

**Pleasant Grove City
City Council Special Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 27, 2026
6:00 p.m.**

Mayor: Eric Jensen

Council Members: Diana Andersen
Steve Rogers
Cyd LeMone
Todd Williams

Staff Present: Scott Darrington, City Administrator
Christine Petersen, City Attorney
Sierra Pierson, Assistant to the City Administrator
Wendy Thorpe, City Recorder
Neal Winterton, Public Works Director
Megan Zollinger, Recreation Director
Drew Engemann, Fire Chief

Excused: Sheri Britsch, Library and Arts Director
Deon Giles, Parks Director
Daniel Cardenas, Community Development Director
David Packard, Human Resources Director
Keldon Brown, Police Chief

The City Council and Staff met in the Community Room, 108 South 100 East, Pleasant Grove, Utah.

6:00 P.M. REGULAR CITY COUNCIL

1) CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Eric Jensen called the Special Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. All City Council Members were present.

2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Williams.

3) OPENING REMARKS

The Opening Remarks were offered by Council Member Rogers.

4) APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

City Administrator, Scott Darrington, reported that there were no changes proposed to the agenda.

MOTION: Council Member Andersen moved to APPROVE the Meeting Agenda. Council Member Williams seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Council Members Andersen, Rogers, LeMone and Williams voting “Aye.”

5) **DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEM**

A. **City Council Interview with Applicants and Consideration to Appoint a Qualified Individual to Fill the vacant Pleasant Grove City Council Seat, for the Term Ending December 31, 2027.**

Administrator Darrington reviewed the process and procedure for the meeting. Each candidate will speak for up to three minutes in the order shown on the Master Ballot list as designated by the State of Utah. The Mayor and City Council would have up to five minutes to ask questions of each candidate. After all candidates spoke and answered questions, the nomination process would begin.

In response to a question from Mayor Jensen, Administrator Darrington confirmed that videos were optional. Mayor Jensen then invited the first candidate to speak.

Brett Robertson reported that he and his wife have three children. His sons attend Grovecrest Elementary, and his daughter attends Pleasant Grove Junior High School. Mr. Robertson is an assistant principal at American Fork High School and was not in favor of the school district split. He has been in education for 21 years and in administration for 11. He enjoys working with children and in the community. Mr. Robertson grew up on a farm, so he knows what hard work means. He is a thinker and a go-getter, but also someone who seeks to work together. In his field, it is important to be able to work in large groups, and he enjoys working with different teams. He always looks for opportunities to serve. He serves on the Beautification Committee and Design Review Board. Gardening, agriculture, and horticulture are his passions. He has enjoyed being a part of the community for the last 21 years.

Council Member LeMone asked if Mr. Robertson had taken advantage of any other opportunities to serve that would be relevant to a position as a Council Member. Mr. Robertson stated that he has helped with Strawberry Days and other events. As a high school administrator, he has a lot of after-school commitments, and his volunteer efforts allow him to continue in his job while also giving back to the City. If he can do something that allows him to balance family and work, it allows him to give his all to each of his commitments.

Council Member Rogers stated that the City Council sometimes deals with divisive political issues and asked how Mr. Robertson would stay true to his position while maintaining a collaborative relationship with other Council members who may have opposing views. Mr. Robertson stated that it ultimately comes down to respect. Everybody can have their own convictions and opinions, and you need to understand their perspective. You have to think about what you say and how you are perceived. In his profession, he hears complaints from parents about issues he has no control over. You have to think about why a decision is being made and its ultimate goal, so he sets his personal opinions aside to look at the issue at hand. If there was conflict, he would be respectful and honor everyone else’s positions.

Council Member Rogers pointed out that the City Council requires a large time commitment. Mr. Robertson stated that he shares the workload with five other administrators at the school, and his job and after-school commitments would not interfere with Council duties.

Council Member Williams asked Mr. Robertson to list the biggest issues facing Pleasant Grove in the next two to five years. Mr. Robertson stated that growth is an issue. He is a runner, and on his runs he has noticed that there are not many places left for homes. There is a decrease in student enrollment in the City despite the growth. The City's use of the property near the freeway has had paid positive dividends. It is important to have a good tax base while maintaining a small-town feel.

David Nelson stated that he has lived in Pleasant Grove for five years. He and his wife have seven children. The move to Pleasant Grove was life-changing for his family, and he wants to ensure other people have the same opportunities. Pleasant Grove should continue to be a wonderful place to raise a family. Two of his children graduated from Pleasant Grove High School, and the others are all enrolled in City schools. He wants Pleasant Grove to remain a welcome community with a small-town feel. There has been growth, and now there is so much convenience, with restaurants and hospitals nearby. It is an ideal location, and he believes in supporting that. He loves the City events like Strawberry Days and music downtown. His ancestors are from Pleasant Grove, and he enjoys reading about its history. The City Council has done a fantastic job of tying those things together, and he wants to be a part of ensuring it exists for his children and grandchildren.

In response to a question from Council Member Andersen, Mr. Nelson stated that he is a front-end supervisor at Costco and has been at the company for 28 years.

