

North Powder City Council Meeting
Minutes
August 4, 2025
City Hall (340 E Street)
7PM

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor John Frieboes called the meeting to order. The pledge of allegiance was said.

Roll Call: Midge Clause, John Frieboes, Don McClure, Tonya Dias, Alan Brown, Lindsey Thompson, Josh Guthrie, Emily Hart, Jake Jones

Public Comment:

Marie Johnson reported that the recycling company left the cardboard dumpster locked. As a result, cardboard was thrown on the ground. She requested that Waste Pro be reminded to leave the dumpsters unlocked. Dave Hoene expressed concern regarding tire dumping on a property. He noted that the Sheriff's Department has been contacted. John will follow up by contacting the State Fire Marshal. Teri Brown announced that a Firewise meeting will be held on August 28, 2025, at 6:00 PM at the Wolf Creek Grange.

Amend/Accept Agenda:

Councilor Dias requested that the following items be added for consideration:

- Posting the council meeting date and time
- Providing meeting room chairs
- Signage for the wetlands

Approval of Agenda:

Councilor Clause made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilor Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed with all other councilors voting in favor. Councilor Guthrie abstained from voting.

Amend/Accept Minutes:

Councilor Dias noted an amendment needed for the Public Works Report on July 7, 20-25.

Councilor Brown made a motion to approve the amendment and approve the minutes for July 7, 2025 and July 29, 2025. Councilor Clause seconded the motion. The motion carried with all other councilors voting in favor.

Councilor Guthrie abstained from voting.

Accounts Payable:

- It was noted that some invoices were not received in time to be included on the spreadsheet for the June bills. A revised spreadsheet was added to council packets.
- The total bills for June that were sent to the accountant were \$11,601.44.
- Additional June library grant invoices were received but have not yet been sent to the accountant. These total \$228,530.67.
- The July library grant bills total \$12,130.40.
- The regular July bills total \$45,136.83.

Councilor Dias made a motion to pay the bills, Councilor Clause seconded, the motion carried with all other councilors voting in favor. Councilor Guthrie abstained from voting.

Library Report:

Maurizio from the Ford Family Foundation will provide a presentation on Zoology, with a focus on the Badger (the Community members have expressed interest in tutoring at the library).

A draft Tutoring Policy was created after reviewing policies from other libraries. The policy would allow tutoring within the facility but clearly separate it from library operations. Council approval of the policy will be required. Council agreed to allow time for review and discussion at the next meeting.

The library is exploring the creation of a Junior Board Member group (teenagers) to advise on library programs, reading materials, and activities. This would allow youth to be engaged and feel connected to the library. Council will review charter and policy requirements before moving forward with honorary or advisory youth positions. Feedback from local students on seating and library space preferences was shared, providing helpful insight into youth needs. Interest continues to grow in board involvement and community activities, especially with the new library facility nearing completion.

Huckleberry Festival:

Bonnie Finley reported:

- A successful festival was held this year.
- Sponsors: 33 sponsors supported the event, both monetarily and through services.
- Vendors: 42 vendors participated.
- Car Show: 45 entries were received, with participation extending from Idaho and Washington.
- The end-of-year festival committee meeting will be held on August 16, 2025.
- The committee reported a strong budget foundation going into 2026 and a solid group of volunteers, though additional help is always welcome.
- No further events are planned until February 2026.

Public Works Report:

Public Works Report

- Water Production: Over 7 million gallons of water were produced.
- Water Leak & Meter Relocation: Work began on the water leak that has been leaking since October. Efforts shifted to a meter relocation. The City will be responsible for the new water path. The church will complete excavation from the property line back to their service connection, and the current service line will be abandoned. This will resolve long-term issues caused by the line previously running across private property. A water leak was discovered on Fifth St.
- Record keeping over the past 25 years has been inconsistent, making system work a process of trial and error.
- Consultation & Reviews:
 - Conducted a wetlands review with Anderson Perry.
 - Attended a DEQ meeting, which was reported to have gone well. Progress is being made toward aligning with DEQ expectations and requirements.
 - DEQ provided feedback regarding the lagoon system, and staff are following guidance for improvements and long-term planning.
- Ongoing testing and monitoring are being conducted, including phosphorus and chlorine injections throughout the system. Records are now being established to provide better long-term tracking.
- Progress: Communication continues with consultants and contractors to address infrastructure needs. Small but steady progress is being made, with future work anticipated to address additional service line and meter issues across the city (e.g., multiple houses sharing one meter).
- Community Comment:
 - Concern was noted about chlorine odor in household water.
 - Public Works explained this can occur when water sits overnight and gases off. Running water for a few minutes typically resolves the issue.
 - It was also noted that individuals with chlorine sensitivities should exercise caution (e.g., by using shower filters).
- Acknowledgment: Council members commended Jake for the progress made and his work in the department.

