

MINUTES
TOWN OF ALTA
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday, January 14, 2026, 4:00 PM
Alta Community Center, 10351 E. Highway 210, Alta, Utah

PRESENT: Mayor Roger Bourke
Councilmember Carolyn Anctil
Councilmember Craig Heimark
Councilmember Dan Schilling

STAFF PRESENT: Chris Cawley, Town Manager
Mike Morey, Town Marshal
Jen Clancy, Town Clerk
Molly Austin, Assistant Town Manager
Fred Swetland, Facility Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Cameron Platt, Legal Counsel
Polly McLean, Legal Counsel

NOT PRESENT: Councilmember Elise Morgan

1. **Call the meeting to order**

00:00:00

Mayor Bourke called the January 14, 2026 Alta Town Council meeting to order and welcomed Craig Heimark to the council following the transition from the treasurer position.

2. **PUBLIC HEARING: Accept public comment on Ordinance 2026-O-1 Elective and Statutory Officials Salary**

00:00:45

Jen Clancy explained that the ordinance addressed a vacancy in the treasurer position following Craig Heimark's election to the town council (from role as Treasurer) and noted that the Town Manager, Chris Cawley had agreed to serve as treasurer on an interim basis. Clancy stated that the intent of the ordinance was to clarify that no additional compensation would be provided in the situation where the town manager assumed the role of treasurer.

No public comment.

3. **Discussion and possible action to adopt Ordinance 2026-O-1 to update Elective and Statutory Officials Salary**

00:02:30

MOTION: Mayor Bourke motioned to approve Ordinance 2026-O-1 updating elective and statutory officials' salaries. Dan Schilling seconded.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Councilmember Anctil – yes, Councilmember Heimark – yes, Councilmember Schilling – yes, and Mayor Bourke – yes, Ordinance 2026-O-1 was unanimously approved.

RESULT: APPROVED

4. **Citizen Input**

00:04:30

Mark Haik commended former Mayor Sondak, former Councilmember Byrne, and Councilmember Heimark for improving council procedures, budget regularization, and financial transparency in recent years. Haik stated that these changes marked a positive departure from past practices. Haik then encouraged the Mayor and Town Manager Cawley to provide a public presentation on municipal assets, including water and sewer agreements, to better inform the public, and concluded the remarks with a critical reference and thanks to the council.

Charlie Luke, Executive Director of Canyon Guard, thanked the council for its attention to canyon transportation issues. Luke urged the council to closely review the Big Cottonwood Canyon proposal, noting that it differed substantially from prior approaches in Little Cottonwood Canyon and included recent developments related to Phase One and UDOT's agreement to proceed. Luke emphasized the importance of carefully monitoring implementation and raised concerns about proposed enhanced bussing and tolling, stating that tolling would need to be coordinated between both canyons to be effective. Luke concluded by acknowledging UDOT's efforts and expressing hope that improvements in the process would continue.

5. **Open Public Meeting Act Training, Cameron Platt**

00:11:00

Cameron Platt presented the council's required annual training on the Open and Public Meetings Act (OPMA), outlining the purpose of the Act, its broad applicability to public bodies, and the requirements for when meetings must be noticed and conducted openly. Platt explained what constitutes a meeting, including quorum requirements, electronic communications, and restrictions on discussions, and reviewed public records obligations, notice and agenda requirements, meeting locations, and permissible closed sessions. Platt also addressed requirements for recording and meeting minutes, emergency meetings, and potential penalties for violations. Councilmembers and staff asked clarifying questions throughout the presentation, and the discussion concluded with questions regarding enforcement and statutes of limitation.

6. **Review: Rules of procedure and order for the Alta Town Council, Jen Clancy**

00:28:15

Clancy reviewed the Town's rules and procedures for council meetings, building on the OPMA discussion. Clancy outlined the three types of meetings as regular, special, and emergency and then reviewed agenda preparation, notice requirements, and the process for adding items to future agendas. Clancy explained quorum and voting requirements, the mayor's role in chairing meetings, the use of roll call votes, and procedures for abstention or recusal. Clancy also reviewed requirements for written ordinances and resolutions, minutes and recording timelines, annual ethics disclosures, and rules of decorum for public comment.

7. Alta Ski Area Update, Mike Maughan

00:38:15

Maughan provided an update on ski area operations, noting improved conditions following recent snowfall, current visitation trends, and a projected season shortfall dependent on future weather. Maughan reported on ongoing activities, including dog rescue training operations and a scheduled early-morning ski event associated with a convention. Maughan also updated the council on progress for the Grizzly restroom project, including preliminary Forest Service approval, anticipated permitting timelines, design features, and efforts to expedite review due to seasonal constraints. Maughan discussed coordination with UDOT on Phase One transportation improvements, expressed interest in enhanced bus service, and raised concerns requiring further refinement. A discussion followed regarding how community input could be gathered and coordinated with the council in compliance with the OPMA, with consensus that any formal town position would require council approval in an open meeting. Additional discussion addressed collaboration among stakeholders, parking impacts, and the revised restroom location.

