



CITY COUNCIL

MEMBERS:

LEANNE HUFF
COREY THOMAS
SHARLA BYNUM
NICK MITCHELL
PAUL SANCHEZ
RAY DEWOLFE
CLARISSA WILLIAMS

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South Salt Lake City Council Work Meeting Agenda

Public notice is hereby given that the **South Salt Lake City Council** will hold a Work Meeting on **Wednesday, December 10, 2025** in the City Council Chambers, 220 East Morris Avenue, Suite 200, commencing at **6:20 p.m.**, or as soon thereafter as possible.

To watch the meeting live click the link below to join:

<https://zoom.us/j/93438486912>

Watch recorded City Council meetings at: [youtube.com/@SouthSaltLakeCity](https://www.youtube.com/@SouthSaltLakeCity)

Conducting: Council Chair Bynum

Matters for Discussion:

1. Police Department Morale Audit

Sharla Bynum

Adjourn

Posted December 5, 2025

Those needing auxiliary communicative aids or other services for this meeting should contact Ariel Andrus at 801-483-6019, giving at least 24 hours' notice.

In accordance with State Statute and Council Policy, one or more Council Members may be connected electronically.

Have a question or concern? Call the connect line 801-464-6757 or email connect@sslc.gov

CITY OF SOUTH SALT LAKE
CITY COUNCIL WORK MEETING

COUNCIL MEETING Wednesday December 10, 2025
6:22 p.m.

CITY OFFICES 220 East Morris Avenue
South Salt Lake, Utah 84115

PRESIDING: Council Chair Sharla Bynum

CONDUCTING: Council Chair Sharla Bynum

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sharla Bynum, LeAnne Huff, Corey Thomas, Nick Mitchell (Zoom),
Paul Sanchez (Zoom), Clarissa Williams, and Ray deWolfe

COUNCIL MEMBERS EXCUSED:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Mayor Cherie Wood
Josh Collins, City Attorney
Charee Peck, Chief of Staff
Jared Christensen, Deputy Fire Chief
Carson Aprato, Police Sergeant
Spencer Redden, Police Officer
Yasmin Abbyad, Emergency Management Coordinator
Mayra Serna, Legal Assistant
Natalie Molino, Legal Assistant
Ariel Andrus, City Recorder
Sara Ramirez, Deputy City Recorder

Matters for Discussion

1. Police Department Morale Audit

Council Chair Bynum introduced the matter brought to the Council's attention in May of this year and provided an overview of South Salt Lake's mayor-strong form of government.

The City Council is the legislative branch within the City and exercised their power when they gave a majority consent and approval to the appointment of Police Chief Croyle in January of 2024. Council Chair Bynum noted that authority over the hiring and termination of City staff, including the Police Chief, does not rest with the City Council and is vested with the Mayor.

Jones, Skelton & Hochuli partner, Heather White, then presented the results of the Police Department morale audit conducted in recent months. The audit was initiated in response to an internal survey conducted by the South Salt Lake Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) in May 2025, a copy of which was not provided to Jones, Skelton & Hochuli despite multiple

requests during the course of the investigation.

The investigation involved approximately 100 hours of interviews with all 88 current employees, including Chief of Police Danielle Croyle. The final 72-page report was issued on November 21, 2025.

Overall, employees across all ranks, including the Chief, described morale as significantly diminished and at a "historic low". The decline in morale was attributed to a combination of cultural, operational, and relational factors that had compounded over time, rather than a single event.

Key findings covered different topics and areas that were discussed throughout the course of the audit and cover things such as:

Merit and Leadership Selection: Many employees, particularly those with longer tenure, perceived that the Chief's selection process was not transparent or competitive, leading to a belief that more qualified internal candidates were overlooked. This sentiment contributed to ongoing skepticism regarding leadership legitimacy.

Philosophy of Policing: A significant organizational divide existed between employees favoring a traditional enforcement-oriented approach and those preferring a community-oriented policing model. The shift toward the latter without broad consensus created friction and concern among some officers about the Department's strategic direction and their ability to perform core law enforcement functions.

