MINUTES

CITY OF THE DALLES BUDGET COMMITTEE

May 6, 2025 5:30 p.m.

In Attendance:

Scott Randall, Tim McGlothlin, Dan Richardson, Ben Wring, Rod

Runyon, Jann Oldenburg, Allyson Schock, Serena Smith, Sandy

Haechrel

Absent:

Richard Mays, Jared Gosson

Staff in attendance:

City Manager Matthew Klebes, City Attorney Jonathan Kara, City

Clerk Amie Ell, Community Development Director Joshua

Chandler, Public Works Director Dale McCabe, Library Director

Jeff Wavrunek, Airport Manager Jeff Renard

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair McGlothlin at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was conducted by City Clerk Ell, Mays, Randall, McGlothlin, Richardson, Runyon, Oldenburg, Schock, Smith, Haechrel present. Gosson absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair McGlothlin asked Councilor Runyon to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilor Runyon invited the audience to join in the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Runyon and seconded by Richardson to approve the minutes of the May 5, 2025 City Budget Committee meeting as presented. The motion carried; Runyon, Richardson, Oldenburg, Wring, Randall, McGlothlin, Smith, Schock, Haechrel voting in favor; none opposed; Gosson absent.

PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing to Receive Testimony Regarding the Proposed City Budget

Chair McGlothlin called for the continuation of staff budget presentations.

City Manager Matthew Klebes began by answering a question from the previous night. He explained that the contingency on page 174 was calculated without including transfers or other payments, such as those to the Capital Fund, Federal Street Plaza, Streets Department, Airport, or Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue. This approach aligned with the City's fiscal policy to maintain a 10% contingency, resulting in the \$1.28 million shown.

BUDGET PRESENTATIONS BY FUND

Library Director Jeff Wavrunek presented key changes and highlights from the Library Budget including;

- Distributed an improved monthly newsletter, including a Spanish version that consistently ran out due to high demand.
- Promoted the summer reading program with a major kickoff event planned in June featuring food and a bounce house.
- Scheduled the HVAC replacement project for September–October; low bid received was \$423,050, with \$3,000 for engineering.
- Began budgeting for future replacement of the elevator and both roof sections.
- Received the new library van ("Word Wagon") in October; used for outreach across Wasco County and featured in the Cherry Festival parade.
- Installed a new self-checkout machine, which functioned well until issues arose after a consortium software update.
- Marked the retirement of Maggie Pando after 35 years of service.
- Integrated the Word Wagon into regular library services.
- Commissioned Jeff Stewart to create two carved cub bear sculptures for the entrance canopy.
- Reported strong turnout for Day of the Dead programming, with approximately 800 attendees.
- Acquired two privacy booths—one funded by a \$10,000 Google grant and the other by a \$7,000 State Library (IMLS) grant—both received high usage.
- Noted the end of IMLS federal funding, which impacted grants, teen intern programs, and database access.
- Anticipated significant courier cost increases for the Sage Consortium; new costs would be covered by the County Library District.
- Highlighted interactive art and new digital access tools, including Kanopy for streaming

and Libby for ebooks and audiobooks.

• Removed "office equipment" and "travel, food and lodging" line items from the City budget and shifted them to the County Library District per auditor direction.

When asked about the 2.1 million in revenues and 2.7 million in expenditures, showing a \$600,000 deficit, Wavrunek clarified that in previous years, his operating budget did not include transfers or a contingency fund. This year, both were included. He explained that the \$300,000 in contingency funds would not be used, and that his library board, being conservative, wanted him to spend some of the funds to reduce the cash carryover, preventing it from growing too large. Therefore, the actual deficit was not as significant as it appeared.

Klebes added this was also partially due to shifting funds from the general fund into the library, airport, and public works funds, which were managed separately. A portion of the funds was also being transferred into the capital project fund to cover deferred maintenance items, such as the library HVAC system, elevator, and roof repairs. These funds would leave the library fund and be allocated to the City's capital fund for these essential improvements.

Angie Wilson confirmed that some of the beginning fund balance was being used for capital projects. She clarified that these funds were being spent down to fulfill capital needs, rather than for operating expenses like salaries or personnel costs. She emphasized using the funds for maintenance of the assets was a good approach.

