



The Common Council of the City of Bellevue, Idaho met at a Special Meeting on Tuesday, June 23, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the City of Bellevue Offices, located at 115 E. Pine Street, Bellevue, ID 83313.

Call to Order: Mayor Giordani called the Regular Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. *(00:00:03 in video)*

Roll Call: *(00:00:17 in video)*

Christina Giordani, Mayor – Present
Diane Shay, Council President – Present
Tammy E. Davis, Council Member – Present
Suzanne Wrede, Council Member – Present
Shaun Mahoney, Council Member – Present *(via zoom)*
Tom Bergin, Council Member – Present
Jessica Obenauf, Council Member – Present

Staff Present:

Chris Johnson, Public Works Director
Amy Phelps, City Clerk
Brian Parker, Community Development Director
Kirtus Gaston, Marshal
Shelly Shoemaker, Treasurer

1. Notice of Agenda Compliance: *(00:00:53 in video)*

The posting of this Special meeting agenda complied with Idaho Code §74-204. The Special meeting agenda was posted within forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting at the Bellevue City Hall, Post Office, and on the City website on *June 5, 2025*.

Motion: Council Member Davis moved that the agenda notice was in compliance with Idaho Code §74-204. Council President Shay seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. CALL FOR CONFLICT (AS OUTLINED IN IDAHO CODE §74-404): ACTION ITEM

No conflict was noted at this time.

3. WORK SESSION

a. BUDGET WORK SESSION 4

(00:03:27 in video) Mayor Giordani explained that allocating payroll across multiple departments—Streets, Parks, and Buildings & Grounds—has created imbalances due to the overlapping nature of the public works team’s daily tasks. To address this, she proposed consolidating these areas into a single category under the General Fund, tentatively titled “City Services.” This would allow payroll and resources to be managed as one pool, providing greater flexibility and efficiency while still encompassing all functions of streets, parks, and buildings & grounds. A color-coded spreadsheet was provided to illustrate the combined structure for review and discussion.

Public Works Director Chris Johnson presented his proposed 2026 budget. He explained the shift to a consolidated “City Services” payroll to simplify allocations and improve efficiency. He explained for payroll, the

2026 proposal is \$295,245, an increase of approximately \$30,735 from 2025, accounting for wage adjustments, PERSI retirement, taxes, and higher insurance rates.

Mr. Johnson stated operating expenses are proposed at \$234,290, an increase of about \$26,250, reflecting higher fuel and utility costs, safety equipment updates, signage, and building maintenance needs such as repainting City Hall and repairing doors. He further explained capital expenditures are proposed at \$242,315, up from 2025, though this includes a \$85,000 community project grant. Adjusted, the increase is minimal. Planned expenditures include equipment leases, a possible woodchipper purchase, fire station door replacement, and planning for future equipment replacement, such as the aging bucket truck and grader.

Mr. Johnson also discussed the need for funds to address riverbank restoration in flood years, as well as street maintenance projects like friction sealing, which may be expanded once the transportation plan is complete.

Council Members Wrede requested more clarity on how proposed projects align with priorities and strategic initiatives. Mr. Johnson explained he understood what she was asking for and said he would work on that.

(00:16:14 in video) Council President Shay asked about the \$40,000 chip seal project on Rosewood in the Strahorn Subdivision, clarifying whether the developer was responsible for the initial seal. Public Works Director Johnson explained that the developer contributed \$35,000 toward the project, but an additional \$5,000 came from the city's street budget to complete it.

Council Member Obenauf asked about the \$5,000 budgeted for signs. Mr. Johnson noted that funds are used to replace outdated or faded road and stop signs, add "No Parking" signs where needed, and address other signage requirements. Council Member Obenauf added that grant funding may also be available through the ERC.

Mayor Giordani inquired about the snow removal budget, set at \$50,000. Mr. Johnson stated he felt comfortable with this amount, given past expenditures and additional equipment received from Sun Valley (requiring about \$5,000 in repairs). He noted the budget should be sufficient, though an unusually heavy winter might require adjustments.