Recorder Report:

It was noted that Public Works produced over 7 million gallons of water last month.

North Powder was not selected for the Small City Allotment Program Grant. The application has been submitted multiple times without success. Council discussed the need to revisit priorities and consider revisions for the next grant cycle (April–May 2026).

QuickBooks Proposal:

- The City Recorder requested implementation of QuickBooks to improve efficiency, accuracy, and reporting.
- Currently, financial tasks are duplicated on paper and manually entered in multiple systems. QuickBooks would streamline processes and integrate with potential future billing software.
- Options presented:
 - QuickBooks Online: \$30–\$60 per month, plus setup and training.
 - QuickBooks Desktop: One-time cost of \$300–\$600, plus setup and training. A promotional price of \$299 was noted for the desktop version.
- Council Discussion: Council expressed strong support for moving forward, acknowledging the Recorder’s workload and the need to reduce manual processes.
- A motion was made Councilor Dias to approve purchase of QuickBooks in the version recommended by the City Recorder. Councilor Thompson seconded. The motion carried with all voting yes.

The City Recorder reported that she has applied for the Public Works Director position. Due to this, she can no longer be involved in the recruitment process. Council will need to appoint a representative to work with CIS and manage related hiring tasks.

The City Recorder participated in a DEQ inspection and is now registered to submit reports. Additional work hours will be required to complete DEQ reporting responsibilities. Councilor Dias volunteered to take on the recruitment process. Council agreed to this plan.

The Recorder noted that she has been performing Public Works Director Duties and requested a discussion on compensation for the additional workload and responsibilities.

Mayor’s Report:

Community Appreciation: The Mayor thanked all individuals and volunteers who assisted with the Huckleberry Festival and other city needs over the past month, particularly with Public Works support.

Fall Cleanup:

- The Mayor proposed scheduling a Fall Cleanup event, similar to last year’s.
- Possible limitations include no curbside pickups; tire disposal remains under discussion.
- Funding: Pending invoices from spring cleanup, but grant funds from Union County should still be available.
- Proposed Dates: Council considered September 27, 2025 or early October. No final decision was made; the topic will be revisited at a future meeting.

City Properties & Cleanup Discussion:

Council discussed the accumulation of materials and debris around city-owned buildings and properties. It was noted that this cleanup may need to be addressed separately from the community Fall Cleanup Day to allow for dedicated time and resources.

A scrap metal dumpster (6x6) has been ordered and is expected to arrive by Thursday or Friday, delayed slightly due to driver availability. The dumpster will be placed at the city shop.

Council agreed that addressing city property cleanup is important and should remain on the radar for future planning, possibly as a separate cleanup effort.

Parks Committee

- The Mayor recognized community member Mike Schoeningh for his volunteer efforts in maintaining the park, including mowing and watering with his own equipment. The park has been well cared for and is seeing frequent community use.
- The Mayor proposed appointing Mike as Chairman of the Parks Committee to oversee park maintenance, improvements, and planning. The committee will consist of one council member, the chair, and community volunteers.
- Council Appointment: Councilor Mitch volunteered to serve as the council representative on the Parks Committee alongside Mike.
- The committee will provide meeting notes, including attendance and discussion topics, to the City Recorder.

Water Tower Vandalism

- The Mayor reported recent graffiti vandalism on the city water tower.
- Concerns included both the vandalism itself and potential liability issues if individuals climb the tower and are injured.
- The Sheriff's Office was contacted, and a deputy will investigate the matter.
- Photos of the graffiti were shared with the school principal and superintendent to determine if the initials have any relevance.
- Safety measures were discussed, including placing a "No Trespassing" sign directly on the ladder and reviewing additional ways to restrict access.