When asked if the budget was balanced and if there was a deficit at the library, Klebes said no. While the beginning fund balance was being spent down, it was for one-time capital expenses, not recurring costs. The unappropriated or reserve funds for future expenditures were not visible, but they would show everything balanced out.

Airport

Jeff Renard Airport Manager provided an overview of the airport's budget, highlighting key changes and updates;

- The budget decreased from \$11 million last year to \$4 million this year, reflecting the completion of large projects.
- Key projects, such as T hangars being built with the Connect Oregon grant, were designed to generate revenue and improve sustainability for the airport.
- There was a notable increase in contractual services due to a shift in how finances were managed, moving from internal transfers to a contractual relationship with Klickitat County.
- The City and Klickitat County were revising their joint operating agreement (JOA), which may result in the formation of a separate entity similar to Qlife. This review was

expected to take six months.

- The complexity of the airport's finances and the joint operating agreement led to an increase in audit services.
- Several large capital projects were underway, including a new fuel tank system and an emergency generator, funded by Oregon airport relief grants.
- The construction of 20 new T hangars was expected to generate around \$100,000 in revenue by next fall.
- The airport had reduced equipment costs by securing surplus snow plows and brooms from Boeing Field at minimal cost.
- A reduction in loan proceeds for the T hangars project was due to changes with the EDA project and the college hangar. Klickitat County was now handling the financing for the project, with the city contributing approximately \$500,000.

When asked about the reduction in grants, Renard said it was due to completed projects and the reassignment of funds. Last year's budget included grants from Klickitat County and the EDA, which were going to be managed through Klickitat County moving forward. He also noted the South Apron project was nearing completion.

When asked to clarify the Special Enterprise Zone Fund transfers, Klebes said the \$350,000 transfer was in support of the EDA grant for the T hangar project and loan. The match for the EDA grant was originally planned at \$500,000, but cost escalations and delays had affected the project.

When asked about the long-term lease with DNR, Renard said they had a five-year lease for the red and white hangar, which included office space, helicopter tie-downs, and support areas. DNR typically based one to two helicopters each fire season, but this year may instead bring six Fire Boss aircraft. He noted changes in fire service operations that last year generated revenue of about \$50,000 in tie-down fees.

Public Works

Dale McCabe Public Works Director introduced staff members who were present to assist in the Public Works Budget presentation. David Mills, formerly the Transportation Manager, had transitioned to Deputy Public Works Director; Tyler Mitchell, Water Quality Manager; Jerry Anderson, Water Distribution Manager; Steve Byers, Wastewater Collection Manager; and Jill Hoyenga, Regulatory Compliance Manager.

McCabe stated the Public Works department was responsible for the City's water, sewer, storm water, and transportation systems. The department had six divisions, along with engineering and administration, and a total of 47 FTEs. The budget presentation would cover eight funds: Street Fund (5), Public Works Reserve (9), Street Reserve (13), Water Utility (51), Water Capital

Reserve (53), Wastewater Utility (55), Wastewater Capital Reserve (56), and Sewer Plant Reserve (57).

Street Fund

- Revenue sources highlighted included;
 - o Franchise fees, the local \$0.03/gallon fuel tax, and the State Motor Vehicle Fund.
 - The General Fund had contributed funds in recent years, specifically for the design and construction of ADA ramps.
 - The Water and Wastewater Utility Funds also contributed through internal franchise fees, helping compensate for roadway damage caused during utility trenching for new mains and laterals. The City franchises its own utilities at 3% of gross utility revenue, similar to how it handles external utilities like PUD, NW Natural Gas, and fiber providers.
 - The Zayo Group's franchise fee increased significantly from \$5,000 to \$33,436 due to issues with inaccurate utility locates which delayed City projects.
- A \$50,000 budget allocation was set aside for Engineering Services to assist with the design backlog of ADA ramps.
- Funds were allocated for a study to replace the Sixth Street Bridge, which had exceeded its extended lifespan. ODOT inspections indicated the bridge was under load restrictions and needed replacement.
- A pedestrian crossing study was budgeted for Sixth Street between Cherry Heights and Webber Street. The study would assess the feasibility of a mid-block crossing due to high pedestrian traffic, particularly by schoolchildren and transit users.
- The Street Fund's chip seal program was an annual project contracted with Wasco County. The City provided traffic control, while Wasco County handled purchasing materials, labor, and trucks.
- The Crack Seal Program budget was increased from \$1,572 to \$58,500 due to an insufficient amount the previous year. The funds were used to purchase crack seal material for City crews.
- The ADA Sidewalk Program continued to address the backlog of curb ramps that needed to be installed.

