



SCAPPOOSE
Oregon

Monday, July 21, 2025

**City Council Work Session ~ Exploration of Communication Tools to Facilitate Council
and City Manager Feedback, 6:00pm**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
33568 EAST COLUMBIA AVENUE
SCAPPOOSE, OREGON 97056**

Disclaimer: These minutes are intended to summarize the conversations that took place in this meeting rather than provide a full transcript. Anyone who wishes to view the full conversation can find a recording of this meeting on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4vJkgoNiws.

Mayor Backus called the work session to order at 6:00pm.

Present: Mayor Joseph A. Backus; Council President Tyler Miller; Councilor Jeannet Santiago; Councilor Kim Holmes; Councilor Marisa Jacobs; City Manager Benjamin Burgener; and City Recorder Susan M. Reeves.

Excused: Councilor Joel Haugen

Remote: Public Works Dave Sukau joined at 6:51pm.

Councilor Jacobs and Councilor Holmes went over the presentation.

Councilor Jacobs explained she and Councilor Holmes were tasked with exploring what the options are for us as Council, given our managerial responsibility, is to manage and evaluate the role of the city manager. As they were doing this work, they also identified an opportunity to regroup us in our ways of working and really regrouping in our roles and responsibilities as Council and how that relates to the city manager's role. The information that will go over this evening is a compilation of research that was done through our Charter, what's coded in law, best practices in terms of ways of working. She explained halfway through the presentation she will turn the presentation over to Councilor Holmes and we'll talk about tools and feedback cadence. A lot of that research was done through LOC, CIS and ICMA.



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Council Work Session

July 21, 2025

Recent Council & City Manager interactions highlighted an opportunity to realign expectations.

The following content is to reground in the roles & responsibilities as coded in law, Scappoose Charter along with external best practices. The intent is to foster positive working relations which will position Council to successfully perform their management responsibility to position the City Manager for success which directly impacts the health of the City.

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Roles: Council & Manager

• Council

- Elected officials focus on policy development
- Assess effectiveness of policies within the community
- No individual authority
- Must act as part of the collective council
- Debate to decide & accept decision
- Build relationships
- Do not interfere with day-to-day administration of city business
- Do not undermine authority of City Manager or department heads

• Manager

- Appointed by Council as the administrative head of city government
- Day-to-day service delivery, policy implementation, and performance management to align with policy goals
- Fiscally responsible financial steward of City monies
- Build stakeholder relationships within Cities, Counties & State
- Inform council of affairs & needs of the City timely

Scappoose, OR

Interactions: Council - Staff

• Council Working with Council

- Review & adhere to the Team Agreement
- Know & practice role responsibility
- Adhere to Procedure
 - Requests of Staff Time for questions/research sent to CM & Mayor
 - Approval for Attorney time sent to Mayor & CM
 - Councilor/s provide material to all

• Council Working with Staff

- Redirect Staff concerns to City Manager & notify City Manager
- Refrain from requesting information directly from Staff members
- Request information of Staff during session
- Be curious – ask question to seek clarity

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Impact of Interactions

• Working within our Roles

- Build Trust
- Clear Communication
- Smoother Decision Making
- Efficient Operations
- Alignment with Goals
- Fiscally Responsible
- Improved Service Delivery to Citizens

• Working outside our Roles

- Mistrust
- Confusing Communication
- Reluctant to Decide
- Disorganized Operations
- Misalignment with Goals
- Fiscally Irresponsible
- Decreased Service Delivery to Citizens

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**“The key to
success is
cooperation &
collaboration.”**

- Know your role
- Respect the boundaries
- Ground interactions by using the Team Agreement

Scarpus



Council Opportunity

Scarpus



Council Opportunity

The City Manager and Council form of government offers great benefits. However, for small cities, it can create challenges for Council to conduct their management responsibility. Council has limited visibility into the functioning of the City that makes Council oversight challenging. To bridge this gap, a meaningful feedback process should be developed.

- How does council provide meaningful feedback to a city manager to ensure success?
- How does council have the info to conduct a meaningful assessment?

Goal: To create a comprehensive feedback loop that:

- Builds trust
- Creates quality communication between the City Manager and Council
- Sets consistent expectations for both Council and the City Manager to ensure success of the City

Recommendation – 3 Prong Approach

Productive communication between the Council and the City Manager

- Communication needs to be a “two-way” street
- Build relationships that foster trust

Mechanism for Council to understand Staff feedback

- Insight into how the City Manager is leading the staff
- Create opportunities for staff to elevate issues that could be consequential to the long-term success of the City
- Mechanism to alert Council to issues that Council can offer consultation to the City Manager for resolution

Develop a meaningful tool for Council to assess performance of the City Manager to identify:

- Council priorities for the City Manager
- City Manager to identify their performance priorities
- Facilitate alignment to facilitate continued success for the City

Council and City Manager Input: Are these the right areas to focus on to build the communication tools around?

