

Minutes of the Altamont Town Council Meeting
June 12, 2025

Present:

Clyde Watkins
Scott Allen
Glen Jessen
Russell Sorensen
Craig Kettle, Town Employee
Amanda (Mandy) Gardner, Town Clerk
Brandon Peck Fire Chief Left 7:55
Vicke Jessen arrived 8:17pm

Public:

David Kettle K&K Left 7:34
Karalee Kettle K&K Left 7:34
Brett Kettle K&K Left 7:34
Shane Rowley arrived 7:27 Left 7:39
Suzzy Rowley arrived 7:27 Left 7:39

Clyde Watkins called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m._

Minutes Approved

Glen Jessen made a Motion to approve the minutes of May 8 2025 as written. Motion seconded by Russell Sorensen. Motion carried unanimously.

Russell Sorensen made a Motion to approve the minutes of March 13, 2025 as written. Motion seconded by Scott Allen. Motion carried unanimously.

Glen Jessen made a Motion to approve the minutes of April 13, 2025 as written. Motion seconded by Russell Sorensen. Motion carried unanimously.

Town Website

- **Rationale:** The town is moving into a world where you basically have to have a website, with state laws starting to require online postings.
- **Vendor Recommendation:** Following research by Nate (from UBAG), the council is considering using Municipal Impact.
- **Ease of Use:** The proposed website platform is described as user-friendly, if you can run Word, you can run this website.
- **Setup and Content:** Municipal Impact will set up and build the site with pre-built templates. Nate, who has assisted Ballard and Tabiona with their websites, can help integrate existing research and content.
- **Cost:** The annual cost for the website is approximately \$737. The initial 1,236 will be added into this year's fiscal budget.

A Motion was made by Glenn Jessen to go forward with a town website using municipal impact. Motion seconded by Russell Sorensen. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget Review and Adoption Public Hearings

Amend 2024-2025 Budget

Russell Sorensen made a Motion to exit the town Council meeting. Motion seconded by Scott Allen. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Revenue Performance:** Property tax, sales tax, and fire revenue exceeded projections; sewer and sanitation revenues were lower.

- **Expense Performance:** Many expenses came in lower than budgeted, as built-in contingencies for repairs were not utilized.
- **Notable Increases:** Audit costs were higher than anticipated. Fire expenses were higher due to increased fire revenue. A grant for wastewater was also received but not initially budgeted for, affecting expense calculations.
- **Budget Amendments Proposed: Fire Department:** A significant difference was noted, with the budget being \$64,000 but actual expenses reaching \$130,000. An amendment was strongly encouraged to reflect this.
- **Flood Control:** The budget had zero allocated, but \$21,250 was spent (due to a survey by Jones, which had a delayed billing over ~5 years). An amendment for this was also encouraged.
- **Rationale for Amendments:** To ensure the budget comes out a lot closer for state review, improving accuracy.

A Motion was made by Glen Jessen to return to the regular town council meeting. Motion seconded by Russell Sorensen. Motion carried unanimously.

Glenn Jessen motioned to amend the 2024-2025 budget to account for increased fire expense and flood control. Russell Sorensen seconded the motion, which then carried unanimously.

Adopt 2025-2026 Budget

Russell Sorensen made a Motion to exit the town Council meeting. Motion seconded by Scott Allen. Motion carried unanimously

- **Property Tax:** The final number provided by the county is \$16,790.
- **Sales Tax & Fire Revenue:** These were intentionally set low as estimates, acknowledging the potential for future amendments given past fluctuations and unpredictable events.
- **Interest Income:** The council anticipates an increase in interest earnings.
- **Attorney Fees:** Bumped up slightly, with the option to amend later if needed.
- **Park Expenses:** Utilities for the park are still under the town's name and are accounted for in the budget, mirroring park income.
- **Fire Truck:** A new fire truck or replacement is a goal for the end of this year and will be part of the new budget. This is a top action item.

A Motion was made by Glen Jessen to return to the regular town council meeting. Motion seconded by Russell Sorensen. Motion carried unanimously.