Mayor Mays arrived at 6:26 p.m.

When asked about the cost of ADA ramps, McCabe said the price was around \$10,000 per ramp, but by completing some projects in-house, the cost reduced to approximately \$6,000 per ramp.

Public Works Reserve

• The City was saving funds for the purchase of a smaller paving machine, suitable for projects requiring an 8-foot width, compared to the current 11-foot wide machine.

- The planned purchase of a volumetric concrete truck to mix smaller quantities of concrete for projects like ADA ramps or utility service repairs, aiming to save on high costs and long lead times. The truck would be shared by the Street Fund, Water Utility Fund, and Wastewater Utility Fund.
- The reserve fund included savings for a future street sweeper

Street Reserve

- Sixth Street widening project between Snipes and Hostetler, including a center lane, curb, gutter, sidewalk, and drive approaches, funded partially by ODOT. Completion by end of September.
- East 12th Street sidewalk and storm improvements, with storm line, curb, gutter, sidewalk, and retaining walls. ARPA-funded, completion by October, with a \$32,000 transfer for additional funding.
- 10th Street Safe Routes to School project adding sidewalks and RRFBs between Snipes and Chinook Loop Road. Funded by ODOT grant, with a \$200,000 match from the school district and City. Construction to begin in May, completion by August 29.

Richardson expressed gratitude and congratulations to City staff for securing numerous grants, which enabled the completion of projects with minimal impact on local taxpayers.

Water Utility

- The increase in projected revenues for the water utility was partly due to two grants: the US Forest Legacy Grant (\$2.1M) for the Arrowhead Ranch property and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Drinking Water Source Protection Grant. These funds were used to purchase 3,600 acres of watershed property.
- A FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant funded backup generators at well houses and lift stations.
- The charges for services increased due to a 7.1% rate hike per the Water Master Plan Update, effective for the full year. It was also expected consumption levels would increase, further boosting revenue.
- The sludge lagoon cleaning contract at the Wicks Water Treatment Plant was estimated at \$75,000.
- Tree removal and fire hazard mitigation at the Wicks Water Treatment Plant were completed in partnership with Mid Columbia Fire and Rescue.
- Watershed road construction addressed culvert replacements and bridge repairs based on the timber forest management plan.
- Starlink was installed at the Wicks Water Treatment Plant to improve internet service after issues with previous providers.
- The training and conferences budget increased to cover certifications for five new staff at the Wicks Water Treatment Plant.

- A 15% increase in water treatment chemicals was necessary due to expanded water production and new projects.
- Rotor valve replacement and replacement of hypochloric storage tanks were completed as the tanks had reached the end of their service life.
- The Itron service agreement provided radio-read meters to streamline water meter reading.
- ASR monitoring, under a \$56,000 contract, tested the ASR well at Riverside.
- The water distribution training budget increased to certify three crane operators for boom truck operation.
- There was a significant increase in chemical lab supplies due to new reservoirs and wells at the Riverside water facility.
- The backflow testing software was updated due to the old software becoming unsupported.
- A transfer of \$209,614 was made to the Public Works Reserve Fund for future equipment and vehicle purchases.
- The 9th and Clark water line replacement project, budgeted at \$30,000, was completed in-house by the water distribution crew.
- A contingency budget was set aside for emergency expenses, with a better amount available this year than last.

Chair McGlothlin recessed the meeting for a break at 7:10 p.m.

The meeting was resumed at 7:19 p.m.

Jared Gosson arrived at 7:20 p.m.

