

City of Newberg City Council Meeting Minutes February 17, 2026

Call to Order

Mayor Rosacker called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, February 17, 2026.

Roll Call

City Recorder Rachel Thomas conducted roll call. Present: Councilor Wheatley, Councilor Yarnell-Hollamon, Mayor Rosacker, Councilor Turgesen, and Councilor Carmon. Absent: Councilor Kilburg and Councilor McBride.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Rosacker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

City Manager Report

Statistical Report on December 2025

City Manager Will Worthey presented statistical data for December 2025, covering multiple city departments. Combined planning decisions totaled 12, with 7 building permits issued for housing units and 32 for other types. Building inspections reached 174. Community engagement included 15 website submissions, all answered within 24 hours. Social media engagement continued its steady increase with 16,805 interactions. Public records requests numbered 9. Accounts payable totaled \$2,490,000 and payroll reached \$1,140,000, with payments for significant capital projects including water basin covers and the Franklin storm line.

The Human Resources department reported zero recruitments, two separations, and three workers compensation or other claims. Information Technology resolved 157 service tickets, with City Manager Worthey noting a decrease in tickets since network switch repairs were completed, indicating improved network resilience. Staff continued testing the Azure virtual desktop environment to eventually replace the Citrix system, though printer lag issues remained under investigation.

The Library recorded 7,678 door counts and 32,226 circulation events. Public Safety handled 1,893 calls for service, conducted 653 traffic stops, and issued 522 citations and warnings, with 7 DUIIs recorded in December. The Dispatch Center processed 809 911 calls and 2,848 non-emergency calls.

Water production for December was 48,680,000 gallons, typical for winter months. Wastewater treatment processed 205,500,000 gallons, indicating continued infiltration and inflow issues requiring ongoing work. Public Works completed 663 work orders, a relatively low number attributed to the all-hands response to a sewer line overflow previously discussed.

City Manager Worthey announced plans for the next statistics presentation to include a multi-year trend analysis from 2021 through present to identify emerging patterns and correlations.

Public Comments

Jim Talt inquired about the status of his previous request for the city to extend preferred concrete pricing to residents. City Manager Worthey confirmed that Concrete Solutions had agreed to extend multi-year pricing to any resident and that the city had compiled all known concrete vendors on one page to avoid favoring any single company. Mr. Talt expressed gratitude for the speedy response.

Elaine Koskela thanked the Council for continuing to allow general public comments and expressed appreciation for statements made at the previous meeting acknowledging the Council's responsibility to hear constituents even on matters potentially outside direct city jurisdiction. Ms. Koskela shared recent examples of how national immigration policy is affecting Newberg residents, including a business owner questioned about their legal status, families researching ways to leave the country, and a coworker moving to Japan. She also described increased bullying in schools, including an incident where a student justified calling classmates "fat" by referencing the President's behavior. Ms. Koskela urged the Council to seek out and listen to minority, immigrant, and Black and Brown constituents and work together to develop creative solutions to improve their lived experiences in Newberg.

Presentations

Safety Manual

City Manager Worthey presented the updated Safety Manual, explaining that the existing manual from 2018 was adequate but not excellent and represented the last standard city policy predating 2021. Staff worked with the Human Resources department and CIS insurance provider to develop modern approaches. Since 2018, many Oregon OSHA and federal regulations have evolved, particularly regarding respirators, pathogens, confined space operations, and relevant OARs including chapters 437 and 654. The city's culture has changed markedly with a well-trained safety committee, an established emergency and safety coordinator position, and an admirable insurance loss record.

The 2026 manual contains updated authorities, a commitment to workplace safety standards through the lens of STRIVE values, concrete definitions of responsibilities, clear rules about safety committee composition and duties, and guidelines for worksite inspections. It includes details on safety alerts distribution, regulation updates, workers compensation claims procedures, accident reporting protocols, and data storage in the Oregon records management system.

