

City Hall
206 N. Main St.
Toledo, Oregon 97391
6:00 p.m.



TOLEDO CITY COUNCIL
City Council Work Session
February 25, 2026

1. Call to Order

- a. Mayor Tracy Mix called the meeting to order at 6:00 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. Noting that Councilor Chambers absence was excused.

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, Public Works Director Brian Lorimor, Interim Finance Director Judy Richter, City Attorney Souvanny Miller, and City Recorder Paul Johnson

3. Discussion and Information Items

- a. City Manager Opening Comments
- City Manager Huebner addressed two preliminary items for the record. He clarified that the city no longer schedules public comment at work sessions, as these meetings transitioned to true discussion-focused sessions in October. A public comment submitted yesterday would be shared at the next business meeting instead.
 - He also noted that the Oregon Sustainable City Year Program discussion item would be shortened, as only a nonbinding letter of interest needs to be submitted by Monday, with more detailed information to come after tomorrow's webinar.
- b. Oregon Department of Forestry Presentation
- Evan Elderbrock and Allison O'Sullivan, community assistance foresters with Oregon Department of Forestry's Urban Community Forestry Program, presented on urban forestry resources and assistance available to Toledo.
 - The foresters explained that urban forestry encompasses the intersection of trees and people within city limits, including public parks, street trees, parking lots, residential and commercial properties, schools, and natural areas. They emphasized the multiple benefits

- of urban forests, including air and water filtration, cardiovascular health improvements, mental well-being, increased property values, and enhanced commercial activity.
- iii. Key concepts discussed included "right tree, right place" - selecting appropriate trees based on context, available space, and infrastructure considerations. The presenters noted Toledo's existing sidewalk issues with tree roots as an example of infrastructure conflicts that can be managed through proper tree selection.
 - iv. The program offers various forms of assistance including workshops, technical support, urban forest management planning, tree ordinance development, pest and disease preparedness, and access to free inventory and canopy analysis software. They highlighted Toledo's long-standing Tree City USA status and praised the city's tree ordinance as exemplary compared to others statewide.
 - v. Council members expressed interest in coordinating training sessions for parks staff. The presenters offered to provide the presentation materials and return for hands-on training workshops as requested.
- c. Water Conservation Efforts
- i. Mayor Mix initiated discussion about proactive water conservation efforts in anticipation of a challenging summer, noting the mild winter with limited rain and snow. The conversation focused on early community engagement rather than waiting for potential restrictions.
 - ii. Council President Silvia emphasized the need for early action and coordination with neighboring communities, particularly noting that Siletz would lose water rights before Toledo. City Manager Huebner confirmed Toledo holds the most senior water right to the Siletz River at up to 2 million gallons daily, predating both Siletz and Newport's rights.
 - iii. Council discussed various outreach approaches including town halls, community water conservation events with family activities, and partnerships with neighboring cities. Councilor Keating suggested combining water conservation discussions with budget presentations, as people attend meetings about rate increases.
 - iv. The group reached consensus on hosting a town hall in March to begin community conversations about water conservation. City Manager Huebner will check the fire hall's availability for March 25th to replace that month's work session. Council agreed to develop the agenda with water conservation as a primary topic, potentially supplemented by other community issues. They also discussed using social media surveys to gather input on discussion topics and ensure community engagement in the planning process.
- d. 2026-27 Budget CIP Review
- i. City Manager Huebner presented nine preliminary Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) totaling \$2,521,522, though \$2.3 million represents the bonded water reservoir project, leaving approximately \$221,000 in other requests.
 - ii. The administration department's CIP includes the previously approved Civic Plus package. The fire department submitted requests for a new cardiac monitor and phase one of a three-phase roof replacement project. Human Resources requested a new information system to support the growing HR program.
 - iii. Information Technology requested mobile device management software to improve security and remote management of city devices. The library proposed updating furniture and signage throughout the building.
 - iv. Public Works submitted two items: the Amend tank reservoir replacement (bonded project) and the required update to the water management and conservation plan

