

**City of Lowell Oregon
City Council
Work Session Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2026**

The Lowell City Council held a Work Session meeting on March 3, 2026. The meeting location was at the Lowell Rural Fire Protection District Fire Station 1 at 389 N. Pioneer Street, Lowell, OR 97452. Mayor Weathers called the meeting to order at 7:41 pm.

City Councilors present: Mayor Maureen Weathers, Jimmy Murray, Gail Harris, Don Bennett, and Tim Stratis

City Councilors absent: None

Staff/others present: City Administrator Max Baker

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved.

Consent Agenda: No consent agenda

Public Comments: No Public comments received.

Staff Reports: No Staff Reports

Work Session Topics:

East First Street Paving Quotes

The City Administrator presented three quotes for completing the East First Street paving project, which involves adding the final 2 inches of asphalt to complete the road. He explained that they had already put down the base 4-inch layer and were waiting for inspections from the engineer regarding the sewer line, plus waiting for litigation to close, which had since been resolved.

The three quotes received were from River Bend Construction (\$15,112), Wakeview, and Wildish. The City Administrator noted they had good working relationships with all three companies, as they were all local contractors who had done previous work for the city. River Bend had done the safe routes to school project, Wakeview had completed the previous paving work, and Wildish had worked on Lakeview projects.

He explained that the River Bend quote did not include compaction testing, while the Wakeview quote included it for an additional \$500. However, he indicated they would not require compaction testing as it was difficult to achieve the required level initially, and the road would naturally compact over time with traffic and weather. He had already discussed this with Matt and confirmed there were no issues with this approach.

Mayor Weathers asked about taking the opportunity to fix other issues while the contractors were mobilized. The City Administrator confirmed they would address potholes on South Alder near the school, Cannon, and one spot on D Street. He explained that Pave Northwest had quoted these repairs under their spending authority, though they wouldn't be available until May. However, since DFN was already working in the area and needed to order a certain quantity of blacktop anyway, they could handle some repairs for just a couple hundred dollars for equipment operation.

The City Administrator mentioned they would also advertise to property owners on First Street, similar to what they had done on Main Street and Lakeview, allowing residents to coordinate with the vendor for their own paving needs at cost. He noted that someone had recently inquired about when the First Street paving would be completed. The goal was to complete this project within the current budget cycle, timing it properly for temperature requirements, as the previous attempt had to be delayed until fall due to excessive heat, and winter paving was not possible.

Recent Lowell Municipal Code Update and Website Navigation – Discussion

The City Administrator announced the completion of the final module for the city's code update, describing it as one of the largest code codification and update projects the city had undertaken in a long time. The update included the downtown master plan, new building standards, zoning consolidations from a mass rezoning of a large portion of the city, ADU standards, downtown development requirements, FEMA flood plan updates, and the building department fee schedule ordinance.

He demonstrated the new online municipal code system by navigating to the city's website at Lowell Oregon dot gov, explaining that citizens could access the code through the government section and clicking on "municode." The system allowed users to search, print, email, and download sections of the code in Word format, making it much more user-friendly for both staff and the public.

The City Administrator showed how the system displayed all chapters of the city code with hyperlinks, and importantly, it automatically updated to show the most current version while still allowing access to previous versions for comparison. He emphasized this was crucial because during a recent comment period, someone had deliberately used outdated code information, though the newly adopted code was still available upon request at city hall.

The search function allowed users to find specific topics like "fence" or "cats" (noting the city actually had a cat ordinance), and the system would show every mention of those terms throughout the code. For code enforcement letters, staff could now easily extract relevant sections and create Word documents rather than having to reinvent the wheel each time.

The City Administrator explained that the system would save significant staff time and improve service to developers and other municipalities who often requested copies of Lowell's ordinances. He noted that other cities' websites were often difficult to navigate, which made this standardized system particularly valuable.

Council President Murray raised concerns about upcoming federal website accessibility requirements with an April 26th deadline for cities. The City Administrator confirmed they were tracking this issue and that Municode (which also owned their website through Civic Plus) had assured him that Lowell would be in compliance by the April 27th deadline. The accessibility features would include screen reader compatibility, mobile and desktop versions, and AI assistance for users with hearing or vision difficulties or different language needs.

Mayor Weathers announced that following their executive session discussion, she would prepare a first draft recap of the City Administrator's performance evaluation for council review, with plans to have it on the agenda for the March 17th meeting. She indicated they would begin gathering data for April 1st budget discussions, including CPI information and consideration of contract terms. The performance evaluation would be completed at the March meeting, with other criteria addressed in April to tie into the budget process.

The City Administrator requested confirmation that this approach was acceptable to all council members, and there was agreement to proceed with adding it as a regular agenda item.

Mayor Weathers noted it had been a pleasure having the City Administrator in his position and expressed optimism about the upcoming budget process, particularly given that the city was not "in the tank" financially. The City Administrator mentioned they were applying for various state funding opportunities, noting that they had been applying since 2023 and that even smaller grants of \$100,000 were significant for a city their size compared to larger cities like Eugene.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM.

APPROVED:



Maureen M. Weathers, Mayor

ATTEST:



Max Baker, City Recorder

