

BURNS CITY COUNCIL

May 27, 2026

The Burns City Council met in regular session on May 27, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. Members present were as follows:

Mayor: Jen Hoke
Councilor President:
Councilors: Susan Lowe
Shane Brockmann
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 City Clerk Tiffany Leffler. Also, Via Zoom was the city's Land Use Planner Jay Harland.

SUMMARY

The Burns City Council meeting on May 27th focused on welcoming and swearing in new Mayor Jen Hoke as well as welcoming and swearing in new City Council member, Shane Brockmann. The council approved agenda changes, including removing Lindsey Wilcox's item and adding the Washington Park Outdoor Fitness Loop Proposal to #5 and COAR grant amendments to #6. Police Chief Robby Tiller provided a comprehensive update on department activities, including 905 total calls for service, 30 arrests, and ongoing efforts to address city ordinance violations and property maintenance issues. The council discussed parking requirements for new developments, ultimately deciding to support a sliding scale based on facility size rather than requiring full paving. Several grant applications were reviewed, including airport improvement projects and a community pool variance application, though the latter was tabled pending legal review of federal requirements. The council also discussed a proposed stormwater utility fee but decided to table the decision to allow for more public input and discussion at a future meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kim Rollins, at 831 Riverside Drive, addressed the council, requesting that Ordinance No. 26-909 regarding the stormwater utility be tabled due to insufficient time for public review.

AGENDA APPROVAL AND ADDED ITEMS

Mayor Hoke removed and postponed Lindsey Wilcox's code updates from item #2 and added the Washington Park Outdoor Fitness Loop Proposal to #5 and COAR grant amendments to #6.

Mayor Councilor Gahley made a motion to approve the agenda with the changes. Councilor Roy seconded the motion. All Ayes. **(4/0)**

CONSENT AGENDA

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Councilor Gahley made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilor Roy seconded the motion. All Ayes. **(4/0)**

RESIGNATION OF MAYOR ERBE

Councilor Roy made a motion to accept Mayor Erbe's resignation. Councilor Gahley seconded the motion. All Ayes **(4/o)**

SWEARING IN OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Gahley made a motion to appoint Jen Hoke to the City of Burns Mayor. Councilor Roy seconded the motion. Councilor Gahley, Councilor Roy, and Councilor Lowe voted to accept Jen Hoke as Mayor. Councilor Hoke abstained herself from voting.

City Clerk Tiffany Leffler swore in Jen Hoke as the new City of Burns Mayor and Shane Brockmann is as City of Burns Councilor #3. She congratulated Mayor Hoke and welcomed Councilor Brockmann to the team.

DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

Police Chief Robby Tiller provided a department update, reporting that Burns PD handled approximately 905 calls for service since February 2026, including 200 traffic stops, 30 arrests, and 28 domestic violence calls. The Chief also updated the council on several property ordinance violation cases, including progress on cleanup efforts and payment plans for multiple properties with outstanding fines.

Police Chief Robby Tiller also spoke about some of the other stuff the department has been working on including addressing camp trailer violations with citations and compliance actions, a successful large-scale drug investigation involving multiple law enforcement agencies resulting in three arrests and hosting a Junior Officer Day event for children aged 5-10. The department also participated in Community Bike Night and an event recognizing missing and murdered Indigenous persons. Recent personnel changes included the departure of Officers Willis and Gregoire, with new hires Officer Trent Ireland (attending Police Academy) and Officer Jake Hatley (starting in July). Upcoming plans include collaborating with Les Schwab to collect old tires for recycling and participating in the Senior All-Night Party for high school graduation.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Code Requirements for Paving** – City's Land Use Planner Jay Harland informed the council that staff had been having a lot of negative feedback from the community with the paving requirements in the City of Burns Zoning Ordinance. He discussed the city's code requirements for paving parking lots and driveways during development, seeking council direction on whether to maintain current uniform standards or make changes.

The current code requires paving minimum required spaces with the rest being gravel, but staff proposed a sliding scale approach where a percentage of spaces beyond the minimum could be unpaved to reduce costs for smaller businesses while maintaining ADA compliance. The council expressed concerns about high costs for businesses and potential negative impacts on economic development, while acknowledging the need for some paving standards, particularly for ADA spaces and frequently used areas.

The council agreed that new developments should have functional parking lots with proper wheel stops, and that requirements should vary based on the number of parking spots and building size. As a next step, the council will direct the Planning Commission to work on revising the parking lot requirements for the city at the next council meeting.

