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES

There were no Resolutions/Ordinances.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The city reported on the Wealth Works wealth-building framework initiative, which involves four agencies collaborating on projects and seeking different funding, with another session scheduled for August.

Various committee updates were provided, including the URA meeting being rescheduled due to pending information requirements.

Councilor Gailey clarified details about a $3 million grant and B Street extension project, explaining how R3 funding was used for housing development in Miller Springs subdivision.

The city further discussed acoustic issues in the council room, suggesting rearrangement of the space as well as moving forward with exploring hearing assistance devices, with Councilor Garo offering technical assistance.

Councilor Roy addressed concerns about a grant overage and emphasized the importance of proper public notification and conflict of interest disclosure.

NEXT STEPS

1. City Staff: Provide a $100 water and sewer gift certificate for the Chamber Benefit Auction in October.

2. Kim Rollins: Bring back specific examples of deficient meeting minutes and the minimum requirements of ORS for future discussion.

3. City Council: Research and clarify the requirements for public meeting minutes, including the identification of speakers, based on SDAO guidelines and ORS.

4. City Council: Schedule and hold a work session to educate themselves and the community about R3, including inviting Nick Green for a presentation.

5. City Council: Research and address the acoustics and assistive listening needs in the council chambers, including exploring systems like the "OWL" or assistive headphones.

6. City Council: Consider rearranging the council chambers setup to improve acoustics and accessibility.

7. City Council: Look into improving the city's methods for getting the word out about meetings and issues, potentially utilizing other platforms.

8. City Council: Reschedule the URA meeting, as the originally planned date (July 13th) is no longer valid.

ADJOURN

Mayor Hoke adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

Recording for July 8, 2026, City Council meeting:

https://zoom.us/rec/share/TeRoWzceW40VUT-q17zI1k7H-PcjFSdlF1zl_dMPSoDBiCuV64pslwRtlrC8W9-r.9dX-aOCEc7oVIJgc?startTime=1783558801000

Passcode: =QKE%k1?

Tiffany Leffler, City Clerk

Jen Hoke, Mayor