



# City Council Meeting

January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026

City Council Chambers, 38 West Center

7 P.M. Mayor Wanner opened the meeting.

**Roll Call:**

Kim Pickett, Rohn Peterson, Donald Childs, Stella Hill, Michael Wanner

**Invocation/Inspirational Thought:**

Given by Dennis Marker

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

Led by Mayor Wanner

**Public Forum:**

No public comment

**Public Hearings**

**Determination of Surplus Property (30 acres near Peacock Springs):**

Councilor Childs made the motion to open the public hearing; Councilor Peterson seconded the motion.

**Roll Call:**

Pickett: Yes, Peterson: Yes, Childs: Yes, Hill: Yes

The City discussed the determination of surplus property consisting of a 32-acre parcel near Peacock Springs that had been owned for approximately 38 years. The property was located below the Peacock Springs source, which had historically been used as a municipal drinking water source and was currently used only as a secondary source for irrigation.

It was proposed that the City retain approximately 3 acres surrounding the spring to protect the water source and allow for future improvements.

The parcel had been valued by the county assessor at approximately \$24,000 and was determined to have minimal asset value to the City aside from protecting the water source.

A proposal was presented to trade the 30 acres to the adjacent property owner, Mr. Lyle Young, in exchange for construction services to the City exceeding the appraised value.

The purpose of the public hearing was to determine whether the property should be declared surplus.

It was clarified that the purpose of the public hearing was solely to determine whether the property should be considered surplus. Public comment was invited, and none was received.

During Council discussion, the assessed value of the property was calculated at slightly over \$700 per acre, based on the county assessor's total valuation of approximately \$24,000. It was noted that this figure was for tax purposes only and that the property could potentially sell for a higher amount on the open market. It was also noted that, as a public entity, the City did not pay property taxes on the parcel.

Council discussed the proposal to retain two acres around the spring source. Staff explained that two acres represented the minimum footprint believed necessary for future operations and protection of the water source, though the City could retain additional acreage if desired.

The eastern boundary was described as already limited by an adjacent property owner, while the western boundary extended beyond the spring to provide adequate protection. It was noted that land to the south consisted primarily of hillside with minimal practical value, and that access to the spring was provided by an existing road to the north.

Council acknowledged that the retention boundary could be adjusted if additional land was deemed necessary in the future.

Josh Flake addressed the Council. He discussed whether the assessed valuation reflected the true market value of the property and noted that assessor values were typically lower than market value. It was suggested that a comparative market analysis could provide a clearer per-acre valuation based on similar recent sales. He stated that, while having a personal relationship with the adjacent property owner, it was still important to ensure the City received fair value.

City Administrator Dennis Marker explained that the proposed transaction would include conveying the land and providing a water connection to the adjacent owner's shop near Highway 81 by the UDOT sheds, in exchange for the construction of a 40-by-60-foot metal building for the City's Public Works Department. The construction project was estimated to exceed \$80,000. It was noted that the combined value of the land and water connection was significantly less than the value of the proposed construction project.

Councilor Hill made the motion to close the public hearing; Councilor Childs seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Pickett: Yes, Peterson: Yes, Childs: Yes, Hill: Yes

## Reports of Officers, Staff, Boards and Committees

**GVPD Chief Jason Adamson:**

The Police Chief presented the December report, noting that the department recorded 912 calls for service over the past year, the highest total to date. He reviewed arrests, citations, and warnings, and reported increased proactive traffic enforcement, particularly on Main Street, near schools, and in residential areas.

December call volume was consistent with prior years, and serious crime remained minimal based on the Uniform Crime Report. Increased enforcement during the month was attributed to state-funded DUI and holiday patrol shifts.

The Chief also reported receiving a \$50,000 grant for new in-car camera systems and approval for grant-funded licenses for AI investigative software to assist with evidence review and case analysis.

**Discussion and Possible Action Items**

**Interview of Candidates to Fill City Council Mid-Term Vacancy:**

**Brian Nielson:**

Brian was interviewed as a candidate for City Council. He stated that the primary role of the City Council was to serve as the decision-making body for the City and to be thoughtful, informed, and deliberate when addressing issues before the community.

He identified long-term water sustainability as a critical priority and expressed support for the Tarr Canyon water project and continued maintenance of existing wells and water sources to support future growth.

He stated that attracting residents, recreation, and commerce required maintaining quality of life, supporting recreation opportunities, utilizing amenities such as the Riverwalk, and supporting local businesses while following zoning and development regulations.

