

**City Of Cove
Council Meeting Minutes
July 7, 2026**

Call to Order

Mayor, Sherry Haeger, called the regular session of the Cove Common Council to order at 7:00 p.m. located at City of Cove City Hall, 504 Alder St., Cove, Oregon, 97824. Remote access to the meeting was active.

Council Members Present: Councilors, Alexis Cannon, Cheryl Hargrove.

Council Members Present Remotely: Councilor Eric Stone.

City Staff Present: City Recorder, Lana Shira, Public Works Director, Dave Johnson.

City Staff Present Remotely: There were no city staff present remotely.

Council Members Not Present: Council President, Matt McCowan, Councilors, Shawn Parker, and Boss Parker.

City Staff Not Present: Billing Clerk, Kerri McCowan.

Public Present: Executive Director, Ascension School, Amy Jayne, John LaFountain, CCA President, Heidi VanSchoonhoven, Wyatt Dement.

Public Present Remotely: There was public present remotely. See City of Cove Meeting Info printout.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Haeger.

Council Roll Call

Roll call was performed by Lana Shira, City Recorder. A quorum was determined to be present.

Additions/Changes to the Agenda

Letter regarding dangers of tall vegetation was added to Old Business.

Public Comment

Heidi VanSchoonhoven, CCA President, requested financial support from the city for the Cove Cherry Fair. She noted they were hoping for \$400 or \$500 but would always take more. She explained they need more donation dollars this year because they did not receive any TRP funding from the county. The amount of funds they will not be receiving from TRP this year is \$1,500. The money requested from the city would go to support advertising for the event and for supplies. It was discussed that the request would be added to New Business for discussion at this meeting. Lana indicated that the city has requested from the CCA a reconciliation of how donation funds are spent and asked if Heidi had anything like that with her. Heidi provided a copy of the CCA's budget. Lana further explained that the city has received funds from the county to support tourism activities, and that information is on the agenda to be discussed under New Business.

Consent Agenda

- June 2, 2026, Council Minutes
- Approval of Bills to Be Paid
Lana presented a late addition to the bills to be paid for \$250 from the Bureau of Labor for the First and Water Street project.

Motion: Councilor Hargrove moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.
Councilor Cannon seconded. Motion carried.

- **Correspondence**

There was no correspondence presented at this meeting.

- **Old Business**

- Ascension School Parking Variance – Approval Contingent Upon Updated Parking Map with 51 Spaces

Amy Jayne, Executive Director, Ascension School, requested a reconsideration of the additional 20 parking spaces for the pool. She noted while the Ascension School supports adequate parking the additional request for 51 spaces exceeds their anticipated needs of the facility. The cost and site impact of creating 51 parking spaces at the facility are significant and compromise the overall feasibility of the project, adding up to potentially \$50,000. She offered a revised plan with 36 parking spaces and went on to explain the Community Center's assembly area of 800 square feet, when interpreting the city's ordinance, would only require eight parking spaces. She noted this ordinance has admittedly been very difficult to apply to the community pool but indicated that industry guidance recommends one parking space for every three to five users which is based on occupancy rather than square footage. She went on to explain that the City of La Grande uses the standard of one space per every three users per assigned occupancy, and that would be the closest representation of the Ascension School's pool occupancy, meaning the requirement for spaces would be three rather than five. Based on the school's maximum pool occupancy that has been set at 80 users that equates to a parking demand of 27 spaces for the pool. Taken together it would be 35 spaces. With request for this consideration the school has submitted the amended site plan with 36 parking spaces which meets the requirement and avoids unnecessary additional costs and site plan impacts. Additionally, she described the projected attendance and operating schedule of the pool that may be helpful in further understanding the parking demand. She outlined the hours and days of public swimming as well as the mode of travel for most swimmers to and from the pool. Further, she noted because the pool and the community center operate in different seasons and on different schedules, the overlap of events and swimming hours is expected to be rare, and the school staff oversees the operation of events and swimming hours, and they would be able to manage any conflicts. She also addressed the concerns that have been stated about parking illegally along Highway 237, noting they share those concerns but are very confident in law enforcement's ability to make sure that is something that will not occur.

Discussion ensued, and clarity was provided for operating times and projected usage as well as what is in the city ordinance.

Ultimately, it was determined that before a decision is made more council members need to be present for the discussion. It was clarified that doing this will not hold up the permitting process for the pool. This will be added to the agenda for the August meeting.

- COLA and Step Increases for City Employees

Lana provided a review of the current step increase that is due to the Public Works Director, noting he is at step 9 and is due to be increased to step 10.

Motion: Councilor Stone moved to increase the Public Works Director's salary from step 9 to step 10, effective July 1, 2026. Councilor Cannon seconded. Motion carried.

2027 Federal COLA increase projections were discussed for all city employees. The average increase would be between 2% and 3.9%. Past increases were also discussed, and it was noted council must decide what they want to award.

Motion: Councilor Hargrove moved to approve a 3% COLA increase for city employees. Councilor Cannon seconded. Councilor Stone and Mayor Haeger objected. Motion failed.

Motion: Councilor Stone moved to approve a 4% COLA raise for city employees. Councilor Hargrove seconded. Motion carried.

- Cove Clean-Up Day Review

Lana provided a review of the turnout for Cove Clean Up Day as well as the expenses and income. She noted this year the city operated at a loss of \$278.88. She provided an explanation of the unexpected expenses and stressed there was a lower turnout this year than in previous years, assuming it was largely due to the wet and cold weather.

