

**City of Lowell Oregon
City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 16th, 2025**

The Lowell City Council held a regular meeting on September 16, 2025. 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 7:00 pm.

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

City Councilors absent: None

Staff/others present: City Administrator Max Baker

Approval of Agenda: Mayor Weathers noted that Item 8c (USACE Letter of Consent to Perform Geotechnical Exploration) was being pulled from the agenda for discussion at a later time. No other changes were requested.

Consent Agenda: The Consent Agenda included Financial Reports for June 2025, Check Register for August 2025, Leave Register for August 2025, and Regular Meeting Minutes from August 19, 2025.

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Councilor Murray, seconded by Councilor Harris, and approved unanimously.

Mayor Weathers: YES; Murray: YES; Harris: Yes; Bennett: YES; Stratis: YES

Public Comments: Larry Senn (38506 Pengra Road) addressed the Council regarding water safety. He noted that recent articles about water safety published in the local paper failed to mention life preservers, which he felt was a serious omission. Mr. Senn expressed concern about people using the lake and river without wearing life preservers, noting that over the years there have been deaths as a result. He respectfully requested the Council consider ways to promote information about wearing life preservers to people who will be on the water. He emphasized the importance of wearing life preservers rather than just having them available, especially given the community's location surrounded by water, and suggested the Council consider adding signage or including more information in the newspaper.

Staff Reports

City Administrator Report: City Administrator Baker reported on the following:

- **Code Enforcement:** The City has published code sections 6.01 and 6.05 (abandoned vehicles and parking regulations) in the Bridge newsletter. Staff will meet with Oak Ridge PD to help educate on these code sections. Baker emphasized that education would come before enforcement, with warnings giving people time to correct issues before citations or towing. He noted that citizens' complaints about vegetation have evolved to include reports of abandoned vehicles, which was helping with overall code enforcement.
- **Property Abatement:** Public Works staff abated a property with noxious vegetation deemed a fire hazard after giving the owners extra time to address the issue themselves. Additionally, letters were sent out last week for nuisance, public peace violations, debris accumulation, additional noxious vegetation, and garbage service standards. Baker reported a good response from property owners so far and will follow up on Friday.
- **ECWAG Water Treatment Plant:** Baker requested a call with all appropriate parties (US Army Corps, USDA, Civil West Engineering) regarding the project. This was why Item 8c was removed from the agenda, as more information is needed before proceeding with any expenditures. Baker will continue providing updates, noting they are still within the window for emergency follow-up.
- **Land Use and Planning:** The Planning Commission reviewed Land Use 2025-03 on September 3rd, which will be discussed tonight under New Business. Land Use 2025-02 (for the 13-lot subdivision formerly known as Whipple Estates) will be reviewed at the October 1st Planning Commission meeting.

- **Parks:** The gaga ball pit was installed at Paul Fisher Park and was popular immediately after installation. Baker mentioned that local youth had already come to the Parks meeting with recommendations. Staff is also working on installing new swing sets at Rolling Rock and making preparations for a memorial plaque, which they hope to install by the end of the week. The park bathrooms remain closed until toilet repairs are completed.
- **Covered Bridge:** Staff met with Overhead Door and Lane County representatives at the covered bridge to discuss recommendations for improving the operation of the gates. Baker learned that the existing gates, which are popular in commercial settings, should not be modified. The contractor will provide a quote for fixing the opener and replacing the support beam at the bottom, which has been damaged over time. Public Works staff made 10 additional keys for the bridge and improved its operation. Baker plans to have staff open and close the bridge for a week to ensure reliability before enlisting volunteers again.
- **Sale of Old City Hall:** There was a showing two weeks ago with an investor. Baker gave a tour and reiterated the DDA standards and development possibilities. The investor asked some technical questions about power feeds that Baker referred to Lane Electric. While nothing official has been received, Baker characterized it as an optimistic meeting.

Public Works Report:

The Public Works Report noted a fire hydrant issue, another leak on the south side of town, and the need for nine-year water samples. Baker highlighted that the last round of lead and copper testing, if below contaminant levels, would eliminate the need for the comment at the bottom of customers' bills and the possible addition of corrosion control in 2027. The lake is currently lower than it has been during drawdowns in the past three years due to less rainfall.

Baker also mentioned that DFN and its subcontractors are working to complete the underground utility project before late fall. He assured the Council that any damage to curbs, driveways, or other infrastructure would be repaired upon project completion, noting that temporary fixes are in place to avoid hazards while work continues.

Library Report: The Library Report was included in the packet.

August 2025 Lane County Call Log: The Lane County Call Log was included in the packet.