He described resolving disagreements by encouraging open discussion, considering multiple perspectives, and working collaboratively toward informed decisions. He also stated that throughout his career, including 10 years with the Sheriff's Office, he had prioritized making ethical decisions even when they were difficult.

Brian indicated he was retired, had time to commit to public service, and had prior experience in law enforcement, search and rescue, firefighting, and community service. He expressed willingness to serve with an open mind and no personal agenda.

**Josh Flake:**

Josh was interviewed as a candidate for the City Council. He stated that the primary role of the Council was to prepare for the future while ensuring the City continued to operate smoothly.

He identified long-term water planning as a critical issue and emphasized the need to continue acquiring water rights, identifying new well locations, and pursuing conservation where feasible.

He stated that attracting more residents and businesses would require increasing affordable housing through regulatory adjustments to allow smaller lots and greater density, while maintaining reasonable setbacks. He also emphasized the importance of making Gunnison business-friendly through supportive policies and regulations.

He described resolving disagreements through open discussion and mutual respect and shared an experience from his missionary service in which he chose to uphold rules despite personal difficulty, resulting in respect and positive outcomes.

Josh expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate, noted his interest in housing development and city regulations, and stated his willingness to be involved in the community in any capacity.

**Steven Sautler:**

Stephen was interviewed as a candidate for the City Council. He stated that the Council's primary role was to preserve the community's history while planning for future growth and change.

Regarding long-term water needs, he stated that it was important to better understand the City's current water resources and future projections, address over-irrigation and misuse of culinary water for landscaping, and then plan for sustainable growth based on accurate data.

He stated that attracting more people to live, play, and shop in Gunnison would require better promotion of local businesses and community events, particularly during tournaments and visiting activities, and improving visibility of what the community offers to visitors.

He described resolving disagreements through teamwork and mutual support, drawing on his experience in fire and EMS service where cooperation was essential despite differences of opinion.

He shared an experience as a sports official in which he enforced an unpopular but correct ruling, emphasizing the importance of following rules even when difficult.

Stephen stated that he had been actively involved in the community, regularly attended meetings, and was willing to continue learning and serving if selected.

**Shawn Crane:**

Shawn was interviewed as a candidate for the City Council. He stated that the Council's primary role was to guide the community into the future while preserving its history and values, making decisions with a long-term perspective.

Regarding long-term water needs, he emphasized completing current projects, exploring secondary water storage, and ensuring the City maximizing its water resources.

He stated that attracting residents, recreation, and commerce required supporting local businesses, promoting loyalty between residents and businesses, and expanding opportunities for living, playing, and shopping in the community.

He described resolving disagreements by listening carefully, remaining calm and objective, and being willing to adjust his perspective for the good of the whole community.

He shared a personal example of choosing the right approach over the easy way when attempting a home project, illustrating the importance of thoughtful decision-making.

Shawn explained that he returned to the Council to serve a two-year term to help complete ongoing projects and support the community, particularly considering personal circumstances that previously limited his availability.

All City Council applicants were asked the same set of questions during their interviews.

The Council moved to appoint a member to fill a midterm vacancy.

City Recorder Valerie Andersen conducted the election. She let them know that voting was conducted on paper and made public, with names recorded. The process allowed for multiple rounds if no majority was achieved or if there was a tie for second place, in which case a coin flip determined the second candidate for a runoff.

In the first round, votes were split among four candidates: Councilor Donald Childs voted for Brian Nielson, Councilor Kim Pickett voted for Joshua Flake, Councilor Stella Hill voted for Shawn Crane, and Councilor Rohn Peterson voted for Brian Nielson. Brian Nielson advanced to the second round, and a coin flip determined Joshua Flake as the second candidate to advance. In the final round, Brian Nelson received all four votes and was appointed to the position.

## Appointments, Recognitions, and Awarding of Bids

### **Appointment of Citizen to Fill a City Council Mid-term Vacancy:**

Brian Nielson took the oath of office, pledging to support, obey, and defend the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Utah, and to faithfully discharge the duties of the office. The oath was followed by the signing of the official document. City Recorder Valerie Andersen administered the oath.

### **Appointment of Mayor Pro Tempore:**

The council discussed the appointment of Mayor Pro Tempore. After clarifying that it was the council's prerogative to vote, they proceeded with nominations.