A Motion was made by Russell Sorensen to adopt the 2025-2026 budget. Motion seconded by Scott Allen. Motion carried unanimously

Road Ordinance Adoption

- **Ordinance 2025-01:** This ordinance pertains to abandoning/vacating a road in exchange for a paving part of a road.

- **Background:** The school board approved paving the road past James Helms. The School District will be including a sidewalk up to the school fence. Mark Thacker from the school board confirmed the approval.

A Motion was made by Russell Sorensen. Motion seconded by Scott Allen. Motion carried unanimously

Annexation Ordinance Public Hearing

Russell Sorensen made a Motion to exit the town Council meeting. Motion seconded by Scott Allen. Motion carried unanimously

- **Annexation of High School:** The school district petitioned last fall to annex the high school into town limits.
- **Process:** Steps were followed, including publicizing the intention and sending letters to neighbors. No objections were received.
- **Benefits:** Annexing the school is deemed necessary and makes future actions easier.
- **Next Steps:** The ordinance will be sent to the Lieutenant Governor's office and the county recorder.

A Motion was made by Glen Jessen to return to the regular town council meeting. Motion seconded by Russell Sorensen. Motion carried unanimously

Annexation Ordinance Adoption

Decision: Motion to adopt the annexation ordinance (Ordinance 2025-02) was made and seconded. A roll call vote was taken for official record and clarity, with all present council members voting Yes.

A Motion was made by Russell Sorensen to adopt Ordinance 2025-02. Motion seconded by Scott Allen.

Vote:

Scott Allen AYE

Glen Jessen AYE

Russell Sorensen AYE

Vickie Jessen Absent

K&K

- **Report on Free Dump Week:** One roll-off container was sufficient; however, two may be necessary next year, or the existing one may need to be emptied mid-week to accommodate demand.
- **Waste Volume Collected:** A total of 1.28 tons of waste was collected in the dumpster.
- **K&K Services:** K&K generously donated their services this year; however, their continued ability to do so is uncertain.
- **Communication With K&K:** K&K asked if there were any concerns with the current service and driver to let them know .

Cemeteries

- **Altonah Cemetery Survey and Fence:** The previous discussion about a survey for the Altonah Cemetery's property adjustment is moving forward. The cost of the survey is \$1,800. The surveyor offered to include the pond access easement at no additional cost.
- **Action:** Need to get an official bill/invoice for the survey, not just a text message, to ensure a clear paper trail for payment and grant reimbursement.
- **Fencing:** Fencing represents an additional expense, and the prevailing sentiment suggests that this task is no longer commonly undertaken by individuals, implying the necessity of professional hiring.
- **Cemetery Grant Reimbursement:** A state legislative grant is available for cemetery expenses.
- **Action:** Need to submit something official, like the survey bill, to the state to secure the allocated funds for the Altonah Cemetery. Even if the actual cost is less than the applied amount, securing the funds is beneficial.
- The grant is specific to Altonah Cemetery, not both cemeteries.

A Motion was made by Russell Sorensen to move forward with a survey of the Altonah Cemetery to adjust the property boundaries. Motion seconded by Scott Allen. Motion carried unanimously

Fire

- **Personnel Pay:** Hunter Phillips, who is on mission needs to be paid (check for him is available).
- **Boot Replacement:** New wildland boots each pair costs \$400 and structure boots costing \$200 a pair are needed, as current ones are out of date and many firefighters use personal boots.
- **Fire Budget & Strategy:** Current budget for fire is \$64,000.
- Minimum budget needs to cover county contracts approximately \$34,000 and firefighter incentives.
- The department typically budgets for upkeep and equipment, then amends for actual fire expenses.
- **New Strategy:** The department advocates for increased revenue through the deployment of firefighters to assist with wildfires outside the current operational area. Mac Thacker has been deployed to the Sterling fire on behalf of the county.
- **Debit Card for Fire Operations:** A debit card is required for wildland firefighters for expenses like fuel and hotels. The initial proposed amount to fund it is \$15,000, which can be adjusted. It is a debit card (not a credit card with a set limit), so funds can be transferred as needed by calling Mandy.
- **Equipment Needs: Turnouts:** Need to order a couple, costing \$4,500 each due to tariffs (a 10-year cycle expense).
- **New Type 3 Engine:** A new engine costs half a million dollars.
- **Funding Strategy:** Grants are the primary target. CIB (Community Impact Board) application is a possibility.

