



MINUTES

October 1, 2025

6:00 p.m.

Albany Fire Department Station 11, Ralston Room

Approved: **12/03/2025**

Call to Order

Chair Cynthia Green called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Roll Call

Members present: Bessie Johnson; Kevin Kreitman; Katie Pleis; Erik Anderson; Erik Rau;

Members absent: Nick Fowler, Sheree Speaks-Mahi

Staff present: Chief of Police Marcia Harnden; Fire Chief Chris LaBelle;
Deputy City Manager Kayla Barber-Perotta
Rochelle James, Administrative Assistant

The August 6, 2025, minutes were approved with a correction to the header date on page 2-5.

Guest speaker Deputy City Manager Kayla Barber-Perotta attended the meeting to provide the commission with information on creating a strategic plan. The commission members actively participated in discussions and group exercises, which allowed them to take steps toward honing in on the commission's vision and scope. The commission will continue to work towards those goals and will consider creating a strategic plan in future meetings.

Staff Updates:

Fire Update – Chief Chris Labelle

Total responses so far for the fiscal year are just over 2000. AFD is on pace to have over 12,000 calls for service this year. There have been 173 fire and life safety evaluations so far for this fiscal year. Response times are trending down, and that could possibly be attributed to the new dispatch system. Adding a single rural ambulance downtown has been a game changer and we are seeing a lot of positive benefits from that. We will continue to track those response times and that will play a role in determining the location for the east side station. Response times are broken up into three parts: the call is received, turnout time, and travel time. The target response time for travel time to a call is four minutes.

Our community paramedic, Hillary Kosmicki, is doing an excellent job. She and our EMS Chief have been visiting various care facilities, and we are in the process of implementing the lift devices program, which is fully funded through a grant.

Sick person, fall, and lift-assist calls continue to be at the top of our top twenty-five responses list. We have responded to 83 fire alarm activations, with 99% of them being false alarms. At the end of this month, we are proposing to the city council that we implement a false alarm fee. The hope is to reduce the number of nuisance alarms, thereby reducing wear and tear on the equipment and the community's

exposure risk. If approved by the council, AFD will model the false alarm fee structure after APD's process. The first false alarm will be a warning, and a fee will apply to subsequent false alarms.

We are paying close attention to concurrent calls, as it is becoming more common for us to be out of ambulances and going from call to call. Our busiest times are from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

We currently have eight firefighter-paramedics in our 16-week academy. Once they come online, AFD will be fully staffed around the end of December for the first time in four years.

We will be going to the city council to increase our Firemed fee. Because of write-offs and amounts not covered by insurance, we have had to reevaluate the program's cost. Albany will charge one of the highest base rates in the state; however, many of the other ambulance services will only write off 50 percent. Albany will be asking for a fee increase to \$85.00.

AFD will be hosting their annual open house this Sunday at Station 14 in North Albany from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Commissioner Kreitman asked Fire Chief Labelle how difficult it would be to show on a map or separate form how many times, and for police as well, in a month where we have no units available to respond.

AFD is refurbishing an ambulance, which is a cost savings of around \$100,000.00. The ambulance should be arriving back in Albany on Friday. It should be operational in a couple of weeks.

Commissioner Plies asked Fire Chief when commission support at city council meetings may be beneficial for gaining council approval for AFD requests. Chief Labelle advised there are instances where commission support may be beneficial depending on the individual circumstances.

Police Update – Chief Marcia Harnden

Looking at the drug laws on page one of the report, you're seeing a massive increase because that law changed on September 24, 2025. You will also see that calls involving livability issues, such as abandoned vehicles and junk and trash, have decreased. We had CSO staffing issues that affected our ability to reach those calls quickly. You will also see an uptick in camping with the closure of Marvin's Gardens. We have seen a ripple effect throughout the city with that closure, resulting in calls to APD. Our Second Chance shelter is already at capacity, primarily because Corvallis closed its shelter. We will continue to monitor that situation.

We have already exceeded the number of Narcan doses used in 2024 compared to this year. Fentanyl continues to be a significant issue, and nitazenes, which are referred to by the street name carfentanil, are spreading up the West Coast. Nitazenes are more potent than fentanyl and do not respond well to Narcan. Additionally, we are still encountering xylazine, a substance that impairs users and does not react at all to Narcan.

Staffing continues to be an issue. We had several scheduled retirements and then lost three police officers unexpectedly. The good news is that for those eight vacancies, we have seven people in backgrounds. Our mental health intervention specialist, Kiersten Glaser, retired. That position was utilized throughout the city. We received no applicants on our first posting; we are reevaluating the requirements for that position to generate interest.

All our traffic camera locations are live and ticketing. At the request of the city council, we are going to put some warning lights at North Albany Rd. We will take that funding from some crosswalk improvements. We are hoping to have those lights up in six months or so.

After discussions during the last meeting, we pulled some data regarding suicides. In 2024 we had six suicides. We have already reached 6 for 2025, with the fall and holiday season approaching. That time of year tends to see an increase in suicides. The average age of our suicide victims for this year was 43. The youngest victim was 17 years of age and the oldest was 68.

Chief Harnden suggested that those attending the December meeting may bring a holiday treat to share at the meeting.

Business from the Commission

Commissioner Rau advised that there is an emergency preparedness event being held at the farmers market on October 11, 2025. Commissioner Rau suggested this may be an opportunity for the commission to engage with the public. There was discussion regarding communication between members outside of meeting to coordinate appearances at events and how that could be facilitated.

Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting is on December 3, 2025, at the Albany Police Department.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Chair Greene adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Rochelle James
Administrative Assistant I

Reviewer's Name
Reviewer's Title

**Documents discussed at the meeting that are not in the agenda packet are archived in the record. The documents are available by emailing cityclerk@cityofalbany.net.*