Demeanor and Communication: Employees consistently identified concerns related to the Chief's demeanor, citing issues of emotional variability, tone, and communication style. These concerns, along with a perceived lack of clear communication and the bypassing of the chain of command, contributed to a tense, anxious, and rumor-driven environment.

Discipline and Retaliation: Concerns about discipline were a significant and frequently discussed theme, centering on perceptions of inconsistency, a lack of progressive discipline, and a fear of punitive action for minor mistakes. Fears of retaliation for expressing disagreement were widespread and deeply embedded, leading to a pervasive sense of caution and reduced willingness to offer feedback.

Staffing and Training: Staffing shortages were reported by nearly every employee, leading to burnout, forced overtime, and perceived risks to officer safety. A significant decline in the frequency and quality of practical, hands-on training (e.g., scenario-based, defensive tactics, and firearms) was also a major concern, affecting confidence and readiness.

Mental Health and Camaraderie: Nearly a quarter of employees described experiencing stress, anxiety, or burnout directly attributed to the work environment. Two officers expressly admitted to suicidal ideation. The report noted a significant decline in camaraderie, with officers feeling isolated and guarded due to organizational stressors and fear of retaliation.

The report was intended to document the perspectives shared during interviews and did not assess the validity of those perceptions, nor did it offer recommendations or directives for City

decision-making based on the findings.

Following the report's release Mayor Wood stated the City would develop an action plan over the next 90 days to address the findings. The mayor's office acknowledged the strain but noted the findings were not unexpected given ongoing organizational changes aimed at rectifying years' worth of operational inefficiencies, necessary modernization, and accountability concerns.

Council Member deWolfe asked if there was a variance in responses based on officer's tenures.

Ms. White found that the officers that were most discouraged and favored a leadership change were longer tenured. She added that it can be expected for various reasons.

Council Member Mitchell asked if these issues were happening before the current chief's appointment or if the low morale was centered around who the police chief currently was. He also asked if there was a reason for the lack of specific numeric data in the results of the audit.

Ms. White said that several officers and civilian staff said that a lot of these problems predated Chief Croyle's appointment. As far as numerical data is concerned, more specific data was provided towards the end of the audit report.

Council Chair Bynum asked what differences were noted between civilian staff and sworn officers.

Ms. White said that while there was more support from the civilian staff towards the police chief, they were still highly tuned into the sworn officers' low morale, which in turn affected their morale as well.

Council Member Sanchez addressed the findings that noted the suicidal ideations from a couple of officers and asked if there was a sense of urgency for a big change in the department.

Ms. White said that she's unsure that those kinds of findings are uncommon for officers who already deal with high stress situations and face public scrutiny. Mental health challenges run rampant across the board simply by the sector of work that they are in, however, low morale is a high enough concern for any department to address. She also noted that it's of equally high importance to handle things in the right way than to act with haste.

Council Member Thomas asked if any subjects stood out or were more consistent in being brought up by the interviews.

Ms. White said that mental health issues are always amongst the primary concern in any police department. She also noted that most of, if not all, the issues were equally concerning for all the officers.

Council Member deWolfe asked if there was a consistent set of questions for each interview or if it was more of an open-ended conversation.

Ms. White said that initially, her firm started with a list of questions to ask each officer but

decided to focus on providing an open-ended forum so civilian staff and officers could share every concern they had.

Council Member Huff asked what the reason was that the FOP didn't share their survey with the firm.

Ms. White said that while she was provided with a copy of the summary of the survey, she wasn't provided with the actual responses that she asked for.

Council Member Williams asked if the firm saw anything on how low morale was spread or passed around amongst officers or civilian staff.

Ms. White said that one of her concerns in approaching the audit was to ask if the feelings that were being expressed were based on personal knowledge or what others were saying. This was addressed in every interview by asking what personal negative experiences an individual had vs. what they had heard from others. There were more people expressing themselves as not having negative personal experiences with the police chief but either witnessing or hearing about treatment that was seen as unfair to or by others. She noted that perception plays a role in how morale develops a reality and ultimately affects how morale is.

Council Chair Bynum asked if there was discussion about officers filing formal complaints or going through a formal documentation process.