Council Member Rogers asked how Mr. Nelson would handle being on the minority side of a divisive political decision. Mr. Nelson stated that it is important to listen. He does not know everything and may not agree with someone else's position, but it is important to hear them out and try to understand why they think the way they do. February is Kindness Month, and he believes that when you disagree with someone, you should do it with kindness. It is important for the City Council of a small city like Pleasant Grove to work together.

Council Member LeMone asked Mr. Nelson why he is the most qualified candidate for the City Council. Mr. Nelson stated that he has developed a love for the community. As a Costco supervisor, he has to wear many hats, and that can change every day. He has always found it beneficial to work together. You might not always take a leadership role, but the supporting roles are equally important. He is not always right, so it is important to listen and learn.

Council Member Williams asked what success for the City would look like in a year. Mr. Nelson stated that success means it is a safe, fun place to be. If the City is not well-run, people will leave. He believes it is currently being run well.

Justin Nielson stated that he was glad to see so many candidates. He grew up in Pleasant Grove and has watched it grow from a town of 12,000 people. He has seen a lot of people come and go and has learned a lot about the City from older residents. Pleasant Grove is both business-friendly and welcoming for new residents, hopefully new homeowners. He has worked on a lot of construction jobs in the area. He is raising two children in the City and is pleased with the schools. The City is doing the right thing and is attracting more and more people.

Council Member Rogers asked Mr. Nielson to speak about a time when he had a difference of opinion and how it was resolved. Mr. Nielson stated that he often experiences conflict in his position and you just have to brush it off. You cannot take it personally because you do not know what is going on in that person's life. You should listen to their position and try to explain yours. Once everyone understands the facts, you can usually reach a mutual agreement.

Mayor Jensen asked what Mr. Nielson had learned from serving on a Homeowners Association board. Mr. Nielson stated that they had an issue with trampolines in the neighborhood, which were not covered under the HOA's insurance. They reached a solution that allowed homeowners to keep their trampolines if they were located in a private right-of-way and covered under their homeowners' insurance policy. People were upset, but they calmed down after the board explained the situation.

Council Member Andersen asked how Mr. Nielson makes decisions. Mr. Nielson stated that if he does not know, he will research an issue until he feels competent enough to speak about it. He is a curious, hands-on person.

Council Member LeMone asked Mr. Nielson why he is the most qualified candidate for the City Council. Mr. Nielson stated that he may not be the most qualified candidate, but he knows about growth and construction. If he were able to serve on the Council, his knowledge in those areas could help other people understand them. Many members of the public do not understand what the City is doing or why, but are supportive once it is explained to them.

Council Member Williams asked what motivated Mr. Nielson to apply for the position. Mr. Nielson stated that he has lived in Pleasant Grove for 49 years and watched it grow. He has seen the great trails built in the foothills and the diversity the town has put forth to accommodate everybody.

Gayle Lynne Yocum stated that the meeting reminded her of a debate class assignment on extemporaneous speaking. Mark Bezzant was her debate coach at Pleasant Grove High School, and she was happy to use what he taught her. She was very excited when she saw the announcement about the open position because it would be a chance to give back some of her experience. She has been in city, county, and federal government for 30 years and knows the legislative process. She currently manages \$96 million in projects and has brought over \$350 million in public-private partnerships to Utah over the last 20 years. She is good with telecommunications, utility work, and rights-of-way. She believes one issue with the City is its infrastructure needs. She loves Pleasant Grove. It is an amazing place, and she wants to use her talents to help it. It looks like City Code will be updated soon, and she has experience writing codes and standards. She has given a lot back to the state and nation, and now she wants to give back to the City. She has served on a lot of boards, and she thinks it is time for Pleasant Grove to get some of her talent.

Council Member Williams asked how Ms. Yocum would respond to personal public criticism. Ms. Yocum stated that she is used to public criticism because it comes with projects. When she helped Crown Castle bring cell service to the canyon, there was a lot of pushback from people who did not want cell service there. However, it was important for public safety to provide 911 service. You listen to those comments because they are valuable and then try to present the best information you can. You have to weigh those comments against your responsibility to the public.

Council Member Andersen asked how Ms. Yocum makes decisions. Ms. Yocum stated that policy helps you make decisions. Public meetings are required, and then you have to make a decision.

Council Member Rogers asked why Ms. Yocum chose to apply for the vacant position rather than run in the last election. Ms. Yocum stated that she was busy with grants at that time. There were also very qualified City Council Members running that she wanted to support. She enjoyed attending the debates. When she saw the vacancy, the time felt right. She is no longer teaching and is now an empty nester.

Council Member LeMone asked what Ms. Yocum found to be most challenging and rewarding in her previous positions. Ms. Yocum stated that it is challenging to work with railroads. Right-of-way and water issues are also difficult because you have to understand everyone's rights and what must be preserved. It can be challenging to try to make it work for everybody.

Robert Miller stated that he has lived in Pleasant Grove for 20 years. His wife grew up in the City and they decided that it was where they wanted to raise their children. They left briefly while he attended chiropractic school and while he was in the Navy. His time in the Navy and medical profession have taught him how to deal with people. He loves volunteering at the rodeo, which he has been doing for the past 10 years. He applied for the vacant position because it is a way to give back to the City that has given so much to him and his family. If chosen, he looks forward to serving.

