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City of Arlington, Oregon
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 7, 2026

The regular meeting of the Arlington City Council was held on Wednesday, October 7, 2026, in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building and via telephone conference.

Presiding: Mayor Jeffery Bufton

Council Present: Councilors Denise Ball, Matt Irby, Jerry Hanan, Kayla Rayburn, and Mark Davidson.

Council Absent:

Staff Present: Recorder Victoria McKinney, Public Works Superintendent Shanna Gronquist, Attorney Ruben Cleaveland, and Engineer Brad Baird

Guests: Rita Miciak, Stephen Allen, Jill Catherine, Leah Shannon, Christopher Jackson

Guests Announced Via Conference Phone: None

Pledge of Allegiance recited.

Mayor Bufton opened the regular council meeting at 6:30 p.m.

1. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
   - **a.** Officer Brown shared a quick overview of the stats given by the Sheriff's Office for Arlington and Condon.
   - **b.** Marta shared a paper called Agra Times. She explained they have an article called Back When. It's about the town of Alkali, a town built twice. It's about Arlington. She left a copy for everyone to see.
2. **CONSENT AGENDA**

   The consent agenda consisted of the following items:

   a. Minutes — August 5, 2026
   b. Minutes — September 9, 2026 Postponed.
   c. Minutes — September 17, 2026 Special Mtg.
   d. Approval of Bills — As Listed. Approval: Councilor **Rayburn** moved to approve the September Special Meeting minutes and the bills as posted. Councilor **Ball** seconded the motion. Roll call: Councilor Davidson: Yes, Councilor Rayburn: Yes, Councilor Hanan: Yes, but abstaining from the Sept. 17 Special Mtg. due to his absence. Councilor Irby: Yes, Councilor Ball: Yes.

3. **Arlington Public Library - Marta Mikkalo Approval:** Marta spoke about how well Amy Bendtsen is doing with her new ideas. She asked the council for permission to install ADA buttons to open their front door. The cost is currently unknown, but Gilliam County's grant will fund it. They are having issues with the back door. Amy will use a tool to fix. The Arlington Public Library hired

Jessica Campbell, and Madalyn Hayter is still there doing a great job. She shared the board's excitement for the future possibilities of operating under the City of Arlington. Marta spoke about the Friends of the Library saying it is an active 501c3. She would like to start a little paper like the Agra Times. She has been wanting something that can report on the positive things happening on the north end of Gilliam County. Using the Friends of the Library 501c3 to write, and produce it on card stock and mail as an EDDM at $0.26 each. To all citizens in the 97812 area. Leslie Hammer plans to help. Marta would like the City Council's blessing and to know whether they can use the City printer for all printing. **Councilor Rayburn** asked if they needed 3 quotes. Attorney Cleaveland says no, as long as the estimate given is under $25,000. **Council consensus is to approve printing in the City office.**

Councilor Davidson asked Attorney Cleaveland if we can typically be allowed a 25% overage on project contracts. Attorney Cleaveland said he would need to review the thresholds before fully answering, but if you are under but that close to $25,000, you should be getting 3 bids anyway. Or at least attempt it.

4. **MCEDD – Jill Catherine, Project and Grant Manager**. Jill Catherine opened the discussion with the City Council about potential projects and how MCEDD (Mid-Columbia Economic Development District) can support grant writing. Gilliam signed a contract for MCEDD to serve all cities in the county. She shared resources, including grant-writing support. They can also generate ideas and facilitate this with the council. They are available, and as an MCEDD staff member, she can draw on others' experience as well. The contract is annual. Sherman Co. has had an annual contract with MCEDD for 20 years. She helped the county and the Port write their RIF grants. She is happy to help our city in any way we need. She wants to start a dialogue with the city and the residents. Councilor Irby and Jill will work together on funding the small dock. The council shares its support for this collaboration. Mayor Bufton asked if she had experience with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Jill stated she had not, but the organization has a relationship with them. He stated there is a need for an ADA footpath from one end of the park to the other and linked to the existing ramp to the east. Councilor Irby stated he and PWS, Gronquist, had been working on replacing the small floating dock, which has been quite a challenge. Because ADA access is needed, this would make it more of a priority. We also want to provide this to the public so more people can access our park. In addition, we have a visitor's kiosk currently closed because it is in need of repair. Jill shared the projects she has been involved with and that she is here to provide support to our city as needs develop, making sure she connects the city with any current grants available. She is open to dialogue with the city as a whole. Councilor Irby asked how to get ahold of her. She will make sure Recorder McKinney can share with the council. Councilor Rayburn shared how much she sees that Jill is very active in our community and how impressed she is with what she does.
5. **COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND DECISION**
    a. **Christmas bonuses. Historically, $200 per employee** – Councilors Davidson and Hanan asked to increase the bonuses to $300. Councilor **Davidson** moved to approve increasing employee bonuses to $300. Councilor **Hanan** seconded the motion. Roll call: Councilor Davidson: Yes, Councilor Rayburn: Yes, Councilor Hanan: Yes, Councilor Irby: Yes, Councilor Ball: Yes.
    b. **Holiday Party date, gift discussion, and catering preference.** Consensus: dinner on Dec. 6th, 2026 at 2:00 pm; have David (Rivers Edge) cater the meal again this year; and White Elephant gifting.
    c. **Christmas Turkey/Ham for employees:** Consensus to have Shanna ask her crew and move forward with employees' preference.
    d. **Utility Collection Progress Status**. Councilor Davidson asked about the home that burned down and its utility charges. Recorder McKinney explained that the home burned down in 2013 and was still being charged the base sewer, with no water or garbage charges. After reviewing the account, she decided to zero the account because there is no utility connection to a building, so no charges are needed. Councilor Davidson asked whether Admin and PWS have met to review the utility bills, as he feels Public Works can identify which houses have

