

CITY OF VALE OREGON - CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, August 11, 2026, 7:00 pm

Join by Zoom: Dial in by calling: 253-215-8782

Personal Meeting ID: 225 421 4421 Host Key: 683213 Meeting Link: [Click Here](#)

Mayor	Alex Hartwell	Council Member	Michelle Harper-Dennis
Council President	Leighton Keller	City Attorney	Michael Horton
Council member	Monty Bixby	Interim City Manager	Marea Skultety
Council member	Jeremiah Strohmeyer		
Council member	Derrick Peasley	City Recorder	Ashley Aponte

1. Call to Order and Roll Call-Mayor Alex Hartwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Roll call was conducted and a quorum was established.

Present: Mayor Alex Hartwell; Council Member Michelle Harper-Dennis; Council Member Monty Bixby; Council President Leighton Keller; Interim City Manager Marea Skultety; City Recorder Ashley Aponte; and City Attorneys Cole Sahleen and Jake Conde.

2. Pledge of Allegiance- Mayor Hartwell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Review and Approval of Agenda- Council discussed adding the property next to the bank and the park slide to the agenda. Motion: Council Member Bixby moved to approve the agenda as amended. Council President Keller seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes- Motion: Council Member Bixby moved to approve the July 28, 2026, meeting minutes as written. Council President Keller seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Review and Approval of Bills

The first check run totaled \$26,371.67, for a grand total of \$26,371.67.

Motion: Council President Keller moved to approve the checks submitted for payment totaling \$26,371.67. Council Member Bixby seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Department and Committee Reports/Council Comments

City Manager: The Interim City Manager submitted a written report to Council. City Attorney Jake Conde discussed a response being prepared regarding a public records request from Dave Roberts. The documents referenced in the request had not been provided to the Council and were not records in the City's possession. It was noted that Mr. Roberts could provide the documents to Council for consideration.

Ordinance Officer: Twenty-five weed ordinance letters were sent. Twenty-three recipients had complied, leaving two properties that had not complied at the time of the meeting.

Airport: The committee did not meet.

Parks and Recreation: The committee held a brief meeting. The PurpleAir sensor for the swimming pool has arrived. Approximately \$250 was spent on a stand/platform that will allow smaller children to rest while swimming and assist them in becoming comfortable in the water.

EMS/Police: Jess submitted activity numbers for Council's review.

Library: The Library reported earning slightly more than \$1,000 from the book fair, with approximately \$400 remaining after expenses. The metal bench located in front of the Library will be moved due to ongoing concerns with loitering and garbage being left in the area.

Public Works: The committee is scheduled to meet the following week.

Swimming Pool Committee: The committee held its first meeting and discussed long-term goals for the swimming pool. The committee's primary focus is maintaining the mechanical operation of the existing pool. The committee expressed interest in a salt generation system. The estimated initial cost is approximately \$28,000, with annual costs estimated at approximately \$800 following installation. Current chemical expenses were discussed at approximately \$24,000 annually. Long-term ideas include the possibility of adding a therapeutic pool and potentially expanding the existing pool facility. A contractor is scheduled to inspect a deteriorating portion of the wall near the shallow end of the pool. Council also discussed the airplane displayed at the park. The original donors have expressed interest in having the airplane returned to the museum if expansion of the pool requires its removal. Moving the airplane would be complicated and would need to be coordinated by those requesting its return. The airplane was polished several years ago and its decals were replaced.

7. Public Participation/Comments

Public comments shall not be restricted based on content or viewpoint. Public comment is limited to three (3) minutes per person, per item, unless additional time is permitted by the presiding officer.