Presentations: Yard of the Month Award Presentation

Mayor Weathers presented the Yard of the Month award to the resident of 38 Wetleau Drive in recognition of their efforts to beautify their yard and the city. The recipient was given a certificate and a gift certificate to Jerry's Home Improvement.

Old Business: None.

New Business

A. Library Grant Opportunity

City Administrator Baker explained that Library Director Peggy is seeking approval to apply for a \$5,000 grant from the Oregon Arts Commission. The grant requires matching funds, but these can be provided through administrative time, space for activities, advertising, and supplies. The grant would fund a hands-on professional artist to work with 10 community members to create projects. The artist would be identified and advertised in the Bridge newsletter. Baker noted that he brought the grant to Council's attention because all grants create some strain on staff for reporting and record keeping, affecting not just the library but also the contract accountant and the City Administrator. The Council expressed general consensus in support of the grant application.

B. Public Works Vehicle Quotes

City Administrator Baker presented quotes for a new public works vehicle. Staff determined they need a 4-wheel drive, one-ton, long-bed truck with a non-diesel engine, as diesel is not ideal for the start-stop driving typical in a small town. Baker provided quotes from two manufacturers:

- 2026 Ram 3500 Tradesman (one-ton Dodge) pickup for \$48,366
- 2026 Ford F-350 for \$51,919.52

Both quotes include license, taxes, fees, and title transfers. Baker noted that \$75,000 was budgeted across four funds for the vehicle. Staff recommended purchasing the lower-priced Ram, which would leave funds available for adding a rack and toolbox to make it a proper public works vehicle.

Baker explained that Hunter, a staff member, had spent four months researching options, and while they requested quotes from Ford, Dodge, and Chevy, they were unable to obtain a quote from Chevy despite numerous attempts. The City's other two newer vehicles are Rams, which have performed well.

Motion to purchase a 2026 Ram 3500 Tradesman crew cab not to exceed \$48,366 was made by Councilor Murray, seconded by Councilor Harris, and approved unanimously.

Mayor Weathers: YES; Murray: YES; Harris: Yes; Bennett: YES; Stratis: YES

D. First reading and public hearing on Ordinance 314

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

City Administrator Baker presented the staff report, explaining that the City of Lowell is proposing an amendment to the Lowell Development Code to add zoning regulations and standards for mobile food vending, which is currently not allowed in the city. A committee was formed to review existing code standards from other Lane County cities and develop draft regulations. The committee consisted of Mayor Weathers, Planning Commissioner Bill George, and community members Kristen (owner of a coffee shop) and Brittany Hunt (owner and operator of a mobile food vendor). The Planning Commission met on September 3rd and recommended the City Council adopt the proposal. Mayor Weathers added that the proposal would allow mobile food vending on both public and private property, using a common-sense approach to make it work in suitable locations. Although they had hoped to implement this earlier to catch the late spring and summer season, they wanted to put the regulations in place for future use.

Baker noted that one change was made to the ordinance following the Planning Commission's recommendation: all permits would expire on June 30th of each year, aligning with the City's budget cycle. This was added for clarity and administrative efficiency, even though the ordinance already specified permits were good for one year.

During the public hearing, Bob Burr (566 East First) asked whether the Council had considered the impact on the Blackberry Jam event and if food trucks would be allowed to operate during the event. Baker clarified that the Blackberry Jam is a separate event held by the city, and while the ordinance would not prevent mobile food vending elsewhere in the city, vendors would need to be aware that the park is reserved for Blackberry Jam during the last week of July. Vendors could either relocate or apply to be a booth at the jam and pay the regular fee.

No comments from Council.

Mayor Weathers closed the public hearing at 7:35 PM.

Motion for first reading of Ordinance 314 by title only was made by Councilor Murray, seconded by Councilor Harris, and approved unanimously.

Mayor Weathers: YES; Murray: YES; Harris: Yes; Bennett: YES; Stratis: YES

City Administrator Baker performed the first reading of Ordinance 314 by title only.

Motion to schedule a second reading of Ordinance 314 by title only at the October 21, 2025, City Council meeting was made by Councilor Murray, seconded by Councilor Bennett, and approved unanimously.

Mayor Weathers: YES; Murray: YES; Harris: Yes; Bennett: YES; Stratis: YES

Baker noted that after the second reading, if approved, the ordinance would go into effect 30 days later, making it effective around November 21, 2025.

Other Business: None.

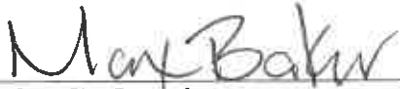
Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 PM.

APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Maureen M. Weathers", written over a horizontal line.

Maureen M. Weathers, Mayor

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Max Baker", written over a horizontal line.

Max Baker, City Recorder