

CITY OF ISSAQUAH
City Council Committee-of-the-Whole – City Council Retreat

9:00 AM
May 9, 2026

Gibson Hall, 105 Newport Way
SW

MINUTES

COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL PRESENT

Councilmembers:

Paul Adair
Erika Boyd
Kelly Jiang, Deputy Council President (*Arrived at approximately 11:30 a.m.; Attended Virtually*)
Russell Joe
Tola Marts, Council President
Kevin Nichols
Lindsey Walsh

Administration/Staff:

Mark Mullet, Mayor
Wally Bobkiewicz, City Administrator
Andrea Lehner, Deputy City Administrator
Tisha Gieser, City Clerk
Kristin Garcia, Finance Director
Jeff Watling, Parks & Community Services Director
Gillian Straub, Management Analyst
Michael Blunt, Budget Manager
Lee Critcher, Executive Dept. Intern

CITY COUNCIL RETREAT

a) Welcome

Council President Marts called the meeting to order at approximately 9:02 AM and made introductory remarks.

b) Public Comment

The following individual provided public comment:

- Ann Fletcher, resident, made comments regarding the Issaquah Climate Action Plan update, the importance of data measurements for environmental targets and budget decisions.

c) Administration Introductory Comments

City Administrator Wally Bobkiewicz and Mayor Mullet provided introductory comments regarding the purpose of the retreat and the 2027-28 budget process.

d) COM 0267 - 2026 Citywide Workplan

Presented by:
Gillian Straub, Management Analyst

Councilmember feedback included:

- Difficult to know when items are coming to the Council and staying on track from a timing perspective.
- Requested some tracking of what has been accomplished towards meeting these workplan items.
- Requested alignment of these items with strategic plan and updates twice per year.
- Requested updates on capital projects twice per year.
- Requested knowing when items are on hold or paused.
- Appreciate the streamlining of this work, but felt the information was too high level; would appreciate more detail.

- Challenges reviewing the historical record with evolving dashboard content. Recommend publishing a static record periodically to allow for review and comparison over time.
- Recommend including how goals are incorporated with the budget.

e) **COM 0269 - 2025 Performance Measures**

Presented by:

Lee Critcher, Executive Dept. Intern

City Councilmembers requested:

- A document showing the measures whose Targets were Not Met and the plan for those items
- Whether the City was meeting the permit review timelines required by recent state law
- Interested to see average wage of jobs in Issaquah
- Interested to know whether collision data involving bicycles and pedestrians is available

City Council feedback included:

- Need more precise measures around mobility
- Need mobility measures that don't include cars
- Would like performance measures presentation shared with the boards and commissions
- Interested in a chance to weigh in on 2026 performance measures at a future Committee of the Whole
- Important to consider removing measures when new measures are added

****10 Minute Break****

Council President Marts called the meeting back to order at 10:48 AM.

f) **COM 0225 - Economic Development Plan Update**

Presented by:

Mayor Mullet

Mayor Mullet requested feedback on a \$120,000 investment leveraging Main Street tax credits to the Downtown Issaquah Association (DIA) mid-year, with City staff joining the DIA board to strengthen the partnership.

Council requested a formal DIA presentation addressing audit concerns before approving funding, and suggested input from relevant boards/commissions such as the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee, the Arts Commission and the Economic Vitality Commission.

g) **COM 0268 - Potential Park Bond Renewal**

Presented by:

Jeff Watling, Parks & Community Services Director

City Council expressed overall support for the park bond, and relayed additional feedback, which included:

- Concerned about North Issaquah and the lack of a project in the proposed Park Bond projects. If not included in Park Bond, would like some specific project timelines.
- Concerned that the City gets enough value out of potential school turf improvements given cost; important to ensure ease of public access to turf fields.

- Want to ensure cost estimates are accurate or recommend an item be removed from the project list so as not to overpromise and underdeliver.
- Would like to ensure ballot language allows for some flexibility if there are cost overruns.
- Concerned about lack of finalized joint use agreement with Issaquah School District; important to get an agreement in place as soon as possible.
- Recommend using the momentum of the bond to engage pool users for future discussions around pool needs even though the pool is not on the list of proposed bond projects.
- Discussed potential for 2033 park bond for additional projects.

The City Council recessed for lunch at approximately 12:00 PM.

****Lunch****

Council President Marts called the meeting back to order at approximately 12:15 PM.

h) **COM 0252 - 2027-28 Budget Planning**

Presented by:

Kristin Garcia, Finance Director

City Administrator Wally Bobkiewicz provided introductory comments.

City Council provided some "big picture" comments about the upcoming 2027-28 budget and the materials provided in the agenda, which included:

- Interested in more information about affordable housing tax fund use.
- Interested in exploring ways to save money on capital projects by doing some of the work in house.
- Want to understand reasons behind changes in financials. What is the story?
- Would be helpful to see trend lines especially for the general fund.
- Would be helpful to understand the levers in the budget.
- Important to grow general fund ending fund balance over time.
- Suggest being more intentional with what one-time or volatile revenue is used for.
- Need to better understand maintenance needs for fleet and facilities.
- Would like to know the real dollars spent by the City per capita.

Finance Director Kristin Garcia provided the presentation.

City Council feedback included:

- Interest in seeing 2027-28 financial estimates as compared to actuals when possible, or the updated 2026 forecast.
- Request 10 years of actuals for staff position vacancy rate.
- Interest in having a secondary list of priority items if revenue comes in higher or expenditures come in lower than expected.
- Continue to fund small-medium transportation project list.
- Preserve or increase funding to non-profits.
- Direct human services are a priority over human services grants.
- Prioritize emergency management. Consider position sharing with another neighboring agency.
- Prioritize maintenance. Ensure there is a workplan for targets to address backlog of facilities and fleet maintenance needs.
- Would like to aim for 13.5% of general fund ending fund balance.
- Would like to look more closely at:

- Use of public safety sales tax funds and potential other uses for those funds including behavioral health and co-responder models.
- Arts funding sources.
- Jail reimbursement costs.
- Use of affordable housing sales tax funds.
- Prioritize traffic signalization upgrades to get projects to completion.
- Interested to learn more about finding ways to connect neighbors in Issaquah.
- Look into the option of circulator shuttles.
- Maintain or expand the number of uniformed officers.

i) Closing

Their was agreement to hold the next City Council retreat on Monday, July 27 from 5:30-9:00 PM.

j) Public Comment

The following public comment was provided:

- Vinny Ricciardi, parent of a Clark Elementary student, spoke regarding support for the turf project as part of the Park Bond and asked questions about the joint use agreement with the Issaquah School District and how to direct advocacy efforts.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:02 PM.

Tisha Gieser, City Clerk