

# Bluff Town Council Regular Meeting Approved Minutes

January 20, 2026

Bluff Community Center at 4:00 p.m.

190 N 3rd East P.O. Box 324

This meeting was in person and virtual.

**4:03pm Meeting Called to Order and Roll Call:** Mayor Josh Ewing, Jennifer Davila, Gary Haws, Britt Hornsby, Spencer Wade & Erin Nelson, Town Manager

**Approval of January 6, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes:** Hornsby motions to approve January 6, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes, Davila seconded. Ewing, Haws, Hornsby, Davila and Wade voted in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

**Approval of January 13, 2026, CDBG Public Hearing Minutes:** Hornsby motions to approve January 13, 2026 CDBG Public Hearing Minutes, Davila seconded. Ewing, Haws, Hornsby, Davila and Wade voted in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

**Approval of January 13, 2026, Town Council Work Session Minutes:** Ewing clarified Council representation on multiple committees. Hornsby motions to approve January 13, 2026 Work Session Minutes with Ewings corrections, Davila seconded. Ewing, Haws, Hornsby, Davila and Wade voted in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

**Public Comment:** Malia Collins, Planning and Zoning Chair, following up on a request for a joint meeting between Planning and Zoning and Town Council to discuss priorities for 2026, referencing the Planning and Zoning by-laws.

Council discussed adding this to the Work Session in February.

## Unfinished Business

1. **Vote to Submit Community Development Block Grant Application for CCC Asbestos Removal Project (4:15pm):** Discussion at Work Session to submit CDBG application for CCC Asbestos Removal Project. Collins confirmed that other grants will still have sufficient work to accomplish, updated we are waiting for response from SERDA stating if Bluff is eligible to apply based on the income surveys conducted. Mayor Ewing calls for a vote, Hornsby motions to approve, Davila seconded, Ewing, Haws, Davila, Hornsby and Wade voted in favor. Motion passes unanimously.
2. **Discussion and Appointment of Local Homeless Coordinating Council Representative (4:18pm):** Following up from last meeting, it does need to be a council member. Davila previously expressed interest if needed. Davila is still willing if Leppanen is there to support, as needed. Hornsby motions to appoint Jen Davila as Local Homeless Coordinating Council Representative, Haws seconded, Ewing, Haws, Wade, Hornsby and Davila voted in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

## New Business

3. **Advice and Consent of Appointment of Three Bluff Cemetery Board Members (Ewing)(4:11pm):** Mayor Ewing recommends appointing: Tom Hiserodt,

Carolyn Harmon and Kathy Carson. Council discussed the recommendations and benefits to those appointed, inquired who else put their name in: Rey Foushee. Hornsby motions to approve appointments as recommended by Josh Ewing for three Bluff Cemetery Board Members: Tom Hiserodt, Carolyn Harmon and Kathy Carson, Davila seconded, Davila, Hornsby, Ewing and Wade vote in favor, Haws abstains. Motion passes.

4. [Update from Building Department on the San Juan County "Onsite Wastewater Ordinance" \(Bushnell\) \(4:20pm\)](#): Kristen Bushnell, Building Department, Town of Bluff and Dennis Shumway, Environmental Health Director, San Juan County Public Health presented the final draft of the Onsite Wastewater Ordinance.
  - In October, the issue was raised that many non-conforming lots (many are .4 acres) in Bluff do not meet requirements for Septic approval by San Juan County's current ordinance. San Juan County (SJC) follows state code, as many counties and municipalities do, which states minimum lot sizes are 1 acre.
  - The presented ordinance keeps the same stipulations that apply to all other lots per code (drainage test, Licensed Wastewater Designers, etc) and includes alterations to an existing septic. Clarification was made that not all lots will be approved unless they meet all stipulations. This is strictly an adjustment to the minimum lot size for Bluff.
    - Replacement Area: same footprint must be set aside for WHEN your septic fails.
    - Alternative Septic Tanks & Experimental Systems are also permitted through Shumway, and per code, Experimental Systems must be pronounced on the Deed.
  - This ordinance has the potential to bleed into minimum lot requirements set by Planning and Zoning including Subdivision Ordinance and others. Shumway does not recommend subdividing lots down to .4 acres and recommends an edit to the ordinance stating 'existing lots' due to the potential for ground water contamination. Council discussed the 'existing lots' clause at length and did not come to a consensus.
  - Davila stated her Conflict of Interest, as she has property to sell. Then commented on the cost/acre in Bluff at ~\$100,000 as one of the inhibiting factors to affordable housing.
  - Nelson inquired why this is not an interlocal agreement but is the County determining the land use. Shumway clarified that this ordinance is not land use but health and human services, he answers to the Health Dept who answers to the San Juan County Commission.
  - Council edited language within the ordinance
  - Bushnell stated that this ordinance is a band-aid for the Sewer discussion, as putting additional septic tanks on the land has higher potential to contaminate ground water. By allowing properties to be subdivided to .4 acres, the amount of septic tanks in Bluff could double.
5. [Recommendation and Vote to Support San Juan County Health Department and San Juan County Approval of an Onsite Wastewater Ordinance \(Councilman Haws\)\(5:09pm\)](#): Ewing presented the approval of this ordinance is a show of support

for Shumway to present to San Juan Public Health and then San Juan County Commission. Council discussed their desire to spend more time reading the ordinance, specifically due to the 'existing lots' clause, as it is written is more digestible to all.

Hornsby motions to support San Juan County Health Department and San Juan County Approval of an Onsite Wastewater Ordinance, as written, Davila seconded, Ewing, Haws, Davila, Hornsby and Wade voted in favor. Motion passes unanimously.

Shumway stated that this ordinance is possible because we are not on wells. In addition, if lots that are .4 acres that do not have access to culinary water, septic tanks will not be approved per State Code. This will go from Health Dept to San Juan County, Shumway will keep Council updated for presentation and vote date.

6. [Other / Adjourn \(5:19pm\)](#): Hornsby applauded incoming council for all of the training attended and would like to discuss policy and procedures (meetings and agendas specifically) at the next work session and work to change policy if anything does change. Davila agrees and would like to also include 2026 Council priorities in the discussion.

[5:21pm](#) meeting adjourned.

For requests to receive emails/meeting invitations, email [office@townofbluffutah.gov](mailto:office@townofbluffutah.gov)