

Riverton City, Utah
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Minutes
April 1, 2025

Riverton City Hall
12830 South 1700 West
Riverton, Utah 84065

Attendance:

Mayor Trent Staggs

Councilmembers:

Councilmember Tish Buroker
Councilmember Spencer Haymond
Councilmember Tawnee McCay
Councilmember Troy McDougal
Councilmember Andy Pierucci

City Staff:

Kevin Hicks, City Manager - excused
Ryan Carter, City Attorney
Cary Necaie, Public Works Director
Jason Lethbridge, Development Services Director
Jamie Larsen, City Recorder
Chief Shane Taylor, Riverton Police Department
Josh Lee, Communications Director
Sheril Garn, Events and Operations Director
Stacie Olson, Assistant Public Works Director
Fire Marshal Wade Watkins, Unified Fire Authority

Mayor and Council Informal Meeting – 5:15 PM

WORK SESSION – 6:00 PM

Call to Order

Mayor Staggs called the Work Session to order at 6:04 PM and conducted a roll call. Councilmembers Buroker, Haymond, McCay, McDougal and Pierucci were present.

Discussion Items

Business License Code

Ryan Carter, City Attorney, explained that the changes to the business license ordinance focus on modernizing the application process without making substantive policy changes. The revisions aim to streamline procedures, require online applications, and close loopholes—such as businesses applying under alternate “Doing Business As” (DBA)—to ensure more accurate information is collected. He emphasized this is a practical update intended to improve efficiency within the business license division.

Mr. Carter highlighted that much of the current update involves removing outdated and unused portions of the business license fee schedule by deferring entirely to the annually adopted City fee. The alcohol licensing section has been cleaned up by removing duplicative references to state law, which posed a risk if state laws changed. The City will now simply require proof of state compliance for off-premise and restaurant liquor licenses, which are the only two categories being emphasized. Provisions the City never had the resources to enforce, such as

certain proximity rules or extra enforcement measures, have been removed.

Animal Code

Mr. Carter explained that the proposed changes to the Animal Control code address longstanding enforcement challenges and modernize procedures to improve public safety. A key issue was overlapping administrative processes and unclear authority when animals attacked people or were involved in rabies-related impounds. These situations were complicated by legal ambiguities, especially regarding the seizure and holding of animals pending trial. To resolve this, the updated code simplifies seizure authority by explicitly allowing animal control officers to seize animals involved in attacks and, if owners do not cooperate, to apply for a search warrant.

Another significant update clarifies that animal owners are liable when their animals attack or are at large, even if someone else had custody of the animal at the time. The definition of “animal under restraint” was also revised. Previously, vague language allowed owners to argue that radio shock collars qualified as restraint. The revised definition eliminates this loophole, requiring physical leashes or containment. Radio collars are no longer accepted, as they are often unreliable and create public perception and safety issues. This policy change is supported by Animal Control staff and the Police Chief.

Mayor Staggs asked for clarification regarding whether animal control officers have discretion in impounding a dog after an attack, referencing a previous Council decision that may have mandated impoundment after a single incident.

Mr. Carter responded by citing the current language, which states that an animal that bites or attacks a person or another animal may be seized by the department without a court order. If the animal control officer is unable to obtain the animal voluntarily, they shall pursue a search warrant. He explained that recent complications in a municipal court case—such as confusion over notice to the owner and requirements for written orders—led the City to shift its approach. The City decided to standardize the process by using search warrants for seizure, which is a routine legal mechanism already used for other types of evidence.

Mr. Carter emphasized that the City has the capacity to care for animals while a case is pending and stated that allowing the return of an animal that has already attacked could present a public safety risk. The decision to keep the code language as “may” rather than “shall” was to allow discretion in cases where the injury was minor or not immediately apparent. He indicated that discretion should depend on the severity of the incident and the determination of the animal control officer. The primary duties of animal control include verifying rabies vaccinations and determining if there is an ongoing threat.

Presentations

Unified Fire Authority

Fire Marshal Watkins provided a detailed report to the Council, followed by an invitation to view the new medic engine serving Riverton City.

The presentation began with highlights from “Fire School 101” and Marshal Watkins announced that four new fire engines had recently been placed into service within the Unified Fire Authority, with one assigned to Station 124 in Riverton. He emphasized the importance of timing and

budgeting when procuring such equipment. He concluded with a reminder about the upcoming Community Fire Planning Update scheduled for September 18 and includes a day of labor within Riverton City by the wildland division as part of an ongoing grant-supported fuel mitigation program.

Adjournment of Work Session

Councilmember McCay **MOVED to adjourn the Work Session**. Councilmember Haymond **SECONDED** the motion. Mayor Staggs called for a vote; the vote was as follows: Buroker-Yes, Haymond-Yes, McCay-Yes, McDougal-Yes, and Pierucci-Yes. The motion passed unanimously. The Work Session adjourned at 6:40 PM.

COUNCIL MEETING – 7:00 PM

Call to Order

Mayor Staggs called the Riverton City Council Meeting to order at 7:01 PM and conducted a roll call. Councilmembers Buroker, Haymond, McCay, McDougal and Pierucci were present.