Council Member LeMone asked Mr. Miller why he is the most qualified candidate for the City Council. Mr. Miller stated that, as he looked at what it takes to be a City Council Member, it seemed very simple. You need to be a registered voter who lives in Pleasant Grove. He meets those qualifications. Outside of that, he has learned from working with people in the medical profession. He is probably not as qualified as other candidates, but he learns quickly, adapts, and loves to serve.

Council Member Williams asked about the process Mr. Miller has gone through to make a difficult decision. Mr. Miller stated that 15 years ago, he was almost 40 and had to decide whether to go to chiropractic school. He had four small children at the time. It was not an easy decision, but with the counsel of his wife, family, and other leaders, he realized it was the right decision to make.

Council Member Rogers asked what type of person or situation frustrates Mr. Miller the most and how he deals with those situations. Mr. Miller stated that he often faces noncompliance in his profession. He knows that he has laid out a plan that will be good for them, and it is frustrating when they do not follow it. At the same time, you cannot force anyone to go against their will. You just try to reason with them and help them understand the importance of what you can do for them. If you cannot agree, try to find a solution that you can both agree on.

Council Member Andersen stated that she has watched Mr. Miller work with rodeo riders for years and is grateful for his service. She asked what he would like to accomplish on the City Council. Mr. Miller stated that he does not want to make any big changes. The number-one priority is keeping Pleasant Grove a place where people want to raise their families and doing so in a fiscally responsible and inclusive way. He has learned that you cannot please everyone, so sometimes you just have to make a decision and go for it.

Sandeep Singh stated that he moved to Pleasant Grove from Australia in 2014. He chose Utah because he loves mountains and hiking. In 2012 when he and his wife first became engaged, traffic was not bad. They lived in Riverton for four years, then moved to Pleasant Grove in 2018. He has worked in the community since that time. He learned a love of service from his parents and grandparents. He did not want to commit to a full four years on the Council, so he believes the two-year term would be a great opportunity. When he commits to something, he commits. He has 25 years of retail customer service experience and has managed employees from 16 to 80 years old. He knows how to manage people and balance expenses. His business started in 2018, and he now has three locations due to the hard work of his team and support from the community. Now he believes it is his turn to give back.

Mayor Jensen asked what Mr. Singh had learned about how to approach and deal with people. Mr. Singh stated that he believes the customer is right, but not always. He listens to their complaint, reviews it with those involved, and then makes a decision. If it is a genuine complaint, he apologizes to the customer and does whatever he has to do. However, his employees always come first.

Council Member Andersen asked what Mr. Singh would like to accomplish in the City. Mr. Singh stated that he wants to raise his children and grandchildren, and he wants Pleasant Grove to maintain its small-town feel. He also wants to see more young people in government.

Council Member Williams asked about the first thing Mr. Singh would want to learn if appointed. Mr. Singh stated that he is from a different faith than many, and he would like to learn more about their culture.

Council Member LeMone asked Mr. Singh why he is the most qualified candidate for the City Council. Mr. Singh stated that it was up to the Council to decide.

Council Member Rogers asked about the last time Mr. Singh realized he was the problem in a conflict and how he grew from that. Mr. Singh stated that everyone has those days. When there is a problem, he analyzes the situation and lays out the plan step by step. If he is the problem, he will take the blame. If he makes a mistake, he will admit it.

Jeffrey Snider stated that he and his family moved to Pleasant Grove 16 years ago. Both of his children graduated from Pleasant Grove High School, and his third child is enrolled at Pleasant Grove Junior High School. He grew up in a small town in Southern California, and Pleasant Grove is the town he thought he grew up in. It is a wonderful place that he loves and never intends to leave. He was the second employee at DigiCert and worked there until shortly after it was sold to new owners. To the extent that a city can be compared to a business, he believes Pleasant Grove is in the growth cycle he saw at DigiCert. Being a member of the executive team there during that period had a lot of parallels to the City Council. Stephen Covey said, "Seek first to understand, and then to be understood." He is a big believer in shutting up and listening. It is very important to know what you are talking about before you start talking. He believes in gathering information, learning what he can, and putting his skills, talent, intelligence, and experience to use after he actually understands what is going on. He is a baseball podcaster and a Dodgers fan, so he gets a lot of hate. You learn by disagreeing with people and talking it out.

Council Member Rogers asked Mr. Snider to describe a time when he became frustrated and how he dealt with the situation. Mr. Snider stated that he is not easily frustrated. He is the dining director at an assisted living home, and at work, he heard someone in a meeting use the phrase "once again" 26 times. That was a sign to him that the person came to the meeting with something to say, not to learn or listen. He finds it frustrating when people are not interested in actually having a conversation. How you deal with that depends on the situation. Sometimes the answer is to realize that you will not make headway with that person. If there is a chance to have a conversation, he is always in favor of doing so.