Water Capital Reserve

- Received funds from the Forest Legacy Grant and OWEB for the purchase of the Arrowhead property for watershed protection.
- Wicks Water Treatment Plant SCADA Phase One Upgrade Project was underway, with completion expected by December 2025.
- SCADA Phase Two Upgrade Project was planned as a 3–4 year effort to upgrade systems at the Public Works site, water wells, reservoir sites, and sewer lift stations; funding was shared between the Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection divisions.
- Planned installation of new VFD pumps at the Marks and Jordan wells to allow for system pressurization and future decommissioning of the Garrison Reservoir; this would enable a future interior coating project similar to the one completed at the Sorosis Reservoir.

Wastewater Utility

- Proposed a 3% utility rate increase for the Wastewater Utility Fund, consistent with the
 increase approved for the Water Utility Fund, and explained that the increase was
 prompted by discussions during the Water System Master Plan update to proactively
 support future capital needs.
- Stated that the City was in the process of updating the Wastewater Facility Master Plan, with a focus on the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and anticipated that the plan would identify substantial projects requiring future investment.
- Clarified the 3% increase was included in the proposed budget and would require City Council authorization, and emphasized that the adjustment was intended to offset annual cost escalations and maintain long-term financial stability for the fund.

Wastewater Capital Reserve

- Budgeted for anticipated ammonia testing requirements under the City's upcoming NPDES permit renewal for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, even though such testing was not currently required under the existing permit.
- Transferred funds for sewer line work from the Wastewater Utility Fund to Fund 56, the Special Sewer Reserve Fund, to support capital projects such as the First Street sewer project.
- Included funding for storm water improvements related to ADA ramp construction, specifically for relocating catch basins that conflict with new ramp placement.
- Clarified in response to a question machinery previously budgeted under the Wastewater Utility Fund was already purchased for the shop and new equipment purchases were moved to another fund this year to conserve resources.

Sewer Plant Reserve

- Transferred funds from the Wastewater Utility Fund (Fund 55) to the Sewer Special Reserve Fund to support a sewer main project on 1st Street near Public Works.
- The observed fluctuation in the difference between total revenues and expenditures—\$7.3 million last year compared to \$2.8 million projected for FY 2025-26—was due to a large system development charge payment made by Google, which was received and subsequently transferred, affecting fund balances.
- The SCADA System Phase Two upgrade, which was mentioned under the Water Special Reserve Fund, was also budgeted under the Sewer Special Reserve Fund. This multi-year project was expected to receive funding over the next three years.

Capital Improvement Funds

Klebes presented key changes and highlights including;

Special Assessments Fund

- Focus on Local Improvement Districts (LIDs), nuisance abatements, and sidewalk programs.
- No new LIDs for FY 25-26; ongoing sidewalk rehabilitation programs for residential and commercial properties.

Capital Projects Fund

- Focus on building funds for various City facility projects including HVAC at the Library.
- Reserve for City Facility Improvements: Nearly \$3.8 million for roof repairs and facility upgrades, including at the library and police department.
- Dock Maintenance and Park Improvements were also included.

Special Revenue Fund

Klebes said the special reserves funds budgeted for unemployment needs, veteran memorials, special projects, and State Office Building Fund. He added highlights and key changes that included;

Special Grants Fund

- 1st Street Project budget for engineering and construction.
- \$500,000 Brownfield EPA Grant for environmental cleanup and redevelopment.
- SHPO Cemetery Grants for maintenance support at Pioneer Cemetery.
- 3rd and Jefferson Parking Lot: \$484,000 from Urban Renewal for redevelopment.
- Transportation and Growth Management Grant to create a master plan for the West Side Renaissance.

Special Enterprise Reserve Fund

- Funding for water and wastewater master plans through SIP and enterprise zone payments.
- Support for core City services and infrastructure improvements.

Debt Service Fund

Klebes presented key changes and highlights including;

- AA-2 Credit Rating had been maintained.
- A summary of outstanding debts including Safe Drinking Water Revolving Fund loans and Airport-related debts.
- A focus on paying down debts with airport property rental revenue.
- A \$40,000 reduction in revenue from Mid Columbia Fire and Rescue partnership due to sourcing financial services elsewhere.