8. Old Business

a. Backflow Prevention Survey-The Water Specialist reviewed the proposed Backflow Prevention Survey and advised that it appears to contain the information necessary for the City. Council discussed that completing the survey is voluntary; however, properties that do not respond may require additional follow-up by the City to determine whether backflow prevention requirements apply. Council consensus was to proceed with distributing the survey.

b. DRC Employee Discussion- Council discussed the City's Drinking Water Direct Responsible Charge (DRC) designation and associated employee compensation. The employee's current hourly rate of \$27.09 was reviewed. Council discussed potential additional compensation associated with assuming DRC responsibilities. It was noted that DRC responsibilities are not currently included in the employee's job description. Council discussed whether additional compensation of a few dollars per hour would be appropriate given that the DRC is not necessarily serving as a supervisor or manager but will assume additional regulatory and operational responsibility. The additional responsibilities include making decisions regarding water system operations, determining whether work may be performed by other employees, and deciding whether an issue can wait or requires immediate attention. Council discussed the need for consistency when providing additional compensation for added responsibilities and whether doing so could create expectations for other employees seeking additional compensation. It was noted that the City needs to formally designate a qualified individual with the State to maintain compliance. Council also discussed wastewater operations and noted that employees are working toward the required certifications. Previous budget discussions included approximately a 2.5% increase related to DRC responsibilities, although that increase has not yet been implemented. The employee also received the applicable 5% union wage increase. Council discussed contacting State representative Amy Ward for additional clarification regarding DRC responsibilities. Council also discussed developing a formal wage scale that establishes wage ranges and maximum rates for positions. Daily work records are being implemented throughout Public Works. Similar logs are already used by the Road

Department and for on-call work. Council discussed the importance of these records for documenting completed work and protecting both employees and the City.

c. Ordinance/Charter Committee Appointments-Council discussed appointments to the Ordinance/Charter Committee. An applicable resolution was located or identified for further review. The matter will return to Council after the resolution has been reviewed.

c. Brush Pit- Council discussed charging a \$25 user fee for access to the City brush pit. Because residents are not required to use the City's brush pit, Council discussed that charging a reasonable user fee would be appropriate. Council discussed installing a new lock and issuing new keys stamped "Do Not Duplicate." A key checkout and tracking system will be developed, potentially including a secure key/card storage system. Council also discussed maintaining a list of individuals who misuse the facility and restricting future access when necessary.

d. Park Slide-Council reviewed two quotes for the park slide. One option would replace the slide only, while the other would replace the slide and associated components/hood. Funding is available within the current budget. Motion: Council President Keller moved to approve the park slide expenditure in the amount of \$1,814.09. Council Member Bixby seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

e. Memorandum of Understanding Between City and Rural Fire- Council reviewed the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the City and Rural Fire. An existing credit was discussed. Rural Fire will pay the current amount in full, and the parties will determine how to address the credit during the following year. Motion: Council Member Harper-Dennis moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and Rural Fire. Council President Keller seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

f. 792 17th Street N- Council discussed ongoing ordinance concerns regarding the property at 792 17th Street N. A certified letter was sent on July 16, 2026. The primary concern involves reports of individuals residing in multiple trailers/RVs on the property. The occupants had previously been advised that only one trailer could be used as a residence. They subsequently reported that electrical cords to the additional units had been removed and that only one unit was being occupied. The Ordinance Officer inspected the property and, at that time, verified apparent occupancy of only one unit. Additional information was subsequently provided alleging that more than one unit may still be occupied and that electrical connections may be disconnected and reconnected. Charles Kimball, associated with the neighboring property at 794 17th Street, discussed observations regarding a truck camper and its proximity/orientation to his property. Council discussed the limitations on gathering evidence from private property. Council stated that it could not advise private individuals to enter or photograph another person's private property without lawful authorization. Individuals may pursue any private legal remedies available to them. The Ordinance Officer will continue investigating through lawful observation from public areas or from private property where the owner has granted permission. The current compliance deadline is September 11, 2026, there should no longer be anyone living in trailer.