Recommendation – Communication Cadence

Communication area	Suggested tools
Council/City Manager feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement 1:1 between each City Councilor and the City Manager• Quarterly Executive Session for the City Manager and Council to exchange information to ensure success for the City
Staff feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine mechanism for staff to raise concerns that affect the success of the city• Fold staff feedback into the annual assessment process
Performance assessment tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop quantitative and qualitative assessment tool that assembles staff, City Manager and Council feedback on an annual basis

Goal: Develop a wrap-around communication strategy that leads to mutual success

Next Steps

- 7/22 thru 8/4 Council Homework - review sample manager evaluations and bring recommendations for the functional areas within the assessment
- 8/4 Discuss the priority functional areas for the assessment (from homework)
- 8/18 Discuss elements of the assessment tool
- 9/2 Council approval of the assessment tool followed by public comment opportunity

TEAM AGREEMENT (1)

The Council reaffirmed their team agreement from 2021 for the year ahead. The team agreement identifies how the Council agrees to work together in alignment with their Council rules and procedures. The purpose of this agreement is to guide the team in working together, establishing trust, and facilitating open communication and accountability.

AGREEMENTS FOR CONDUCTING COUNCIL MEETINGS AND BUSINESS

1. Attendance at Council meetings is the first priority. If unable to attend, please contact the City Recorder.
2. Be on time to meetings.
3. Mayor will take the lead in keeping the meeting and discussion focused.
4. Distribute information in advance of Council discussion.
5. Mayor will recognize councilors when indicating they wish to speak.
6. Put a time limit on audience testimony and ask them not to repeat previous speakers.
7. Use formal procedure (point of order, call for question, etc.) to focus the meeting. Formal procedure may be used when necessary for effective discussion in lieu of Council's usual, more informal, process. Individuals should use procedure appropriately and courteously.
8. Council meetings are televised live; this requires Council to act professionally by:
9. Speaking in turn and on the issue;
 - Not interrupting;
 - No engaging in side conversations; and
 - Treating the public and each other with courtesy.
10. Information available to one council member will be available to all, in a timely manner.
11. Every effort will be made to adjourn meetings by 9:00 p.m.
12. Council shall interview prospective committee members and advise the Mayor through a public process. Appointments will be made by Mayor and approved by Council.

TEAM AGREEMENT (2)

INDIVIDUAL COUNCIL MEMBER CONDUCT AGREEMENTS

Council Members agree to:

1. Prepare and do our homework by reading staff reports and reaching out with questions in advance to ensure constructive dialogue during meetings
2. Not make assumptions other than assuming positive intentions
3. Being open to having conversations and healthy debate
4. Always be respectful, maintain dignity and humility
5. Hear each other out. Acknowledge contributions and make sure all ideas and voices are heard
6. Recognize your opinion may not always be shared, be open even if you don't agree
7. Disagree without being disagreeable. Respect differences of opinion
8. Follow the rules of order and procedure
9. Ensure equal access to information
10. Move on as a team after the decision has been made. Support each other even if we don't agree
11. Avoid saying or doing anything that would discredit or harm the City

COMMITMENTS AS A COUNCIL TO THE COMMUNITY

Council strives to:

- Continue to improve citizen involvement, awareness and participation
- Improve follow-up and resolution of citizen concerns or complaints
- Act as an advocate for the City

COMMITMENTS BETWEEN COUNCIL AND STAFF TO FOSTER A STRONG PARTNERSHIP

Council will:

- Work as part of one team with Staff
- Trust Staff to implement Council goals
- Communicate with the organization through the City Manager
- Provide questions in advance of meetings to the City Manager
- Support a mutually respectful and professional relationship with the Staff
- Ensure unity of the Council's vision and direct staff accordingly using one voice

Staff will:

- Provide timely facts, information, context and relevant City code information for decisions that come before Council – no surprises
- Offer the pros and cons for scenarios
- Provide summary and background information for issues that come before Council
- Support a mutually respectful and professional relationship with Council

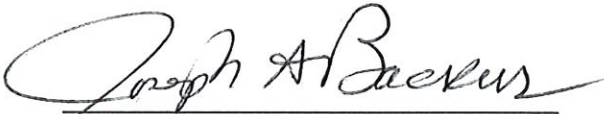
Mayor Backus and Council discussed in more detail the presentation of the Exploration of Communication Tools to Facilitate Council and City Manager Feedback.

Mayor Backus and the Council reviewed the next steps.

- 7/22 thru 8/4 Council Homework - review sample manager evaluations and bring recommendations for the functional areas within the assessment
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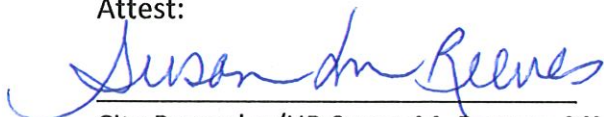
Adjournment

Mayor Backus adjourned the work session at 7:00 pm.



Mayor Joseph A. Backus

Attest:



City Recorder/HR Susan M. Reeves, MMC

