

The City of Portland
City Council
April 6, 2026
5:30 PM

City Council was called to order by Mayor Jeff Westlake at 5:30 PM on Monday, April 6, 2026. Roll was called and present were members Kent McClung, Matt Goldsworthy, Mike Aker, Ashley Hilfiker, Dave Golden, Ron May and Michele Brewster. Also, present were Attorney, Wes Schemenaur, and Clerk-Treasurer, Lori Phillips.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of City Council minutes from March 16, 2026

Motion by May, seconded by Hilfiker to approve the City Council minutes from March 16, 2026 as presented. Roll call vote. All voted aye.

Claims Docket

Motion by May, seconded by Hilfiker to approve two payroll dockets; February 28 for \$141,140.47 and March 14 for \$164,865.01. General, Water and Sewage claim #118015-118324 in the amount of \$1,473,352.41. Roll call vote. All voted aye.

Ordinance 2026-1; Prohibiting Harboring Livestock in the Corporate Limits

After some discussion, it was decided to make the following changes and present to council at April 20th meeting: Include farm livestock animals (as in the previous draft ordinance) and increase the number of chickens to 10. Motion by May to table the ordinance. With the motion not receiving a second, there was no action on this ordinance.

Ceann Bales, JCDC Executive Director; Approval to send FCC PP Tax Abatement to the Tax Abatement Board

Motion by McClung, seconded by May to send the FCC tax abatement to the Tax Abatement Board. Roll call vote. All voted aye.

Equipment: Productivity improvement equipment

Investment: \$8,038,634

Abatement: 5 years

Ceann Bales; Approval to send Joyce Dayton PP Tax Abatement to the Tax Abatement Board

Motion by Hilfiker, seconded by Golden to send the Joyce Dayton tax abatement to the Tax Abatement Board. Roll call vote. All voted aye.

Equipment: MH63 Mill

Investment: \$896,607

Abatement: 3 years

Ceann Bales; Approval to send Amended Joyce Dayton RP Tax Abatement to the Tax Abatement Board

Motion by McClung, seconded by Golden to send the amended RP tax abatement to the Tax Abatement Board. Roll call vote. All voted aye.

Amendment: Updated the equipment and total investment.

Investment: \$8,047,880

Abatement: 5 years

Ceann Bales; Approval to send Amended Joyce Dayton PP Tax Abatement to the Tax Abatement Board

Motion by McClung, seconded by Golden to send the amended PP Tax abatement to the Tax Abatement Board. Roll call vote. All voted aye.

Amendment: Updated the equipment and total investment.

Investment: \$1,986,491

Abatement: 3 years

Ceann Bales – JCDC Quarterly update

The quarterly update is attached to the minutes.

Mary Adair, Executive Director , Jay County Visitor & Tourism; Update on America 250

Mary noted that she has reached out to many businesses and organizations to assist with ideas and implementation for American 250 celebration. A few of the plans currently in place:

Civic Theater – Production of 1776

Cross Roads Credit Union – Serving birthday cake (at the JC Fair ground)

Main Street Committee – Special patriotic planters

Others that have been contacted and planning something special:

The Coffee Shop

Historical Society

John Jay Center

Jay County Fair Board

July 4th Committee

Downtown businesses

Approval to submit the City of Portland Redevelopment Commission Annual Report

Motion by May, seconded by Golden to approve the submission of the RDC Annual Report. Roll call vote. All voted aye.

Ordinance 2026-1; Prohibiting Harboring Livestock in the Corporate Limits

After further discussion, motion by Hilfiker to pass Ordinance 2026-1 on the first reading (as presented). The motion was seconded by May. Roll call vote. May, Hilfiker, Aker and Golden voted aye. McClung, Goldsworthy and Brewster all voted nay. The motion did pass on the first reading with a roll call vote of 4 to 3 in favor.

Council Comments

Ashley –

1. Suggested that each police officer be assigned a certain area / zone that they are responsible for doing Code Enforcement. This could be done while patrolling on their 12-hour shift. This option could save time and money.
2. Asked about the timeline for the study by Ritter Strategic, LLC. Lori noted that the agreement stated a completion date around August 17th. Asked Jeff if he intends to take into consideration the result of the study. Jeff noted that he agreed to the study to “save face” with the city.
3. Noted that all Portland City Leaders need to do better for Portland.
4. Read a letter from Heather Keller requesting the installation of safety signage along East Water / Highway 26. The safety sign is to alert drivers that deaf or hard of hearing children are in the surrounding area.

Mike –

1. Noted that the BOW approved the agreement with Ritter Strategic and asked when the study would start. Lori noted that the agreement suggested a starting date the 2nd week in April.
2. Asked if a new Code Officer had been hired. Jeff noted that the Chief hired Dylan Limbert as the new Code Officer. Mike asked if this position was advertised. The mayor noted that it had not.

Ron –

1. Asked how much the Code Enforcement Officer is being paid. Lori noted that the payroll ordinances rate for part-time Code Enforcement is a range up to \$16.00 per hour. However, with Dylan’s full-time wages, the Code Enforcement wages and overtime all being considered, his hourly rate (for Code Enforcement) will be near \$31.00 per hour. After much discussion, the mayor noted that he is keeping Dylan as Code Officer and that he has contacted a representative from FLSA to confirm that his wages are being figured correctly.
2. Asked if any progress has been made to the “path to nowhere” on Blaine Pike. The mayor noted that he has not requested quotes to finish that path. Lori noted that the project has been closed with INDOT and modifications to the path can be made.
3. Asked about the trash ordinance; specifically, if the city is charging for large items being picked up. The mayor noted that he would like to see that happen again. Lori noted that the entire trash ordinance needs to be updated before we start charging. (We can not just pick and choose when we are going to charge residents.)
4. Questioned the mayor about the old feed mill on East Votaw Street. He noted this as a blighted area. The mayor noted that he would reach out to the owner and see what can be done with this property.

Kent –

1. Asked the council to commit to an Executive Meeting to interview a possible attorney for the City Council. An Executive Session will be scheduled for April 13th at 6:00.

Dave –

1. Asked that discussion of the trash ordinance be added to the April 20th council agenda.
2. Stated that the Portland City Council has not been productive in 2026. Noted that the council needs to be more productive for citizens!

Mayor's Report

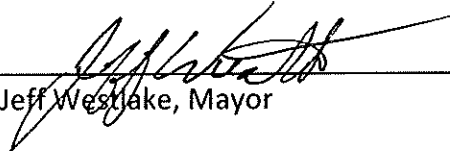
Noted that damage from the recent wind storm.

Clerk Treasurer's Report

- Spring clean-up next week on your regular trash day. (April 13-17)
- CCMG 2026 - City of Portland did receive \$648,060.80 from INDOT

Adjournment Motion by McClung, seconded by Golden to adjourn at 6:35 p.m.

APPROVED:



Jeff Westlake, Mayor

ATTEST:



Lori Phillips, Clerk-Treasurer