When asked why the expenditure and revenue bar graph did not show a balanced budget, Wilson clarified that the bar graph shows anticipated revenues and expenditures for the 2025-26 budget year. The beginning fund balance was not considered revenue, as it's the carryover from the previous year. While the budget was balanced, some expenditures were funded by this beginning fund balance for one-time capital projects, not recurring expenses. Including the beginning fund balance as revenue would inaccurately represent funds for the year.

It was suggested to either edit the graph to include a representation of the beginning fund balance or add a one-liner explanation clarifying that carryover budget dollars are not reflected in the forecasted revenues for the coming year. Another suggestion was made to include the beginning fund balance as a line graph over time, showing its decrease to visually represent how the three sources of funds interact and illustrate the use of the beginning fund balance.

Klebes said it was important to show how the beginning fund balance was being spent down, and he did not want to alter the existing graph too much, as it was crucial to highlight that aspect of the budget and how the funds were being used.

The committee had further suggestions for improvement to the new budget book. It was suggested these comments be sent to the finance department.

Chair McGlothlin asked if anyone wished to testify in support of, in opposition to, or in any other way directly related to the proposed budget.

Susan Buce of the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center said they had applied for \$10,933 in funding, but the recommended amount was \$6,000, a \$5,000 reduction from their initial request. She explained that this reduction could have significantly affected their ability to proceed with the project, particularly in terms of getting the photos up and running. In the past, organizations like schools, local history researchers, and the general public had benefited from the resource. While the costs would be ongoing, as they would need to be renewed annually, she believed that once the project was operational, maintaining it wouldn't be a challenge. The requested amount was intended primarily for the initial setup to get the project back on track.

Carolyn Wood Columbia Gorge Discovery Center Board Member expressed her support for the funding request described by Susan Buce.

Richardson asked to for an explanation of the spending down of the beginning fund balance.

Klebes explained that the spending down of the beginning fund balance aligned with discussions to support capital improvement needs. Rather than allowing the funds to sit in the beginning fund balance and grow, they could be allocated to specific needs. For example, this year, \$1.5 million

was shifted into the Capital Improvement Fund. As the fund grew and capital improvement plans were better informed, he expected to develop a 5- to 10-year estimate for how much the fund would require. He noted that the flat \$1.5 million transfer was based on anticipated deferred maintenance needs, such as roofs and elevators, which can be costly. Klebes believed that transferring this amount was a good strategy for preparing for future expenses and managing the fund effectively.

Mayor Mays added that he had discussed fund balance issues with Klebes at the beginning of the year. He stated that when the fund balance exceeds 20% of operating expenses, it is considered high. He agreed with Wilson that investing part of the fund balance in capital costs, rather than operating costs, was a prudent strategy to reduce the fund balance to a more appropriate level.

Chair McGlothlin closed the public hearing at 8:18 p.m.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Gosson asked about the City's long-term debt reduction strategy.

Klebes said some of the existing debt was set to retire by 2035. However, he highlighted that the City's future plans, particularly related to the Water Master Plan, would likely involve taking on more debt. He mentioned the use of WIFIA (Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act), a federal program designed to support large, generational water projects. Specifically, the City was planning major infrastructure projects, including replacing the Wicks Water Treatment Plant, raising the Crow Creek Dam, and replacing transmission lines. As a result, the City would be adjusting rates to service the additional debt associated with these projects. While the City would continue to pay down current debt, he anticipated that future debt would grow faster than it decreased in the near future due to these large-scale investments.

The committee discussed the Funding Request process, noting the absence of formal guidelines for evaluating and awarding funds. Members reviewed several examples of requests that were not fully funded, including the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, which requested \$10,933 and received \$6,000, and YouThink, which requested \$30,000 and was awarded \$25,000. Concerns were raised about directing applicants to alternative funding sources without confirmation that such resources would be available. Several committee members expressed a desire for the City Council to establish clearer parameters—including a set dollar amount and evaluation criteria—for future requests. They agreed that doing so would ensure transparency, fairness, and consistency, and would prevent the need to make decisions on an ad hoc basis during each budget cycle.