New Business:

Lindsey Thompson:

Main Street Program Discussion

- Council heard a presentation on the potential benefits of forming a North Powder Main Street Program. Information and sample materials were provided by the Brand group.
- Pros & Benefits Discussed:
 - Brings downtown businesses together to plan events and activities.
 - Provides access to training, grants, and contacts with other cities and organizations.
 - Focuses on four key concepts: economic vitality, design, organization, and promotion.
 - Opportunities for events such as "shopping Thursdays," art walks, wine walks, and other community-building activities.
 - Potential for grants to support business and community beautification (buildings, sidewalks, etc.).
 - Increases public involvement in shaping long-term planning (5–10 year goals) rather than the City deciding unilaterally.
- Requirements & Structure:
 - No minimum number of businesses required. Participation is demonstrated through volunteer involvement, board meetings, and ongoing development activities.
 - A local Main Street Board or Group would need to be formed to oversee efforts.
 - Annual fee is approximately \$125, which may be paid by the City or by a private group.
 - Establishing a district or boundary would be part of the group's initial planning.
- Council Comments:
 - General support was expressed for exploring the opportunity.
 - The importance of gathering additional information and clarifying expectations before committing was emphasized.
 - Timing of the fee payment (January rather than late in the year) was noted as a consideration.

- Next Steps: Council agreed to seek further information and guidance on the program before making a decision on membership and fee payment.

Charter & Ordinance Review Discussion

- Mike Wisdom:
 - Expressed concern regarding the lack of progress on the Charter and Ordinance Review Committees.
 - Noted that the committees were assigned months ago but have not yet met.
 - Stressed that this process should already be underway, as ordinance and charter review will be lengthy and ongoing.
 - Emphasized the importance of starting work before volunteer interest diminishes.
- Council Response:
 - Council acknowledged delays due to staffing shortages and additional responsibilities following retirements and resignations in Public Works.
 - Several members noted that background research has been underway, including review of charters from other small communities, to ensure committees are prepared with information before convening.
 - Councilors agreed that progress has been slower than anticipated but reaffirmed commitment to moving forward.
- Ordinance Enforcement Concerns:
 - Discussion emphasized the need for effective enforcement mechanisms.
 - Without enforcement, existing ordinances have limited impact.
 - Suggestions included:
 - Hiring an Ordinance/Code Enforcement Officer.
 - Exploring a cooperative agreement with nearby jurisdictions for enforcement services.
 - Reviewing the City's past violation process (steps for warnings, notices, and penalties) and updating as needed.
 - Establishing a fine schedule, magistrate process, and clear authority for enforcement to ensure compliance.
- Historical Context:
 - Approximately 10–12 years ago, the college assisted in compiling ordinance reviews into a notebook, which remains available as a reference.
 - Past agreements with the County Justice system may provide a framework for enforcing fines and addressing repeat violations.
- Council Concerns:
 - Members noted that lack of enforcement has contributed to ongoing community issues such as abandoned vehicles and property nuisances.
 - Recognized that financial resources and safety concerns (including threats to city officials) make enforcement challenging without proper systems in place.
 - General consensus was that a cohesive enforcement framework—including fines, court processes, and interagency agreements—must be established alongside ordinance review.
- Next Steps:
 - Committees will begin meeting to review the charter and ordinances, incorporating research already conducted by council members.
 - Council will further explore options for enforcement, including partnerships or hiring.
 - A cooperative agreement with the Justice Court will be revisited to clarify fine collection and enforcement authority.

Liquor License Renewals

- Council reviewed the annual liquor license renewals for:
 - CJ's Country Store

- Badger Mart
 - North Powder Café
- It was noted that these renewals are routine.
- Opportunity for public comment regarding liquor license renewals was held. No public comment was received.

Council Meeting Schedule

- Council discussed adjusting the regular council meeting schedule to allow for a fuller review of bills and to ease workload at the beginning of each month.
- Proposal: Move meetings to the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 PM (instead of the first Tuesday at 7:00 PM).
- Council agreed the change would allow more time for billing, reduce workload conflicts, and help meetings conclude earlier.
- Motion: A motion was made by Councilor Brown, and seconded by Councilor Clause to adopt the new schedule. The motion carried unanimously with Councilor Guthrie abstaining from voting.
- The new schedule will take effect beginning with the September 9, 2025 meeting. Notice will be provided to the community via the newsletter, post office, and other outlets.

