

**City of Lowell Oregon
City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2026**

The Lowell City Council held a regular meeting on April 21, 2026. The meeting location was at the Lowell Rural Fire Protection District Fire Station 1 at 389 N. Pioneer Street, Lowell, OR 97452. Council President Jimmy Murray called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

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

City Councilors absent: Mayor Weathers

Staff / Others present: City Administrator, Max Baker

Approval of Agenda:

Council President Murray noted a typo in the agenda under item 8a, which should read Resolution 877, not 878. City Administrator Baker confirmed the printed packets distributed at the meeting were correct.

Motion: Councilor Don Bennett moved to approve the agenda as amended. Councilor Tim Stratis seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda:

City Administrator Baker noted that the April 21, 2026 meeting minutes included in the second packet had been edited to correct an error in the opening sentence about the date and a clerical error under city council president.

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

Public Comments: None

Staff Reports:

City Administrator Report

City Administrator Baker provided updates on several items. He reported that the proposed 2026-2027 budget was completed and distributed, with the first budget committee meeting scheduled for the following day at 6:00 PM.

Regarding code enforcement, Baker stated he had conducted a round of enforcement activities and identified issues with two roosters in town that were generating multiple complaints. He noted he would work through the full process professionally. Baker also identified six problematic vehicles, with three in the same location that had been a past problem, and planned to request assistance from the Oakridge for towing and tagging.

For vegetation enforcement, Baker explained he would conduct another drive-through on Thursday, noting that recent weather patterns had caused unusually tall weeds and grass growth throughout the area. Baker announced that the city's beautification event would run for ten days starting Saturday, with Parks Cleanup Day specifically on Saturday. He explained the city would provide garbage, recycling, and green waste bins, with staff or volunteers present to ensure proper sorting. Baker emphasized this was funded by local tax dollars and preferred to keep participation within city limits. He noted this period served as an amnesty for code violations, with stricter enforcement to follow afterward.

Regarding engineering projects, Baker reported requesting updates from USDA, US Army Corps, and Civil West on both the geotechnical review and environmental work needed for the new water treatment plant. He mentioned receiving notification in March that the water plant project would be eligible for significant grant funding, potentially 75% grant coverage, though details remained preliminary.

Baker provided updates on land use applications, noting that two applications from the previous month had been deemed complete but required additional information. One had been resubmitted, while work continued on the plan unit development on Carol Street.

For parks updates, Baker reported that the Oregon Memorial plaque had been installed at Fisher Park on the west side of the bathroom facility. The city had not yet heard back from Hall's family regarding a potential dedication ceremony but planned to proceed with a staff dedication regardless. Council President Murray asked about protecting the memorial plaque with plexiglass. Baker explained they had considered this during installation and decided to wait, noting the Paul Fisher memorial had never been vandalized. After discussion, council agreed it would be wise to install plexiglass protection after the weekend's events.

Baker reported that the Covered Bridge IGA remained under review with contract personnel, and work continued on a memorandum of understanding with Lane County for various services including street sweeping, catch basin cleaning, and street striping.

Regarding the city hall sale, Baker stated there was an interested party whose contractor had been at the property for two recent weekends. He explained he was hoping to bring a letter of intent to the meeting but had not yet received an official offer. The property was listed at \$350,000, and the interested party appeared to want to use the existing structure.

For grant activities, Baker reported issuing a letter of support for Lane County's Safe Streets and Roads for All funding application. The proposed project would include intersection and curve warnings, traffic calming treatments, transition zones, radar speed signs, and school zone beacons. Baker also submitted an application for ODOT's Small City Allotment Grant for street improvements on Everly, Loftus, and East Main Street, requesting approximately \$210,000.

Library Report

Council President Murray noted the impressive summer program agenda that Library Director Peggy had prepared. City Administrator Baker confirmed plans were in place for library operations during Peggy's vacation, including potentially extended hours and utilizing the city's dedicated volunteer team.

April 2026 Lane County Call Log

City Administrator Baker highlighted the final item on the call log, noting it was the fourth time this issue had appeared in two weeks. He explained it represented a known problem that had persisted for years but seemed to be worsening. Baker noted the city received many complaints about this issue, and that Oakridge had asked for direction on this matter multiple times. He mentioned that enforcement was challenging when no one was present, but that Lane County would respond when they were available. Baker also reported a close call between a public works vehicle and an ATV, emphasizing the growing safety concerns.

Presentations: None

Old Business:

Resolution 876, "A Resolution Adopting the City of Lowell's 5-year Strategic Plan"- Discussion, Possible Action

City Administrator Baker presented the final version of the 5-year strategic plan, explaining it had been reviewed extensively over the past three months during work sessions and the April 21st regular meeting. He noted that pictures had been added to the document, reducing it from 16 to 12 pages.

Baker identified several minor typographical corrections in the version distributed electronically, including a plus sign that needed removal and "policies" instead of "policy." He also noted missing dots in the timeline and formatting issues where some elements appeared faint in the PDF version.

