City of Lowell Oregon
City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 16, 2026

The Lowell City Council held a regular meeting on June 16, 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 7:04 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, Contract Accountant Layli Nicols

Approval Of Agenda:
Mayor Weathers called for any changes to the agenda. City Administrator Baker noted that Resolution 885 — a resolution accepting a grant for the library — needed to be added as item 9(j) under New Business. Mayor Weathers also noted that under Other Business, the council would read a proclamation and discuss scheduling an executive session for the following day.

Motion to approve the agenda with the noted changes was made by Mayor Weathers and seconded by Councilor Murray. The motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda:
Mayor Weathers reviewed the items included in the Consent Agenda: Financial Reports for April 2026, Check Register for May 2026, Leave Report for May 2026, and meeting minutes from the May 19, 2026 Regular Meeting and the June 2, 2026 Work Session. Two minor corrections were noted: Mayor Weathers had been listed as both present and absent in the May 19th minutes, and Council President Murray had been listed incorrectly in the June 2nd minutes. Mayor Weathers stated both would be corrected for the record.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda as amended was made by Councilor Stratis and seconded by Councilor Murray. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments: No public comments were received.

Staff Reports:

City Administrator Report
City Administrator Baker delivered the report. He noted improvements in code enforcement, with 13 noxious vegetation notices, several nuisance issues, one public peace violation, and two camping/RV violations—down significantly from 41 at this time last year due to better community awareness.

In engineering, he reported that Civil West is preparing a scope of work for the stormwater master plan and a transportation plan, with a draft expected in late July or early August. Because Civil West does not develop transportation plans in-house, alternative options are being reviewed.

For land use planning, Baker stated that LU-2026-02 (North Highland Partition) is now complete and scheduled for Planning Commission review on July 22.

Regarding parks and recreation, he highlighted the Lowell Beautification Event held May 23–31. Volunteers improved landscaping at City Hall, the library, and the cemetery. A volunteer group from Weyerhaeuser/South Willamette Valley District performed major maintenance at Rolling Rock Park and Paul Fisher Park, including weed removal, spreading bark, and cleaning the caboose for Blackberry Jam.

On the Covered Bridge IGA with Lane County, Baker reported continued delays. The city is ready to move forward with a draft IGA, pending council approval of a term longer than two years and eight months, but no draft has been received. The quote for a new gate opener exceeded Lane County's spending authority, so the city will re-request the quote internally. He expressed frustration after the gate jammed twice during his attempts to operate it manually. In response to Council President Murray's question, Baker confirmed that employee activities under the IGA are fully covered by city insurance, regardless of location.

Public Works Report
City Administrator Baker noted that the Public Works Report was included in the packet. He highlighted a recurring water leak repair on North Alder near the lift station, suggesting the line may need full replacement. He also outlined plans to install a new electrical pole on the south side of Rolling Rock Park to provide dedicated power for food trucks and events, eliminating unsafe extension-cord setups.

Council President Murray asked about the Oakridge water issue. Baker confirmed it had no impact on Lowell's system, explaining that the plant was briefly shut down and chlorine levels increased as a precaution consistent with standard protocols.

Library Report
City Administrator Baker noted the Library Report was included in the packet. Mayor Weathers and Council President Murray thanked Library Volunteer Crystal Gardner and her family for organizing and working the recent fundraiser, with Murray specifically recognizing that Gardner's son participated on the day of his graduation from Oregon State University.

March 2026 Lane County Call Log
No discussion was recorded on this item.

Presentations:
The Yard of the Month presentation was skipped as the recipient was not present.

Public Hearing:
Resolution 880: Establish Water And Sewer Rates July 1, 2026
Mayor Weathers opened the public hearing at 7:23 PM.

City Administrator Baker presented Resolution 880, explaining that it is an annual resolution establishing water and sewer rates effective July 1, 2026, including bulk rate water fill, hydrant fill, and gray water disposal fees. He noted the resolution reflects a 3% increase over the prior year's rates, in line with the 2025 Consumer Price Index. He further clarified that on the water side, the 3% increase was applied only to the base rate and not to the variable rate for the 0–5,000 gallon tier.

No public comments were received.

Mayor Weathers closed the public hearing at 7:25 PM.

Resolution 881: Certifying Services FY 2026-2027
Mayor Weathers opened the public hearing at 7:25 PM.

City Administrator Baker presented Resolution 881, explaining that the city is required to certify it provides a minimum of four core services in order to be eligible to receive state revenue sharing. He noted the city provides more than the required four services. Council President Murray noted a typographical error in the resolution's second section referencing "EDU" (equivalent dwelling unit), which City Administrator Baker acknowledged and committed to correct.

