

**ESCALANTE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 20, 2026
REGULAR MEETING/ELECTRONIC MEETING – 6:00 P.M.
ESCALANTE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS - 65 NORTH CENTER STREET**

Mayor Melani Torgersen called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Escalante City Council Chambers.

Present at said meeting were Mayor Torgersen, Council members Lenza Wilson, Marlene Stowe, Chad Lyman, City Attorney Barry Huntington and City Recorder Stephanie Steed. Council member Sally Orme arrived at 6:04 p.m. Council member Ryan Cottam was excused.

Also present were Ralph Perkins, Bill Weppner, Fran Wilson, Glen Wilson, David Cassidy, Claire Cassidy, Jenny Evans, DeEtte Spencer and Julie Brugger.

Mayor Torgersen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Council member Stowe moved to adopt the agenda as written. Council member Lyman seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Stowe, Lyman and Wilson voting aye.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 6, 2026 MEETING

Council member Wilson moved to approve the minutes of the January 6, 2026 meeting as written. Council member Stowe seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Wilson, Lyman and Stowe voting aye.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

JULIE BRUGGER

Ms. Brugger said she would like to request a public hearing regarding the future of the library building. Ms. Brugger said it is important to get community input on what to do with it.

RALPH PERKINS

Mr. Perkins introduced himself and announced the official launch of his campaign for the County Commissioner A seat, as Leland Pollock will not be running this year. Mr. Perkins stated his interest in understanding the needs and struggles of the community. Mr. Perkins invited anyone with comments to speak with him. Mr. Perkins emphasized his desire to know "what is going on in Escalante." and the importance of listening, expressing pride in his accomplishments on the school board. Mr. Perkins also expressed appreciation for the new elementary school and commented that he was glad the community supported it.

Council member Orme arrived at this time.

PLANNING AND ZONING ITEMS

PLANNING AND ZONING UPDATES

Council member Stowe explained the Planning Commission met last week and worked on some

ordinances and the annexation plan.

**DAVID & CLAIRE CASSIDY - MODULAR HOME, DECK AND UTILITY BUILDING
465 S 500 W (RR-1-10)**

Council member Stowe explained this project. Council member Stowe said this project meets all requirements and Planning and Zoning recommends it to the City Council for approval. Council member Lyman said he is concerned about the drainage due to the location. Ms. Cassidy said their property is in a low corner and Ryan Ellingford is their contractor and has stated there is no drainage issue. **Council member Wilson moved to approve the Municipal Project Approval Form for Mr. and Mrs. Cassidy. Council member Lyman seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Stowe, Lyman, Wilson and Orme voting aye.**

**MARK ALIPRANDINI - CONNECT EXISTING HOUSE AND GARAGE - 320 S 800 W
(RR-1-20)**

Council member Stowe explained this project. Council member Stowe said this project meets all requirements and Planning and Zoning recommends it to the City Council for approval. **Council member Stowe moved to approve the Municipal Project Approval Form for Mr. Aliprandini. Council member Orme seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Stowe, Lyman, Orme and Wilson voting aye.**

SCHEDULED ITEMS

DAVID & CLAIRE CASSIDY - NEW WATER SERVICE

City Recorder Steed explained the waterline is on the opposite side of the road so Mr. and Mrs. Cassidy are aware they will need to bore under the road. Council member Lyman asked if Mr. and Mrs. Cassidy are aware they will need to start the project because they only have so much time to get their building permit. Mr. Cassidy said they are aware of the time limit. **Council member Lyman moved to approve the new water service for Mr. and Mrs. Cassidy. Council member Stowe seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Lyman, Stowe, Orme and Wilson voting aye.**

DAVID & CLAIRE CASSIDY - NEW SEWER SERVICE

Council member Orme stated that Mr. and Mrs. Cassidy are responsible for their line and must have a city representative present when making the connection. **Council member Orme moved to approve the new sewer service for Mr. and Mrs. Cassidy. Council member Lyman seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council member Orme, Stowe, Wilson and Lyman voting aye.**

AIRPORT HANGER LEASE

Council member Wilson explained the lease agreement updates and requested the rent be set at \$200.00. Council member Wilson explained the increased rate is due to the City being responsible for mowing the property. Council member Wilson requested the City continue to pay for the power costs, as the fuel system is connected to the hanger's power. Council member Wilson said the rental of \$200.00 was determined after researching hanger rental rates at other local airports. **Council member Wilson moved to approve the revised lease agreement and to post for bids. Council member Lyman seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Wilson, Lyman, Stowe and Orme voting aye.**