(00:19:46 in Video) Mayor Giordani asked about the status of asset management technology, specifically how it might appear in the 2026 budget. The Public Works Director explained that the primary costs will be in the Water and Sewer budget, though streets and other departments would have access. He explained the technology would help track and manage assets such as signs, hydrants, and other infrastructure, allowing the City to better monitor replacement cycles and plan for maintenance. He stated the estimated cost for initial GIS implementation, including licenses and a data collector, was reported at approximately \$15,000.

Mayor Giordani addressed the ongoing allocation of \$100,000 for transportation projects. She noted that while the transportation plan will provide clearer priorities, there are some potential shovel-ready projects, including improvements to the Broadford pathway and road repairs associated with upcoming water projects. Larger-scale street projects, such as Second Street, Pine, and Elm, will be identified once the transportation plan and traffic study are complete.

Council Member Wrede requested additional details in future budget materials regarding street cleaning schedules, pothole maintenance, alley maintenance, and right-of-way maintenance. Mayor Giordani interjected to emphasize the importance of addressing as many questions as possible during the work session, noting that unanswered or more detailed requests could be followed up by email to keep the discussion on track within the workshop timeframe.

Council Member Wrede raised questions regarding departmental initiatives, functions, and the need for budgets to reflect priorities, return on investment, and alignment with the City's strategic goals. She emphasized the importance of standardized maintenance schedules, such as street cleaning, pothole repair, and signage, and requested greater clarity on how budget line items translate into tangible services for residents.

Mayor Giordani responded that while budget proposals may not yet be at the desired level of detail, the City is moving toward more strategic and impact-based budgeting. She explained that historically, budgets were reactive, but with recent workshops and stronger council engagement, the process is shifting toward linking services, priorities, and outcomes. Mayor Giordani also noted staffing limitations and the need to balance expectations with available resources.

The discussion continued with a focus on street maintenance, where Council Member Wrede stressed the importance of clear schedules and performance measures for activities such as street cleaning and pothole repair. Public Works staffing changes and retention, including the extension of Casey McGee's employment, were mentioned as factors affecting service capacity. The Council also debated whether to consolidate the budget categories for Streets, Parks, and Buildings & Grounds into a single "City Services" category. While some members supported consolidation for efficiency, others expressed concerns about accountability and ensuring that funds remain tied to their intended purposes.

Maintenance and priorities for City Hall and other facilities were also reviewed, with discussion around repainting City Hall, replacing windows, and addressing safety concerns such as emergency egress. Members agreed that structural integrity of the building should take precedence over cosmetic improvements. The conversation then turned to the parks and Howard Preserve, where the Council noted ongoing grant funding and maintenance needs, including cleanup and debris removal from recent storms. It was acknowledged that some projects funded in prior budgets are still being carried forward.

Throughout the discussion, council members emphasized that safety, both in buildings and on roads, must guide the prioritization of projects. Specific concerns included potholes, road signage, striping, and conditions around the school zone. The importance of customer service and communication was also highlighted, with a focus on ensuring that residents know where to report issues and receive timely responses. This was linked to administrative functions such as phone, website, and social media communications.

The Mayor and Council concluded that while the budget process may not yet be fully professionalized, it should at minimum justify expenses in terms of resident benefit. Moving forward, the Council will continue refining priorities and expectations, with emphasis on delivering essential services, maintaining safety, and building toward more strategic budgeting in future years.

Council discussion then turned to parks and related projects. Council Member Bergin asked Public Works Director Chris Johnson whether he foresaw projects for the City's parks that would go beyond regular maintenance, noting that while upkeep is essential, there may also be opportunities to invest in improvements. She specifically raised the example of the park at Strahorn, where she observed that while trees had largely failed due to lack of water, irrigation infrastructure now appears to be in place. She suggested this may open the door for improvements such as replanting trees or adding amenities, and asked Johnson for his perspective on potential projects.

Mr. Johnson responded that an irrigation system had indeed been installed at Strahorn Park, although it required repairs and replacement of heads in recent years. With the system now operational, he suggested that the most beneficial improvements would be adding a shade area, benches, a water fountain, and signage directing proper parking. He also mentioned that kiosks with trail maps, dog waste stations, and other small improvements were under discussion internally. He agreed that these items could be considered as projects for prioritization, similar to the way the Fire Department budget had included a "wish list." This approach, he noted, would allow staff and Council to identify specific projects, assign costs, and then track whether they were funded and completed within the year.