Klebes reviewed the following amendments, noted during budget:

- Removal of \$20,000 for the unmanned aerial vehicle in the Police Department budget
- Removal of \$20,000 from contractual services in the Judicial budget
- Addition of \$18,536 for personnel in the Human Resources budget
- Addition of \$6,532 for personnel services in the Economic Development budget
- Addition of \$332,172 to the Police Department budget for the CAD/RMS upgrade project in partnership with Mid-Columbia Fire & Rescue and Wasco County (including data conversion, hosting upgrades, and change orders)
- Correction of a typographical error in the Police filming records line item, reducing the amount from \$16,885 to \$1,600
- Additional \$32,000 transfer from the Special Grants Fund to the Public Works
 Transportation System Reserve Fund, using ARPA funds to support the 12th Street
 project
- Removal of \$30,000 due to a duplicate allocation for the Ninth and Clark project
- Budgeting of the Brownfield Grant Fund (Fund 18) at \$500,000, with \$50,000 allocated to administration and \$450,000 to reserve
- Removal of \$40,000 in revenue from the financial services contract with Mid-Columbia Fire & Rescue from the General Fund

Haechrel asked for clarification regarding the funding gap for the Police Department's \$332,000 need.

Klebes confirmed the listed additions and reductions did not cover the full amount and explained the remaining difference would require a reduction to the ending fund balance.

The Committee discussed increasing the Discovery Center's allocation from \$6,000 to the full \$10,000 requested. Runyon highlighted the importance of identifying available funds before making decisions, noting the Discovery Center's significant community contributions. The Committee reached consensus to fully fund the request and add it to the comprehensive list of amendments for the budget approval.

The Committee discussed the past practice of ensuring any additions to the budget were balanced by either increasing revenue or decreasing expenditures.

Mayor Mays recalled this was followed in previous years, which helped maintain budget balance.

McGlothlin mentioned that in prior years, departments were able to negotiate and make cuts to accommodate additional funding requests.

Klebes said as City Manager, he would be reluctant to decrease funds for City departments to fund outside requests. In previous instances, funds were transferred internally between

departments within the City's budget, rather than allocating funds to external parties.

Klebes drew the Committee's attention to a graphic showing how transient lodging tax revenue was allocated. He explained that there was no predefined budget for the grant process. The tourism promotion fund received 55.4% of the revenue for tourism purposes, while 44.6% was transferred to the general fund, totaling \$649,988 in the City Council's budget. He noted this revenue source was limited and not available for endless funding requests. The calculation aimed to maintain consistent funding levels, accounting for necessary transfers between funds. The Committee also discussed the need for a clearer guiding principle for evaluating requests as well as a proposal to create a dedicated review committee to better assess applications. The conversation also touched on transparency in the process, with Klebes acknowledging that while he had tried to summarize the applications for the Committee, the full document was extensive, and a more thorough review by a specialized committee would be beneficial. Concerns were raised about how people who submitted requests were unsure of when to attend meetings, and some groups were absent from the meeting, likely assuming their requests were secure.

Klebes confirmed general support to fully fund the Discovery Center request and added it to the list of amendments. He reported a net increase of \$266,888 to the General Fund, with increases of \$43,000 in Fund 18, \$32,000 in Fund 13, and a \$30,000 reduction in Fund 53 due to a duplicate Ninth and Clark request. The largest General Fund increase was attributed to first-year costs of the CAD/RMS project, to be covered by reducing the ending fund balance. He noted the balance stood at \$3.73 million, sufficient to support the amendments.

It was moved by Gosson and seconded by Runyon to approve the proposed budget and recommend its adoption to the City Council as amended. The motion carried; Gosson, Runyon, McGlothlin, Haechrel, Smith, Schock, Wring, Richardson, Randall, Oldenburg voting in favor; none opposed; none absent.

Klebes expressed appreciation to the Budget Committee members for volunteering to serve, acknowledging the long nights and the hard work involved. He thanked the City Council, volunteers, and all City staff, particularly Wilson from the Finance Department for her continued support. He extended gratitude to Nick and Lisa from the Finance Department and all the other City employees for their efforts.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Submitted by/ Amie Ell, City Clerk

SIGNED:

Budget Committee Secretary, Serena Smith

ATTEST:

Amie Ell, City Clerk