Council Member Williams asked Mr. Snider to expound on his statement in the application that he is far more interested in public service than politics. Mr. Snider stated that when he thinks of politics, he thinks of adversarial situations. In national politics, so many things are determined by the capital letter after your name. Beyond that, people turn off their brains. People should think for themselves. He loves that the City Council is nonpartisan. They think for themselves, have meaningful conversations, and are not adversarial even when they disagree. He believes that is aided by the fact that there are no party pressures, so they are able to represent the City that they love.

Council Member LeMone asked why Mr. Snider believes DigiCert went downhill after it was sold, and to explain the parallel he referred to between the company and the City. Mr. Snider stated that the thing that made DigiCert great was that they remembered what made it great, which was their customers and employees. They took great care of both. As the company grew, it did a better job of taking care of them because it had more resources. When it was sold to a faceless corporation, they stopped caring so much. It is still a good job that pays well, but when he was there, it was a wonderful and special place to work. The parallel is that the people of Pleasant Grove are what make it great. The City Council does its best to act in residents' interest and recognizes that everything it does is for their benefit.

Council Member Andersen asked what issues Mr. Snider is excited about attacking. Mr. Snider stated that he is excited about figuring out what to attack. There may come a time when he runs for reelection and has specific goals, but right now, he is excited about attacking the City's most pressing need. He loves to work hard and give his all to do what needs to be done, but he does not yet know enough about what needs to be done to have a specific answer.

~~Peter Steele stated that he has lived in Pleasant Grove for 15 years. He is an archeologist and environmental consultant who helps cities and state agencies obtain approval and funding for projects. He served for eight years on the Planning Commission as both the Chair and Vice-Chair, and he is interested in serving on the City Council to help with the next 10 years of the City's growth and development.~~

Council Member Andersen asked what Mr. Steele is excited about. Mr. Steele stated that connection within the City is important. It is getting harder to connect with people, and it is important to find ways to foster that connection and make Pleasant Grove a vibrant city. He would also like to make it a more pleasant place to live. He cares about sidewalks. He walks a lot, and it is not fun to walk down 300 East at night. He wants to find ways to solve problems. He likes to dig in, learn about things, and solve issues.

Mayor Jensen asked what Mr. Steele learned from the Planning Commission that he could take to the City Council. Mr. Steele stated that you should not trust developers when they promise you retail. The Commissions that he served on were very collaborative. They worked as a team for the good of Pleasant Grove and make the best decisions they could. The sole dissenter on a decision can still make that decision better even if they do not vote yes.

Council Member Rogers asked Mr. Steele to describe a time when he realized he was the problem and how he grew from it. Mr. Steele stated that he does not get upset easily, but his teenage son can push his buttons. It has been a learning process to learn how to stay calm, address his concerns, carefully listen to him, and treat him with respect. He has worked on being able to address things with respect even when he finds it upsetting.

Council Member LeMone asked Mr. Steele why he is the most qualified candidate for the City Council. Mr. Steele stated that he likes to plan and think things through. He researches, learns, and digs into the details and numbers. He spends a lot of his life finding money for cities and helping them obtain approvals to build things they need for their citizens, and he would like to use that expertise for Pleasant Grove. In response to a follow-up question, he indicated that he obtains money through grant writing and similar efforts. His biggest find as an archaeologist was an obsidian pendant that was found near Kanab. His favorite project was the Olmsted Hydroelectric Plant at the mouth of Provo Canyon.

Council Member Williams asked why Mr. Steele chose to submit an application now. Mr. Steele stated that his children are old enough that they do not need him around as much and may not want him around as much. He has more time out of the house. He is also at a place in his career where he has more time, and he has been looking for somewhere new to volunteer. He volunteers at the library but would like to do more service.

Joe Goff stated that he is a long-time resident of Pleasant Grove. His five children have all gone to school in the City, and his wife teaches at American Heritage School. He has coached for many years at the Recreation Center. He believes he is the best person for the position because he attends City Council meetings and has learned their vision and goals. His vision works hand-in-hand with theirs, and he knows he can be an asset to the City. He has owned businesses since 2000 and has dealt with all kinds of people, including employees and disgruntled homeowners. His number-one goal is safety. There have been issues with safety at intersections near schools, and he believes the crosswalks need blinking lights. His company was a contractor for Cook Family Park and installed the safety signs there.

Council Member Williams asked how Mr. Goff balances confidence in his views with humility and openness to listen to others. Mr. Goff stated that he has been a member of Business Network International (“BNI”) since 2012 and was a director there for almost five years. He learned how to deal with different kinds of people from different businesses there.

Council Member Andersen asked about Mr. Goff’s other priorities after safety and crosswalks. Mr. Goff stated that he would like to see better communication with residents. He has heard about issues over the past few years, like the fact that if a property does not have horses for six months, they lose their animal rights. He would like more walkable neighborhood parks.

Council Member Rogers asked when Mr. Goff realized he had a preconceived notion that was not true and how he learned from that experience. Mr. Goff stated that at BNI, people like to jump to bigger chapters with bigger groups. He believed someone wanted to leave chapters for this reason, but he later realized she had good reasons for the move and ended up being a good fit in his chapter.

