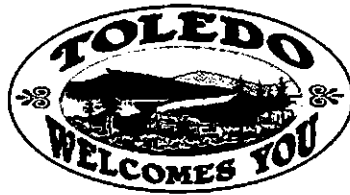


City Hall
206 N. Main St.
Toledo, Oregon 97391
6:00 p.m.



TOLEDO CITY COUNCIL
City Council Work Session
July 22, 2026

1. Call to Order and Flag Salute

- a. Mayor Tracy Mix called the July 22, 2026 City Council Work Session to order at 6:00 PM at Toledo City Hall, 206 N. Main St, Toledo, Oregon.

2. Roll Call and Quorum Determination

- a. City Recorder Johnson took roll call.

Seat #	Council Member	Present	Via Zoom	Absent
n/a	Mayor Mix	X		
2	Council President Chambers	X		
1	Councilor Riley	X		
3	Councilor Kauffman	X		
4	Stu Strom	X		
5	Councilor Keating	X		
6	Councilor Burns	X		

- b. The City Recorder noted that a full council was present. As this was a work session, no votes would be taken; the meeting was designated for discussion only.
- c. Staff Present: City Manager Rich Huebner, Code Enforcement Officer Ron Bush, and City Recorder Paul Johnson
- d. Via Zoom: Stu Strom, City Attorney Souvanny Miller and Abigail Yeo

3. Discussion and Information Items

- a. National Night Out Update
- Note: Due to technical connectivity issues with the remote presenter, the Council temporarily moved to Item 4b and returned to Item 4a once the connection was established.*
 - Ron Bush joined the meeting remotely to provide an update on the upcoming National Night Out event. The event is scheduled for **August 4th from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Memorial Field**. Mr. Bush reported that approximately 24 organizations have committed to participate, slightly exceeding last year's attendance of 22. The field will open at approximately 1:00 PM to allow setup time for organizations such as GP, the fire department, and public works.

- iii. Mr. Bush confirmed that food, including hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, and beverages supplied by Big Foot, will be available. Participating organizations include Homey House, health care providers, 1st Student, ODF, TCB, the Railroad Museum, Phoenix Wellness, GP, Rotary, the library, JC Market, and others. Officer Wallace, arranged by Chief Pace, will assist with setup. Core setup of tables and chairs is expected to begin around 3:00 PM.
 - iv. Mr. Bush indicated that volunteers are always welcome, particularly for setup and breakdown. Mayor Mix confirmed her availability to assist and inquired about swag for the City's table. City Manager Rich Huebner noted that city-branded items such as pens, hats, and water bottles would be reviewed and made available. Mr. Bush noted that his organization would have its own swag, including pencils, crayons, a coloring table, and the Rock Park mural for children to sign.
 - v. The Council confirmed no additional needs from the City at this time, and Mr. Bush was thanked for his update.
- b. Strategic Reserve Fund
- i. City Manager Huebner introduced the topic, noting that it arose from a prior special meeting in which Brenda Brown of the Lincoln County Historical Society attended and indicated that both the Historical Society and the Railroad Museum intended to again request funding from the Strategic Reserve Fund. This prompted a broader council discussion about the appropriate use and structure of that fund.
 - ii. City Manager Huebner outlined the key questions before the Council: whether outside organizations should continue to be eligible to request Strategic Reserve Fund dollars directly; and if so, whether that process should remain council-led or be routed through the Contributions Committee.
 - iii. Mayor Mix expressed support for the current structure, noting that routing these requests through the Contributions Committee would likely result in reduced funding amounts, as that committee tends to distribute limited funds across many applicants rather than fully funding any single request. She emphasized that the Toledo History Museum and the Railroad Museum are integral to the community and that the current approach is not broken.
 - iv. Councilor Keating raised a third option that had been discussed previously: moving recurring, known expenditures for these organizations directly into the city budget as line items. He argued that a fund named "strategic reserve" should be reserved for unanticipated needs, not predictable annual contributions. He expressed concern about placing these nonprofits in a position where they must return each quarter or each year to make their case for funds they have come to depend on. He noted that the quarterly disbursement structure he had previously advocated—intended to incentivize grantees to seek other funding sources—had not produced that outcome, and that these organizations had demonstrated both their need and their value.

