City of Arlington, Oregon
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 9, 2026

The regular meeting of the Arlington City Council was held on Wednesday, September 9, 2026, in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building and via telephone conference.

Presiding: Mayor Jeffery Bufton

Council Present: President Councilor Denise Ball, Councilor Matt Irby, Councilor Jerry Hanan, Councilor Kayla Rayburn and Councilor Mark Davidson (Late).

Council Absent: Councilor Marshall Swope

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

Guests: Sheriff G. Bettencourt, Corporal M. Walker, Lieutenant R. Brown, Christine Fitsimmons, Deidre Campbell, Stephen Allen, James Metzker and Rita Miciak.

Guests Announced Via Conference Phone: Cori Mikkalo.

Pledge of Allegiance recited.

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

1. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
   a. **James Metsker** stated he is seeking permission of the Council to place a small memorial cross at the location where David Ballard was found, on City property. James stated he would be responsible for the upkeep of the cross. There was a discussion regarding the location and protection from the elements. **Consensus:** The consensus of the Council is to allow the placement of the memorial cross for David Ballard.

   b. **Sheriff Bettencourt** stated he would like to apologize for the chaos the Verkade cameras created. Although there was Council permission, the Sheriff's Office did not communicate when the cameras would be installed. Sheriff Bettencourt explained the intent and the capabilities of the cameras. The cameras have been removed before the 30-day trial was completed due to negative public opinion.

   c. **Officer Brown** reviewed the Sheriff's report to the Council.

2. **CONSENT AGENDA**
   The consent agenda consisted of the following items:
   a. **Approval of Minutes –** Regular Council Meetings: August 5, 2026 – Postponed to October meeting
   b. **Approval of Bills - As Listed**

   Approval: Councilor Rayburn motioned to approve the consent agenda. Councilor Hanan seconded the motion. Roll call: Councilor Rayburn: Yes, Councilor Hanan: Yes, Councilor Irby: Yes, Councilor Ball: Yes. (Councilor Davidson was not present for this portion of the meeting.)

3. **CHRISTINE FITSIMMONS, GILLIAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE MANAGER**

Requesting approval of the Joint Resolution No. JR2026-02, Gilliam County Emergency Operations Plan. First, Christine introduced Deidre Campbell, who will replace her upon retirement. Christine stated that the Emergency Operations Plan is her last project before retiring. The County received a $25,000 Homeland Security grant and hired Cori Mikkalo as the Planning Consultant. Cori Mikkalo stated she has been working on the Emergency Operations Plan with Gilliam County and the stakeholders for over a year. This basic plan is the streamlined version. Cori reviewed the purpose and the functions of the plan for the Council. Christine reviewed the process of developing the plan. The Gilliam County Court approved the plan last Wednesday, along with the City of Condon. Mayor Bufton asked if the plan will be available online. Christine stated that it will be available on the County website, along with other County plans. **Approval:** Councilor Rayburn motioned to approve the Joint Resolution No. JR2026-02, Gilliam County Emergency Operations Plan. Councilor Hanan seconded the motion. Roll call: Councilor Davidson: Yes, Councilor Rayburn: Yes, Councilor Hanan: Yes, Councilor Irby: Yes, Councilor Ball: Yes.

4. **COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND DECISION**

   a. **Haguewood Water Purchase Agreement, Expires October 31, 2026:** A short discussion was had about the potential agreement. Attorney Cleaveland stated that the agreement expired April 3, 2026; the stopgap agreement expires 10-31-26 and is not signed. The Council can extend it. **Approval:** Councilor **Rayburn** motioned to approve the Haguewood water purchase agreement to October 31, 2026. Councilor **Hanan** seconded the motion. Roll call: Councilor Davidson: Abstained, Councilor Rayburn: Yes, Councilor Hanan: Yes, Councilor Irby: Yes, Councilor Ball: Yes.

   b. **Utility Delinquencies, AR (Assistant Recorder) Grubaugh:**

   AR Grubaugh reviewed the items the Council received in the pre-meeting packets.

      1. **Columbia Mobile Home Park**: AR Grubaugh reviewed the details presented to the Council regarding the account balance, possible options for payment plans and the steps taken before the Council meeting. Mayor Bufton asked about responses to the notices. AR Grubaugh stated that once they received the notice by email, as a last resort, there was a response with a request for a payment plan. AR Grubaugh explained that the amount due is also due to the customer not signing up for utilities in a timely manner. There was a brief discussion regarding the billing for the entire RV park and the responsible party. AR Grubaugh explained the monthly trailer count and charges applied to the account in more detail. The payment plan options are based on a ten-month average of water usage and trailer counts. There was a brief discussion regarding the conversations had with the account holder regarding a payment plan. There was a discussion regarding the actions that can legally be taken regarding nonpayment of a mobile home park. Attorney Cleaveland stated that he would prefer the customer pay the delinquency rather than place a lien on the property. There was a discussion regarding the possible terms of a payment plan. There was a discussion regarding how the account accumulated the balance due. AR Grubaugh stated that the mailing address has been updated since the account holder's response to the delinquency notice. There was a discussion regarding the Council's individual feelings towards shutting off multi-tenant

