



**CITY OF JOHN DAY
CITY COUNCIL MINUTES February 10, 2026**

COUCILORS PRESENT:

Sherrie Rininger, Mayor
Chris Labhart, Councilor
Bradley Hale, Councilor
Ron Phillips, Councilor
Vern Pifer, Councilor
Heather Swank, Councilor
Meloni Cochran, Councilor

COUNCILORS ABSENT

STAFF PRESENT:

Melissa Bethel, City Manager
Don Gabbard, Fire Chief
Nick Ducote, Contract grant writer & administrator

Agenda Item No. 1—Call Meeting to Order

The City Council meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Agenda Item No. 2—Pledge of Allegiance

The City Council stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item No. 3—Roll Call and Attendance

All councilors were present.

Agenda Item No. 4—Amend or Accept Regular Agenda

Councilor Cochran made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pifer and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 5—Public Comments

Andrew Radinovich: He made a comment regarding the change in his water bill. Radinovich stated that he purchased a neighboring property which was unlivable and feels it is unfair to be charged for water service until repairs are made. He also noted that a trailer behind his home shares the same water meter as his house and feels he should not be billed for two services.

Louis Provencher: He reported several safety concerns he has including leaning railing along the north sidewalk across from City Hall on Main Street, exposed rebar stakes along the riverside trail and accumulated garbage in the alley between 3rd and NW 4th Avenue causing concern for nearby residents.

Agenda Item No. 6—Consent Agenda

- a. Accounts Payable through 1-26-26
- b. Minutes of CC Workshop Meeting 12-3-2025
- c. Minutes of City Council Meeting 1-13-26 (unavailable)

Councilor Hale made a motion to approve the consent agenda as published. The motion was seconded by Councilor Cochran and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 7—Contract Renewal; Gaslin Accounting

Bethel presented a contract amendment extending Gaslin’s agreement for three years with two optional one-year extensions and an annual not-to-exceed cap. Councilor Labhart supported the extension but expressed concern that the cap could still be exceeded. Bethel said the cap was included to avoid a future budget amendment.

Councilor Hale made a motion to approve the amendments to the contract renewal. The motion was seconded by Councilor Phillips and passed unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 8—WWTP Update; Ducote Consulting; Nick Ducote

Ducote provided an update on the wastewater treatment plant improvements, noting federal congressional funds have been secured and included in the budget. Engineers are finalizing plans for DEQ submission within the next month or two. After DEQ approval, the construction loan can be finalized. Bethel added that ongoing costs are required throughout this process, including a \$14,000 DEQ review fee upon final design submission, and noted these expenses are necessary for approval.

Other Business:

Agenda Item No. 9—City Manager Comments

Bethel reported that the wastewater treatment plant project is progressing, with final design expected at the end of April, bidding anticipated in the fall, and construction planned for spring 2027.

She noted that budget is coming up and that Council will receive the budget calendar for approval at the next meeting. Ducote will give a presentation on the URA.

The Spring LOC Conference in Pendleton is approaching for those interested in attending.

During budget review, Bethel noted the City exceeded the chlorine budget by \$20,000 due to an unexpected price spike and wanted the public to be aware of this.

Agenda Item No. 10—Mayor and Council Comments

Mayor Rininger, Bethel and Gabbard will present a wastewater treatment plant update on February 23rd at 1pm at the Senior Center, including diagrams and a public Q&A.

Councilor Labhart requested discussion of two surplus properties. The greenhouses and the building next to the church—stating he would like them listed for sale with a realtor, noting an appraisal would be provided at no cost. Mayor Rininger responded that the properties have been discussed previously, and conditions attached to the sale create challenged, though there has been recent interest.

Councilor Hale requested a future agenda item to explore the potential uses for the greenhouse property, including the possibility of a swimming pool. Bethel responded stating that any productive use of the greenhouse would be better than rent, but noted past efforts have not succeeded due to the high operating cost of running it.

Councilor Labhart asked if Council could follow up on Radinovich’s public comment. Councilor Hale suggested reviewing the issue and, if necessary, making an amendment rather than a new resolution. Mayor Rininger emphasized that the current resolution enables funding for the treatment plant, and amending it could jeopardize that.

Next Regular Council Meeting February 24th, 2026.

Adjourn:

There being no further business before council the meeting was adjourned.

Melissa Bethel, CM