occupants and which do not. Admin sees numbers and addresses. Recorder McKinney stated that the PW Superintendent brings items to our attention. He thought it wise for the three staff members to go over the accounts together, one at a time. They had a brief discussion and agreed to meet, but then Recorder McKinney offered a comprehensive report that may work better. This way, PWS can review and make notes for Admin to address. They all agreed this would be a good solution. The mayor asked about the wording of the ethnicity questions on the service application. Recorder shared that it is a requirement. PWS said she thinks it was required for the USDA grants. Attorney Cleaveland will review this requirement. The mayor asked about the driver's license number and date of birth on that same application. The recorder stated it is for collection purposes and is typical. Most utility providers require this. She added that we must remain consistent with required information for all customers. We cannot pick and choose based on who we think will or will not pay their utility bill. The mayor then asked about the Business Licenses and whether anyone questioned that. The Recorder said yes, and there has been pushback on the overall information, but they have provided it so far. A short discussion followed on which party is responsible for unpaid tenant utility bills. Attorney Cleaveland will research this. A long discussion followed with Christopher Jackson about how he receives his bills, late notices, and shutoff door tags. He is dissatisfied with city protocol and seems confused about how he receives his bills. The mayor asked the Recorder if she has a record of this activity. She stated that she does. Mayor Bufton and Councilor Ball asked the Recorder for information on this issue. Mr. Jackson continued to express his displeasure. Councilor Ball stated the Recorder will provide the information now. Mr. Jackson verbally pushed back to Councilor Ball during this exchange. Mr. Jackson stated he is really bothered and left the building at that point. Recorder McKinney then read the notices dating back to July of 2025 and explained the backup copies for each incident. All notices complied with standard utility billing procedures, and she noted that he confirmed his address on file was correct while visiting the office. She added that PWS also followed policy. **Mayor Bufton** stated, for the record, that Public Works followed city protocol in this matter. If they knock, it is a courtesy, not a requirement. Public Works does not engage when delivering notices, and **Attorney Cleaveland** said there is no obligation to do so. **Attorney answered Councilor Davidson's** question about delivering Shut-off Notices to properties with No Trespassing signs. No Trespassing signs can be posted, but PW staff can legally post the notices in the city easement to the property.

6. <u>ENGINEER BAIRD, ANDERSON PERRY & ASSOCIATES</u>

Mayor Bufton shared that Brad Baird sent a report. **1.** Engineer Baird was not present but left an update on the Alkali Park. The splash park is moving along; lines have been tested. They are nearing completion of the project. **a.** Bolen Construction requests payment #8. **Councilor Rayburn moved to approve payment application #8 for Bolen Construction LLC in the amount of $208,249.22. Councilor Davidson seconded the motion. Roll call: Councilor Davidson: Yes, Councilor Rayburn: Yes, Councilor Hanan: Yes, Councilor Irby: Yes, Councilor Ball: Yes.** Recorder McKinney provided an update on the status of the reimbursement requests related to this project. It is taking longer than expected because the report requires more detail than originally anticipated, but she is assembling the reports and requests. Mayor Bufton stated there will be a walk-around, and if everything is to contract, we can produce the final check and close out soon.

Mayor Bufton asked the Recorder if she would like to update the council on the Supplemental Budget. She has offered printouts to share. She explained that many mistakes were made originally and how much she learned in the process of producing the supplemental budget. Councilor Ball will take a copy and review the supplemental budget.

7. <u>COUNCIL REPORTS</u>

- **Councilor Davidson:** Nothing to report.

- **Councilor Rayburn:** Nothing for sanitation. She attended the MCEDD meeting. She feels like this is a good match, and Jill will be a great asset. She will keep the council informed. She attended the LOC Conference.

- **Councilor Hanan:** Councilor Hanan asked the PW Superintendent about the 2026 crack seal. She said they did not seal this year, but it will be on next year's list. They last did it in the summer of 2025. He encouraged doing this annually to avoid other issues.

