



MINUTES

June 3, 2026

6:00 p.m.

Albany Fire Department, Ralston Room

Approved: 08/05/2026

Call to Order

Chair Bessie Johnson called the meeting to order at

6:00 p.m. Roll Call

Members present: Cynthia Green; Bessie Johnson; Kevin Kreitman; Erik Rau; Sheree Speaks-Mahi, Nick Fowler; Katie Pleis

Members absent: Nick Fowler; Katie Pleis; Cynthia Green; Kevin Kreitman

Staff present: Police Captain Jerry Drum; Fire Chief Chris LaBelle; Julia Tremain Clerk III; Chuck Perino Emergency Manager

The February 4, and May 18, 2026 minutes were approved a presented.

Staff Updates:

Police Update – Captain Jerry Drum

Captain Drum started off with overdose data. They have had no overdose deaths year to date and have a steady decrease over the past years. This is largely to do with Narcan being more accessible and used by the public as well as police. A question got brought forward about why there is a difference in Narcan administrations as well as overdoses compared to last year. This is attributed to gaps in reporting. If Narcan is used privately it's not recorded. He goes on to state that heroin "has virtually disappeared out of the community" and that it's not coming in so they aren't seizing it.

There have been eleven total hires in 2025 with 8 of them being year to date, along with two pending hires. They also have vacancies that include a police officer, a clerk and three approved "over hire" positions to preplan for retirements.

For the crime snapshot Drum shared that it is remaining stable with an increase in property crimes, as well as shoplifting and domestic violence. Overnight camping has also increased. Response times are up largely due to higher volumes of people in the community making it harder to get through traffic. Abandoned vehicles are down due to CSOs patrolling more and getting them off the street. A request was presented to get more information on the approach to overnight camping. Captain Drum shared that it is always an education focus first, letting people know you cannot camp on public land within the city like down by the river, before it becomes a citation.

Fire Update – Chief Chris LaBelle

Total responses this year are already at 10,628 with a month still to go, potentially a little lower than FY 25 but they are getting into the busy time of year with 44 calls in one day this last month. Response times are still low, with an additional goal of tracking time spent on structure fires. Their average currently is one hour and six minutes, with one major outlier. There was a structure fire that required overnight supervision, causing a crew to be there for fourteen hours.

Life safety division numbers are still down. That department has three people when it should be about seven. There was an attempt to put in for a grant that would fund an additional deputy fire marshal,

which was unsuccessful but will be reattempted.

Upcoming events is June 23 through July 6 you will be legally allowed to sell fireworks in the state of Oregon. This will require the DFM to review each grocery store and pop-up tent to make sure everyone has the proper permits and set up. This is in addition to the fireworks show at Timberlinn park. City of Millersburg, Albany, and Linn County will be involved with making sure the site is ready to go and is safe.

Community paramedic, Hillary Kosmicki, “continues to do an amazing job” with the care facilities. This month she did a demonstration with the lifting devices, and they have been averaging thirty calls a month. This means thirty less times they are calling 911, keeping resources available for emergencies in the community. With the implementation of these devices the residents also have less time to wait for emergency responders since help can be administered by in-house staff. The most common calls continue to be sick person, fall, and lift assist. Meaning this program is highly effective in cutting out a good portion of the most frequently called about emergency types.

The busiest time of day continues to be eight in the morning to eight at night, with a lot of calls between seven and eight in the morning being caused by inter-facility transfers. These are normally held until shift changes unless there is a true emergency and not just a higher level of care needed. This prevents crews that may have been on for 46 hours making an unnecessary three in the morning ride to Portland.

Regarding hiring there have been seven conditional positions for firefighter paramedic and all have accepted. Three of the line crew have left for other agencies, and one member is out of work for the next month so the city has allowed a three position over hire in this biennium. This will cause noticeable savings in overtime hours. A new training chief started on June 1. Dave Milburn comes with 28 years of fire service experience.

Safety camp is June 29 through July 2, for the 4th-6th grade children in our community. It starts at Oak Grove and will have members of the fire and police department making it a success.

Open burning ended June 1, which transitions us into fire season. An above normal fire season is expected, possibly similar to what we experienced in 2018, but the Fire Department is ready to send out resources as part of a task force if need be, being very conscious to take care of “home base” first and leave plenty of staffing in the community. A question was raised about the tall grass and weeds in the community, wondering if the city has anything in place for preventing potential fire hazards. Chief LaBelle confirmed there is a program between police and fire. The report initially comes to fire, and the owner of the property is given plenty of notice before being escalated to police. A follow up question was raised regarding tracking the upcoming “El Nino” event, Perino and LaBelle confirmed they do track weather trends and take those into account when making our emergency preparedness plans.

Emergency Manangement – Chuck Perino

Perino began by covering the general picture of his job duties. His role is large-scale type disasters including flooding, FEMA-declared disasters and public outreach. This includes coordinating with different groups from county, state and federal agencies. The largest task being developing plans and procedures, for example the COOP plan which is the Continuity of Operations Planning. This is what happens in the event the city loses the ability to use a building, or some level of leadership is unavailable.

A lesser known facet is being in a state required role to work with Linn County first. Working with Benton County is permitted, however State law requires contacting Linn County as first priority. Mitigation, or the lessening of disasters, is another large component of the position. Perino goes on to give an example of older homes in flood prone areas being placed on stilts to prevent damage in the event of a more than likely flood. This saves the city money in the long run by preventing costly cleanup and repairs.

Emergency alerting systems are managed by this position as well including Nixle, for road closure alerts or notice of police activity. You must be subscribed to receive these alerts unlike Albany Alert which operates much like an Amber Alert. This system deals with large scale disasters and will send a message out to phones in the area with no need to subscribe. There has been a new system implemented as well called IPAWS (Integrated Public Alert and Warning System) that you will receive notices for even if you are from outside the area visiting, essentially an emergency broadcast system.

Business from the members –

Kevin Kritekman shared it would be beneficial to future meetings to have a representative from APD or AFD be a guest speaker to share more details on how different parts of the departments operate.

Mark Stewart requested an opportunity to discuss fuel prices and public safety. Kritekman requested he create a write up to present for consideration.

Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting is on Wednesday August 5, 2026, at the Albany Police Department.

Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Reviewed by,

Julia Tremain
Clerk III

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.*