Prayer / Pledge of Allegiance

Councilmember Haymond offered the invocation and Fire Marshal Watkins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Citizen Comment

Mayor Staggs called for public comments; there being none, he closed the Citizen Comment period.

Mayor/Council Reports

Councilmember McDougal expressed gratitude to the County for the recent NIMS (National Incident Management System) training. He noted that the session provided valuable information for emergency training and services.

Councilmember Pierucci reported on his role as a trustee for the Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District (“District”), which is considering a 9.3% property tax increase as part of its budget discussion. He expressed concerns about the increase, particularly regarding the funding of the District’s conservation garden. He noted that while the garden serves residents, it primarily benefits those living nearby, creating a park-like atmosphere funded by the entire District, which he felt didn’t justify the tax hike.

Additionally, he encouraged the District to analyze the public versus private benefit of the water provided by the District. The analysis revealed that the public benefit, which is difficult to capture through fees or rates, amounted to \$20 million. In comparison, the District generates \$30 million in property tax revenue, leaving a \$10 million discrepancy that was harder to justify from a public benefit perspective.

Councilmember McCay shared experiences from recent events, including a tour of the Huntsman Mental Health Crisis Care Center, and highlighted the center’s services, including legal, dental, vision, and medical care, along with long-term care rooms. She suggested that

police should familiarize themselves with the facility as it serves many individuals in need.

Councilmember McCay also mentioned attending emergency management training and proposed that the Council conduct annual drills to improve response times in real-life situations. She attended several ribbon-cutting events and the TRCC meeting. She reported that TRCC currently has two open grants, with a healthy account balance of at least \$6 million to be distributed, encouraging the preparation of another strong application from the City.

Councilmember Buroker congratulated Councilmember Haymond on his new role as Vice Chair of the Association of Municipal Councils, highlighting the importance of the group. She also shared insights from the Intermountain Health meeting, where it was noted that food insecurity is the primary social determinant in Riverton, which was surprising but crucial to address. She also discussed the recent emergency training, noting its excellence and the possibility of more sessions in the future. Lastly, she reflected on attending the Miss Riverton pageant on Saturday, calling it a fun and energizing event, and expressing pleasure in seeing the excitement of the young women participating.

Councilmember Haymond began by sharing his experience attending fire school, describing it as an eye-opening and enjoyable experience. He also attended the emergency training and expressed gratitude for the training. He discussed attending the Miss Riverton pageant for the first time, praising the event for its fun and excitement.

Mayor Staggs shared upcoming events for the month of April. On April 11, at 1 p.m., a ribbon-cutting ceremony will take place in front of City Hall to mark the launch of two new bus routes, with UTA and the mayors of Bluffdale and Herriman participating. Several state legislators, who played a key role in making this happen, have also been invited. The following Friday, on April 18, at 11 a.m., another ribbon-cutting event will be held to celebrate the opening of the Green Well.

Presentations

Financial Literacy Month Proclamation

Mayor Staggs introduced a proclamation to recognize April as Financial Literacy Month in Riverton. The proclamation emphasized the importance of improving financial literacy, which empowers individuals to make informed financial decisions, thereby improving their quality of life.

Consent Items

Mayor Staggs presented the following Consent Agenda:

- a. Minute Approval: March 18, 2025;
- b. **Resolution No. 25-22** – Authorizing the Mayor to Execute the First Amendment to Agreement between Riverton City and Salt lake County for Water Service at Riverbend Golf Course; and
- c. **Ordinance No. 25-09** – Amending Riverton City Code Title 2, Chapter 105 to Adjust Compensation of Elected Officials.

Councilmember Pierucci **MOVED that the City Council approve the Consent Agenda.**
Councilmember McDougal **SECONDED** the motion. Mayor Staggs called for discussion on the

motion. Mayor Staggs called for a roll-call vote. The vote was as follows: Buroker-yes, Haymond-yes, McCay-yes, McDougal-yes, and Pierucci-yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing(s)/Action Items

Ordinance No. 25-08 – Amending Section 18.90.010 (Table of Commercial Users) clarifying allowed commercial uses, Amendments proposed by Riverton City

Jason Lethbridge, Development Services Director, discussed updates to the table of commercial uses, which aimed to clarify and better define certain categories without significantly changing permitted uses. Key updates included defining assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and residential care facilities as conditional uses in all commercial zones; creating a new category for building trades (such as electricians, plumbers, and HVAC) to address recent questions, with restrictions on vehicle and equipment storage; explicitly including dance studios, gyms, and martial arts studios; and clarifying the definition of bus terminals to differentiate them from bus stops. These changes were recommended for approval by the Planning Commission.

Mayor Staggs called for public comments; there being none, he closed the Public Hearing.