- v. Council President Chambers agreed, suggesting that stable city support would be best expressed through intentional programming alignment, particularly with the Toledo Public Library. He noted that the library and the history-focused organizations already collaborate on programming, and that formalizing a budget relationship could deepen that partnership. He also raised the idea of exploring whether the city could help reduce organizational overhead costs, such as rent, potentially connecting these organizations to Urban Renewal resources or city-owned space in the longer term.
- vi. City Manager Huebner added that assigning these contributions a dedicated line item in the budget, whether under the library, administration, or another cost center, is administratively feasible and that staff would work to identify the most appropriate placement during the next budget cycle. He further noted that the current Strategic Reserve Fund already has a special purchases line item from which these contributions have been drawn, so no immediate structural change is required for the current fiscal year.
- vii. The Council reached general consensus that:
 - 1. For the current fiscal year, the Toledo History Center and the Railroad Museum will each be asked to submit a Strategic Reserve Fund application, from which their annual funding (understood to be \$12,000 each) will be disbursed in a single payment at the start of the fiscal year, rather than in quarterly installments contingent upon updates.
 - 2. Organizations will be welcomed and encouraged to provide periodic updates to the Council voluntarily, but such updates will not be a condition of receiving funds.
 - 3. Staff will incorporate these contributions as dedicated line items in the next annual budget, with the expectation of formalizing a closer relationship between these organizations and the library.
 - 4. The Strategic Reserve Fund will continue to be available for emergent or one-time organizational needs that fall outside the budget cycle, with the Contributions Committee remaining the primary pathway for general charitable requests.
- c. County Financial Support in Toledo
 - i. Councilor Keating presented his concerns regarding four agreements funded by Lincoln County's Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) revenues that had been placed on the Board of Commissioners' consent agenda and then removed without explanation. The four agreements involved the North Lincoln County Historic Museum, the Lincoln County Historical Society (which encompasses the Toledo History Center and Railroad Museum), the Toledo Chamber of Commerce (\$30,000), and the Yachats Chamber of Commerce.
 - ii. Councilor Keating noted that these agreements have remained unchanged for several years, meaning the organizations are effectively receiving less support in real terms due to inflation. He emphasized that the funding is

tied directly to operational capacity, including staff compensation, for at least some of the impacted organizations. He was careful to note that he does not believe the agreements will ultimately go unsigned, but that the unexplained removal from the consent agenda raised a significant concern about the future direction of county TLT spending.

- iii. He provided context on recent state legislative changes that will give counties greater flexibility in how TLT revenues are spent, reducing the prior requirement that a fixed proportion be directed toward tourism marketing activities, the basis upon which these organizations have historically received funding. Councilor Keating expressed concern that, as counties gain more discretion in spending TLT funds, organizations like the Toledo Chamber of Commerce and the city's history museums may face reduced or eliminated support, despite the tourism value that Toledo's events generate for the county as a whole. He noted that Toledo collects very little TLT revenue directly, having only four short-term rental units, and therefore cannot compensate locally for any reduction in county support.
- iv. Councilor Keating proposed that the city draft a formal statement of support to be submitted for inclusion in the **August 5th Board of Commissioners meeting agenda packet**, with a submission deadline of **July 28th**. He stated that the statement should: (1) advocate for the immediate approval of the four pending agreements, given the organizations' dependence on those funds for the current fiscal year; and (2) encourage the Board of Commissioners to recognize Toledo's unique position in the county's tourism ecosystem when making future TLT allocation decisions, and to consider increasing rather than reducing support for Toledo's organizations.
- v. Councilor Keating further proposed that any city advocacy on behalf of the three Toledo-based organizations, the Toledo History Center, the Railroad Museum, and the Toledo Chamber of Commerce, should only proceed with the explicit consent of those organizations, since the agreements are theirs with the county, not the city's. City Manager Huebner confirmed that he would reach out to the directors of all three organizations the following day to seek their consent and assess their needs.
- vi. Mayor Mix clarified for the record that the Council cannot formally direct Councilor Keating to coordinate with city staff; that authority rests with the City Manager. City Manager Huebner confirmed his willingness to involve Councilor Keating in the process.
- vii. Councilor Strom noted that Toledo has historically sent delegations to the county to advocate for a return of tourism-related revenues, based on the city's role as a destination, and expressed full support for letters of support.
- viii. The Council reached consensus to proceed with drafting a statement for the August 5th meeting, contingent upon confirmation from the affected organizations that they support the city's advocacy on their behalf.