Baker emphasized that these were clerical corrections only and did not change the substance of the document that had been previously reviewed. He requested that any motion include "as amended" to account for these corrections.

Councilor Don Bennett questioned the inclusion of dock development under the quality of life section, expressing skepticism about the feasibility of obtaining a dock. City Administrator Baker explained that while he had initially planned to remove this item, it had found renewed support through the parks

department, with one person specifically volunteering to pursue all necessary contacts starting with the Army Corps of Engineers. Baker stated he supported leaving it in as a parks and recreation goal for 2027, making it accountable, while acknowledging the significant challenges involved.

Bennett noted that a dock at Orchard Park would require approximately 150 feet in length and involve astronomical costs and multiple agencies that could potentially deny the project. Baker agreed about the challenges but suggested the city could potentially expand existing launch point facilities and improve access.

Motion: Councilor Gail Harris moved to approve Resolution 876 as amended. Councilor Tim Stratis seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business:

Resolution 877, "A Resolution Adopting Fiscal Year 2026-2027 City Council Goals" - Discussion, Possible Action

City Administrator Baker noted a typographical error at the top of the document, which should read "2026-2027" instead of the incorrect fiscal year shown.

Baker explained the proposed goals included unfinished goals from the previous year and new goals based on input from both council and staff. He emphasized the effort to tie goals to the five main categories from the strategic plan.

Under enhanced communication and public outreach, Baker discussed the community coordinator position, explaining the change from "volunteer coordinator" to "community coordinator" to broaden the scope beyond just volunteers. Council President Murray elaborated on his vision for this position, suggesting it could serve as a point person for various community entities including the pantry, grange, church, grocery store, and schools, while also managing communication strategy.

Baker explained the goal was to identify the scope of the position and establish a selection committee process, leaving open whether it would ultimately be a volunteer or paid position. He suggested this could potentially become a part-time paid position in the future, with possible grant funding opportunities available for rural communities.

Councilor Don Bennett discussed the Grange's summer cooling center program for days above 95 degrees, which provides air conditioning, ice cream, and water. He asked about coordination through the city for outreach. Baker and Council President Murray suggested working with the city's communications coordinator Sam and including information in The Bridge newsletter.

Baker reviewed the remaining goals, including fiscal responsibility items such as seeking funding opportunities, maintaining fund balances, selling the former city hall, completing policy updates, creating surplus property inventory, and expanding equipment for in-house operations. He noted the city had purchased a one-ton public works vehicle that expanded their equipment capabilities.

For dependable infrastructure goals, Baker discussed master plan updates, SDC updates tied to annual budget adoption, completing the rate study, and Pioneer East Main Street improvements dependent on grant funding.

Sustainable development goals included ongoing land use code updates, with Baker noting they were currently in a "wait and see" phase regarding FEMA floodplain updates while other jurisdictions made decisions. He also discussed the buildable land inventory goal, explaining its complexity due to dependencies on new water reservoir development and treatment plant construction.

Under exceptional quality of life, Baker emphasized code enforcement as key to livability, explaining the city's quarterly enforcement approach and plans to track enforcement activities through their maintenance module for annual reporting to council.

Baker discussed exploring low-cost community programs through partnerships, crediting Council President Murray for the suggestion. He explained this could include coordination with neighboring communities and various program types from library to public works to community cleanup activities.

The goals also included ongoing items such as caboose repairs and permanent Christmas tree installation, with Baker noting the Christmas tree project would return to Parks and Recreation for timeline recommendations from landscape designers.

Motion: Councilor Tim Stratis moved to approve Resolution 877 as amended. Councilor Gail Harris seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Other Business:

City Administrator Baker reminded everyone about the budget committee meeting scheduled for the following day at 6:00 PM, noting that restroom facilities would not be available due to asbestos remediation, with dormitory facilities available if needed.

Baker invited everyone to participate in Parks Cleanup Day on Saturday, mentioning a volunteer appreciation barbecue at 1:00 PM and encouraging community members to take advantage of the available dumpsters. He noted the city would have the public works trailer available to assist with moving acceptable materials to the street.

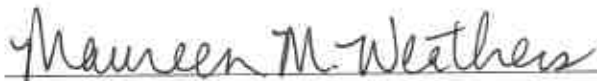
Baker also announced that a group of veterans would place tombstones in the cemetery on Saturday and handle Memorial Day flag placement and removal.

Adjourn

Motion: Councilor Bennett moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilor Gail Harris seconded. Motion passed. Councilor Murray: Yes, Councilor Harris; Yes, Councilor Bennett; Yes, Councilor Stratis; No.

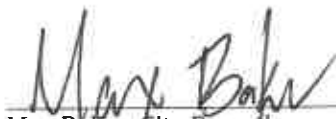
The meeting adjourned at 7:57 PM.

APPROVED:



Maureen M. Weathers, Mayor

ATTEST:



Max Baker, City Recorder