2. **Lindsay Wilcox – Code Updates** – Postponed by Lindsay Wilcox until the next meeting on June 10, 2026.
3. **Joint Intergovernmental Letter of Support for Community Pool Variance Application** – City Manager Brenda Engebretson said the four agencies (Burns Paiute Tribe, Harney County, City of Burns, and City of Hines) had come together and written a letter of support for a variance application after they discussed what Councilor Roy had informed the council of at the last City Council meeting concerning the fact that Oregon Health Authority was trying to put some strict regulations around public swimming pools. They were worried it could have some very negative effects on the community's public swimming pool.

Councilor Gahley made a motion to approve the city signing the letter of support for the Community Pool Variance Application. Councilor Roy seconded the motion. All Ayes. **(5/0)**

4. **Grant Offer for Airport Improvement Program (AIP) Project No. 3-41-0009-025-2026 and Grant Offer for Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) project No. 3-41-0009-026-2026 at Burns Municipal Airport** – City Manager Brenda Engebretson informed the council that they would do these as one item instead separately as listed on the agenda.

The council reviewed two airport improvement program grant offers totaling \$473,534 and \$417,996 but tabled the decision pending clarification on federal requirements regarding government aircraft use and land for federal facilities.

Councilor Gahley made a motion to table both grant offers pending clarification on federal requirements regarding government aircraft use and land for federal facilities. Councilor Roy seconded the motion. All Ayes **(5/0)**

5. **Washington Park Outdoor Fitness Loop Proposal from Harney County Health Department** – City Manager Brenda Engebretson said that Kelly Singhose had reached out to her and they were applying for a grant to do an outdoor fitness loop and would like to partner with the city.

The council expressed support for partnering on the grant application while noting concerns about maintenance responsibilities and liability insurance.

City Manager Brenda Engebretson said the people who install it will be the ones to maintain it and it will not fall back on the city. She said the city wouldn't be handling any of the funds at all. They would just be partnering with them so that they can use Washington Park. That's all the commitment the city would have, besides being included in the design and things of that nature.

6. **Amendments to COAR Grant Agreements** – City Manager Brenda Engebretson informed the council that these were just time amendments. The snow removal equipment is the pickup and snowplow, and they were just amending the time. It took longer to put all the parts together and everything, so they extended the time out to June 30, 2027. That was for the snow removal equipment one, and then the other one was for the snow removal equipment building which they were giving a time extension as well. That one was also amended to June 30, 2027. She reassured

them that these amendments were just time amendments, no money amendments, or anything like that.

Councilor Gahley made a motion to approve the amendments to the two COAR grant agreements. Councilor Roy seconded the motion. All Ayes. **(5/0)**

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES

1. **Ordinance No. 26-909** – An Ordinance of the City of Burns amending Chapter 13 of the Burns Municipal Code to establish a stormwater utility and stormwater service charge and imposing an initial monthly stormwater charge per utility account.

The council tabled a stormwater utility ordinance after discussing the need for more public input and more detailed cost information.

Councilor Gahley made a motion to table Ordinance No. 26-909 until the next meeting. Councilor Roy seconded the motion. All Ayes. **(5/0)**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Councilor Lowe, who is on the Cemetery Committee, informed the council that there are issues with ground squirrels up at the cemetery and there was a lot of public feedback on how upset people were. She wanted them to know that the city has started using a Rodinator as well as setting traps to try and handle the squirrel issue and she would also be contacting some exterminators to get some ideas on how to maybe handle this issue as well as quotes.

NEXT STEPS

1. Land Use Planner Jay Harland: After Initiated by council, draft a code amendment to revise the City of Burns parking lot requirements, incorporating a sliding scale based on size/number of spaces, as well as some other housekeeping items and bring it to the council for approval.
2. City Manager Brenda Engebretson & Public Works Director Ty Richardson: Possibly schedule a public work session focused on the proposed stormwater utility ordinance, including public notice and distribution of rate structure examples.
3. City Staff: Post notice for vacant City Council position, with 30-day application period.
4. City Council: At next URA meeting, appoint URA chair.
5. Councilor Lowe: Continue coordination with exterminators and report on options for addressing cemetery rodent issue at next meeting.
6. City Manager Brenda Engebretson/City Council: Develop written policies/procedures for City Council appointment process.

Recording for May 27, 2026 City Council meeting: https://zoom.us/rec/share/GpRaK667a6qXzSpglPCYg5FD-Y26YiEfoN1cwhph1oIpXQqXw2jN6_b3oHwdfj3F.NgBh4uSaU1oGoDYD?startTime=1779929973000
Passcode: Z?*4Sp1R

ADJOURN

Mayor Hoke adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Tiffany Leffler, City Clerk

Jen Hoke, Mayor