The manual features safety checklists designed for field use covering specific risks including things like foot protection, protective clothing, personal protective equipment hazard assessment, and blood-borne pathogen incidents. It also includes chapters on the respirator program, citywide training exercises, individual department safety training standards, and a contractor agreement acknowledging city standards.

City Manager Worthy emphasized this update represents proactive workplace safety maintenance rather than response to failure, noting the city's strong insurance position. The policy will return to Council for formal adoption at the next session.

New Business

Council Goals Update

City Manager Worthey presented a mid-cycle update on Council priorities, noting this is not the scheduled time for major goal-setting but an opportunity to recognize successes and calibrate the living document. He reviewed each goal area:

Goal 1 - Customer Service: The objective to create department customer service standards by July 2026 and streamline building permit processes has been achieved through hundreds of staff hours, retraining, customer service focus, and implementing new software. Turnaround times have improved significantly and complaints have decreased. City Manager Worthey recommended moving this to ongoing goals with continued regular training.

Goal 2 - Industrial Land: The city is taking a strategic approach to identifying industrial land and attracting family-wage employers. Work continues on the one-time urban growth boundary expansion for housing, which may inform future decisions about industrial land. City Manager Worthey and others have had discussions with Portland Community College about potentially converting campus land to industrial use.

Goal 3 - Community Safety: The additional school resource officer objective has been met. The second objective regarding red light and speed cameras is approximately 50 percent complete, with speed-slowing measures installed around roundabouts, thermoplastic street markings renewed, the first camera operational, and a second camera location in progress.

Goal 4 - Transparency: Progress has been made on expanding communications outreach through the Public Information Officer position, hosting First Friday Art Walk events, and regularly attending meetings with the downtown coalition, Chamber of Commerce, and Chehalem Valley Chamber Friday Greeters. The objective to develop streamlined council rules has been completed, including the seven-day publication schedule, executive summaries in RCAs, and streamlined parliamentary procedure.

Goal 5 - Fiscal Policy: One debt has been retired early and a second will be retired two years early by June 2026. The communication line item will be removed from utility bills this summer. To reduce bills further, new revenue streams are needed, and staff will soon present a proposal for a local gasoline tax. The long-term financial plan objective is ready to proceed now that precursor steps (purchasing manual, Tyler Encode 10 system, digital court system, and biennial budgeting) are complete. Finance Director Kady Strode assured completion in 2026. Regarding converting gravel streets to paving and removing the Transportation Operations Fee (TOF) from utility bills, City Manager Worthey explained these objectives are interlinked and require new revenue streams. The proposed two-cent gasoline tax would raise approximately \$350,000-\$400,000 annually, enabling TOF reduction but not complete elimination, as TOF currently generates \$1,400,000-\$1,500,000.

Goal 6 - Downtown Revitalization: In the last seven months, \$28,000 of repairs and upgrades have been completed downtown. ODOT is conducting historical impact research as part of ADA ramp work that will support exploration of historic downtown designation if Council desires.

Staff are applying for a certified local government grant to hire a specialist to update the historic resource inventory.

Goal 7 - Tourism Balance: Both objectives have been met with new short-term rental rules codified and the grant writer position established to assist the community.

City Manager Worthey proposed reformatting the goals document by moving completed objectives off the list and renumbering remaining items, representing approximately 30-40 percent of objectives achieved. The next major goal-setting session will occur in 2027.

Councilor Yarnell-Hollamon commended City Manager Worthey's leadership and praised the welcoming, competent, and professional staff, specifically highlighting the second SRO's positive impact at Edwards Elementary, improved customer service across all departments, staff morale, City Recorder Rachel Thomas' work including the new council resource notebooks, and Public Information Officer Emily Salsbury's social media engagement efforts. City Manager Worthey added recognition for Planning Director Scott Siegel's leadership in revolutionizing the Planning and Building Division, improving turnaround times, and City Recorder Thomas' digitization of hundreds of document boxes.