- **Councilor Irby:** Nothing to report

- **Councilor Ball:** Nothing to report

8. STAFF REPORTS

- **Public Works Superintendent Gronquist: Taken from update handout: 1.** Scheduling Fire Hydrant Flow Testing – Have not heard a date yet. I will coordinate with Vicky to post when I have a better idea on when it will be done. 2. Back Flow Testing in Complete. 3. Greens were plugged in September, Spring plugging is Scheduled for April 23rd 2027. 4. Crushing is moving along. 5. Working on getting a quote on the Oregon Trail Information Center at Earl Snell Park. The Roof will more than likely fall in if we get much snow. Working with a contractor on getting a bid on repairing & Replacing the structure. I will check on Army Corps regarding this as well. 6. Army Corps Lease expires in 2 years. Do we want to keep leasing the Park Area? 7. The Current Lease was for 25 years & to renew will take a couple of years for the process.8. Camera's @ Splash Park – We could try and get a grant for these from the county again. 9. How would you like to proceed with the camera's? 10. Looking into Noxious Weeds and how to proceed with them. There may be a county or state ordinance regarding them. 11. Waste Water Position is open again.

  Public Works Superintendent shared as follows: 1. The Visitor Kiosk is closed for roof repair. We're looking into a bid to repair only the roof. **2.** The city's 25-year lease with the Army Corps of Engineers expires in two years. She says the Corps of Engineers staff advised us to begin this process now if we intend to renew the lease. If there is no lease agreement renewed, then the property will revert back to Native Americans. In addition, the Army Corps of Engineers asked whether she still wants to treat the seaweed in the lagoon. She said yes and asked them to add the lagoon to their list for this treatment**. 3.** Splash park is moving along. 4. She spoke to a deputy about ordinances concerning noxious weeds and goat heads. He didn't think there was a city ordinance on this, but thinks there is at least a county of state ordinance. He intends to look into this further. **5.** WWTP position is open again. **6.** The noise parade is tomorrow at 5:30.

- **Attorney Ruben Cleaveland:** Will bring up a subject in executive session.

Recorder Victoria McKinney: 1. She has been working with ICC Code Solutions to obtain a quote to update and codify the City's codes. **2.** The FY 2025-26 Audit: Fieldwork is complete. Two compliance issues were identified: **a.** Goat grazing services require documentation of three bids and annual Council approval, even when grant-funded. This will be reported as a finding. **b.** State Highway Fund revenues require either: **1.** Spending 1% on bicycle/pedestrian projects with supporting documentation, or **2.** Adoption of a resolution under ORS 366.514 and ongoing compliance tracking. The City is currently not in compliance, and Council direction is needed. **3.** She attended a cybersecurity training in Pendleton that helps meet requirements for the City's enhanced cyber insurance coverage.

The training highlighted the need for regular review and discussion of the City's Incident Response Plan (IRP**).** At the training, she shared the most recent experiences with staff, and they said to change the password right away. **4.** The UGB Update: Dan Meader is working through issues related to new agriculture and viticulture laws and is awaiting guidance from DLCD. More information will follow. The recorder added that she received a phone call from a gentleman asking whether the city would be willing to sell the large parcel intended for the UGB expansion. **5.** The Times-Journal provided information on manufactured home park management and strategies to prevent future community losses. Reference materials were provided. The Recorder added that the Contract holder of the sale, Darren, called the city office to see about the payments on the MHP utilities, as part of their contract is to keep current on utilities. Per Darren's request, that account has been updated with his "contract holder" contact information and also requested to be added to any delinquency notices going forward. **6.** The Supplemental Budget is nearly complete. Additional time is needed to ensure compliance with Oregon budget laws and to meet the required public hearing notice timeline. The final version will be provided as soon as it is completed.

1. **Other Business:** Times Journal, Steven Allen. Mr. Allen referenced the latest article in his paper on the MHP and shared that he pulled documents from the Gilliam County Clerk's office going back to 2013. He visited the Oregon Secretary of State and Secretary of State Business searches and found they were in Idaho, Texas, Illinois, Missouri, and Delaware, operating under the same LLC. He spoke with residents. Around the time they purchased the Arlington property, there were issues with the MHP in Texas, and he shared similar issues happening there. In fact, liens were put on the property there, and they walked away from the MHP. The head of the company is Alex Danolvo. He added they are charging residents utilities now on top of lot rent.

The Regular Meeting closed at 8:06 pm

The body entered Executive Session at 8:07 pm pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(e) to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the Governing Body to negotiate real property transactions.

Closed Executive session at 8:18 pm

The Regular Meeting opened at 8:18 pm; no final decision was made, and staff was directed.

City recorder: asked permission to send the $1,309 overdue sanitation account to collections. Consensus was unanimous. Council agreed to let office staff determine collections going forward and report to council.

The Regular Meeting closed at 8:19 pm

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Jeffery Bufton, Mayor Victoria McKinney, City Recorder