9. New Business

a. Sophia Andrews – Pool Mural-Sophia Andrews was not available online for the scheduled discussion. No action was taken.

b. Development and Access Permit- City Attorney Jake Conde reported that he had reviewed the proposed permit. Additional input from Horton is needed; however, Horton had been on vacation. The matter will return at the next Council meeting. Council discussed requirements associated with curbs, gutters, and sidewalks. New construction is required to address curbs, gutters, and sidewalks under the permit

requirements. Driveway requirements were also discussed. Although a specific City Code provision regarding driveways was not immediately identified, driveway permitting requirements may be contained within the City's Public Works standards. Applicable County and State driveway requirements may also apply. Council discussed the benefit of having requirements clearly established in writing to provide consistency and prevent disagreements regarding what applicants were told.

c. RV Limited Use Permit-The RV Limited Use Permit was discussed in conjunction with the Development and Access Permit. Additional review is needed, and the matter will return to Council.

d. Business Oregon Lottery Award Loan- Council reviewed a significant amount of information regarding the Business Oregon funding opportunity. Anderson Perry provided a summary for Council. With a Friday deadline associated with the current opportunity. Approximately \$3 million in grant funding was also discussed. The overall project is expected to require approximately another \$4 million in funding, \$1.5 million of that would be able to apply for loan forgiveness. The City would continue seeking additional funding opportunities through approximately 2028. Mayor Hartwell discussed exploring whether funding associated with new construction could contribute to the project because the project would improve water pressure in that portion of the City. Council discussed the City's water master planning and whether construction of an additional water storage tank should be included. Previous planning documents had included a tank at one point and later removed it from the project. Council discussed whether a tank may ultimately be necessary for adequate water storage regardless of the current project. Siera with Senator McClane's office may also be able to identify additional grant opportunities. Council agreed that the City should begin the process and indicate its interest in pursuing the available funding. **Motion: Council Member Bixby moved to authorize continued progression of the Business Oregon funding opportunity. Council President Keller seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

e. Anderson Perry – General Engineering Agreement- Council reviewed a General Engineering Agreement with Anderson Perry. They would like to establish annual engineering agreements for general consultation and miscellaneous engineering needs. The City has apparently not had a similar general agreement in place since approximately 2013. The agreement itself does not create a charge simply for being in place; costs would be associated with specific services requested by the City. **Motion: Council President Keller moved to approve the General Engineering Agreement with Anderson Perry. Council Member Bixby seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

f. Infrastructure Grant-Council discussed a \$10,000 infrastructure grant opportunity provided through State of Oregon. The City did not qualify for the previous SCA grant application for 15th Street. Council discussed whether the new funding could assist with paving or improvements to 15th Street. Blue Sky Drive was also discussed. The roadway is approximately 20 feet wide and therefore does not function as a standard two-lane roadway; however, improvements could allow it to serve as an emergency services access route and improve connectivity on the west side of the neighborhood. Council discussed submitting eligible road and water projects for consideration and supported pursuing available grant funding.

g. Property Next to the Bank- Council discussed the property adjacent to the bank. Abatement of the property had previously been started, and there had been an understanding that arrangements were being made through the prior City Manager. However, the property owner will not respond to any communications from the city.

A structural beam on the property is leaning and may pose a risk of damage to the neighboring bank. Council discussed whether removing the beam could allow the remaining structure to be safely pushed inward or otherwise addressed. Rex Martin was identified as the property owner. The County had previously been involved when another portion of the structure was removed, but the process was later stopped. Council discussed the history of the issue, and the need to obtain additional information before proceeding. The matter was tabled until the next Council meeting. Council also discussed whether the adjacent roadway may need to be temporarily closed if necessary to protect public safety.

10. Other Matters

No additional matters were discussed.

11. Adjournment

Motion: Council Member Bixby moved to adjourn the meeting until Tuesday, August 25, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. Council President Keller seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "A. Hartwell", is written over a horizontal line.

Mayor Alex Hartwell

A horizontal line is drawn across the page, intended for a signature.

City Recorder Ashley Aponte