Council and Committees Technology Responsibility Agreement

City Recorder Thomas presented a proposed technology responsibility agreement addressing the problem of city-provided devices not being returned at end of terms or being damaged, with no current enforcement mechanism. The city faces potential costs of \$12,000-\$13,000 annually if all equipment must

be replaced. The agreement outlines expectations for city-owned technology, responsibilities for returning equipment, and allows individuals to opt out and use personal devices instead. IT Director Dave Brooks explained issues including devices used for personal business, devices damaged in cars or by water, and constituents requesting IT support for personal devices, which places staff in difficult positions.

The agreement requires individuals to choose between accepting liability for city devices (excluding normal wear and tear) or using personal devices with the understanding they must turn over city records upon request and will not receive IT support. City Recorder Thomas clarified this is fiscally responsible and good practice, noting the item will return for approval at the next meeting unless Council wishes to act tonight.

Mayor Rosacker expressed reservation about requiring volunteers on boards and commissions to be financially responsible for lost or damaged city-provided devices, distinguishing them from paid staff. No other Council members commented on this concern.

Edwards Water Valve Repairs

Public Works Director Russ Thomas presented a request to authorize the City Manager to execute necessary documents for replacing two critical water valves: an 18-inch valve and a 12-inch valve at the intersection of North Edwards and East First Street. The 18-inch valve, part of the water system backbone installed in the early 1980s connecting Center Street to the older 12-inch Edward Street line from 80 years ago, has a non-repairable leak in the valve body discovered during ODOT ADA ramp work. The 12-inch valve on the south end of First Street, over 80 years old, cannot close entirely, preventing isolation of the line to replace the 18-inch valve.

Replacing both valves simultaneously requires shutting off water to a large area including First Street from Center Street to School Street and Edward Street from Vermillion to Fifth Street, impacting all downtown businesses and numerous residents. Work must be conducted at night to minimize disruption. Cost estimates range from \$60,000 to \$120,000, likely not exceeding \$100,000, due to complexity. Keller and Associates is developing the work plan and securing ODOT permits for right-of-way and lane reductions. Public Works crews will assist by shutting off water meters to protect individual businesses and residences, reducing contractor costs, though staff must remain on-site throughout the project. Two crews working simultaneously should complete the work overnight. The project is scheduled for May or June 2026, before ODOT begins ADA ramp work around July 1st.

City Manager Worthy confirmed funding is available through the pipe replacement fund established for unexpected below-grade discoveries in storm water, water, and wastewater systems, which has not yet been spent.

Public Works Director Russ Thomas concluded his presentation by thanking the Council, City Manager Worthy, and department heads for a fantastic career with the City of Newberg, noting his retirement in two weeks.

Motion: Councilor Carmon moved to approve Resolution 2026-4013 authorizing the City Manager to approve and sign necessary documents and contracts for replacement of the leaking 18-inch valve and failed 12-inch water main valves at North Edwards and East First Street. Councilor Yarnell-Hollamon seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

Vote Results:

- Councilor McBride: Absent
- Councilor Wheatley: Aye
- Councilor Yarnell-Hollamon: Aye
- Councilor Kilburg: Absent
- Councilor Turgesen: Aye
- Mayor Rosacker: Aye
- Councilor Carmon: Aye

Councilor Yarnell Hollamon praised Public Works Director Thomas as an incredible human who treats everyone equally regardless of background, commended his professional and happy public works team as a reflection of his leadership, and expressed gratitude for having him as a neighbor. Councilor Carmon thanked him for his service to the city. Councilor Turgesen expressed gratitude for his background knowledge and history, particularly the tour he provided to newer council members and his wealth of institutional knowledge. City Manager Worthey thanked Public Works Director Thomas for talking him through challenges at the end of 2021 and helping develop a strategy to tackle issues one at a time. Councilor Wheatley thanked him for always knowing answers and being happy to respond to questions. Mayor Rosacker praised Public Works Director Russ Thomas and his entire family as wonderful community members and looked forward to seeing him at community events.

Adjournment

Mayor Rosacker adjourned the meeting.

Attested by:



Mayor Bill Rosacker



City Recorder Rachel Thomas