



CITY OF OREGON CITY YOUTH ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

City Hall Mt. Hood Room, 625 Center St., Oregon City, OR 97045
Monday, November 10, 2025 at 7:15 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair, Justin Evers called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

PRESENT: 15

Bettie Chappell, Donald Bredehoeft, Evan Conley, Gaby Rysdam, Hadley Taylor, Hyrum Freestone, Jack Solari, Justin Evers, Max Bishop, McKenzie Gilmore, Myles Kinney, Sydney McFarland, Commissioner Adam Marl and Mayor Denyse McGriff.

STAFF: *Hannah Schmidt, Community Engagement Specialist*

EXCUSED: *Cole Solari, Emma Artman, and Elyjah McFarland.*

ABSENT: *None.*

2. **PRESENTATIONS**

Alex Troutman introduced herself, noting that she had been with the city for nearly two years and had worked in local government for almost a decade, previously serving as City Manager in Scappoose, Oregon. Alex Troutman's presentation covered the structure of government from federal to local levels, with emphasis on Oregon City's governance. She explained that the city charter functions as the local constitution, outlining that the city has one mayor and four commissioners who each have equal votes, with three votes needed to pass measures. The mayor has additional duties including running meetings and signing ordinances. The presentation included the city's organizational chart, showing that the City Manager and Municipal Judge report directly to the city commission, with all other departments reporting to the City Manager. Troutman oversees HR, IT, Parks and Recreation, the Library, and Facilities. Ms. Troutman emphasized how advisory committees inform the city commission about community priorities and provide valuable feedback. She explained the difference between regulatory bodies like the Historic Review Board and Planning Commission (which have decision-making authority granted by the state) versus advisory committees that provide recommendations but do not make final decisions. Commissioner Justin sought clarification on the roles and responsibilities slide, which Ms. Troutman explained shows the information flow between city commission (ultimate decision makers), staff (providing expertise), and advisory committees (providing community input). In response to a question from a commissioner, Ms. Troutman clarified that while the Historic Review Board and Planning Commission make final

decisions in their regulatory capacity, their decisions can be appealed to the city commission under certain circumstances. Commissioner Merrill added an analogy comparing the city government to the federal government's branches, with the city commission as the legislative branch passing policies, the city manager as the executive branch implementing those policies, and the municipal judge as the judicial branch overseeing legal matters.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Please see the public comment guidelines below.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Staff Liaison Hannah Schmidt presented options for facility tours including the Police Department, Public Works building, the Libke building (which houses the municipal court and city commission meeting space), the Library, and Pioneer Community Center. She explained these would be shorter than previous tours, likely an hour maximum.

The commission discussed scheduling preferences, with the consensus being to hold tours one hour before regularly scheduled meetings. The commission agreed to prioritize the Police Department for the first tour before the December meeting.

Staff Liaison Hannah noted she would coordinate with facility staff, and in some cases the commission might need to walk to a nearby location for their meeting after the tour due to room availability constraints.

- b. Hannah Schmidt introduced the contest, and Jack Solari provided an overview for new members, explaining that students in grades 4-12 can submit entries for judging, with different submission types by age group: posters (grades 4-5), essays (grades 6-8), and multimedia presentations (grades 9-12). First place winners at the local level advance to the state competition with opportunities for prizes.

The commission discussed how to handle the judging process, with Hannah Schmidt proposing that staff review all essay submissions first and select the top five for the Youth Advisory Commission to judge, due to the high volume received in previous years. For the multimedia presentations, she suggested staff handle the judging to avoid conflicts of interest for high school commissioners who might want to participate themselves.

The commission had an extensive discussion about preventing AI-generated submissions. They considered using AI checkers but noted their unreliability and potential to falsely flag neurodivergent writers. The group ultimately decided that suspicious entries should first be given a human review, and if still concerning, could be checked with AI detection tools. They also agreed to include a statement on contest materials that "AI submissions will not be accepted."

The commission discussed outreach strategies to increase participation, particularly at the high school level where participation has historically been low. Ideas included:

- Creating flyers to be distributed in schools
- Making announcements on OCTV at the high school
- Targeting presentations to social studies/government classes
- Using school newsletters to reach parents/students
- Having youth commissioners personally encourage their peers alongside the Mayor
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Jack Solari volunteered to create the contest flyer. The group set the contest submission deadline for Sunday, March 15, 2026, with a special YAC meeting scheduled for Monday, March 23 to review entries. State-level submissions due by April 1.

5. WORKING GROUP BREAK OUT SESSION

The commission broke into working groups for discussion at 8:37 p.m. and reconvened at 9:05 p.m.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Youth Nicotine Addiction Working Group:

Gaby Rysdam reported that the group plans to create a marketing campaign focused on youth nicotine prevention, drawing inspiration from Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" campaign and the DARE program. They intend to use retro-style graphics from the 1980s to appeal to the current trend of nostalgia. Hannah Schmidt will provide contact information for the city's communications manager to coordinate on social media and other promotional materials.

b. Youth Houselessness Working Group:

Jack Solari shared that the group has compiled a list of contacts for homeless shelters and programs around Oregon City. They plan to reach out to schedule tours, build connections, and learn how the Youth Advisory Commission can help amplify these organizations' voices to the city commission. Ultimately, they aim to create an educational slideshow to share with the commission and potentially distribute to schools.

c. Environmental Working Group:

Sydney McFarland reported that their group has contacted Oregon Metro about upcoming projects in Oregon City. They have secured a date (February 26th) for the Youth Advisory Commission to provide input on proposals, including the possibility of a community garden. They also mentioned Parks and Recreation might present at a future youth advisory meeting.

d. **Education Accessibility Working Group:**

McKenzie Gilmore explained that their group had initially planned to set up an information table about disability isolation but realized they needed to narrow their focus and approach as they aren't experts in the field. They are now looking at opportunities to volunteer at community events and work with organizations serving people with disabilities.

e. **Staff Liaison Report:**

Hannah Schmidt reported that the Youth and Young Adult Suicide Prevention Coalition of Clackamas County has completed their app, "Compass to Connection," which the commission had provided input on previously last term. She encouraged all commissioners to download the app before the coalition's presentation at the December meeting.

She also noted that Parks and Recreation Department leadership might present at an upcoming meeting about the parks master plan and potential opportunities for youth input. Additionally, she announced that the city swimming pool is having its 60th birthday with a logo contest, encouraging commissioners to vote on their favorite design by November 12th.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. McKenzie Gilmore noted that her last name was incorrectly listed as Taylor. Gaby Rysdam moved to approved the October 13, 2025 Youth Advisory Commission Work Session Minutes as amended. Jack Solari seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. McKenzie Gilmore noted that her last name was incorrectly listed as Taylor. Jack Solari moved to approve the October 13, 2025 Youth Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes as amended. Gaby Rysdam seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Justin Evers adjourned the meeting at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Schmidt, Community Engagement Specialist
Date Approved: 12/8/2025