

North Powder Council Meeting
Minutes
May 12, 2026
City Hall (340 E Street)
6PM

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance: President Lindsey Thompson called meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Pledge of allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Don McClure, Don Clark, Becky Sturm, Midge Clause, Josh Guthrie, Lindsey Thompson and Alan Brown

Public Comment:

Bonnie Finley stated that the North Powder Firewise Committee invites the City Council and the community to a taco salad event. It will be held on Saturday, May 16 at 6 pm at the North Powder Firehouse. They will be talking about fire preparedness, community safety and evacuation planning. The guest will be Chris Paul, Morgan St. Capital, and Nick Gora, Union County Emergency Manager. This will be free to all and no RSVP required. Posters have been distributed around town, and they encourage the public to attend.

Amend/Accept Agenda: The agenda was changed to remove The Compost Chick franchise violation to be tabled for special session. Midge made motion to accept amended agenda, Don Clark 2nd, passed unanimously.

Amend/Accept Minutes: Alan made motion to accept minutes from 3/13/26, 4/7/26 and special session 4/26/2026, Don McClure 2nd. Passed with Josh abstaining.

Accept Mayor's Resignation: President Lindsey read resignation letter from John Freibose dated April 28, 2026. Don Clark made motion to accept resignation, Josh 2nd the motion, Vote unanimously.

There was discussion about posting notice for Mayor. There has been notice posted since the resignation was submitted with one letter of interest from Alan Brown.

Council member appointed/sworn in: There was one person that submitted letter, Alan Brown. There was discussion regarding whether to wait until next meeting to get more letters of interest. This has been posted for two weeks with no other interest. Midge made motion to accept and appoint Alan Brown as interim Mayor. Don McClure 2nd the motion. Vote was 4 yes, Josh abstained from voting. President Lindsey Thompson swore Alan Brown in as interim Mayor.

Accounts Payable: Alan Brown asked for question/discussion on Accounts payable list. It was mentioned that the bills were mostly for the library improvements/construction covered by the grant. This needed to be done before April 23 to receive reimbursement from the grant. It was noted that \$500 charges will be handled internally in the future. Midge made motion to pay the bills, Lindsey 2nd the motion, vote passed unanimously.

Library Report:

Library Open house was great success. Had over 60 people come in. There were librarians from all over the state, the Union County Commissioners were here. Thank you for all your help.

Bookcases were ordered to hang on the wall. Terri Brown resigned from the Library Board. Notices to fill vacancy have been posted. Have applied for the EO Grant, \$1500 for books/media. Summer reading program will begin on June 3, 12, 19, and 26 (Fridays), 11:00 – 12:00. Parents must stay. Mary Seal will be doing presentation on June 26, 11:00-7:00. Reading program is for 1st – 5th grade. Josh asked if there was enough money in contingency fund to compensate Don's overtime wages, he worked to get the library ready. Midge stated that they will talk about it. Midge stated that there is no one allowed in the old library without authorization. Someone has been getting in; all locks have been changed, and security cameras will be installed soon.

Public Works Report:

Don McClure stated that the systems are running smoothly at fresh water. Working on solar beacons at the lagoons. Repaired gates between 1 & 2. Would like to thank the community for their assistance. Sod has been laid down. This was paid for by Don out of his pocket. Planning a trip to Joseph to pick up a new head/auger for wastewater ponds. This equipment will compact/dries solids and improve filtration to 5 microns. Benefits include reduced manual handling and extended bioactive life. He plans to gather photos, documentation and modification requirements to install.

Part-time position recruitment status and next steps: There has been one application received after a 30-day posting on website, newsletter and indeed. Don Clark motioned to extend the advertisement in Indeed for 15 more days, Midge 2nd, vote unanimously.

Interview committee will be Don McClure, Barbara Huffman, Dave Hoene and Don Clark.

Recorder Report: Training has been completed and target is to go live by next billing cycle. Bills will be switching to postcard format: newsletters will no longer be included with bills. They will be available at the Library, City Hall, the Grange, the Post Office or via email/mail on request. Uncertain if the payment history will be displayed on postcards. Most likely will be previous balance, current balance and total. Possibly last payment.