locations. Councilor Rayburn stated that if a plan is to be put in place, she would like to see it on the attorney's official letterhead. Attorney Cleaveland suggested a payment plan with terms that make it enforceable as a lien, enforceable through shut-off at the city's discretion, with interest laid out and a signature from a representative of the company, not an agency, the owner. There was a brief discussion regarding the tenant and property owner responsibility. Recorder McKinney stated that the office has been working diligently to follow standard procedure, the three-month period process, across the board. Now that we are operating out of the new billing system, we are questioning and reviewing charges that have historically been in place. We are just a year into the new system and are working towards cleaning things up. We will not be in this situation again. The office has taken steps to include the property owners in the noticing process. AR Grubaugh directed the Council to review a portion of their packets regarding customer contact information. Until March 2026, there has been nothing in place to request phone numbers, email addresses, dates of birth and driver's license numbers from new and existing customers, information needed in order to send customers to collections. The office staff has revised the agreement form to fit the needs of the City. AR Grubaugh reviewed the report regarding customer information and those who use the online portal. Attorney Cleaveland stated the property owner is ultimately responsible for outstanding utility bills. Stephen Allen of The Times-Journal stated that some mobile home parks are predatory. They will sell a trailer to someone, but they don't actually own the land underneath them. The land can be sold any time. Attorney Cleaveland stated that the city provides utilities as part of the space lease. Stephen asked if the owner is Columbia MHP; Engineer Baird confirmed it is via OnX. There was a brief discussion regarding property owner responsibility and notice of delinquency to the property owner. Attorney Cleaveland stated that having the owner of the property sign up for utilities instead of the tenant is best because, at the end of the day, the owner is the master of the agreement and will be held responsible. The City has no say in communication between the property owner and the tenant. There was a brief discussion regarding a trash-only account that is set to be sent to collections. There was a discussion regarding the different ways the City can obtain dates of birth and driver's license numbers from preexisting customers. There was a discussion regarding the terms of a potential payment plan agreement. **Consensus:** The consensus of the Council is to allow a six-month payment plan with 8% interest, due by the 25th of the month, which can be enforced as a lien on the property.

2. **Arlington Church of the Nazarene:** AR Grubaugh stated that the Nazarene Church discovered they had a significant water leak halfway through the month of June. It did not come to the City's attention until the following billing at the end of June. It was relayed to the customer that a leak adjustment on the bill is not permitted until the leak it identified and fixed. The leak lasted until August 8, 2026. City staff worked diligently with the church to locate the leak, with frequent calls to review meter readings during the search. The total water use during the leak was 265,870.22 gallons. The church paid what was billed during this time, but they are asking the Council for a possible leak adjustment. There was a discussion amongst the Council regarding the possible amounts to grant as a leak adjustment. **Consensus:** The consensus of the Council is to allow for a leak adjustment of $234.32 to be applied to the Church of the Nazarene's utility account.

3. **Updating Customer Information:** AR Grubaugh asked the Council how they would like the office staff to obtain updated customer information. There was a brief discussion regarding long-standing customers who do not want to give personal information. There was a discussion regarding the options of notices to send out. **Consensus:** The consensus of the Council is to send account holders the updated utility agreement forms as needed.

c. **Gilliam Co. Public Hearing Date, Sept. 22, 2026**: Gilliam County has accepted an application from Brookfield Renewable for a renewable energy facility known as Saddle Butte Energy Facility. The Council was asked if they wanted to make a comment as surrounding property owners. **Decision:** There was not a formal consensus, but there was a general agreement that no comment was needed.

d. **Regional Infrastructure Fund Grant**: Engineer Baird provided a handout from the Infrastructure Finance Authority website regarding the RIF (Regional Infrastructure Fund). The state has put $10 million into the RIF fund for governments with populations under 25,000. There are 241 incorporated cities in Oregon; 215 are below a population of 25,000. Funding can be used for two types of projects: Construction ($100,000 to $1,000,000) and Planning, Research and Design Projects ($25,000 to $250,000). Engineer Baird stated he has reviewed the application. Depending on how the council wants to move forward, he can complete the application by September 16th. The project will need to be shovel-ready with a completion date of 24 months. Engineer Baird presented the statewide and regional priority list for the council to review. Statewide, the priority is housing, and the Greater Eastern region's priority is Energy Security and Child Care. Councilor Rayburn stated that the City of Condon and the Port of Arlington are applying for infrastructure funding with the help of MCEDD. Councilor Rayburn said she believes the City water project qualifies under the guidelines, at least for the engineering portion. There was a brief discussion regarding projects that would qualify for funding. Engineer Baird presented a map to the Council showing 4 potential lots for development, with water and sewer, above the Well located off of West Fourth Street. Councilor Ball stated that the City does not want to develop the property; she would like to identify uses for the property. Councilor Ball stated the reason she was in favor of purchasing the property was for fire hazard control. Councilor Davidson stated he would like to see the developable property either marketed or developed. The City is currently working to expand the urban growth boundary and identify buildable areas. There was a discussion regarding the potential for the property and how the funds could be applied. Councilor Rayburn stated she will connect Engineer Baird with Jill Catherine, the MCEDD Representative. There was a discussion regarding potential projects and the funding amount to apply for. Recorder McKinney stated that the more funding the city requests, the more it demonstrates the need. Mayor Bufton said he would like the City to request the maximum amount available. Engineer Baird will pursue the grant.

