

CITY OF GEARHART
Worksession of the City Council
Tuesday, September 30, 2025
4:00 pm On-site and Virtual/Telephonic

A worksession of the Gearhart City Council was held Tuesday, September 30, 2025. Council members, City staff, and the public were able to attend on-site, virtually, or by dialing in on a telephone.

Present were Mayor Kerry Smith, Councilor Paulina Cockrum, Councilor Preston Devereaux, Councilor Dana Gould, Councilor Sharon Kloepper, City Administrator Chad Sweet, Fire Chief Josh Como, Police Chief Josh Gregory, Executive Assistant Krysti Ficker, and City Treasurer Justine Hill. A quorum of the Council was present.

Mayor Smith opened the worksession and explained that Councilor Cockrum would be leading the meeting. Councilor Cockrum went over the purpose of the worksession and explained that Administrator Sweet would be assisting with time keeping. She talked about the worksession agenda and hoped to get some consensus on the 7 steps on conducting a survey. She indicated that the framework for the 7 step process came from an online company, SurveyPlanet. The hope was to get through steps 1-4 during the worksession.

Councilor Cockrum went over the topics in the "Where Are We Now? Update" section of the agenda. She asked if there was any input on the task document that was distributed at the last meeting, which was created to help keep accountability on the Public Safety Building project. There were no questions or comments. She indicated that she and Councilor Kloepper met with Fire Chief Como regarding a fire call vector analysis. The "heat map" they reviewed was generated from the fire department's software. She noted that the bigger the spot, the more calls. In her opinion, there were more calls in the central part of Gearhart than in the north end (primarily medical calls). Fire Chief Como noted that it can be difficult to pinpoint and that the data was printed in the worksession materials. Councilor Cockrum requested that the maps be posted and/or blocked so that the public could view them. Administrator Sweet had discussions with Building Official Lenoard Brogden about the feasibility of receiving any exemptions from the Oregon State Building Codes Department in terms of the critical infrastructure requirements on the construction of a new Public Safety Building. Administrator Sweet indicated that there were no exemptions for building an essential facility. He referenced a project in Manzanita. He did learn that the City can remodel the current facility to a level 2 remodel, which would only provide very limited structural improvements in terms of earthquake and/or tsunami incidents. He also indicated the State's seismic grant may not be an option because of the limited scope of the structural upgrades (e.g., soil type).

Administrator Sweet reiterated that as long as the police and fire departments remained in existing facilities they would not be required to meet essential infrastructure requirements. Councilor Cockrum and Councilor Gould met regarding the list of essential needs for the police and fire departments. Councilor Cockrum noted that they did not meet with the individual department heads because Councilor Gould had already done a needs assessment document. They decided that the needs assessment document had already been thoroughly vetted, and the current facilities do not meet operational needs. Councilor Kloefer met with Public Works Director Mark McFadden. He indicated that Public Works either needs to be moved to another location or have increased space. He mentioned that equipment sits outside or in a pole building that is not weatherproof. He felt that there would be an increased need for public work staff in the next few years. Public Works Director McFadden's needs list included: four equipment bays; two office spaces; upstairs area for storage; small kitchen; a carport for storing pipes, fittings, and supplies; and a washer/dryer. He also felt that within the next year Public Works facilities would be held to the critical infrastructure building standards. Administrator Sweet followed up on questions about insurance and bond rates. He talked with Knutsen Insurance and CIS regarding the impact of a remodel on the City's insurance rates. He indicated that insurance rates may adjust for increased value. He indicated that insurance would cover the facility's value, not replacement costs. He gave an example of a \$5-10 million valued building only being eligible for that amount in insurance coverage. He stressed that the amount would not cover the costs to rebuild a new replacement critical infrastructure facility. Administrator Sweet talked with the City's financial bond advisor. He mentioned some bond scenarios. The advisor also suggested not extending the payment of a bond out further than the life of the remodel. Administrator Sweet noted that there were no cost estimates on a remodel amount. Councilor Kloefer asked for clarification on the insurance replacement value on the bond. Administrator Sweet indicated that he thought the amount would cover what was left on the bond minus any depreciation. There was continued discussion on replacement costs, impacts of increased building values, and alternative building options. Fire Chief Como did a review of information gathered on the current fire station foundation depth. He explained the process used to gather the data and the measurements. Administrator Sweet explained a structural engineer was going to review and there would be follow-up.

Councilor Cockrum transitioned to "Constructing a Survey 7 Steps." She started with #1 and explained that these were her thoughts and would appreciate any input. After reviewing #1, there was consensus that the goals were appropriate; however, Councilor Gould noted that it was also important to identify the short-term and long-term implications of the decisions. She felt it was important to stress that a remodel was not a "fix it" decision, but rather a band-aid. Councilor Cockrum went over #2 and felt it was a priority to focus on getting data on the voter population. There was continued discussion on data gathering on all the population groups (e.g., voter, homeowner, renter); including a specific target survey