Wetlands Signage

- Council reviewed correspondence between Trask and the Tribes regarding required wetlands signage tied to grant funding.
- Cost estimate provided: \$2,096, valid through December 31, 2025.
- It was noted that the Tribes were responsible for creating the signage.
- Council agreed follow-up is needed to ensure the sign is completed so funding requirements are met.
- Action: Councilor Dias will follow up with the Tribes and Trask to confirm the status of the project.

Meeting Room Chairs

- Council discussed the need to replace the meeting room chairs, many of which are in poor condition.
- Options reviewed included folding chairs with or without cushions, with Amazon noted as the most affordable source compared to Uline and other suppliers.
- Considerations included:
 - Durability of frame style
 - Comfort of cushioned seating
 - Shipping costs (Uline quoted up to \$1,000 for delivery)
 - Alternative suppliers (e.g., Caxton Printers in Caldwell)
- No final decision was made; council will continue reviewing options.

Public Works Director Recruitment

- Update provided that three applications have been received for the Public Works Director position.

Old Business:

Library Construction Update

- Progress on the new library building is continuing.
 - Delays: Windows were returned due to defects, resulting in approximately a one-week delay.
 - Current Work: Sheetrock installation is underway. Siding work is scheduled to begin this week.
- Concerns: A councilor noted poor-quality concrete work near the new sewer lateral. Staff confirmed this issue is on the correction list.
- Blinds:
 - Proposal to purchase new window blinds for the library offices.
 - Estimated cost: \$1,400 (Blinds.com, based on preliminary checking).
 - Samples will be ordered for review before a final purchase.

- Blinds would allow clear viewing outward while limiting visibility inward and deflecting light effectively.
- Library Signage:
 - The library sign was removed during value engineering.
 - Proposal to purchase 16-inch floating letters spelling *North Powder Library* for approximately \$500 (Amazon).
 - Installation will be completed in-house.
 - Future consideration: similar signage for *North Powder City Hall* to match the library, though this is not included at this time.
- Council Action: Council approved proceeding with the purchase of window blinds (pending final measurements) and library signage.

Old Library-Unsafe Building Inspection – 290 E Street

- Inspection Report:
 - The City's building inspector, accompanied by the commercial inspector, inspected the building located at 290 E Street, North Powder, OR 97867.
 - A letter was issued stating the building was in serious disrepair and unsafe to occupy, citing *City Ordinance Chapter 50, Building Regulations, Section 50.42(i)(2)*.
 - Recommendation: Engage a structural engineer to further evaluate the extent of damage and determine whether the building can be safely occupied.
- Safety Measures:
 - The inspector advised that the structure poses a public safety risk, particularly on one exterior wall, and recommended fencing off the sidewalk area adjacent to the building.
 - City staff are removing remaining materials from the building. The restroom previously used by contractors is no longer in use.
- Asbestos Survey Proposal:
 - The City Recorder noted the need for an asbestos survey prior to any future work (renovation, demolition, or abatement).
 - Estimated cost of survey: \$750. The survey would also include lead paint testing and provide cost estimates for abatement.
 - This step is required whether the City decides to rehabilitate or demolish the structure.
- Council Discussion:
 - Concerns were raised regarding notice to the property's historical group and availability of reports.
 - Council emphasized that no decisions have been made regarding demolition or future use of the building; the focus at this stage is public safety and liability.
 - Members noted the survey results would provide information necessary to apply for grants to cover potential abatement costs.
- Action Taken:
 - Motion made by Councilor Brown and seconded by Councilor Clause to approve the asbestos survey. Motion was carried unanimously with all Council voting yes.
 - Vote: Motion carried unanimously.
 - Staff will also ensure the building is secured and posted with warning signage to prevent unauthorized access.

Final Comment: Public Works-Jake expressed appreciation to the Council for working positively with him and providing strong leadership to move the City forward.

Council Comments: None

Meeting adjourned: 830PM