5. **ENGINEER BAIRD, ANDERSON PERRY & ASSOCIATES**

Engineer Baird presented handouts to the Council regarding the following:

a. **Alkali Park Project**

1. **Project Progression:** The project is getting closer to completion. A sample pour of decorative concrete was completed. Once the architect approves the sample, the rest of the pour will proceed. Landscaping will follow shortly after. Engineer Baird reviewed the Council's pouring process. Engineer Baird asked the Council if they would like a ribbon-cutting ceremony when the project is completed. There was a brief discussion regarding the timeline of the project and the reasons for delay. Councilor Rayburn suggested holding the grand opening in the spring.

2. **Application for payment #7 for August:** The total request is for $72,310.42. $40,517.47 is retained, bringing the percent complete to 74%. Engineer Baird does not foresee any additional change orders. The restrooms will be repainted and the toilet leak will be fixed at no cost to the City. There was a brief discussion regarding the drainage system coming into the cold season. **Approval:** Councilor Rayburn motioned to approve application for payment #7 for August work, $72,310.42 to Bolen Construction LLC. Councilor Davidson seconded the motion. Roll call: Councilor Davidson: Yes, Councilor Rayburn: Yes, Councilor Hanan: Yes, Councilor Irby: Yes, Councilor Ball: Yes.

b. **Water System Improvement Project:** Engineer Baird met with Superintendent Gronquist and surveyed the pipeline routes and the base maps are being made. Attorney Cleavland reviewed the project agreement and edits were made. Design and permitting are currently in progress. Engineering will be approved once construction funding is approved. Engineer Baird reviewed the approval options. Councilor Ball stated she would like to review the budget with Recorder McKinney before approving. This item will be reviewed again at the October Council Meeting.

6. **COUNCIL REPORTS**

- **Councilor Davidson** stated he spoke with Blake Philippi regarding potential fire issues on the west side of town. Councilor Davidson stated that he doesn't believe the grass is a danger, but the sagebrush is. Councilor Davidson asked the Council if the City would entertain the idea of a 50/50 process of spray and application. Councilor Davidson stated he didn't think the cost would exceed $2k. Councilor Davidson stated that Blake is not in favor of creating another fire trail. Mayor Bufton asked if Blake has a mitigation plan; Councilor Davidson stated he does not, but he is willing to work with the City. Councilor Ball asked if he would be interested in letting goats graze the property since it is in City limits. Councilor Davidson said he is unsure what Blake would like to do at this time, whether mowing or grazing. Councilor Davidson stated he will speak with Blake Philippi once again. There was a brief discussion regarding fire liability. The Council agreed that it needs further discussion with Blake Philippi and will review the upcoming IGA with the Fire Department.

- **Councilor Rayburn** will be attending an Oregon Infrastructure Summit on September 16th in Salem.

- **Councilor Hanan** left the meeting early.

- **Councilor Irby** had no report to give.

- **Councilor Swope** was absent.

- **Councilor Ball** had no report to give.

7. **STAFF REPORTS**
   - **Public Works Superintendent Gronquist: 1.** Fuel will be provided as in-house credit with the Marathon gas station. **2.** The cameras for the splash park may be able to be paid for by a County grant.

   - **Attorney Ruben Cleaveland** stated that Engineer Baird and he are working on getting an appraiser for the Wells drilled on the Port of Arlington property.

   - **Recorder Victoria McKinney: 1.** The supplemental budget will be completed soon. **2.** The roof has been repaired, and the shop roof will be completed soon. **3.** The City is actively advertising for an intern for the Office. Recorder McKinney reviewed the process of paying the intern with the Council. **4.** There is a construction company that owes $1,325.00 in gravel. Recorder McKinney asked for guidance on how she should proceed. The contractor has not contacted the City or requested more gravel since the initial request to pay the balance due. Attorney Cleaveland stated a lawsuit would cost the City more in legal fees than the amount due. Mayor Bufton asked Attorney Cleaveland to draft a letter to the contractor.

   - **Other Business: 1.** Mayor Bufton stated Councilor Marshal Swope has turned in his resignation to the Council. Mayor Bufton suggested leaving the position open until the election. **Consensus:** The consensus of the Council is to leave the position open until the election. Attorney Cleaveland explained the after-election process to the Council. **2.** Mayor Bufton stated that he and Councilor Ball met with the Daycare Board. The daycare is working on an alternative plan to possibly set up through the education system. They are pursuing grant funding with the help of the school superintendent. Councilor Ball stated they would be located on school property but not a part of the school system.

The Regular Meeting closed at 9:00 pm

No Executive session

Denise Ball for
Jeffery Bufton, Mayor

Victoria McKinney, City Recorder

Taylor Grubaugh
Transcribed By: Taylor Grubaugh, Assistant Recorder