- Award Bid for Paving First and Water Streets

Dave provided a review of the bids submitted for the paving of First and Water Streets. Hampton Paving was the low bid at \$63,015. Their bid checked out and they were the contractors who paved Geni and Susie Lanes last year. They did a good job; therefore, he recommended accepting the bid from Hampton Paving, LLC, for the First and Water Street project.

Motion: Councilor Cannon moved that the contract for the First and Water Street paving project be awarded to the lowest responsive bidder which is Hampton Paving, LLC, for the total bid price of \$63,015. Councilor Stone seconded. Motion carried.

- Anderson Perry Scope and Agreement for Water System Master Plan

Dave explained the Anderson Perry Scope and Agreement for Water System Master Plan is the agreement to update the city's Master Plan. He further explained we have received a grant from Business Oregon for the update and Anderson Perry has agreed to do the work for the exact amount of the grant. We need a signed agreement directly with them before the work can begin. Lana explained how payment would be disbursed according to the terms of the grant.

Motion: Councilor Hargrove moved to approve the Anderson Perry Scope and Agreement for Water System Master Plan. Councilor Stone seconded. Motion carried.

- Dangers of Tall Vegetation

It was questioned when the letter that was discussed at the June meeting will be sent out. Lana noted she will have it ready to be sent by Friday, July 9, 2026. She further noted the letter outlines pertinent ordinances and dangers related to tall vegetation and dry weather.

- **New Business**

- Allocation of Funds from Union County Transient Tax
Lana reported that the county has sent the city a check for \$2,571 which is the City of Cove's portion of the transient tax. She explained the funds are supposed to be used for tourism, economic development purposes, and programs that support tourist activities. Discussion ensued regarding where the money should be spent concluding the Cherry Fair would definitely be an event to allocate funds to. Other events such as the soap box derby and the Cove Run-off were also discussed as potential donation recipients. Discussion returned to the CCA and their donation request for the Cherry Fair.

Motion: Councilor Stone moved to give the Cove Community Association \$750 of the Union County Transient Tax that the City of Cove received. Councilor Cannon seconded. Motion carried.

City Council Working Committee Report

- TSP – Land Use Development Code
Lana reported that the Work Session scheduled for June 23rd was cancelled because the model that she was sent was in PDF version which is not editable. The model is also due to have updates completed in September or October of this year. She requested an editable version and received the document in Word format. She explained her thoughts were to edit the current version according to the notes made from the previous TSP edits made by council, then when they do come out with the final model it will be much easier to transition. It was requested to have the edits done by the August meeting and Lana noted she and Kerri will make it a priority to have it done by then. Discussion turned to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and how it relates to the TSP – Land Use Development Code and the availability of grants to help with updating and implementing these documents.
- Cove Beautification Pilot Project
There was no update provided on the Cove Beautification Pilot Project.

City Recorder Report

Lana provided a verbal report:

- She reported that the replacement of the Zply phone lines at City Hall with Ubiquity as well as replacing the phone at the hydro plant with a Star Link internet phone that is also tied with Ubiquity has resulted in approximately \$200/month savings. Overall, replacing the Zply phone lines resulted in a drop in yearly billing from \$3,000 to \$700.
- The OTEC Franchise ordinance from 2016 is expiring. OTEC sent a draft ordinance that she reviewed and requested clarification for things such as increasing the franchise fee paid to the city. Discussion ensued regarding concerns that a potential increase in franchise fees would then be passed on to the citizens of Cove. Any benefit to the city would have to be weighed against passing the costs onto citizens. The first reading of the ordinance will take place at the August regular council meeting.
- Three councilor positions and the mayor position are open this election cycle. She encouraged the current councilors to contact anyone who might be interested.
- The city audit will be held on August 10th through 13th.
- She will be on vacation in August and will not be present at the September meeting. She has cross-trained with Kerri to do payroll and has a plan in place for the bills to be paid. She does not have vacation time for this time off, so will be taking unpaid leave.

Public Works Director Report

Dave provided a verbal report:

- They have been very busy working on graveling and grading the First and Water Street project. They will be busy playing catch up with the other tasks that have been set aside for that project.
- He will be procuring a new snowplow that was approved in the budget and will be providing council with that information.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Haeger provided a verbal report:

- She reported that she was approached by a parent of one of the Student Councilor applicants and he was upset that council didn't interview each applicant. She noted she explained to him the process for selection and voting procedure, and after hearing her description of the process, he accepted her explanation. She noted she will be tutoring and mentoring this particular student on city council procedures and his father is expecting him to come to a council meeting with prepared questions. Discussion was held regarding holding interviews with Student Councilor applicants in the future.

Student Councilor Report – None Until September 1, 2026, Council Meeting

Good of the Order

There was no Good of the Order presented at this meeting.

Public Comment

Lana introduced John LaFountain as a new resident of Cove. He explained he is building a home on Sunflower Place.

Suggestions for Future Work Sessions & Meeting Agendas

There were no suggestions for future work sessions or meeting agendas.

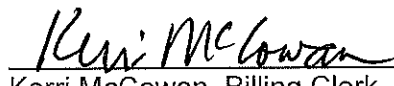
Upcoming Meetings

Regular council meeting scheduled for August 4, 2026.

Adjournment

Mayor Haeger adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.


Sherry Haeger, Mayor


Kerri McCowan, Billing Clerk


Lana Shira, City Recorder