8. Questions regarding Departmental Reports

00:51:00

Cawley introduced Fred Swetland as the town's new facilities manager, noting Swetland's long history working in the canyon and the need for expanded facilities support. Swetland briefly expressed appreciation for the position. Clancy then previewed the start of the FY2027 budget process and discussed the composition of the Budget Committee, indicating staff's intent to recommend that Heimark continue serving due to prior experience.

Cawley provided a legislative update related to the Utah League of Cities and Towns, highlighting anticipated state proposals affecting property taxes and potential water infrastructure funding mechanisms. Council members asked clarifying questions regarding legislative impacts. Carolyn Ancil commended recent emergency response coordination in Big Cottonwood Canyon. The council then discussed the style and level of detail included in meeting minutes, with general consensus that minutes could be scaled back while relying on recordings for detailed reference, and staff was directed to adjust accordingly.

9. Approval of: December 9, 2025 Special Town Council Meeting Minutes, December 10, 2025 Town Council Meeting Minutes, and the December staff and finance reports

01:08:40

MOTION: Dan Schilling motioned to approve the December 9, 2025 Special Town Council Meeting Minutes, December 10, 2025 Town Council Meeting Minutes, and the December staff and finance reports. Carolyn Anctil seconded.

VOTE: All were in favor. The December 9, 2025 Special Town Council Meeting Minutes, December 10, 2025 Town Council Meeting Minutes, and the December staff and finance reports were approved.

10. Mayor's Report

01:09:20

Mayor Bourke noted a recent ski accident involving Junior Bounous, emphasizing Bounous's historical significance to Alta and reporting that Bounous was recovering. Mayor Bourke referenced a book written by Bounous's granddaughter that included a reproduction of a town resolution honoring Bounous. Mayor Bourke reported on testimony given to the Utah Renewal Communities Board regarding participation in a renewable energy program, expressed support for UDOT's announcement of enhanced bus service in LCC, and noted recent oath-of-office ceremonies for recently elected officials. Mayor Bourke also reported attending the Central Wasatch Commission's symposium with the theme of 10 years since Mountain Accord. Mayor Bourke concluded with an informational astronomy presentation related to the Voyager mission and announced the date of the next council meeting as February 11, 2026 at 4pm.

11. Discussion and possible action to adopt Resolution 2026-R-1 confirming appointment of the Town Treasurer

01:21:50

MOTION: Dan Schilling motioned to approve Resolution 2026-R-1 confirming the appointment of the Town Treasurer. Carolyn Anctil seconded.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Councilmember Anctil – yes, Councilmember Heimark – yes, Councilmember Schilling – yes, Mayor Bourke – yes Resolution 2026-R-1 was unanimously approved.

RESULT: APPROVED

12. Presentation and discussion about capital improvement planning, Chris Cawley

01:23:00

Cawley presented the council with an update on the town's capital improvement planning, emphasizing the council's previous engagement and the need to continue addressing infrastructure priorities. Cawley reviewed recent water and sewer system master planning, noting \$2.4 million in short-term water projects including the \$680,000 Crosstow waterline project and \$1.3 million in sewer

projects to address deteriorating pipes. Cawley highlighted long-term recommendations of \$3.8 million for water and \$3 million for sewer over the next 25–30 years. Cawley also discussed water management strategies under the Salt Lake City surplus water contract, including improved monitoring and building permit requirements for projected water use.

On facilities, Cawley explained that urgent structural issues with Alta Central necessitate decommissioning it as a public safety building. Architects proposed two conceptual “test fit” options for relocating town and public safety functions, with varying scopes and costs. Cawley stressed that modest updates to the town office are also recommended to meet code and ADA requirements. The town’s current capital projects plan includes \$9 million for a new building spread over three fiscal years, which is less than the estimated costs for either new building option produced by architects working for the Town.

Funding strategies were discussed, including continued rate increases for water and sewer projects, potential borrowing, philanthropy, and grants. Cawley noted the possibility of using a general obligation bond, requiring voter approval, as the primary method to finance a new building, and emphasized the need for early public engagement and phased design work leading up to a projected 2028 construction start. Councilmembers highlighted the importance of citizen involvement.

Cawley confirmed a grant application had been submitted to hire consultants for the General Plan update, noting it would complement the capital improvement planning process. The discussion concluded with plans to develop the scope for the next design phase, coordinate a special council meeting in March, and advance water and sewer design procurements for the upcoming summer.

