

TREE BOARD – City of Columbia City
February 17, 2026 - 6:00pm

MINUTES

- Roll Call (Present) Janice Daniel, Jeff Bleijerveld, Brent Bockelman, Chip Hill, Bryan Smethers, Dan Knuth, Jim Christl, Seth Slabaugh – advisory (Absent) Amanda Thompson
- President Janice Daniel called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the January minutes. Bryan made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Brent. A vote was taken; all voted “aye”.

OLD BUSINESS

- Financial Update
 - There is \$34,966.58 currently on account.
 - We spent \$32 on books for Arbor Day
 - There is another \$21,155 currently in our Donation Account.
- Update Tree Ordinance Changes
 - Currently waiting on changes taking place at a municipal level.
- Update on New Trees on Tree Keeper
 - Seth Slabaugh is now able to make updates on Tree Keeper and is learning how to pull data and provide reports.
 - Seth will make an effort to attend as many meetings as possible to remain up to date on the board’s activities and priorities, as well as providing reports and serving as an advisory member.
- Grant Updates
 - Jeff completed the Tree City USA application but has just been requested to provide 2 more documents which he will send out this week. Otherwise, our application has been accepted.
- Funeral Trees
 - Brent will check with his daughter about the completion of a brochure and will update Janice tomorrow.
- Tree Removal/Trimming List
 - On Wayne Street there are 2 dead trees that will be removed and replaced as per the homeowner’s request.
 - There are 135 trees that are either dead (10) or in serious decline and pose varying degrees of risk.

- The city crew should be able to get 35-40 of those trees removed while it's still cold.
 - Some trees may require a tree herbicide to eradicate them (i.e., Tree of Heaven)
 - There are approximately 400 trees that require pruning, another 978 are marked for discretionary pruning and another younger 365 requiring "training".
 - Chip will work with Seth to provide us with a list of recommended companies and tender bids for the remaining trees on our trim/removal list.
 - Seth and Chip will work to provide the city workers with some training in tree pruning in order to improve the trimming they do for the tree board.
- Updates on tree planting on Depoy Drive and at Smiles on Main Dentistry
 - The Deer Run home owner's association has agreed to have deciduous trees planted and will cover half the cost up to \$2000.
 - Smiles on Main Dentistry has moved into their new location and are ready to have the 3 crabapple trees removed and sugar maples planted.
 - Arbor Day
 - Our celebrations will take place at 10:40am at Little Turtle on Arbor Day (Friday April 24)
 - Jeff has purchased books to donate to the library and will play Huggy the Tree.
 - Chip will reach out to the mayor about attending and providing a proclamation.

NEW BUSINESS

- New Tree Requests
 - None at this time.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.

Submitted by Jeff Bleijerveld, Secretary