Council Member LeMone asked Mr. Goff what his biggest challenge would be as a Council Member. Mr. Goff stated that his challenge would be patience. He often sees people posting aggressive comments on Instagram and Facebook directed at the City Council. He wishes those people would talk face-to-face because you can work things out if you look each other in the eye without being rude. He would like to do something similar to Mayor Jensen and have weekly open office hours.

Geoff Gregson stated that his family moved to Pleasant Grove 10 years ago and instantly knew it was where they were supposed to be. He has six children and no grandchildren. He has lived all over the country and met a lot of people, but some of the best people he knows live in Pleasant Grove. He spent many years in information technology and wireless communications, where he built and led teams that worked with large organizations. His job was to understand their issues, ask good questions, and solve their problems. He would like to bring that ability to listen, understand, and come up with good solutions to the City. He is passionate about emergency preparedness, ham radio, beekeeping, blacksmithing, fishing, and gardening. He has an MBA, has owned several businesses, and has worked with cities both personally and professionally. When communities work together and listen to each other, things move forward well. When government does whatever it wants, it creates frustration and division.

Council Member LeMone asked Mr. Gregson why he is the most qualified candidate for the City Council. Mr. Gregson stated that he has worked with cities a lot and has a lot of experience with both good and not-so-good city councils and mayors. He hopes to bring that experience to help make things better in Pleasant Grove.

Council Member Rogers asked Mr. Gregson to talk about a time when he was frustrated with his inability to get a project to go in the direction he wanted, or when his superior changed its direction. Mr. Gregson stated that you have to dig in, ask questions, and understand why your boss wants it to go that way, and if it would be best for the organization. If he makes a better case, hopefully it will go his way. If he believes they made a better case, he will change his mind. If his boss overrides him, he will just get it done.

~~Council Member Andersen asked Mr. Gregson to expound on his specific emergency management goals. Mr. Gregson stated that he would like there to be more community involvement. For example, the City could sponsor emergency preparedness fairs with the Community Emergency Response Team ("CERT") organizations. Pleasant Grove is in an earthquake zone, and there needs to be a plan for the next one. He does not know if the City has a plan, as he could not find one on the website.~~

Council Member Williams asked how Mr. Gregson stays informed on City matters like the budget and long-term planning goals. Mr. Gregson stated that he had not stayed informed on those issues until recently. Only in the last few months has he started to think about how he can give back and use the skills he has developed over the years. He used to be involved in social media but realized that it was not for him. He looks at websites and speaks to people, but he would rather sit down face-to-face and discuss issues than read about them.

Kristina Fontana stated that she was excited about the opportunity to potentially represent her friends and neighbors in Pleasant Grove. She has worked with the City Council for over 10 years on the Pleasant Grove Arts Commission and is grateful to Council Member LeMone for pointing her in that direction. She has been a change manager in the high-tech industry for over 14 years, focusing on transformational change. She also worked as a project manager with Cisco and Trellix, understanding their needs and then creating and implementing strategies to help them succeed and hit their targets. The world is in upheaval. A friend of hers visited with Representative Mike Kennedy, and she told her that he was very apologetic, but nothing would change. She thought it was sad that that is how government is. She is excited for the opportunity to be a voice to actually listen and get things done. One of her superpowers is connecting with people and making them feel heard, and she hoped to get the opportunity to do that on the Council.

Mayor Jensen asked about Ms. Fontana's vision for the City. Ms. Fontana stated that she wants Pleasant Grove to be a place people think of when they want recreational facilities, arts, restaurants, and parks. She also wants it to be a safe place to live, and the City is doing a great job of that.

Council Member Andersen asked for Ms. Fontana's suggestions to improve communication between citizens and the City Council. Ms. Fontana stated that change succeeds or fails on transparency and awareness of what is happening. You have to actively use all communication channels, including social media, newsletters, open office hours, and one-on-one meetings. Not everyone will see a social media post or read a meeting agenda. Someone spoke about the City's road safety efforts at the last City Council meeting, but she did not know how residents would find out about it.

Council Member Rogers asked how Ms. Fontana would address an injustice she witnessed. Ms. Fontana stated that when she sees someone sitting by themselves or who has been ostracized, she seeks them out. It is important to make sure that everyone feels heard and validated and that they have a voice, even if it is through her.

Council Member LeMone asked Ms. Fontana why she is the most qualified candidate for the City Council. Ms. Fontana stated that because of her experience as a change manager, she looks at problems differently. She has also been a real estate investor for over 17 years, so she understands the laws and concerns about affordable housing. Because she now owns a consulting business, she has the time and flexibility to devote to the City Council. She is also a mom and has learned to manage her family.

Niels Fugal stated that he was impressed by the talent and desire to serve shown by his fellow applicants. He is grateful that the City Council is always fully attentive when citizens speak and always wants the best for them. People just want to be heard and understood, and that can diffuse a lot of pent-up energy about the issues they think need to be solved. He has been a commercial real estate broker for over 40 years. After graduating from Brigham Young University, he moved to California for a job. He has also lived in Texas. He has encountered many different opinions. He believes it is important in contracts and for a City to stay out of legal hot water, and no contract he has been party to has been involved in a lawsuit. He believes that is because he spells out all the details of each contract so all parties know exactly what is going on. He has not previously thought of running for office because the City Council has done such a great job.

