

TREE BOARD – City of Columbia City

July 21, 2026, 6:00pm



MINUTES

- Roll Call
 - Members Present: Janice Daniel, Jeff Bleijerveld, Dan Knuth, Jim Christl, Amanda Thompson
 - Members Absent: Brent Bockelman, Bryan Smethers
 - Advisory Present: Chip Hill – City Liaison, Seth Slabaugh – City Arborist
- President Janice Daniel called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the May 2026 minutes. Dan made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Amanda. A vote was taken; all voted “aye”.

OLD BUSINESS

- Financial Update
 - \$29,032.85 is currently on hand in our working account.
 - No changes to the donation account - \$21,965
- Update on Tree Ordinance
 - It’s possible that an ordinance is in place, but simply hasn’t been enforced. Amanda will look for a copy and bring it to us to review at our next meeting.
- Update on New Logging of Trees in Tree Keeper
 - New permissions have been added and Dan has us caught up on changes to our tree inventory.
- Grant Applications
 - Jeff will apply for the Small-Town, Big-Trees Grant from the DNR.
- Funeral Trees
 - No new action required.
- Tree Removal/Trimming List
 - Seth provided us with a map of the city divided into five zones. Each zone outlines trees dead, diseased, decayed, deranged or hazardous/clearance pruning required (4DH/C). The list also includes young trees requiring training or proactive pruning.
 - It was agreed the SE region is our highest priority with 168 in the 4DH/C category. It would be best to do this work during the winter months when sap-

feeding insects are not present, and within this calendar year so that the expense takes place before the end of 2026. Seth will bring a list of tree locations that are highest priority to our next meeting so that we can begin tendering prices. We agreed that we would not want to spend beyond \$15,000. In January 2027 we will work to address the needs in the NW1 sector with the goal of having the work completed before the end of winter 2027.

Motion: Seth will prepare for us a quote for work on 50, 75 and 100 trees in the SE section between SR9 and Towerview Dr. so that we can tender the work to On-Site, Lumberjack and Brandenburger tree services.

Moved, seconded and carried

- Stump Grinder
 - The city has purchased a stump grinder at no cost to the tree board.

NEW BUSINESS

- Tree Concern at Smiles on Main
 - There's an issue with one of the oak trees that we planted. Some of the leaves are dying off in one area. Seth will look at the tree and provide us with a recommendation.
- New Tree Requests
 - None at this time.
- Summer Pruning and T-Post Removals
 - Jeff will work on pruning back root suckers on trees, as time allows. We are also ready for some t-posts to be removed so that they can be used in new plantings. Fall or next spring would provide optimal conditions for this to take place. Some of our posts and ties need attention among the new trees planted along Main St (SR9).

Meeting adjourned at 7:04pm

Submitted by Jeff Bleijerveld, Secretary