December 2, 2025, Bluff Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Bluff Community Center at 4:00 p.m.
190 N 3rd East P.O. Box 324
435-672-9990

4:00pm Roll Call: Mayor Ann K. Leppanen, Jennifer Davila, Linda Sosa, Britt Hornsby
Town Staff: Erin Nelson, Town Manager
Excused Absence: Spencer Wade

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Approval of Bluff Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes of November 18, 2025

Leppanen motioned to approve the minutes, as presented for the November 18, 2025, meeting, Sosa seconded. Four in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Bluff Town Council and Bluff Planning and Zoning Commissioners Joint Work Session of November 20, 2025

Leppanen made the motion to approve the Joint Meeting minutes from November 20, 2025; Sosa seconded. Four in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: N/A

Unfinished Business

1. Update on Bluff Cemetery and Discussion and Vote on Bluff Cemetery Ordinance

Leppanen reported that the town's legal counsel and San Juan County's attorney are working on an agreement between the stakeholders (Town of Bluff, San Juan County, Hole in the Rock Foundation, and Southwest Heritage Foundation). The agreement would require each of the stakeholders to maintain their own sections but allow for access to each section through an easement. Town's legal counsel had reviewed the drafted cemetery ordinance and suggested minor changes. The document presented in the agenda packet is the final draft.

Hornsby made the motion to approve the Cemetery Ordinance, as presented; Sosa seconded. Four in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously. Nelson will ensure the ordinance is ADA accessible. The town will begin to advertise positions for the Cemetery Board.

2. Discussion and Vote on Hiring DocAccess or Other Option to Convert Bluff Town Documents to Meet Compliance with American with Disabilities Act (Collins/All)

Collins researched DocAccess further and found that if Town decided to change providers in the future, we would lose all ADA accessibility that would be in place. Leppanen noted that this is the primary reason that the cost was lower than other service providers. The council agreed to continue to research options that would allow Town to retain the ADA conversion.

3. Review and Vote to Accept Modified Donation Policy and Agreement (Collins)

Collins provided Council an updated document that included stipulations for a donation agreement to be in place for any donation valued at over $250.00, per IRS requirements. Hornsby made the motion to approve the policy, as presented; Sosa seconded. Four in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Review and Vote to Accept Modified Art Rail Policy (Collins)

Collins provided Council an updated document with clarified artist expectations and an added incentive of use of the Bluff Community Center for an Opening event, up to five hours. Hornsby made the motion to approve the presented policy; Sosa seconded. Four in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Discussion and Vote on Bluff Community Center Fee Waivers (Leppanen/Collins)

Collins provided Council with an alternative solution to waiving fees; instead of waiving any fees, she had submitted data to compare what Town could have collected if everyone was charged lower fees and no fees were waived. In 2025, Town collected $9,769 in rental fees and waived $6,010. In a hypothetical situation where the rental fees were reduced to $100 daily for Bluff Community Center, $75 daily for Fire Mesa Kitchen, and $50 daily for the pavilion, and everyone paid the same rate, Town would have collected $7,525.

Council determined not enough information was available and requested additional data with a further breakdown of the expenses of operating the community center (utilities). Davila explained she wanted to explore the waiver for 501-C6s, as the Business Owners of Bluff would like a waiver to host the Balloon Festival in January. Council ultimately decided to postpone the discussion until the Master Fee Schedule is amended.

6. Update on Acton and SITLA Litigation (Leppanen/Nelson)

Leppanen reported that the town's legal counsel and the SITLA attorneys were still working on the survey language. The 30-day timeframe to submit the boundary adjustments to the Lieutenant Governor's Office has already passed, and Leppanen will follow up on the notification requirements.

New Business

7. Discussion and Vote to Approve Letter of Support for Bears Ears Partnership for Funding to Launch the River Education & Conservation Program (Leppanen)

Leppanen presented a letter of support for a Bears Ears Partnership funding request. Leppanen made the motion to approve the letter of support; Sosa seconded. Leppanen, Davila, and Sosa voted in favor, Hornsby abstained as he is employed by Bears Ears Partnership and has a conflict of interest. Three in favor, one abstention, none opposed. Motion passed.

8. Discussion and Vote to Approve Letter to the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity for Extension to Funding (Leppanen/Collins)

Leppanen explained that due to the timeline needs of the project, this letter requesting the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity grant be extended for six months, through June of 2026, was already signed and sent to the grant agency. Davila made the motion to retroactively approve the letter; Sosa seconded. Four in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

9. Discussion and Vote on Meeting Dates and Times for 2026 With Input from Incoming Council Members (Leppanen)

Leppanen will coordinate with the incoming council members on this item. Davila expressed a preference to keep meeting days on Tuesdays, Hornsby agreed. This item will reappear at an upcoming meeting for vote.

10. Discussion and Vote on Stipends (All)

Leppanen proposed that in alignment with previous years, Town approve a $50.00 bonus for all staff and Planning and Zoning members. Nelson totaled 11 individuals would qualify for this bonus. Davila made the motion to approve a $50 bonus for all staff and Planning and Zoning commissioners; Sosa seconded. Four in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

11. Discussion and Vote to Pay Bills (Nelson/All)

Nelson presented the accounts payable report and noted two items requiring further investigation: 1) Diamond Propane had billed for a tank rental fee and Nelson and the council were skeptical that the tank was being rented. 2) Nelson noted the charges for IT services were higher than usual and would be investigating the increase in cost.

Council requested proof of a rental agreement for the propane tank. Nelson explained that the IT services are automatically debited from the account but would seek information and potentially a refund. Hornsby made the motion to pay the bills, with the exception to the two items presented; Sosa seconded. Four in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

12. Update on Agenda Packet Administrative Process (Leppanen/Collins)

Nelson requested that Collins help put together the agenda packet so she could be better versed in the process. Leppanen stated that according to Utah code, the agenda packet is a responsibility of the mayor. The process will remain the same and can be evaluated by the incoming mayor.

13. Other

Nelson shared that the new playground equipment was delivered on December 2nd and expressed gratitude to the DesignBuildBluff students who helped unload the truck.

Hornsby thanked those who had participated in the search for Joe Pachak and stated that Town is supportive of Emergency Services' personnel's hard work during this difficult time.

Leppanen shared that we have another EMT who passed the national exam and thanked her for her time to take the course and exams.

Davila made the motion to adjourn the meeting; Sosa seconded. Four in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 4:55 pm.