13. Presentation and discussion regarding the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment and bus service planning in Little Cottonwood Canyon, Devin Weder UDOT

01:48:45

Devin Weder, UDOT project manager for the Little Cottonwood Canyon (LCC) transit project, briefed the council on UDOT’s plans, emphasizing improvements in LCC while using Big Cottonwood Canyon (BCC) as a reference. Weder explained that UDOT’s direct involvement was necessary because ski service’s seasonal nature, and UTA’s and union constraints, make it difficult for UTA to manage high winter demand efficiently. UDOT planned to operate transit either directly or through contractors, allowing UTA to focus on maintaining year-round service throughout the Wasatch Front urban area. UDOT intends to purchase canyon-specific buses designed for snow, altitude, and passenger comfort, with potential restroom facilities, and service would initially focus on the winter recreation season. Phase one improvements included enhanced bus service with improved frequency, a mobility hub at the Big Cottonwood gravel pit, tolling, restricted winter roadside parking, and compliance with Forest Service special use permits. Service could start incrementally, but tolling would only be implemented once the enhanced bus service was fully operational. Funding for phase one was already secured, with implementation aimed for fall 2028, while subsequent phases were not yet funded. Ticket pricing would depend on funding requirements and resort agreements, with the intent of maintaining affordable fares close to current fare rates.

Weder discussed operational logistics, noting that buses would primarily start from the gravel pit and the 94th & Highland Park-and-Ride, with potential intermediate stops where feasible. Bus stops in Alta would likely mirror the scale of those at Brighton and Solitude, comply with Forest Service design guidelines, and reflect local aesthetics. Weder explained that tolling in both canyons would occur simultaneously to avoid disparate impacts, with exemptions limited to public transportation and cases requiring fair access. Minimizing exemptions was important for fairness and administrative efficiency. Participants discussed the location of mobility hubs, with Weder noting that BCC captured the majority of traffic, while an LCC hub would be considered as demand and funding allowed. Enhanced bus service could reduce the need for tolling if ridership was sufficient.

Weder confirmed that special use permit applications for improvements on National Forest System lands in association with the BCC project had been submitted to the Forest Service, while permits for LCC had not yet been applied for. Weder and Adam Shaw (District Ranger) noted that special use permits could overlap with existing resort permits, but significant location changes could trigger a NEPA re-evaluation and potentially delay the project. Draft EIS-level environmental analysis had been completed, and final design would require further detailed review. Parking and infrastructure were addressed, with Weder noting that some of Brighton Resort's parking would be impacted. Weder stated that adjustments had been agreed upon with Brighton, likely resulting in a net gain in visitation due to an anticipated increase in transit service. A 1,600–1,750 stall parking garage was planned at the gravel pit near the mouth of BCC, with future construction of a parking facility closer to LCC contingent on funding and land availability. The placement of hubs was considered carefully to efficiently capture traffic and accommodate seasonal demand, including summer congestion.

Funding and timeline details were reviewed, including approximately \$100 million in one-time Cottonwood Canyons Transportation Investment Fund (CCTIF) funding and additional UDOT funds, with the possibility of future CCTIF revenue supporting both BCC and LCC projects. Bus procurement was anticipated to begin in 2026, accounting for an 18 to 24 month lead time. Weder noted that electric buses were being evaluated but were considered unreliable at present due to early-stage technology and maintenance challenges observed elsewhere. Weder stated that community engagement was important and that he would be hiring a public involvement manager soon, and participants were encouraged to provide input on design refinements. A community meeting hosted by Alta Ski Lifts in February or March 2026 was discussed as a potential forum for consolidating feedback.

Operational challenges were identified, including maintaining road functionality during winter conditions, balancing tolling and exemptions, aligning parking and hub locations with traffic demand and funding, and ensuring permitting and NEPA requirements did not delay the project. The meeting concluded with recognition that ongoing collaboration with ski resorts, municipalities, and the public would be essential to implementing a functional, equitable, and efficient transit system for both Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons.

14. Discussion regarding land use code update, Chris Cawley

02:49:05

Cawley explained that the purpose of the discussion was to provide an early overview of proposed code updates before bringing them to the council for consideration. He noted that the updates would first go to the planning commission and, following their review, would be presented to the council for final decisions over the next few months. Cawley emphasized that the importance of the updates.

Heimark commented that, given ongoing population growth, land use issues were becoming increasingly important and technically complex. Heimark noted that much of the detailed work occurred within the planning commission and suggested that it might be useful for the head of the planning commission to present to the council once or twice a year, to help council members understand the technical material more clearly.

15. Discussion and possible action regarding public comment on the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment

02:51:00

Mayor Bourke recommended that the council not discuss the Environmental Assessment at this time, noting that follow-up would occur in the coming weeks.

16. NEW BUSINESS

Due to the late hour, this item was not addressed.

17. MOTION TO ADJOURN

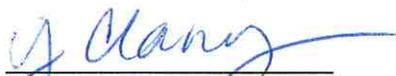
02:51:30

MOTION: Dan Schilling motioned to adjourn, and Carolyn Anctil seconded.

VOTE: All in favor. The meeting was unanimously adjourned.

RESULT: APPROVED

Passed this 11th day of February, 2026



Jen Clancy, Town Clerk