- **Concerns:** Potential for debt if grant funding is not full, and changes in government policy (e.g., FEMA funding) could impact future revenue from fires.
- **Current Engine Condition:** There is concern that the current engine 156 may fail in the future.
- **County Support:** The county offers substantial support, including eight radios, each valued at five thousand dollars, with installation costs covered.
- **Call Out Area Reorganization:** The county is engaged in a redefinition of call-out areas to enhance operational effectiveness, as current boundaries are considered unconventional. This initiative may increase the burden on Altamont's firefighting personnel; however, it is viewed as an integral aspect of their dedication to public service.

A Motion was made by Russell Sorensen to approve \$15,000 for a My Express Card for the fire department, with adjustments as needed. Motion seconded by Scott Allen. Motion carried unanimously

Park Lease Agreement & Improvements

- **Lease Agreement Status:** Danielle from Upper Community Recreation District is inquiring about the status of the lease agreement. The council has not reached a quorum in recent meetings, so no formal decision has been made.
- **Current Arrangement:** The council agreed to operate under the same premise as last year for the current year, while working towards a more formal agreement for 2025-2026.
- **Auction Funds for Improvements:** Danielle asked if auction funds could be used for park improvements.
- **Types of Improvements Discussed:** Splash Park and pickleball courts were mentioned.
- **Council Stance on Improvements: Acceptable:** Improvements that do not incur ongoing costs (e.g., pickleball courts, baseball diamonds, basketball courts, playground enlargement).
- **Require Discussion:** Improvements that will create ongoing cost or a lot of liability (e.g., splash park due to water usage, culinary water requirements, and potential liability issues if the park is eventually transferred back to the city).
- **County Involvement:** We require clarification regarding the county's role and responsibilities concerning the park, specifically in the event that the operating group becomes defunct and the park reverts to the town.

Crossing Guard

- **Problem:** The current crossing guard has resigned; she had indicated a desire to conclude their tenure as of last October. This sentiment persists despite a salary increase from \$15 to \$25 per day.
- **Potential Solutions: School Board/Aides:** Explore if school aides or the school district can take on crossing guard duties. This has been unsuccessfully proposed in the past.
- **Community Posting:** Post notices at the school, post office, and grocery store to find new volunteers/employees.
- **Sheriff's Office:** The sheriff's office showed more willingness to help when the issue was framed as potentially falling back on them.

- **Meeting with Principals:** Suggest meeting with elementary and high school principals to discuss the need and potential solutions at a local level.
- **Financial Incentive:** The town has the necessary funds available to compensate someone for this position.

Property Management

- **Ongoing Issue:** This is a recurring issue that will not resolve itself.
- **Legal Counsel:** The council needs to consult an attorney for options regarding property management issues.
- **Recommendation:** Use Matthew Church from Matthew, Curtis, Bradshaw, and Bedner, who is part of the Utah Local Government Trust. Membership in the trust may offer better pricing and specialized knowledge.
- **Building Inspection Clarification:** Need to clarify the town's agreement with the county regarding building inspections, as the county is directing complaints to the town's building inspector, but the town believes that county is the inspector.
- **Health Concerns:** If there are water or sewer issues causing health problems, then Tri-County could intervene. However, they cannot step in based on the state of how someone is living.
- **Complaint Protocol:** Complaints should be directed to the appropriate authority (e.g., the county sheriff for canine-related matters, or the county for specific building or health concerns).
- **Decision:** Move forward with contacting Matthew Church through the Utah Local Government Trust for legal direction on property management. A formal motion will likely occur once cost information is available.

The next council meeting, July 10, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Russell Sorensen made a Motion to end the meeting at 8:27 p.m. Motion seconded by Glen Jessen. Motion carried unanimously.

Read and approved this 10 day of July, 2024.
Minutes of the meeting prepared by Amanda Gardner Town Clerk