Councilor Pickett made the motion to nominate Stella Hill as Mayor Pro Tempore; Councilor Childs seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Nielson: Yes, Pickett: Yes, Peterson: Yes, Childs: Yes, Hill: Yes

### **Appointment of City Recorder, of City Treasurer, and City Director of Finance:**

The mayor explained that a newly elected mayor was not required to replace the city recorder or treasurer and indicated his intent to keep Valerie as City Recorder, with Mandy as Treasurer and Gary as Finance Director. The council discussed the appointments and confirmed that these positions could be changed at the mayor's discretion.

Councilor Pickett made the motion to accept all three appointments; Councilor Rohn Peterson seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Nielson: Yes, Pickett: Yes, Peterson: Yes, Childs: Yes, Hill: Yes

## **Discussion and Possible Action Items**

### **Determination of Surplus Property (30 acres near Peacock Springs):**

After prior discussion, the council considered declaring the 30-acre Peacock's Springs property as surplus.

Councilor Childs made a motion to designate the property as surplus; Councilor Pickett seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Nielson: Yes, Pickett: Yes, Peterson: Yes, Childs: Yes, Hill: Yes

### **Sale of Surplus Property (30 acres near Peacock Springs):**

The council discussed the sale of the surplus Peacock Springs property, including adjusting the amount of land the city would retain from approximately two acres to about three acres. Members agreed this would allow the city to preserve access and flexibility for future needs. It was clarified that, due to a survey and overlap with state property, the city owned slightly less acreage than originally stated in the deed.

The City Administrator Dennis Marker explained that because the property exceeded one acre, it had been properly declared surplus through a public hearing process, and the council was authorized to proceed with a direct sale without an auction or additional requirements.

Councilor Pickett made the motion to sale the surplus property (30 acres near Peacock Springs); Councilor Childs seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Nielson: Abstain, Pickett: Yes, Peterson: Yes, Childs: Yes, Hill: Yes

### **City Council Meeting time change to 6 p.m.:**

The council discussed changing the regular city council meeting starting time from 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. to allow members to finish earlier in the evening. It was clarified that a formal vote was not required, only proper notice of the change.

The council tentatively agreed to move regular council meetings to 6:00 p.m. going forward, with the possibility of holding work sessions at 5:00 p.m. when needed and adjusting as necessary based on schedules.

## **Ordinances and Resolutions**

### **Resolution 2026-01 Authorizing Application to LWCF for Park Improvement**

#### **Funding:**

The council considered Resolution 2026-01 authorizing an application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for park improvement funding.

Staff explained that the previous council authorized applying for a \$250,000 CDBG grant for new pickleball and basketball courts, with award results expected in March or April. Updated cost estimates from Sunrise Engineering placed the project closer to \$900,000, significantly higher than the original \$500,000 estimate, meaning additional funding would be needed unless the project was reduced or phased.

The LWCF program was described as a federal 50/50 matching grant that could provide up to \$2 million. Existing city funds, donations, and potential CDBG funds could be used as the required match. The council discussed the possibility of requesting approximately \$450,000 to match the estimated project cost and noted that LWCF funds could also be used for other park improvements, such as bathrooms or playground equipment, if available.

It was clarified that Sunrise had only been awarded a professional services contract for design and preparation for bidding, not for construction, and that final construction costs would be determined through a future competitive bidding process.

Councilor Pickett made the motion to approve Resolution 2026-01 Authorizing Application to LWCF for Park Improvement Funding; Councilor Childs seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Nielson: Yes, Pickett: Yes, Peterson: Yes, Childs: Yes, Hill: Yes

## Minutes

### **December 29, 2025, Special Council Meeting:**

Councilor Pickett made the motion to approve the minutes for the 2025, regular council meeting, Councilor Childs seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Nielson: Abstain, Pickett: Yes, Peterson: Yes, Childs: Yes, Hill: Yes

### **Bills for period ending December 29, 2025, totaling \$31,179.46:**

Councilor Childs made the motion to approve the bills for the period ending December 29, 2025, totaling \$31,179.46, Councilor Nielson seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Nielson: Yes, Pickett: Yes, Peterson: Yes, Childs: Yes, Hill: Yes

## Reports of Officers, Staff, Boards and Committees

### **Valerie Andersen:**

The city recorder discussed the option of receiving meeting packets electronically instead of printed copies to save costs and allow easier updates. Members expressed mixed preferences, with some favoring electronic access on personal devices and others preferring hard copies. It was agreed that the city would not purchase new devices, members who wished could use their personal devices to access electronic packets, and printed copies would continue to be provided for those who wanted them. The city recorder also explained public records considerations related to using personal devices for city business.

