

**ESCALANTE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 3, 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 Sally Orme, Lenza Wilson, Marlene Stowe, Chad Lyman, Ryan Cottam, and City Recorder Stephanie Steed. City Attorney Barry Huntington was excused.

Also present were Jennifer Thomas, Bill Weppner, Richard Crawford, Victory Crawford, Julie Brugger,

Mayor Torgersen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2026 MEETING

Council member Orme moved to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2026 meeting as written. Council member Cottam seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Wilson, Orme, Lyman, Stowe and Cottam voting aye.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments at this time.

PLANNING AND ZONING ITEMS

PLANNING AND ZONING UPDATES

Council member Stowe said there was a work meeting last week to work on the ordinances.

SCHEDULED ITEMS

BUSINESS LICENSE ORDINANCE

Mayor Torgersen said she asked City Recorder Steed to put this item on the agenda. City Recorder Steed explained the recent changes to the business license ordinance. City Recorder Steed said the requirement for City Council to approve business licenses is causing delays and asked if the Council would like to consider reverting to the previous in-house approval process. Council member Lyman asked about the new \$100 late fee structure for late payments. This item was discussed at length. **Council member Lyman moved to move forward with a public hearing on Ordinance 3.04.030 B, C and D to revert back to in-house approvals. Council member Wilson seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council members Lyman, Stowe, Cottam, Orme and Wilson voting aye.**

UTAH RETIREMENT SYSTEMS (URS) EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Mayor Torgersen explained this item was tabled from the last meeting to obtain more information. City Recorder Steed presented data on a proposed 401k 5% match for the first 5 years, increasing by 1% every 5 years up to a maximum of 10%. Council member Orme said she would like to consider shortening the periods and increasing the percentages to provide earlier benefits while capping at 10%. City Recorder Steed asked about allowing employees to choose between 401K and Roth options, with the city's match going into the 401k. This item was discussed at length. **Council member Orme moved to allow all employees to contribute to any of the URS retirement plans and the City will match 5% with a 1% every four year increase up to 10%. Council member Stowe seconded the motion. Motion carried with Council member Orme, Stowe, Cottam, Wilson and Lyman voting aye.**

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

ADMINISTRATIVE

City Recorder Steed said the budget and financial reports are available for review.

City Recorder Steed explained the Utah League of Cities and Towns (ULCT) Conference is April 23 and 24 in St. George Utah. City Recorder Steed asked if anyone would like to go to let her know so she can get them registered.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The Public Works Department was not present at said meeting.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

BILL WEPPNER

Mr. Weppner reported that since the last meeting there was one call-out to assist the Ambulance (506).

Mr. Weppner reported the Honda Pioneer rescue vehicle had been repaired and was back in service.

Mr. Weppner explained the Fire Department is underway to pursue reimbursement for the Posy Lake Campground Fire with the help of Commissioner Jerry Taylor and Representative Celeste Malloy.

Mr. Weppner said the Fire Department is concerned about water availability for fighting fires this year and outlined plans to identify and access water sources in the surrounding area, including potential assistance from the school district, Brown Brothers pit, springs and rivers.

COUNCIL REPORTS

MAYOR MELANI TORGERSEN

Mayor Torgersen had nothing to report at this time.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHAD LYMAN

Council member Lyman said he, Brent Pickering, Chad Cottam, City Recorder Steed and Mayor Torgersen met with the company that is putting the SCADA system in for the City. Council member Lyman explained they discussed the well, chlorinator, sewer lagoons, and tanks to

reduce manual labor in maintaining the water system. Council member Lyman said work on installing the SCADA is scheduled for February 17. Council member Cottam asked if the system is currently used by other entities, and Council member Lyman said it is and he has been in contact with Tracy Feltner with Cedar City who uses the system.

COUNCIL MEMBER LENZA WILSON

Council Member Wilson explained he is working with Sphere One to fix the fuel system at the airport, which has been challenging due to parts availability. Council member Wilson explained a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) has been issued stating that the system is currently out of fuel. Council member Wilson said the repair will be completed as soon as the required parts are located and acquired.

COUNCIL MEMBER RYAN COTTAM

Council member Cottam had nothing to report at this time.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARLENE STOWE

Council member Stowe gave an update on the recent water damage to the city library due to an open window during a sprinkler activation and subsequent rain, affecting walls and carpeting. Council member Stowe said the potential for mold growth is unclear. Council member Stowe also noted the building's long-term structural and utility problems. Mayor Torgersen suggested obtaining a bid for roof repair to prevent further deterioration but doubted the city could secure grants for comprehensive repairs. Council member Lyman asked about public interest in maintaining the Library. Council member Wilson agreed the structure, electrical, plumbing, and water lines are in poor condition, expressing concern that any investment would lead to an ongoing cycle of costly, unforeseen repairs.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALLY ORME

Council member Orme said with the City charging landfill fees of \$2.00 per tire and \$25.00 for refrigerators she is concerned about managing cash at the landfill. Council Member Orme proposed a new system for handling payments related to the disposal of tires and refrigerant. Council member Orme explained customers would receive a receipt for the dumped items and then use that receipt to pay the associated fees at the office.

Council member Orme asked the Council if they felt like the public works crew could handle putting up the fence at the landfill instead of putting it out for bid. Council member Orme said it would be a 3-strand barbed wire fence up to the sandstone, with work to begin as time permits. Council member Orme said the City could document the progress to the state as the fence is completed. City Recorder Steed suggested getting a bid for the materials and putting this item on the agenda for approval.

UNPAID BILLS

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

Mayor Torgersen adjourned the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

Stephanie Steed, MMC, UCC
City Recorder

Date minutes approved: 02/17/2026