Councilmember McCay **MOVED** that the City Council adopt Ordinance No. 25-08 – Amending Section 18.90.010 (Table of Commercial Users) clarifying allowed commercial uses. Councilmember Buroker **SECONDED** the motion. Mayor Staggs called for discussion on the motion. Mayor Staggs called for a roll-call vote. The vote was as follows: Buroker-yes, Haymond-yes, McCay-yes, McDougal-yes and Pierucci-yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action Items

Ordinance No. 25-10 – Amending Riverton City Code Title 6, Chapter 5 to Revise Administrative Provisions of the Animal Control Ordinance, Amendments Proposed by Riverton City

Mayor Staggs allowed citizen comment on this discussion/action item:

Jill Walker raised concerns about the proposed animal control ordinance, particularly the provision allowing someone to kill a dog if they reasonably feel threatened, noting the inclusion of barking, growling, or baring teeth as justification and questioning why Riverton's code would expand beyond what Herriman and South Jordan allow. She also noted that Riverton's three-day hold period is shorter than South Jordan and Herriman's five-day policy and argued that five days is more reasonable for owners to locate lost pets. Lastly, she requested clarity on who is held criminally responsible when a dog is loose—the person who let the dog out or the registered owner—and suggested that "dog at large" should be treated as an infraction, in line with 2022 Utah legislation.

Shauna Walker expressed strong concerns about the proposed changes to the code, particularly regarding provisions that allow someone to kill a dog if they feel threatened. She cited the Fifth Amendment and the right to due process, arguing that allowing a person to kill a dog based on subjective fear—such as barking, growling, or baring teeth—effectively makes them judge, jury, and executioner, and violates constitutional protections.

Councilmember Pierucci voiced concern about the proposed language in the animal control ordinance that would allow someone to kill a dog if they feel threatened. While he acknowledged the intent—to permit self-defense during an actual attack—he felt the current wording may go too far, particularly by including behaviors like repeated barking, growling, or baring teeth as justification. He suggested revising the language to narrow the scope strictly to situations involving protection of life.

Mr. Carter clarified that the proposed ordinance change includes a reasonableness standard, which would prevent misuse of the provision allowing someone to kill a dog if they feel threatened. He explained that simply barking behind a fence would not legally justify lethal action, as a reasonable person would not perceive that as an imminent threat. He emphasized that the ordinance aims to address those rare but serious circumstances and aligns with broader legal standards for self-defense. He stressed that this ordinance does not significantly change legal protections but provides clarity for cases where immediate defensive action might be necessary.

Councilmember McCay expressed appreciation for residents who shared their concerns and echoed those concerns regarding the proposed language allowing for the killing of a dog under certain circumstances. She also questioned the current three-day hold for impounded animals, suggesting it be extended to five days to align with neighboring cities and provide owners a fair chance to recover their pets, particularly given the emotional attachment many have to their animals.

Councilmember McDougal argued in favor of the proposed ordinance language, emphasizing that it is a protection for individuals to act in self-defense before an attack occurs. He stressed that no person, including children, should have to wait to be harmed before defending themselves, and likened the provision to existing self-defense laws for human threats. He clarified that the ordinance does not authorize someone to harm a dog simply for barking behind a fence.

Councilmember Buroker shared a personal experience of being bitten by a dog, expressing empathy for how frightening that can be. She emphasized that it is the City's responsibility to ensure residents feel safe when using public sidewalks and trails. She concluded that if the ordinance helps achieve that goal of protecting the public, then she supports it.

Councilmember Haymond echoed previous comments, stating that most people are generally reasonable and that provoking a dog behind a fence would clearly show unreasonable behavior, with the dog essentially acting in self-defense. He noted that although the ordinance allows any person to kill a dog under certain circumstances, in reality, most people aren't carrying weapons or tools that would enable them to do so. He expressed comfort with the ordinance as written, believing it properly allows individuals to defend themselves or others if truly necessary.

Councilmember McDougal **MOVED that the City Council adopt Ordinance No. 25-10 – Amending Riverton City Code Title 6, Chapter 5 to Revise Administrative Provisions of the Animal Control Ordinance.** Councilmember Haymond **SECONDED** the motion. Mayor Staggs called for discussion on the motion. Mayor Staggs called for a roll-call vote. The vote was as follows: Buroker-yes, Haymond-yes, McCay-no, McDougal-yes and Pierucci-no. The motion passed with a 3 to 2 vote.

Ordinance No. 25-11 – Amending Riverton City Code Title 5, Chapter 5 to Revise Business License

Councilmember Buroker **MOVED** that the City Council adopt Ordinance No. 25-11 – Amending Riverton City Code Title 5, Chapter 5 to Revise Business License. Councilmember Haymond **SECONDED** the motion. Mayor Staggs called for discussion on the motion. Mayor Staggs called for a roll-call vote. The vote was as follows: Buroker-yes, Haymond-yes, McCay-yes, McDougal-yes and Pierucci-yes. The motion passed unanimously.

Upcoming Meetings

- a. April 15, 2025 – Work Session & City Council Meeting
- b. May 6, 2025 – Work Session & City Council Meeting
- c. May 20, 2025 – Work Session & City Council Meeting
- d. June 3, 2025 - Work Session & City Council Meeting

Adjournment

Councilmember McDougal **MOVED** to adjourn the City Council meeting. Councilmember Haymond **SECONDED** the motion. All voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:52 PM.

Approved: CCM 4.15.25