The conversation then addressed the \$85,000 parks grant currently under consideration. Council confirmed that the grant revenue should be balanced with an expenditure entry in the capital budget. There was discussion about whether to allocate funds for multiple smaller projects, or one larger project, and it was noted that the Parks Committee and the community project process will help identify top priorities, likely drawing from the

2019 Parks Report. The feedback so far suggests Bellevue may have several smaller needs rather than a single large project.

Council also discussed the Howard Preserve and clarified the City's role in maintaining the property under a management plan with the Wood River Land Trust and the Friends of the Howard Preserve. Mr. Johnson explained that although the Land Trust had purchased the land, the City is responsible for maintenance, with any work requiring review and approval by the Land Trust and the Friends group. Council further discussed whether grant funds could be used for ongoing maintenance, though it was confirmed that such funds are generally restricted to new projects with tangible community benefits, particularly those connected to health and wellness.

Before concluding the discussion, Council shifted to staffing matters, asking about a proposed pay increase to retain a public works employee. The Mayor and Mr. Johnson clarified that while there is no formal contract requiring the employee to stay, the City plans to prepare a letter outlining expectations and additional responsibilities associated with the increase. This, they explained, is intended as a practical retention tool in the current competitive labor market.

The discussion then returned to long-term infrastructure needs, particularly roads. Council members emphasized that while safety remains a short-term priority, the City must also begin planning for larger, multi-year transportation projects. They noted that while \$100,000 in the budget would not cover a major project outright, it could serve as critical matching funds when applying for grants. The importance of setting aside and carrying over funds for future transportation needs was underscored as a way to reduce reliance on bonded debt.

Questions were raised about the unpaved aprons along Main Street following the ITD repaving project. Johnson confirmed that ITD had not included aprons in its scope, and while the City could theoretically have addressed them, the work could not be mobilized quickly enough given ITD's timeline. Looking forward, Council expressed interest in establishing a practical street improvement plan, possibly beginning with small, targeted projects each year, similar to approaches used in nearby communities. The idea of rebuilding the most heavily used blocks first was discussed as one way to gradually improve conditions.

In closing, the Mayor reiterated the need to review budget line items in light of the priorities raised during the discussion. Council agreed to look more closely at each section, both to ensure that funding aligns with community needs and to prepare for possible reductions if necessary.

(01:22:00 in video) City Clerk Amy Phelps presented her budget request and provided an overview of the role of the Clerk's Office. She explained that, in addition to preparing agendas, notices, and maintaining transparency, a critical responsibility of the office is records management. At present, Bellevue's public records are kept in an outdated and disorganized system, with many documents in storage, some deteriorating, and others not easily accessible. She emphasized that this creates inefficiencies, compliance risks, and difficulties in responding to public records requests.

Phelps outlined her strategic goal of creating a user-friendly records management system. As part of her work plan, she seeks to address the backlog of physical documents, including permanent and semi-permanent records, and to begin digitizing records for long-term preservation. She noted that past efforts to organize records were incomplete and that the current condition of the city's archives is unsustainable.

To begin addressing this challenge, Phelps requested an allocation of \$10,000 in the upcoming budget. The funds would allow her to continue researching and evaluating digital records management systems, cover licensing or partial subscription costs, and support training and onboarding. She referenced vendor proposals she has received to date, including one with implementation costs exceeding \$20,000, but clarified that her current request is for \$10,000 to pursue more affordable and scalable options.

She stated that investment in this area would improve transparency, ensure compliance with Idaho law, reduce manual workloads, improve response times for record requests, and lay the groundwork for future

modernization of City Hall operations. Any unspent funds could be applied toward later implementation phases. Phelps noted that her next steps include continuing vendor research, networking with other Idaho cities for best practices, presenting system options and updated quotes to Council for approval, and working toward implementation in fiscal year 2026.