No public comments were received.
Mayor Weathers closed the public hearing at 7:26 PM.

Resolution 882: Election To Receive State Revenues FY 2026-2027
Mayor Weathers opened the public hearing at 7:28 PM. She read into the record the anticipated state revenues for FY 2026-2027: State Revenue Sharing of $12,325; Cigarette Tax of $725; Liquor Tax of $21,575; and Marijuana Tax of $3,025.

No public comments or council discussion were recorded.

Mayor Weathers closed the public hearing at 7:29 PM.

Resolution 884: Adopt Budget, Impose And Categorize Taxes FY 2026-2027
Mayor Weathers opened the public hearing at 7:29 PM.

City Administrator Baker presented Resolution 884, confirming the budget figures and tax rate as approved by the budget committee, with a tax rate of $2.1613 per thousand, and noted no changes from what was previously presented. Mayor Weathers commended City Administrator Baker, Financial Consultant Nichols, and city staff for their collaborative approach to budget development, particularly praising the transparency and accessibility of the budget documents.

No public comments were received.

Mayor Weathers closed the public hearing at 7:31 PM.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Resolution 878: Adopting Financial Management Policies And Rescinding Resolution 874
City Administrator Baker summarized that Resolution 878 had been discussed at the prior work session, with the only change being the addition of Section 4.4 defining a balanced budget. No other changes were noted.

Motion to approve Resolution 878, a resolution adopting financial management policies and rescinding Resolution 874, was made by Councilor Murray and seconded by Councilor Stratis. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 879: Updating Master Fee Schedule And Rescinding Resolution 859
City Administrator Baker presented Resolution 879, explaining that the master fee schedule is now updated annually to reflect changes in staff time and the cost of city-provided services. He noted one key difference from the work session: he had anticipated that the library committee would review and provide guidance on the proposed out-of-city-limits library card fee, but that the library committee meeting had been

unexpectedly canceled. He stated that no fee would be charged until the policy framework was established and brought back to council.

Council President Murray raised a concern that the proposed fee structure was in conflict with the existing library policy passed by council, which extends free library card access to residents of three specific ZIP codes and to anyone with a student ID — effectively covering most community members. He noted that the fee as written would not be in compliance with that existing policy. He suggested two paths forward: amending the resolution to strike the library fee section entirely, or bringing the resolution into compliance with the existing library policy.

City Administrator Baker acknowledged the oversight and explained that the intent had been for the library committee to address the policy alignment before the fee took effect. Financial Consultant Nichols noted that the impact on the budget would be minimal — $5,000 or less — and that a fee did technically exist in the current master fee schedule.

Mayor Weathers expressed concern about passing resolutions that conflict with previously adopted policy resolutions, emphasizing that the council should maintain ownership of policymaking rather than deferring it to advisory committees. She suggested setting the fee to $0 rather than removing it entirely, preserving the framework while the policy is updated.

After further discussion, Council President Murray proposed an amendment to set all library fees in the master fee schedule to $0. Council President Murray and Mayor Weathers also clarified that the library committee would be given a task with a date-certain to advise on the policy update, and that the council would retain responsibility for ultimately adopting any policy changes. Additionally, two typographical errors were noted by Councilor Stratis "original" being misspelled in section 5(b)(1), and "fascia" being misspelled in section 8(4)(h) City Administrator Baker confirmed both would be corrected.

After some procedural discussion regarding the sequencing of the amendment vote and the final vote on the resolution, the council confirmed the proper process and voted.

Motion to approve Resolution 879, a resolution updating the master fee schedule and rescinding Resolution 859, as amended (with library fees set to $0 and typographical corrections), was made by Councilor Murray and seconded by Councilor Stratis. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 880: Establish Water And Sewer Rates July 1, 2026
Council President Murray raised a brief procedural clarification regarding the vote sequencing from the prior item. Councilor Bennett asked City Administrator Baker to clarify the fire hydrant fee of $15.30 for properties "without water service." City Administrator Baker explained this fee applies to properties within 300 feet of a fire hydrant that do not have a water service connection — of which there are currently 14 such properties — as those properties still benefit from the proximity of the fire hydrant.