d. Code Enforcement Municipal Code Review

- i. City Manager Huebner introduced this item, noting the timely arrival of City Attorney Souvanny Miller, who had been asked to research the legality and applicability of an escalating fee structure for code enforcement violations. He also noted a related concern: several properties in Toledo that are active code enforcement cases had liens that matured and entered foreclosure, with the county as the lienholder. Under applicable Oregon statute (ORS), the county tax collector is required to deed such properties to the county. City staff had been told the county would take possession in mid-May, but as of the meeting date, that process had not been completed, creating uncertainty about the city's responsibilities and options with respect to those properties.
- ii. City Attorney Miller reported that for most serious nuisance violations, the city's existing code already classifies them as Class A infractions carrying a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 per day. This amount is separate from the city's authority to charge abatement costs and place liens on properties. She noted that this per-day fine can, in theory, run indefinitely, though practical limits exist, particularly the question of whether a court would uphold fines that exceed the value of the property. She compared Toledo's maximum penalty to those of comparable cities and constitutional limits on excessive fines, and indicated the current cap is appropriate.
- iii. Regarding the escalating fee structure, the City Attorney confirmed that the city does not need to amend its code to implement a sliding fee schedule. As a matter of policy or administrative practice, the city could establish and advertise a graduated schedule, for example, a lower fine in the first week, escalating over subsequent periods, to encourage compliance and provide property owners with a clearer path forward, without immediately invoking the maximum penalty.
- iv. On the question of whether these fines and enforcement actions can be applied to other government entities, including the county, the City Attorney indicated she had found no restriction in that regard; enforcement is property-based.
- v. Council President Chambers expressed that he was previously unaware the existing code already contained a \$1,000-per-day penalty and indicated a strong interest in developing a clear framework for applying it. He emphasized that the intent is not to target occupied residential properties where owners may lack resources to make repairs, but rather specific vacant properties that have become acute public nuisances. He expressed frustration regarding at least one county-owned property, a vacant structure described as visually blighting the community, and suggested that the city consider inviting the county commissioners to view the property in person as part of initiating a more direct dialogue.
- vi. City Manager Huebner also noted the importance of ensuring that if the city were to expend resources to abate a nuisance on a property that the county then takes possession of, the city should not bear that cost without benefit. He indicated interest in exploring whether an abatement could

result in city acquisition or a negotiated transfer rather than the county simply taking a remediated property.