question on population type; previous survey questions/results; and if any other demographic data was necessary. By consensus the Council felt that both voter and non-voter (e.g., homeowners, renters) should be included in the survey. Councilor Cockrum went over #3, "Decide on the Type of Survey Method." She explained that part of the 7 steps was to write an explanatory statement, which she read aloud. She noted that survey questions could also be structured in a rank choice method, which ranks the options in order of preference rather than choosing just one. Councilor Kloepper supported the concept of rank choice voting. There was discussion on formatting the survey in a hybrid voting method (e.g., rank choice, yes/no). Councilor Cockrum indicated that the draft survey questions provided were structured with a yes/no method; however, there was discussion about providing alternative options. She also noted that SurveyPlanet advised that easy questions should come before more complex ones and that all questions should be relevant to finding out what the community would support. Councilor Gould requested a closer review of language in the explanatory statement. She felt that it did not adequately address the whole scope of the project. She felt it did not emphasize that there was a problem and that the community could choose not to do anything at all. She wrote and read a quickly drafted revision. Councilor Kloepper felt there should be specific language addressing the time frame of the options (e.g., 10 vs 50 years). Councilor Gould was going to work on modifying the explanatory statement during the worksession and share back. Councilor Cockrum transitioned to #4, "Design and Write Questions." There was discussion on question A with recommended revisions to the date (2024 instead of 2025); reference to "Fire Station" (Public Safety Building); and length of bond (20 year). On question B, the recommended revision was to again add language on the length of the bond (10 year). Councilor Gould wanted additional language on the remodel being a short-term, temporary fix. On question C, Councilor Devereaux requested clarification on how the cost of \$20 million was established. Administrator Sweet noted that it was just an estimate, which was based on assumption of the park location (e.g., soil, distance away from aquifer, no lateral spread). He did also note that there was not a specific geotechnical report on that location; however, the same dune was analyzed at the Highlands location. There was discussion on adding language about the length of the bond and capitalizing the work "new." Councilor Cockrum inquired if question C was even needed on the survey. Mayor Smith noted that previously he had pulled the park as a potential location; however, based on historical survey results which supported the park location, he felt it should be considered. Councilor Cockrum went over question D and E. Councilor Kloepper asked if it would be beneficial to put the location elevations in questions C and D. Councilor Cockrum asked if there was any additional input on questions C, D, or E. There was continued discussion on distances between location placement (e.g., Highlands, Downtown, Hertig, Cottages), which included mileage and travel time. Councilor Cockrum inquired if there were any comments about having question E on the survey. Councilor Kloepper inquired if allowing a write-in option would be available. Mayor Smith did not feel that was pragmatic because the options offered had information already gathered on

them. Councilor Devereaux noted he was aware of property on Summit that could be purchased. There was continued discussion on location and elevations. There was consensus to eliminate question E.

Councilor Cockrum transitioned into the “PROs and CONs for Council Discussion” section. She indicated that Administrator Sweet had asked her to prepare this discussion item; however, she was not sure how it would be used. She inquired if Councilors wanted to go over this section. Mayor Smith felt like it was a discussion item for another time. He indicated that bullet points in this section needed to align with other sections. Councilor Cockrum felt that the pros and cons would be helpful in laying out alternatives for the voters. There was discussion on the pros and cons (voters’ pamphlet, website, incorporating into survey questions; neutrality test; getting down to the data). Councilor Devereaux felt the biggest misconception was that the general public does not understand what critical infrastructure means. Administrator Sweet mentioned that the Governor has been talking about deeming all State agencies critical infrastructure. Councilor Gould noted that in a discussion with State Representative Javadi, legislators have basically created a situation where unfunded, unrealistic facility infrastructure requirements have forced cities to have to deal with outdated, old buildings until they fall down because they cannot afford the building requirements. Councilor Cockrum suggested someone could write a narrative on critical infrastructure to be shared with the public.

Administrator Sweet confirmed that by consensus question E was being eliminated from the survey; bond terms would be added to questions A-D; and more information would be added regarding the parameters of each location. There was some discussion on the type of survey format (rank choice or yes/no). Councilor Cockrum felt that the same questions would be asked regardless of format; however, the answers would be structured differently.

Administrator Sweet said a survey would be drafted using questions A-D with an explanatory statement and potentially using a test group. He indicated that the survey needs to be ready within the next two weeks. He explained it would then be released for another two weeks with the hope of having some preliminary data for the November meeting. Councilor Kloepper inquired if there should be discussion on #5 of the constructing a survey steps, “Distribute the Survey and Gather Responses.” She also would like clarification on if a survey could come back anonymously and whether only one survey was allowed per person. Administrator Sweet did note that if SurveyMonkey was the software used for the survey and it was done electronically, they have tools to assist in determining if the same computer answered the questions. He indicated that if a specific question about name and address was not asked, the responses would be completely anonymous. Councilor Cockrum inquired if there would be a paper survey available. Administrator Sweet felt the primary distribution method would be electronic for the survey;

however, he felt it would be prudent to also have hard copies available. He listed some distribution methods (online, hard copy, website, QR code, door-to-door). He felt the survey could be mailed out to the community. He did not feel that reaching out via a phone list would be effective. Councilor Cockrum indicated that the two remaining bullet points under #5 required more research before discussion.

Councilor Cockrum asked Councilor Gould to go over the recommended revisions to the explanatory statement for the survey introduction. Councilor Gould read what she had prepared. Mayor Smith requested another revision. Administrator Sweet indicated that a draft of the survey with the revised explanatory statement could be available for Council review by the end of next week. There was agreement that it would behoove the Council to see a final copy of the document before it was released to the public. There was discussion on establishing a date to go over the final copy. Councilor Cockrum noted the meeting had accomplished the purpose.

Councilor Gould gave a reminder that Congresswoman Bonamici invited local elected officials to attend a meeting before her town hall in Seaside on Saturday, which required an RSVP.

The Mayor adjourned the worksession at 5:19 pm.

Mayor Kerry Smith

Chad Sweet, City Administrator