City of Lowell Oregon
City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2026

The Lowell City Council held a regular meeting on February 17, 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 7:00 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: Agenda was approved with no changes.

Consent Agenda:

The consent agenda included Financial Reports for December 2025 Q2, Check Register for January 2026, Leave Report for January 2026, and meeting minutes from January 20, 2026, and February 3, 2026. One correction was noted to the February 3rd minutes changing the call to order time from 7:01 to 7:06. Baker clarified that the December report included both monthly and quarterly reports, which contain the same information with the quarterly being more detailed.

Motion: Councilor Murray moved to approve the consent agenda as amended. Councilor Stratis seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments: No Public comments received.

Staff Reports:
City Administrator Report
Baker presented a comprehensive report covering multiple areas of city operations. The 2026-27 budget process has begun early with staff reaching out to committees and boards for capital improvement projects and recommendations. Parks historically represent the largest spending area for capital projects.

Code enforcement activities included mailing four final notice letters with substantial penalties (up to $1,000 per day), resulting in positive responses from two properties. Seventeen vehicles were tagged, with most property owners calling immediately and two vehicles subsequently moved. Two animal complaints were also addressed.

The new access control system for City Hall and the library has been installed and is working in local mode. While Bluetooth credentials are still pending, the system includes ADA operator scheduling and enhanced security features. A recent alarm incident revealed the need to fully deactivate the old key lock system and provide staff training.

Engineering staff provided a rough draft of the water treatment plant pre-design report, necessary for future RFPs and funding opportunities. The engineer awaits vendor cost estimates to complete the draft, which will be brought to council for review.

Civil West signed off on CCTV inspections for the sewer main on East First Street, finding no issues. The city awaits one more quote to complete the project with top layer restoration.

The ECWAG project remains on hold, but USDA has confirmed funding and requested a meeting to assess project status. The city has not yet authorized the $67,000 for geo reports and cultural studies.

Three land use applications were processed: LU 2024-05 (condos on North Highland Lane) requested a two-year extension to their development agreement, which Baker approved as a Type 1 application. Three new ADU applications (LU 2025-05-06) were submitted for properties on East Main Street, with two 800-square-foot units planned behind one property and one unit planned for a nearby lot.

Parks staff received one quote for door upgrades at the park facilities, with additional quotes pending. Park bathrooms remain locked. Carver Bridge IGA with Lane County showed progress with SHPO approval for roof work and county procurement processes for gate repairs.

No updates were available on the sale of Old City Hall, though three parties remain interested.

Public Works Report
No comments.

Library Report
Baker noted the library report was not available as it had not been received from the librarian. He mentioned the library is planning a June dinner and received additional grants totaling $3,000 with no matching requirements, likely for historical preservation work.

January 2026 Lane County Call Log
No discussion of the call log occurred.

Presentations: No presentations

Old Business:

205/295 Main Street update
Baker reported positive news regarding this matter. The case was closed by the agency in April of the previous year due to inactivity. The agency confirmed there is a statute of limitations and the case could be reopened if needed in the future. Only two invoices were incurred with the agency, and Baker is waiting for direction from legal counsel on any additional steps.

New Business:

Resolution 867 Parks and Recreation Committee Appointment

Three applicants were presented for Parks and Recreation Committee positions. All were previous committee members except Matthew, who would replace Bill Priser (who moved to Planning Commission). The resolution assigns applicants to specific seats corresponding to previously provided charts.

Motion: Mayor Weathers moved to approve Resolution 867 for Parks and Recreation Committee appointments as presented. Councilor Murray seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 868 BBJ Festival Committee Appointment

The same three previous committee members reapplied for the Blackberry Jam Festival Committee positions with terms expiring December 31, 2025.

Motion: Councilor Stratis moved to approve Resolution 868 making appointments to fill expired terms on the Blackberry Jam Festival Committee. Councilor Harris seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 869 Budget Committee Appointment

Two expiring seats were filled, including one new applicant, Pam Kidd, a five-year Lowell resident with school and community-program involvement. The committee still needs one additional member.

Motion: Councilor Bennett moved to approve Resolution 869 making appointments to the Budget Committee to fill expired positions. Councilor Murray seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 870 Library Committee Appointment

Three positions were filled with two returning members and one new applicant, Crystal Gardner, replacing a volunteer who wished to continue volunteering but not serve on the committee. A minor typo in the attachment listed the name as "Kristen Gartner" but was correct in the resolution.

Motion: Councilor Harris moved to approve Resolution 870 making appointments to fill expired vacant terms on the Library Committee as presented. Councilor Stratis seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Resolution 871 Planning Commission Appointment

All three applicants, including Bill Priser who was appointed the previous year, reapplied for Planning Commission positions with terms expiring December 31, 2025.

Motion: Councilor Murray moved to approve Resolution 871 making appointments to fill expired terms on the Planning Commission as presented. Councilor Harris seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Other Business
Strategic Plan and Annual Goal Setting-Discussion

Baker proposed conducting annual strategic planning using two shorter council retreats rather than one lengthy session. The first retreat would review the existing strategic plan that expired in 2025, examining whether the five main goals (organizational excellence, fiscal responsibility, dependable infrastructure, sustainable development, and exceptional quality of life) remain appropriate. The second retreat would focus on developing supporting goals under each category.

Baker emphasized the strategic plan's importance as a tool for long-term planning and capital expenditure decisions. Including the plan in the budget document would complete requirements for a municipal award. He will send out scheduling polls for both retreats and provide council members with the adopted strategic plan documents for review. Baker reminded council members that City Administrator evaluations are due to the Mayor by Friday and can be submitted electronically or printed at City Hall.

Adjourn
The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 PM.

APPROVED:

Maureen M. Weathers

Maureen M. Weathers, Mayor

ATTEST:

Max Baker

Max Baker, City Recorder