Ms. White said that this was discussed by some individuals and that their concern was a perception of nothing happening if this was reported to the City administration and that they could be retaliated against.

Council Member Mitchell asked how many people felt that way.

Ms. White said that it was around ¼ of the police department's employees.

Council Member Sanchez asked what the recommendations were to address the issue of officers having to work overtime and not having enough officers staffed.

Ms. White said that she believes that communication is an issue within the department and that it goes both ways. The morale is getting in the way of communication that there is difficulty in communicating and implementing things. If there's a way for everyone to sit down and focus on how to move forward in a positive way.

Council Member Williams asked if working overtime was a previous issue.

Ms. White said that based on her experience working with different police agencies throughout the state, overtime was a common issue across the board.

Council Chair Bynum made closing comments by sharing that this has weighed heavily and has kept the Council Members concerned for the community that the police department is meant to serve.

Ms. White noted that everyone in the department cares deeply for the community, its citizens, and when asked why they haven't left to go work for a different police department, they said that they loved the City, their coworkers, the citizens and have their best interests in mind.

The Council Members shared closing comments.

Council Chair Bynum stated that in her recent re-election campaign many residents expressed that they don't want the City to work with ICE and that they are proud of the City's Civilian Review Board and the community policing model that the City has spearheaded.

Council Member Williams asked for everyone who was going to read the audit report to read it in its entirety and to read between the lines. She also noted that the Council doesn't have the authority to hire or fire individuals. She also said that by knocking on doors with her recent re-election, she heard many people who were worried about their neighbors and family members and knows the importance of having a City Council who supports the City in its mission to be welcoming to all.

Council Member Thomas said that she would refrain from making an official statement until she was able to read the audit in its entirety. She acknowledged that it is highly emotional and that she doesn't know what the best route of action is at this time. She thanked everyone who participated in the interviews so that they could get a better idea of what has been going on.

Council Member Huff said that she's also in the process of absorbing the findings of the audit and shared her appreciation to the City for hiring a firm to conduct an audit report. She confirmed that her District 1 constituents have also voiced their support for a community-based approach to policing.

Council Member Sanchez thanked the Council Members for all their thoughtful questions and hopes that the City administration will hear and work towards resolving the issues.

Council Member deWolfe thanked Ms. White and her firm for their work, the police department for their service, and said that it's clear that there are issues that need to be addressed. He stated that he is mindful of asking what his role is in this matter and that he is fully ready to always support budget requests for funding that would provide additional support and resources to alleviate the weight of what the police department is going through. His ultimate metric is the matter of having a police department that is effective and knows the importance of not having this low morale go on any longer than is necessary.

Council Member Mitchell stated that he wants a police department that has high morale, is well trained, and is community based. He stated that he is very aware that the next steps need serious consideration.

There were no further comments or questions.

A copy of the report is attached and incorporated by this reference.

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.


Sharla Bynum, Council Chair
Ariel Andrus, City Recorder

10-Dec-25

****Please sign in for each meeting****

**CITY COUNCIL - WORK MEETING
LIST OF ATTENDEES**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>CITY/TOWN</u>	<u>REPRESENTING</u>
Susan Boulden	SSL	myself
Catherine Taylor	SSC	self
Wendy Farran	in SSL	self
Witness #1	SSL	self
Witness #2	SSL	self
Witness #3	SSL	self
Jodi Falt	SSL	self
ALL LACHOWSKY	SSL	SELF
Rich Lachowsky	SSL	self
Andrea Wilkes	SSL	self
Aspen Thomson	SSL	self
WITNESS #4	SSL	SELF
Jeremiah Drumm	SSL	self
Darren Carr	SSL	self
Becca Hardman	SSL	self
Quinten Hardman	SSL	self
Ryan Alvarez	SSL	self
Joe Sutere	SSL	self
Dustin Hansen	SSL	self
Brandon Swilich	SSL	SELF
Tanner Doria	SSL	Self
Jay Gilais	SSL	SELF

10-Dec-25

****Please sign in for each meeting****

CITY COUNCIL -WORK MEETING LIST OF ATTENDEES

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