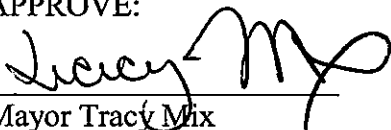
- vii. Councilor Strom affirmed that the purpose of fines is to serve as leverage to achieve compliance, and that the possibility of escalating fines leading to property loss is a key motivator for owners to act.
- viii. Council also noted that a separate but related topic—potentially similar to an ordinance reviewed from the City of Pendleton—had been reviewed by the City Attorney, who confirmed its legality and applicability to Toledo. The Council agreed to defer detailed discussion of that topic to a future work session in September, potentially in conjunction with a Planning Commission meeting.
- ix. City Manager Huebner committed to bringing a written draft policy to the Council, targeting the August 5th meeting if possible, or the third-week meeting at the latest, outlining how the city intends to implement its existing code enforcement authority. The Council also discussed the possibility of inviting the county commissioners to a council meeting or a site visit ahead of that policy discussion.
- e. Domestic Violence Vigil
 - i. City Manager Huebner provided context, noting that last year the city held two candlelight vigils in October: the first in memory of Tasha Anderson, which was well-attended and well-received, and a second broader vigil for all victims and survivors of domestic violence, which had a smaller turnout. Former Council President Silvia had championed making the broader event an annual occurrence and had secured the support of Tasha Anderson's children for naming the event in her honor. A high school art contest to develop visual branding for the event had been attempted but received no submissions, likely due to timing at the end of the school year.
 - ii. Staff presented October 3rd as a proposed date, earlier in Domestic Violence Awareness Month than last year's second event and reflecting feedback that late October was chilly for an outdoor gathering.
 - iii. Mayor Mix initially questioned whether the low attendance at the second vigil warranted continuing the event, but indicated a willingness to give it another year to see how it fares. Councilor Strom expressed a preference for the city to express recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month through a mayoral proclamation rather than a formal annual event.
 - iv. Councilor Keating offered a counterpoint, arguing that attendance numbers should not be the primary metric for whether to hold the event. He drew a parallel to other symbolic civic gestures, such as the blue pinwheels displayed at City Hall in April for child abuse prevention, noting that such acts communicate the city's values regardless of public turnout. He cited District Attorney Wallace's remarks from last year, which emphasized that Lincoln County juries convict in domestic violence cases and that community members should feel safe coming forward. He argued that the event serves as a platform for organizations such as My Sister's Place to share resources, and that the symbolic importance of honoring Tasha Anderson's memory in the first anniversary year is itself

- sufficient reason to proceed, regardless of how many people attend.
- v. The Council reached consensus to proceed with the event on October 3rd at Waterfront Park. Staff will coordinate outreach to partner organizations, including My Sister's Place, the District Attorney's office, and the Sheriff's office. City Recorder Paul Johnson suggested formally designating the event as an annual occurrence on the first Saturday of October, and there was general agreement to name the event in honor of Tasha Anderson. City Manager Huebner suggested that the police department compile domestic violence data and statistics for the community that could be shared on social media in the lead-up to the event to raise awareness.
- f. City Events Review
- i. City Manager Huebner introduced this item as an opportunity for the Council to take stock of the events the city hosts or directly supports, assess whether the associated staff burden is appropriate, and identify any gaps or opportunities.
 - ii. The discussion was wide-ranging. Councilor Keating acknowledged a general tendency on the part of the Council to add events and programming without a corresponding review of whether to scale back anything, and suggested this was a moment to check in with staff honestly about workload. Mayor Mix affirmed that the goal of the conversation was not to eliminate events that the community values, but to ensure staff resources are deployed appropriately and that staff have the opportunity to suggest modifications that might reduce burden while preserving impact.
 - iii. Informally, the Council expressed enthusiasm about increasing the city's participation in the Wooden Boat Show, specifically the cardboard boat race hosted by GP. There was general support for fielding a city team in the race, with the City Manager designated as the pilot. *City Recorder Paul Johnson* noted that a quorum notice may be required if multiple council members participate in joint boat-building sessions. The Wooden Boat Show is scheduled for August 15th and 16th.
 - iv. Council members also discussed the possibility of the city having a float in the Summer Festival parade, noting that this had been discussed in prior years but not acted upon in time. The July 4th community event held at the park was referenced as a successful new addition, and Council members expressed a desire to continue and potentially expand it.
 - v. City Manager Huebner committed to bringing the two staff-directed questions to the management team at the next day's meeting: (1) whether any current city-supported events are placing undue burden on staff, and (2) what ideas staff have for improving or adding to the city's event programming. He indicated he would report back to the Council with staff's perspective at a future meeting.
 - vi. Mayor Mix noted that she would begin attending the Toledo Farmers Market beginning the following day to be accessible to community members.

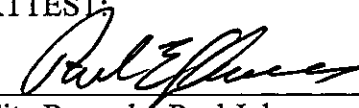
4. Adjournment

- a. The mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

APPROVE:


Mayor Tracy Mix

ATTEST:


City Recorder Paul Johnson