The council was informed that Local Officials Day at the Capitol would take place on January 21 at 8:30 a.m., and members could register if interested.

It was announced that representatives from White Sanitation would attend the next council meeting, and that spring cleanup was scheduled for April 27 through May 4.

The council was notified that business license renewals had been sent out along with a letter from the Independence Day committee seeking sponsorships and support for the upcoming 250th anniversary celebrations.

**JD Bunnell:**

Noted that the Christmas lights had been taken down and that Main Street no longer had the same warm appearance. Councilor Hill asked for feedback on the holiday decorations, sharing that after visiting Ephraim She felt Gunnison could consider expanding its Christmas lighting, especially in the historic Main Street area.

Council members discussed the existing candy cane decorations, noting they were several years old and originally built as part of a local Eagle Scout project. There was general interest in gradually investing in additional lighting over the coming years, possibly adding more lights to trees and poles and incorporating more color, while recognizing the costs and labor involved in installation.

**Dennis Marker:**

Reported that the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity had awarded the city a grant of over **\$44,000**, which would be matched with funding from the **Utah Trust Lands Administration**. The previous council had already committed matching city funds to support expanding infrastructure in the industrial park. The project would extend a new road east from Cemetery Road between ACT and Christensen Arms along an existing 100-foot right-of-way and would also extend water and sewer lines to serve Trust Lands' property. This expansion was intended to support future development and strengthen the partnership with Trust Lands, which had committed **\$90,000** toward the project.

He noted that training with the Governor's office would be scheduled to review grant requirements.

He also reported progress on the **\$5 million federal Community Project Funding grant**, explaining that a meeting with USDA was being arranged to clarify terms, including the required **25% local match**. The city hoped existing grants and project funds could satisfy the match, rather than needing to take out an additional loan.

In addition, a meeting with the **CIB board in Price** was scheduled for the following morning to finalize approval of a **\$2.7 million loan at 1% interest for 30 years** to support the park road project. The city anticipated using as little of that loan as possible, ideally closer to \$2 million or less, relying primarily on grant funding.

Council members asked questions about the road alignment and access points, noting that UDOT had denied certain highway access locations. Staff explained that the current plan followed the existing right-of-way and utility access and aligned with the needs of Trust Lands' property.

**Reports by Mayor and Council Members**

**Donald Childs:**

Noted that the clock tower needed cleaning and asked if JD could coordinate the work, which he agreed to do. It was also confirmed that Shawn had finished his work on the clock tower and that Mandi was now operating it.

**Stella Hill:**

Discussed concerns about trees at the cemetery, noting that some damage or loss was likely due to blackbirds that gather in the area.

She then asked about the status of the proposed pedestrian crosswalk and signal on Main Street at 100 South. It was reported that UDOT required the removal of four trees—two on each side of the street in the planter areas closest to the travel lanes—if the pedestrian signal were installed. The planter boxes would remain, but any replacement plants would have to be low-growing (generally under 8–12 inches). UDOT’s stated reason was that the trees could obstruct visibility of pedestrians and create a safety hazard.

**Mayor Wanner:**

Mayor Wanner expressed appreciation for the prior council, noting the personal growth and learning gained from working with them. They emphasized the importance of maintaining professionalism and leaving disagreements at the door, even during debates, so that the council could represent all perspectives while remaining respectful.

He also shared plans to implement staff and council training, including sessions on council operations, chain of command, and staff roles. Job descriptions and rate structures would be reviewed, with a subcommittee formed to assist in the process. He acknowledged being new as mayor and welcomed guidance from Dennis on legal and procedural matters.

### **Closed Meeting**

Councilor Pickett made the motion to go into a closed meeting to discuss the pending or reasonably imminent litigation, and/or purchase, exchange, or lease of real property Councilor Childs seconded the motion.

Roll Call:

Nielson: Yes, Pickett: Yes, Peterson: Yes, Childs: Yes, Hill: Yes

10:03 P.M. out of closed meeting

**Adjournment:**

Councilor Hill made the motion to adjourn.

Roll Call:

Nielson: Yes, Pickett: Yes, Peterson: Yes, Childs: Yes, Hill: Yes

Michael Wanner

Approval Date: February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Michael Wanner, Mayor

Attest:

Valerie Andersen

Valerie Andersen, City Recorder