

Fire Hall
285 NE Burgess R
Toledo, Oregon 97391
6:00 p.m.



TOLEDO CITY COUNCIL
Town Hall Meeting
March 25, 2026

1. Call to Order

- a. Mayor Tracy Mix called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.; also via Zoom in Toledo, Oregon and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

- a. City Recorder Johnson took roll call and determined a quorum is present.

Council Member	Present	Absent	Via Zoom
Mayor Mix	X		
Council President Silvia	X		
Councilor Chambers	X		
Councilor Kauffman	X		
Councilor Keating		X	
Councilor Burns	X		

- b. Staff Present: City Manager Rich Huebner and City Recorder Paul Johnson

3. Discussion and Information Items

a. Water Conservation

- i. Mayor Mix opened the discussion by explaining that this has been an unusually mild winter, resulting in critically low water levels in the Siletz River that are comparable to typical summer lows. She emphasized the need for early water conservation measures to avoid mandatory curtailments later in the year, noting this is the earliest the city has ever initiated such discussions.
- ii. Council President Silvia explained that the conversation began when he and the mayor recognized the urgent need to address water conservation not only within Toledo but with neighboring East County communities. He noted that Toledo has the oldest water rights on the Siletz River, which provides some protection during curtailment periods.
- iii. Stu Strom raised concerns about Georgia Pacific's industrial operations, noting they maintain approximately a 90-day water supply and may need to shut down if water becomes scarce. This prompted discussion about the existing water sales agreement between the city and GP.
- iv. City Manager Huebner provided detailed explanation of the infrastructure

challenges with the current water sales arrangement. He explained that the city's pump can only serve one location at a time - either Toledo or GP - and requires manual valve switching each time. The aging valve system creates risk of damage with each operation. Additionally, serving GP would require overtime operations and careful coordination to ensure the city's water needs are met.

- v. Former Mayor Cross provided background on water rights hierarchy, explaining that GP has the youngest rights as a corporation and would be the first curtailed, followed by Siletz, then Newport (which has two separate rights), and finally Toledo with the oldest municipal rights.
- vi. Cross suggested that GP should contribute to upgrading the Y-valve system to allow remote operation, which would eliminate overtime costs and reduce infrastructure risks. Mayor Mix confirmed that GP has already agreed to pay 100% of the Y-valve upgrade costs.
- vii. The discussion expanded to regional water cooperation, with emphasis that Toledo's superior water rights should not prevent assistance to neighboring communities. Cross noted that technically, between Toledo's rights on the Siletz and Mill Creek Reservoir, the city controls most of the county's available water supply.
- viii. Stu Strom suggested that tourist-dependent coastal communities pulling from the Siletz might need to implement their own restrictions, such as limiting hotel room availability during water shortages.
- ix. The conversation touched on Mill Creek reservoir capacity, referencing a 2009 water study showing that raising the dam by 10 feet could more than double storage capacity. However, algae buildup during summer months creates treatment challenges that would require significant infrastructure investment.
- x. Cindy George participated via online connection, expressing frustration about prioritizing industrial water use over residential and tourism needs, warning about fire dangers when water levels drop critically low.
- xi. Council President Silvia emphasized his preference for ensuring Siletz residents have water access over industrial needs, while asking about the possibility of raising the Mill Creek dam to increase regional water storage capacity.
- xii. Council Kauffman highlighted that selling water helps protect Toledo's water rights, as unused rights can be reduced by the state. She stressed that every gallon sold, regardless of source, helps maintain the city's full water allocation.
- xiii. Councilor Chambers suggested implementing different industrial water rates to help fund necessary infrastructure improvements through rate adjustments rather than upfront agreements.
- xiv. The mayor concluded that next steps include reaching out to other mayors for regional coordination, developing public education materials about home water conservation measures, and encouraging residents to consider reducing activities like large gardens during the anticipated dry summer.

b. Fire Safety

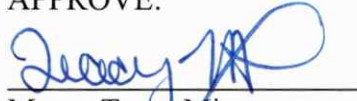
- i. Mayor Mix transitioned the discussion to fire safety, particularly fireworks safety, given the dry conditions and early fire season concerns. The conversation focused on creating safe opportunities for fireworks use while other communities have implemented bans.
- ii. The council discussed organizing a community fireworks event at the Memorial Field on July 4th, where residents could safely set off fireworks with volunteer firefighters present and adequate water supplies available. This would provide a controlled environment with proper supervision and cleanup protocols.
- iii. Council members debated timing conflicts with Summer Festival setup, which typically begins the Monday after July 4th. They explored using the Memorial Field with careful coordination to ensure cleanup before carnival equipment arrives.
- iv. The discussion expanded to include food trucks and making the event a community gathering, though concerns were raised about conflicts with Summer Festival timing. Some suggested holding the event on July 5th instead.
- v. Deputy Fire Chief Larry Robeson provided comprehensive fire safety education, using a dollhouse demonstration to illustrate defensible space principles. He emphasized the importance of creating defensible zones around homes:
 1. 0-5 feet from structures: Hardscaping with non-flammable materials, avoiding wood chips and bark dust
 2. 5-30 feet: Removing ladder fuels by trimming tree limbs 6+ feet from ground level
 3. 30-100 feet: Maintaining larger defensible areas for firefighter access
- vi. Deputy Chief Robeson demonstrated how different building materials affect fire resistance, showing that vinyl siding and gutters are particularly vulnerable, while metal roofing and siding provide better protection. He explained that even terracotta tiles can be problematic if bird nests and debris accumulate in the loops.
- vii. The Deputy Chief offered to provide home fire safety assessments through the state's Survey 123 program, which creates a database for emergency response planning while educating homeowners about vulnerabilities.
- viii. Discussion included the fire department's capabilities for community education, including neighborhood-level assessments and the Firewise Community program for organized residential areas.
- ix. Stu Strom inquired about Main Street fire suppression systems, with Deputy Chief Robeson confirming that hydrants are functional and the former hotel building has an operational sprinkler system, though newer apartment conversions avoided sprinkler requirements through different occupancy classifications.
- x. The conversation concluded with plans to coordinate fireworks booth permitting for Summer Festival, balancing community fundraising needs

with safety requirements. The council agreed to limit the number of fireworks vendors to protect Summer Festival's primary fundraising opportunity while accommodating other community organizations.

4. Adjournment

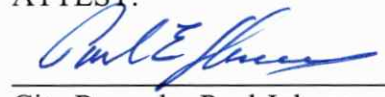
- a. The meeting concluded with discussion of next steps for both water conservation and fire safety initiatives. The council planned to add these topics to their April 15th business meeting for formal action and policy development. Mayor Mix adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

APPROVE:



Mayor Tracy Mix

ATTEST:



City Recorder Paul Johnson