Council Member Williams asked what kind of reputation Mr. Fugal would like to have as a Council member. Mr. Fugal stated that he would like to be seen as affable and someone who listens. If someone is being critical of him, he has learned to step outside himself and view the interaction from that perspective. That often gives him a new understanding. He wants to be part of the solution and create an environment where people can express themselves and be understood.

Council Member Rogers asked what Mr. Fugal would hope to accomplish during the two-year term. Mr. Fugal stated that he would like to focus on economic growth. The City is landlocked in terms of retail sales tax. Lindon has more raw ground that can be developed in that way. He would like to see more high-end retail to bring more money into the coffers. He would also like to analyze the budget against revenues and find ways to create more revenue.

Council Member LeMone asked Mr. Fugal why he is the most qualified candidate for the City Council. Mr. Fugal responded that it is his depth and breadth of experience in dealing with people, connecting and solving problems so that it is as much of a win-win as possible.

Denise Trickler stated that she has lived in Pleasant Grove for 17 years and raised her four boys in the City. She has worked at Grovecrest Elementary School for six years and really enjoys working with children in the community. Her life has been about volunteering. She has volunteered in the school, community, and City. She served on the committee to rebuild Discovery Park, as a precinct delegate, and on the Historic Preservation Commission for the past seven years. She played a key role in creating the summer walking tours and always takes part in the Heritage Days Festival and Victorian Christmas celebration. She has also served on different school councils and has been a Planning Commissioner for two years. For the last 10 years, she has regularly attended City Council meetings to find out what is going on in the community. Her experience has taught her how the City operates and the importance of thoughtful, informed decision-making. She hopes to serve the community more as a City Council Member because she cares deeply about Pleasant Grove's future.

Council Member Andersen asked what Ms. Trickler would be excited about tackling. Ms. Trickler stated that school children's safety is a big concern. She would love to see sidewalks and crosswalks on the main roads where children walk to school. Children are the future, and they need to be protected.

~~Council Member Williams asked how Ms. Trickler would decide between two good options. Ms. Trickler stated that she would get feedback from other people. On the Planning Commission, there are always two good options. She listens to what her fellow Commissioners have to say. The Historic Preservation Commission wants to do so much, but there is little time or money to do it. You have to listen to the community and your colleagues.~~

Council Member Rogers asked how Ms. Trickler would deal with a bully. Ms. Trickler stated she is a peacemaker who finds it hard to deal with bullies. She usually steps back and lets them do their thing, then tries to find a workaround. She does not like confrontation. However, on the Planning Commission, she has been able to stand up, say no, and speak to what she thinks is best.

Council Member LeMone asked Ms. Trickler why she is the most qualified candidate for the City Council. Ms. Trickler stated that there are a lot of good people in the City, so she did not know if she

was the most qualified. She was impressed by how many people want to serve in the position. She believes that all the time she has put in with the City gives her a good chance.

Council Member Williams asked what residents want most from the City Council. Ms. Trickler stated that they want to be heard and feel like their opinions matter.

Eleesha Tucker expressed her appreciation for her fellow applicants' civic engagement. She is currently a program director and constitutional literacy fellow at the Center for Constitutional Studies at Utah Valley University. For most of her career, she has taught about the American Revolution and Constitution, helping people understand the founding principles and how the current generations can carry those principles forward and respond to modern challenges. She has worked with budgets and people in nonprofit leadership. She also worked for the Charles Koch Institute, teaching about market-based management and training young professionals in nonprofit leadership to think like business leaders. She is especially interested in the Council's responsibility for state-mandated middle-income housing. She recently purchased a home in Pleasant Grove. They love the City and hope their property value continues to grow. However, she is concerned about negotiations around the smart growth strategy, overflow with Lehi, and opportunities with Silicon Slopes. She has heard Governor Cox say that we want our children to live near us, not with us, and without smart growth strategies, children will be priced out of the area.

Mayor Jensen asked about a founding principle that could be used today. Ms. Tucker stated that she just taught a class about George Washington, who is the model of civic virtue for Americans. He modeled himself after Roman leader Cincinnatus. Cincinnatus laid aside his personal ambition; he took power in Rome at a time of crisis and could have retained that position as a dictator. Instead, he stepped down and retired. Throughout the Revolutionary War, George Washington always deferred to Congress. He could have been in a position to aggrandize himself, and at the end of the war, people wanted him to be king. Instead, he retired to show that Congress was more important than his position. He put the good of the community ahead of naked self-interest.

Council Member LeMone asked Ms. Tucker why she is the most qualified candidate for the City Council. Ms. Tucker stated that the current Council has served for a long time and done great work. She would bring the perspective of the community's growing constituency of newly established people. She is civically engaged, has leadership experience, and can bring that perspective without sacrificing the City's historic nature, quality, and character.