DEQ is preparing a civil penalty and clean up order regarding the tire issues; expected within 1-2 weeks. Contact changed to Sara Wheeler (DEQ Civil Penalty Department). Multiple agencies notified/visited; city awaits state action.

Formal complaint regarding Council-Staff interaction: Complaint filed against Council Member Lindsey Thompson (Position #5) concerning February 2026 water service interaction. Allegations are intimidation, interference with administration, public criticism without staff present; ethics manual section cited. Response: apology clarifying intent around communication/responsibility: staff noted proper contacts were made.

Water Service for Compost site – Ongoing complications. Residents paid for water service months ago: documentation gaps have complicated progress. Current tie through another property: need to place meter on city property to avoid trespass. Constraints include easements, private property, unclear legacy lines, exaction spotters and business use considerations. Distances discussed (approx. 326-425-feet additional line): seek shortest, economical route. Special session will be planned for detailed resolution.

Mayor's Report: Mayor stated that he met with John and covered a list for future work items; focusing on adjacent building under new business. Library open house was successful: FFA coordinated plants/planters; flowers are targeted for Memorial Day weekend. There will be a citywide yard/garage sale to coincide with the Huckleberry Festival (one day) on Saturday, July 25, 2026; committee working on honorary parade marshal.

Emergency Contact Information and Water Quality Concern. Residents reported brown water and difficulty reaching emergency contacts due to outdated postings. There was a note on the window at City Hall with the correct numbers. The "old" notice was taken down and the new one re-posted on the door. Resident mentioned credit card payment posting issues and mentioned to publicly notify all residents that pay with credit card. Issue was acknowledged and in progress.

Manganese in City water and visible discoloration. It is naturally occurring and not currently filtered; residents report black/brown residue. Possible causes include mainline leaks pulling in dirt: investigation needed near known trouble spots.

Resident stated that returned after six months to find brown sludge and slow-running water; meter showed 66,000 gallons used. Resident had shut his water off before he left with the Public Works Maintenance Director, Rick Lawyer, knowing about this and had his ok. It was suggested to use sonar-based leak detection on main lines: resident-side leaks are customers responsibility.

New Business: Council meeting changed to 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm. Lindsay made motion to change the date of meetings, Don McClure 2nd, passed unanimously.

Ordinance Violation: Manufactured Home placed without permits on rental property. Ownership is unclear, (Mark vs. Terry Schoen: notarized transfer from Umatilla County, verification in Union County pending. Property is a single tax lot formed from five parcels; home sits on axles; ordinance applicability discussed (RVs/Travel trailers vs manufactured homes; storage vs. placement; possible 1180-day provision). Staff consulted with planning/land offices; revised notification letter prepared. There was a debate on special session vs administrative action; consensus to proceed administratively. Midge motion to proceed with letter, 2nd Lindsey, passed unanimously.

Proposal to allow council to check out unused city Chromebooks for city business; draft agreement for tracking and terms. Members to review and suggest changes; potential approval at next meeting.

Budget Committee Appointment: Joyce Lawyer stated she is a former 12-year council member. She emphasized revenue opportunities without raising rates to ensure base water bills for all. Alana West has no experience on committee. Financial advisor for 15 years, single family housing laws, worked for construction company for years and is interested in what's going on. The council voted unanimously to appoint both to Budget Committee for three years. Administration will send appointment letters and schedule first meeting on the May 27 at 6:00 pm.

Library building demolition grant. Mayor stated that we plan to apply for up to \$100,000 grant for asbestos abatement and demolition of the old library; deadline is around June 15. The grant writing cost is approximately \$4,000 and seeking county/commissioner support; requires 20% in-kind (post-demolition site work). Ducote Consulting, scope aligns with parks/recreation priorities: demo building, expanding park, adding parking and public restroom; other amenities out of current scope. Building owned by City of North Powder and is not historic. Demolition must follow abatement via professions. Don McClure motioned to move forward to contact Ducote to proceed with grant, 2nd Lindsey, passed unanimously.

Council Role Reassignment: President remains for two-year term: maintain some current assignments. Bank signatory changes are pending; need minutes reflecting resignation/reassignment.

Wastewater Treatment Plant final inspection: Final inspection expected mid to late May, estimated cost \$13,000 and it is required. Will consult with Accountant regarding contingency funds for the cost.

Council Comments: None.

Meeting adjourned: 7:58 pm