LANDFILL FEES

Council member Orme said she is concerned with the ongoing cost of managing items with refrigerant in them at the landfill. Council member Orme explained it will be necessary to hire certified personnel to handle the removal of these items, with an estimated cost of \$25.00 per unit. Council member Wilson asked if coordinating with surrounding cities on this issue would be beneficial. Council member Orme said she would like to suggest that a city employee could be trained and certified to perform this task. Council member Orme explained once the refrigerants are removed the items will be left at the site and subsequently crushed. Council member Wilson asked if the city could accept units if the refrigerant had already been evacuated before being brought in. Council member Orme said a certified individual would still need to inspect the unit due to existing State requirements. City Recorder Steed reviewed other landfill facilities fees. This item was discussed at length. **Council member Orme moved to add the following Landfill Fees to the City fee schedule, \$25.00 for any item that may contain refrigerant and \$2.00 per tire. Council member Stowe seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Stowe, Lyman, Orme and Wilson voting aye.**

UTAH RETIREMENT SYSTEM EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

City Recorder Steed explained Utah Retirement System (URS) is offering new retirement options, such as Roth 401K and Roth 457. City Recorder Steed said with the URS new software they can implement a match increase over time if the Council is interested in doing an automatic escalation annually for employees. This item was discussed at length and the council agreed to consider implementing these changes by April 1st, with further discussion on the specific match structure to be held at the next meeting. **Council member Lyman moved to table this item until the next meeting. Council member Stowe seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Stowe, Lyman, Wilson and Orme voting aye.**

CITY PROPERTY - 10 N 300 E

Mayor Torgersen provided an update on the Old Elementary School property, noting that the cost estimate for removing asbestos and hazardous materials came in lower than anticipated. Mayor Torgersen suggested that City employees could handle the removal of the hazardous materials. Mayor Torgersen explained if the City agrees to pay for asbestos removal, the County has offered to assist with the building's demolition. Council member Wilson said he supports the demolition, stating the building is in poor condition, which was the reason for constructing a new Elementary School. City Recorder Steed informed the Council that City Treasurer Nancy Porter would contact the State to inquire about a grant to help fund the asbestos removal. Mayor Torgersen added that City Treasurer Porter has been working on this matter for about a year and a half, and the City will need to budget for the asbestos removal cost. **Council member Wilson moved to proceed with the removal of asbestos and hazardous materials, and look at allocating the necessary funds in next year's budget. Council member Lyman seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Lyman, Stowe, Orme and Wilson voting aye.**

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

ADMINISTRATIVE

City Recorder Steed informed the Council that the grant application to renovate the old community center was unsuccessful.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The Public Works Department was not present at said meeting.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

BILL WEPPNER

Mr. Weppner reported a false alarm at the high school last week. Council member Wilson explained in the City Ordinance there is a distinction between a false alarm and an incident where someone intentionally or accidentally triggers the alarm.

Mr. Weppner said the Fire Department is seeking reimbursement from the U.S. Fire Administration for expenses related to fighting a fire last summer on federal land. Mr. Weppner said they have not yet received a response to their submission and request to work with Commissioner Taylor and possibly Celeste Malloy to follow up with the U.S. Fire Administration.

Mr. Weppner briefed the Council on the potential effects of House Bill 48, which concerns modifications to the wildland-urban interface, particularly regarding fire suppression funding. Mr. Weppner explained that the city will be required to develop a plan and fully understand the resulting obligations. Mr. Weppner said a primary concern for the Fire Department is that the city could be rated as "high risk," potentially leading to increased fees. Mr. Weppner said the Department is unsure how insurance companies will utilize this plan to determine their rates.

COUNCIL REPORTS

MAYOR MELANI TORGERSEN

Mayor Torgersen had nothing to report at this time.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHAD LYMAN

Council member Lyman reported that he is coordinating with the county and Brown Brothers to arrange for the production of chips for the remaining roads. Council member Lyman said the material will be transported from Johns Valley.

COUNCIL MEMBER LENZA WILSON

Council member Wilson reported the core drilling at the airport was completed last week.

Council member Wilson said the parts for the Sphere One fuel tank are expected to arrive shortly, and the tank should be operational within the next few days.

COUNCIL MEMBER RYAN COTTAM

Council member Cottam was not present at said meeting.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARLENE STOWE

Council Member Stowe said she will arrange a public meeting to discuss the library. Council

Member Stowe explained the building inspection revealed several issues. Council Member Stowe said she could not access the back room due to not having a key. Council member Stowe said the east exterior has noticeable cracks, the roof needs repair due to missing shingles, the carpets, walls, and ceiling are in good shape, but the bathroom needs fixing. Council Member Stowe reported the library has three rows of books, a copy machine, a computer and a desk. Mayor Torgersen said the copy machine, computer and desk belong to the City.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALLY ORME

Council member Orme had nothing to report at this time.

UNPAID BILLS

Council member Wilson moved to pay the unpaid bills. Council member Orme seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Stowe, Orme, Lyman and Wilson voting aye.

Mayor Torgersen adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Stephanie Steed, MMC, UCC
City Recorder

Date minutes approved: 2/3/2026