- mandated by Oregon Water Resources Department.
- v. The police department requested replacement of 15-year-old patrol rifles. City Manager Huebner explained that while officers rarely discharge weapons in the line of duty, regular training and certification at firing ranges requires reliable equipment. Council President Silvia expressed concern about officers carrying such old service weapons and supported the replacement.
 - vi. Councilor Keating noted that the library's bookmobile project, while below the CIP threshold at approximately \$30,000 with only a \$5,000-\$6,000 funding gap remaining, would be included in budget discussions as previously discussed at the council retreat.
 - vii. City Manager Huebner also reported on approved projects for the police building using facility reserve funds, including paving the back parking lot, restriping the front lot, HVAC system replacement, and installing digital locks before Lincoln City collects the dispatch equipment in April.
- e. Oregon Sustainable City Year Program
- i. Councilor Keating provided a brief overview of research into the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program, having spoken with officials from participating cities who praised the program's cost savings, community engagement opportunities, and student/faculty collaboration benefits.
 - ii. He clarified that the March 2nd deadline for expressing interest requires only a simple online form stating the city's contact information and one or two example projects under consideration. This represents no commitment, and cities can change projects or take over a year to determine their approach if needed.
 - iii. The program director, Megan Banks, offered to present directly to the council. Given the consensus from previous discussions about Main Street revitalization being a priority, and that downtown revitalization is a common and favored project type for the program, City Manager Huebner will submit the nonbinding letter of interest with Main Street revitalization as the proposed project focus.
- f. Victims and Survivors of Domestic Violence and Abuse Candlelight Vigil
- i. Council President Silvia proposed naming the annual vigil after Tasha Anderson, whose murder by her husband prompted the community's focus on domestic violence awareness. Her children have agreed to this honor. The vigil is planned for October 3rd, one day before the anniversary of her death, with her daughter expected to attend and participate in related activities.
 - ii. The council discussed organizing an art contest for junior high and high school students to create promotional materials for the vigil. Winners from each school level would receive shirts featuring their artwork, donated by a local business. The contest would include multiple drop-off locations at city hall and the library.
 - iii. Council President Silvia contacted Principal Chloe Mix, who offered three approaches: simple flyer distribution, homeroom presentations, or a combination approach with flyers followed by voluntary meetings with interested students. City Recorder Johnson suggested a school assembly format would be more efficient and educational, reaching all students with information about domestic violence while allowing voluntary participation in the art contest.
 - iv. The discussion expanded to include elementary students initially, but the council decided to limit participation to junior high and high school ages to avoid potentially traumatizing younger children. They agreed to include homeschooled students through school district

- communication channels and library outreach.
- v. The council debated timing for the art contest, ultimately agreeing to conclude it before the end of the school year to allow for proper recognition and awards ceremonies. They plan to coordinate with school officials for optimal timing that doesn't conflict with end-of-year activities.
 - vi. Additional fundraising ideas emerged, including selling shirts with winning artwork and using proceeds for school supply drives in Tasha's memory, as she was known for providing backpacks and supplies to students in need. Local businesses have offered to support these efforts with gift cards for runners-up and bulk purchasing assistance.
 - vii. City Manager Huebner confirmed the city can conduct fundraisers, with the caveat that once received, funds become government money with restrictions on allowable uses. City Attorney Miller suggested structuring cash prizes as scholarships to provide educational benefit and appropriate fund usage guidelines.
 - viii. The council also discussed creating a memorial at Heritage Park (formerly referred to as "Kitty Litter Park") with options including a bench, flowers, or tiles. This would provide a space for reflection and remembrance while serving the broader community, particularly given the park's use for the annual Christmas tree display.
 - ix. Council reached consensus to name the annual domestic violence vigil after Tasha Anderson, conduct an art contest for junior high and high school students with the contest concluding before the end of the school year, fund raising efforts, and explore memorial options at Heritage Park.
- g. Art Toledo
- i. The discussion centered on determining the future structure of Art Toledo, weighing options between maintaining it as a city program, transitioning to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, or potentially creating a public arts commission.
 - ii. City Manager Huebner and City Attorney Souvanny Miller confirmed that keeping Art Toledo within the city would require dedicated staff or contracted services, necessitating budget allocation for either a new part-time employee or consultant, or reassigning responsibilities among current staff. They noted the challenge of current staff bandwidth and the lack of identified staff with strong arts background comparable to the previous city recorder who had championed the program.
 - iii. The officials explained that a 501(c)(3) structure would operate independently with its own board of directors, not city council oversight. However, the city could continue supporting such an organization through grants similar to support provided to the Railroad Museum and History Center. A 501(c)(3) would have access to significantly more grant opportunities than a city department.
 - iv. Councilor Keating proposed considering a public arts commission as an intermediate option, which City Attorney Miller confirmed could be established under the existing charter. This would provide community involvement and structure while requiring minimal dedicated staffing, though it would still face the same funding limitations as other city operations.
 - v. The group acknowledged that most existing Art Toledo grant funds appear to have been exhausted. Council President Silvia strongly favored the 501(c)(3) approach, arguing against adding more responsibilities to already stretched city staff, especially work outside their original job descriptions.
 - vi. Councilor Keating distinguished between Art Toledo as a concept and Art Oysters &

Brews as a specific event, recommending the city prioritize sustaining the annual festival while taking more time to determine Art Toledo's long-term structure. He emphasized that Art Oysters & Brews represents a successful city-EDALC partnership that brings significant community and economic value to Main Street.

- vii. The discussion revealed that EDALC staff invested 66 combined hours over two days for the event and seeks clearer structure and cost-sharing commitments from the city for future collaboration. City Manager Huebner will schedule meetings with EDALC leadership to formalize the city's role and support for Art Oysters & Brews.
- viii. Council reached consensus to separate the Art Oysters & Brews discussion from the broader Art Toledo organizational questions, prioritizing the immediate need to secure the annual festival while allowing more time to thoughtfully consider Art Toledo's future structure. Council President Silvia offered to participate in meetings with EDALC given his availability and experience with the event.

4. Adjournment

- a. City Manager Huebner announced that the fire and police departments will hold an open house and emergency preparedness fair on Saturday, April 18th from 10 AM to 2 PM at the fire department, led by newest firefighter Amanda Hankins.
- b. Public Works Manager Brian Lorimor noted he will be attending the Oregon Association of Water Utilities conference next week but will be available by phone if needed
- c. The mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

Mayor Tracy Mix

City Recorder Paul Johnson