

Fire / Police Station / City Hall Public Safety Facilities Discussion

Council Work Session – January 13, 2026
Project Status & Decision Timeline (Draft)

Purpose of Tonight's Discussion

- Provide a status update on evaluation of a remodel of existing downtown public safety facilities
- Confirm the timeline and decision points required for a potential **May 19, 2026 election**
- Ensure Council alignment on next steps (**no final approval requested tonight**)

Current Direction (Working Assumptions)

- Staff is actively evaluating a remodel of existing downtown facilities, including:
 - Fire Station
 - City Hall / Police Department
 - New Public Works facility (non-essential seismic standard)
- Architects and engineers are developing program concepts and **preliminary planning-level cost ranges**
- Information shared tonight is **planning-level** and subject to refinement

Preliminary Planning Cost

Remodel – Existing Downtown Facilities

Approximate Total Project Cost: \$10.0 million (planning estimate)

Included Elements (High-Level):

- New Public Works Facility (3,777 sf): **\$2.0M**

- Fire Station seismic improvements (per KPFF / RLB): **\$0.9M**
- Fire Station remodel allowance: **\$1.0M**
- City Hall / Police remodel allowance: **\$0.5M**
- Sitework (excluding soil/foundation improvements): **\$0.8M**

Cost Summary:

- Net Hard Costs: **\$5.2M**
- Margins & Adjustments: **\$2.4M**
- Escalation to Q2 2027: **\$0.9M**
- Soft Costs: **\$1.5M**

Not Included:

- Owner contingency
- Additional year of escalation
- Essential-facility foundation or DSM soil improvements

Estimate assumes low-to-moderate voluntary seismic upgrades.

Key Election & Filing Deadlines

May 19, 2026 Election

- **February 27, 2026**
Last day for the City/District governing body to file the ballot title with elections officials
- **March 19, 2026**
County elections filing deadline

Alternative Election Timing (If May 19 Is Not Used)

August 2026 Election

- Requires Council action and ballot preparation later in spring

- Typically lower voter turnout
- Estimated cost to the City: **~\$10,000**

November 2026 General Election

- Highest voter turnout
- Delays potential project start
- Increases exposure to inflation and escalation

Summary:

- **May 19** remains the earliest election option and requires Council direction by **early February**
- **August and November** remain viable alternatives if Council determines additional time is needed

Critical Council Decision Path

February 4, 2026 – City Council Meeting

- Potential consideration of a resolution to place a Public Safety Facilities bond measure on the ballot
- Direction on ballot amount and project scope

February 27, 2026

- Ballot title and amount must be finalized and submitted

February 4 is the key meeting to keep the May election viable while allowing limited time afterward to finalize technical details.

What Staff Is Asking From Council Tonight

- Acknowledge the current direction and timeline
- Confirm comfort with:

- Continuing refinement of the remodel option
- Returning February 4 with a recommended path forward
- **No action or vote requested tonight**

City Attorney Services Discussion

Council Work Session – January 13, 2026

Council Work Session – Discussion Framework

Purpose of the Discussion

- Discuss whether the City should **initiate a formal recruitment process (RFP/RFQ) for city attorney services now, or**
- **Continue the current interim arrangement** while awaiting confirmation of long-term capacity from current counsel
- Clarify **what the City values most** in a city attorney so future recruitment is better defined and aligned with Gearhart's needs

This is a discussion only — no action is required tonight.

Current Situation

- The City is currently working under a **temporary / interim legal services arrangement**
- Current counsel has:
 - **Provided high-quality service**
 - **Expressed interest in continuing long-term**
 - **Indicated that staffing capacity is still being evaluated**
- Timing and certainty around long-term availability are **not yet known**

This leaves the City with a practical question:

Do we wait for clarity, or do we move forward with a formal process in parallel?

Option 1: Continue Interim Arrangement (Status Quo – Short Term)

Pros

- Maintains continuity during active projects
- Avoids duplicative onboarding
- Respects the strong working relationship that's already been established
- Allows time for current counsel to confirm capacity

Considerations / Risks

- Uncertainty around long-term availability
- Interim arrangements are not ideal as a permanent solution
- Delays if capacity ultimately cannot be confirmed

Option 2: Initiate an RFP/RFQ Process Now

Pros

- Provides structure, transparency, and optionality
- Allows the City to clearly define what it needs in legal services
- Keeps the City from being reactive if interim capacity falls through
- Does **not** preclude continuing with current counsel if they remain the best fit

Considerations

- Time and staff effort
- Potential overlap if current counsel ultimately stays on
- Council would need to agree on selection criteria up front

Key Discussion Question #1

Is Council comfortable continuing with a temporary arrangement while awaiting clarity, or would Council prefer to proceed with a formal recruitment to ensure long-term stability?

Defining What Gearhart Needs in a City Attorney

Regardless of timing, staff believes it is valuable to clearly articulate **what the City is actually looking for**, so future recruitment is intentional and well-aligned.

Core Priorities Identified by Staff

- **Oregon-specific municipal experience**
 - Familiarity with Oregon statutes, case law, and regulatory agencies
 - Ability to operate confidently within Oregon's legal and political environment
- **Strong land use expertise**
 - Planning, zoning, variances, appeals, development review
 - Understanding of coastal and small-city land use dynamics
- **Election law experience**
 - Ballot measures, referrals, timelines, and compliance
- **Broad general municipal law**
 - Public meetings and public records
 - Contracts and procurement
 - Personnel and labor issues
 - Risk management and governance support
- **Established Oregon legal network**
 - Ability to draw on specialized expertise when needed

- Familiarity with best practices across Oregon cities

Additional Attributes for Council to Discuss

- Responsiveness and availability
- Ability to work collaboratively with Council and staff
- Practical, solution-oriented legal advice
- Understanding of Gearhart's scale, culture, and community expectations

Key Discussion Question #2

Are these priorities the right fit for Gearhart, and are there additional attributes Council would like clearly stated before any future recruitment?

Closing the Discussion

- Staff will take direction based on Council's comfort level:
 - Proceed with an RFP/RFQ
 - Continue interim services for a defined period
 - Or return with a refined proposal and timeline
- No action is required tonight unless Council wishes to give clear direction