Motion to approve Resolution 880, a resolution to establish water and sewer rates to be effective July 1, 2026, as amended, was made by Councilor Stratis and seconded by Councilor Murray. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 881: Certifying Services For FY 2026-2027
Motion to approve Resolution 881, a resolution certifying services for fiscal year 2026-2027, was made by Councilor Stratis and seconded by Councilor Harris. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 882: Election To Receive State Revenues FY 2026-2027

Motion to approve Resolution 882, a resolution declaring the city's election to receive state revenues for fiscal year 2026-2027, was made by Mayor Weathers and seconded by Councilor Murray. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 883: Authorizing An Adjustment To Employee Pay Scale For FY 2026-2027
City Administrator Baker noted that the resolution contained a typographical error referencing "whereas" that needed to be corrected. The council confirmed the correction and proceeded.

Motion to approve Resolution 883, a resolution authorizing an adjustment to the employee pay scale for fiscal year 2026-2027, as amended, was made by Councilor Murray and seconded by Councilor Harris. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 884: Adopt Budget, Impose And Categorize Taxes For FY 2026-2027
Motion to approve Resolution 884, a resolution to adopt a budget and impose and categorize taxes for fiscal year 2026-2027, was made by Councilor Stratis and seconded by Councilor Murray. The motion carried unanimously.

City Administrator Contract-Discussion/Possible Action
Mayor Weathers noted that the City Administrator contract had not changed since the council's prior review. She explained that the council reverted to the title of "City Administrator" in accordance with the city's charter, acknowledging that changing the title would be far simpler than amending the charter. She noted that the shared responsibilities previously discussed were captured in City Administrator Baker's job description. Council President Murray humorously noted his disappointment at not being able to come up with a clever alternate title. Council President Murray also acknowledged Mayor Weathers for her work in preparing the contract.

Motion to approve the updated City Administrator employment contract and authorize its signing was made by Councilor Murray and seconded by Councilor Stratis. The motion carried unanimously.

Financial And Accounting Consultation Services Agreement For FY 25-26- Discussion/Possible Action
Mayor Weathers noted a typographical error in the agenda item title, clarifying it should read fiscal year 2026-2027. City Administrator Baker briefly acknowledged ongoing technology difficulties in preparing for the meeting. The agreement with Financial Consultant Layli Nichols was presented for approval.

Motion to approve the fiscal year 2026-2027 financial and accounting consultation services agreement with Layli Nichols as presented was made by Mayor Weathers and seconded by Councilor Harris. The motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 885: Recognizing University of Oregon Oregon Folklife Network Grant and Making Appropriations
City Administrator Baker explained that this resolution had been added to the agenda that evening. He noted that the grant award from the University of Oregon's Oregon Folklife Network — through its Cultural Connects program — was granted on January 24th but had not yet been formally accepted or appropriated. The city contributes $900 and receives $3,000 in return. He emphasized the need to accept the grant within the current budget year and noted the granting agency's deadline of end of October, with the majority of funds expected to be spent before June 30th.

Council President Murray asked whether council approval was required for all grants or only above a certain threshold. City Administrator Baker and Financial Consultant Nichols explained that because grant acceptance changes budget appropriations, council approval is required. Mayor Weathers added that council oversight of grants is also important to ensure awareness of any matching requirements or staff effort obligations, noting that wrapping up grants can sometimes be more costly than applying for them.

Motion to approve Resolution 885, a resolution recognizing the University of Oregon Oregon Folklife Network Cultural Connects program grant and making appropriations, was made by Councilor Murray and seconded by Councilor Stratis. The motion carried unanimously.

Other Business:
Mayor Weathers read a proclamation declaring the year 2026 as the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America, calling upon citizens to observe the milestone with ceremonies, programs, and civic undertakings honoring American heritage and inspiring future generations. The proclamation was signed and dated June 16, 2026.

The council then discussed scheduling an executive session for the following day, June 17, 2026 at 7:00 PM, to discuss an update on the old City Hall property. Financial Consultant Nichols identified the applicable statute as ORS 192.660(2)(b), pertaining to real property transactions. City Administrator Baker confirmed he would post the required 24-hour meeting notice. Councilor Murray made the motion citing ORS 192.660(2)(b).

Motion to call for an executive session on June 17, 2026 at 7:00 PM pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(b) was made by Councilor Murray and seconded by Councilor Stratis. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Weathers briefly noted her attendance at the Joyride women's cycling event held at Jasper Park, describing it as a positive community connection opportunity and noting the city had made a donation to the group. She also noted attendance at four recent graduation ceremonies.

City Administrator Baker announced that no regularly scheduled meetings were planned for July, with the exception of the Planning Commission meeting on July 22nd for the North Highland Partition application and ongoing Blackberry Jam preparation. He noted a special meeting could be called if necessary.

10. Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 PM.

APPROVED:

Maureen M. Weathers

Maureen M. Weathers, Mayor

ATTEST:

Max Baker

Max Baker, City Recorder