Council Member Rogers asked about the most unfair criticism Ms. Tucker feels she has received. Ms. Tucker stated that she has a nonprofit that teaches about citizenship and the right of conscience through the lens of the religion clause of the First Amendment. She specifically teaches public school teachers to navigate religion in a constitutional way. She has been accused of teaching critical race theory because some of the content discusses the Constitutional Convention and founding fathers' compromises around slavery. She has also been accused of teaching religion at the expense of LGBTQ+ rights. She believes it is important to stand by the framework, which is the Constitution, and navigate that diversity of opinion. We live in a pluralistic society; we will not all be the same, but we can live together under a constitutional framework.

Council Member Williams asked how Ms. Tucker would bring constitutional knowledge back into the City and homes. Ms. Tucker stated that the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence

will occur this summer, and there is a lot of public programming around that event. She believes there will naturally be more of an awareness about it. It is important to help people be aware of the kind of media they consume and whether it is trying to make them angry because if it is, it is probably manipulating them. Everyone needs to have the perspective that they are all citizens and they all have a voice, and someone else's can be very different from your own. We can advocate for our perspectives, but the Constitution is designed to create the space to live out our consciences and find unity. The City Council and other governments help us to find where that unity will be, but the City and State levels do a better job of that.

Dustin Phillips stated that the City Council had a tough decision to make, and he did not think they could go wrong no matter their choice. He has lived in Pleasant Grove for 20 years and served the community on the Library Board, Board of Adjustment, and Planning Commission. In addition to his community commitment, he has experience in both the corporate and nonprofit worlds. For the last six years, he has been part of the executive team of a local community bank that recently built its headquarters on State Street. They are committed to the community, creating jobs, helping build the tax base, and bringing vibrancy to that area of State Street. As a corporate executive, you have to be able to make tough decisions. No decision is black and white, and sometimes people are hurt or offended. You have to deliver difficult decisions in ways that bring continuity and unity and provide creative solutions that better the organization. He believes decisions should be made based on the long-term greater good, but sometimes people give up that long-term view for short-term gains. Pleasant grove is facing significant challenges in growth, building tax revenue, traffic, and safety. It is impossible to solve everything, but those needs must be balanced and creative ways must be found to make the City's resources go as far as they can and bring the community together in the process.

Council Member Andersen asked Mr. Phillips what he is excited about moving forward. Mr. Phillips stated that there are a lot of safety issues involved with growth, and a number of things can be done to make the City safer. Water resources, traffic, and congestion also need to be addressed. He believes it is a matter of continuing to help Pleasant Grove be the kind of community where people want to be. When he ran for City Council six years ago, he was called a socialist because he wanted to provide benefits to the community, especially its underserved and less privileged. For example, the library is a great community resource that requires government funding but fills a social need to provide internet access, books, tutoring, and other necessary services. Being able to look at the community's needs and find ways to make it a great place to be are two of his goals.

Council Member Rogers asked what conflict brings out in Mr. Phillips. Mr. Phillips stated that conflict can get loud, but a technique for diffusing it is to ensure that the loudest people are acknowledged and heard. He believes everyone has good intentions and pure motives, and sometimes just knowing that you have been heard can help tone things down. For him, it is a matter of stepping back and asking how he can hear and understand them better. When people recognize that you are seeking to understand them, they are much more open to finding a middle ground. You have to be willing to step back and think about what you may be doing to elevate the conflict and what you can do to help diffuse it instead.

Council Member Williams asked what position Mr. Phillips plays on a team. Mr. Phillips stated that positions evolved. He has significant experience serving in different capacities at the City and nonprofit groups, but he has never sat in Council Member Williams' chair. Being a listener and observer initially is very important so you can assess the situation and needs from a position of quiet.

That then evolves into giving a voice. He threw his hat in the ring because he believes he has valuable opinions that can complement those of the current Council members. Over time, he hopes to take more of a leadership role. When he started on the Planning Commission, Peter Steele was a fantastic mentor. He was incredibly knowledgeable and a great leader in that role. A few year later, Mr. Phillips became the Chair. He will bring his experience and background, but he will step back and learn rather than assume he knows everything.

Matthew Davis stated that he moved to Pleasant Grove from Minnesota after he left the military. He wanted to live in a place with good neighbors and that was safe to raise his children. He has coached youth football and wrestling for 12 years. He thought about getting into politics in the past, and his wife encouraged him to apply when the opportunity presented itself. He loves the community and plans to live here for the rest of his life, and he would like to have a say in how it grows. He was raised to serve. His father was a police officer and served in Vietnam, and his grandfather served in the Navy in World War II. He has not served outside the schools and would like to get involved and help other people in the community.

Council Member LeMone asked Mr. Davis why he is the most qualified candidate for the City Council. Mr. Davis stated that there were many qualified candidates, but his greatest ability is the ability to cut to the heart of an issue. In even the craziest of situations, he can identify the problem and overcome it. He was in many different scenarios in Special Operations that required quick thinking, and that will help him get to the heart of the issue so they can figure out the best solution together.

Council Member Rogers asked about a time when Mr. Davis held a minority opinion and how he advocated for his position. Mr. Davis stated that clear and concise communication is the key. If we cannot explain our position, we cannot expect anyone to understand us. We also have to listen to other people and hear what they have to say so we can understand where they are coming from. That is the only way to reach common ground. People often get caught up in debate instead of entering into dialogue and finding a solution together. When there is a disagreement within a group, the majority determines the outcome.