(01:29:32 in video) Council discussed the Clerk's \$10,000 budget request for a digital records management system, asking about potential options through Caselle, vendor support for scanning, and whether an intern might assist with backlog work. Members noted the challenges with lost or disorganized records, the significant staff time currently spent searching for documents, and the risks of not modernizing the system. While larger platforms could cost substantially more, Miss Phelps explained that \$10,000 would allow her to begin with a phased approach and expand later as funding permits. Council agreed that improved records management is a high priority, recognizing its broad benefits across all departments, though the responsibility appropriately rests with the Clerk's Office.

(01:37:30 in video) Mayor Giordani outlined a restructuring proposal focused on clarifying roles between administrative staff and enterprise funds, particularly the deputy clerk position currently held by Maria. She explained that this role has historically been split between customer service and water/sewer billing, but she recommended redefining it as a full-time customer service deputy clerk under administration while assigning water and sewer billing duties to a separate clerk funded by the enterprise funds. She noted this change would improve customer service at City Hall, help address the workload at the front desk, and potentially allow City Hall to expand hours of service. Council members discussed how this restructuring affects payroll allocations, the need for clear job descriptions, and whether administrative staffing levels are sustainable given the tight budget. Council Member Suzanne Wrede raised the idea of exploring outsourcing payroll through platforms like Gusto as a potential cost-savings measure, while also stressing the importance of technology in reducing paper-based responsibilities. The discussion acknowledged the value of the deputy clerk role in providing direct service to residents but also weighed the costs, with some members suggesting that adjustments may be necessary if budget constraints tighten. The Mayor emphasized that splitting the duties is intended to prevent staff overload and ensure higher accuracy and better communication in utility billing while maintaining strong customer service for the public. An updated organizational chart reflecting these changes will be brought forward once the budget decisions are finalized.

Council further discussed the deputy clerk's position and associated budget impacts emphasizing the importance of maintaining strong customer service at the front desk while also ensuring accuracy and communication in utility billing. While there was overall support for splitting the roles, concerns were raised about the cost of the position, potential reliance on paper-based processes, and whether technology solutions such as electronic forms or payroll outsourcing should be explored to reduce expenses. The Mayor stated she does not support a pay decrease for the current employee, while some members suggested keeping flexibility in case of future budget constraints.

Council Member Bergin asked how often the City uses the County Recorder's Office, noting its role in recording ordinances and serving as a reliable backup repository. Discussion followed about whether past ordinances had consistently been recorded, with acknowledgment that some may have slipped through the cracks. Council reviewed options for digitizing records, including hiring scanning services, allocating work to staff or a deputy clerk, or setting deadlines that would determine whether professional services are required. Members emphasized the importance of compliance and efficiency, with recognition that records digitization could be prioritized even before a full management system is implemented. The conversation also touched on organizational structure, with the Mayor outlining a proposed org chart for administrative, public works, law enforcement, fire, community development, and library functions, clarifying the roles of deputy clerks, department heads, and customer service staff.

Council and staff discussed potential impacts of upcoming property tax levies on City revenue, noting that while levies like library, EMS, and CRD benefit residents, they likely won't increase City funds directly. Discussion

included options for local "LOT" taxes (e.g., bed, liquor, food, or sales taxes) as potential revenue sources, with a recommendation to evaluate their feasibility for future budgets.

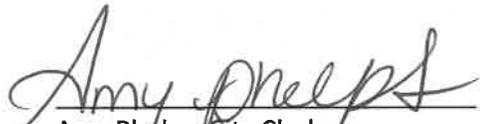
Treasurer Shelly Shoemaker reviewed the administrative budget, highlighting payroll, workers' compensation, operating expenses, and technology costs. She noted that Cassell software, while auditor-friendly, is still in the implementation phase and meter integration is ongoing; alternative software options may be explored after full deployment.

Revenue and expense projections were presented, showing the general fund currently over budget by \$573,074. Discussions included carryover funds, fee adjustments (permits, business licenses), and the need to prioritize emergency preparedness funding. Council agreed to focus on the general fund for now, with members encouraged to submit questions ahead of workshops to streamline review and decision-making.

4. **Adjournment:** (02:44:35 in Video) With no further business coming before the Common Council at this time, Council Member Davis moved to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Obenauf seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 08:15 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.


Christina Giordani, Mayor

Attest:


Amy Phelps, City Clerk