Council Member Andersen asked what Mr. Davis is excited about tackling. Mr. Davis stated that he does not have a specific agenda. He would like to get to know each Council Member and the issues the City is dealing with, then find the best solutions together. It is a team effort.

Council Member Williams asked what position Mr. Davis plays on a team. Mr. Davis stated that he plays whatever position is needed. He does not need to be the leader. He prefers to be the top contributor and give everything he has to each situation. He believes he brings good experience and perspective to the table.

Mayor Jensen thanked the candidates. It was an amazing process that showed what Pleasant Grove is all about.

Administrator Darrington explained the ballot process. Each City Council Member would have one vote by secret ballot. Mayor Jensen would not vote. The Council Member would write down their candidate of choice, and their votes would be collected by City Recorder, Wendy Thorpe. City Attorney, Christine Petersen, would witness as Recorder Thorpe counted the votes. Attorney Petersen

would then announce the results. If a single candidate had three or more votes, they would be the nominee. He then reviewed scenarios and processes for other outcomes.

Mayor Jensen thanked everyone who applied. They had 16 great candidates, and it was a hard decision. Council Member Williams encouraged the candidates to run in the future.

The ballots were collected and counted. Recorder Thorpe reported that the vote was 2-1-1.

The first three nominations were as follows:

- Dustin Phillips – two votes
- Peter Steele – one vote
- Matthew Davis – one vote

Administrator Darrington reported that all other candidates had been eliminated from future consideration. In a 2-1-1 vote, the City Council may choose to conduct a new round of questioning, which would be conducted in reverse order. After the round of questioning, the City Council would vote again amongst the three candidates. If one candidate received three or more votes, they would be selected for appointment. If two candidates received two votes, Mayor Jensen would make the tie-breaking vote. If the results did not change, the candidate with two votes would advance, and a coin flip would determine which of the other two candidates would be eliminated prior to a third vote. If the results of that vote were a tie, the Mayor would cast the tie-breaking vote.

In response to a question raised by Mayor Jensen, Administrator Darrington clarified that the rules are per State law and City ordinance.

The candidates were invited to speak again for five minutes each.

Matthew Davis

Council Member Rogers asked which group of residents would be unhappy with the positions and priorities he supports and why he is willing to take the blame. Mr. Davis stated that it would be the criminal element because he likes a safe environment.

Council Member LeMone asked how his military experience would translate to the City Council. ~~Mr. Davis stated that communication is key in both. In the military, if you say the wrong thing, someone could die. Being able to get to the heart of the issue and communicate is his greatest asset, and he believes it will work well on the City Council.~~

Council Member Andersen asked about his availability. Mr. Davis stated that he is a disabled veteran, and his only current commitment was to the wrestling team. He was willing to commit as much time as necessary.

Council Member Williams asked about something he is actively working on to improve himself. Mr. Davis stated that he is working to give back to the community and be an example for his wrestlers, children, and grandchildren.

Dustin Phillips

Council Member Williams asked what helps him stay grounded. Mr. Phillips stated that recognizing his own faults and working to address them keeps him grounded. This year, he is working on his spirituality.

Council Member Rogers asked him to describe a specific problem he believes the City has under-addressed and what change, policy, or budget action he would propose to address it. Mr. Phillips stated that it is not the City's fault because efforts have been made to address it, but the roads were a major issue that was held up by lawsuits for a number of years. Efforts were made to generate funds to solve the problems, but litigation caused them to be unattended for quite a while.

Council Member LeMone asked how he would communicate with residents if elected. Mr. Phillips stated that Council Member LeMone does a good job of communicating on social media to keep residents informed. Mayor Jensen's open-door policy and activities with the Chamber of Commerce are also helpful. He is not active on social media, but he is very engaged with the business community and will connect in person to give business owners a voice.

Peter Steele

Council Member LeMone asked what sets him apart from the other remaining candidates. Mr. Steele stated that he and Mr. Phillips have similar backgrounds with the City, but he has a depth of knowledge about Pleasant Grove. He has spent the past 10 years thinking about what the City does well and what could be done better.

Council Member Andersen asked what he would like Pleasant Grove to be known for in 50 years. Mr. Steele stated that he wants Pleasant Grove to be the best place to live in Utah, the most walkable city with the best restaurants and art scene.

Council Member Williams asked about his leadership style. Mr. Steele stated that he has a collaborative leadership style. He wants the people to work for him to understand why he is asking them to do things because people need information to make good decisions and be properly motivated. He includes the people who work for him in discussions about what will happen so they can make decisions together.

Council Member Rogers asked what major priority he would like to accomplish in the next two years and what he is willing not to pursue in order to accomplish it. Mr. Steele stated that he would like to double the miles of sidewalk and trails in the City, and he would give up an indoor pool for that.

The second round of voting was conducted by secret ballot. The results were as follows:

- Dustin Phillips – three votes
- Peter Steele – one vote

Administrator Darrington reported that Dustin Phillips was the nominee and would be sworn in at the February 3, 2026, City Council Meeting.

Mayor Jensen thanked the candidates and City Council for participating in the Special Meeting.

Council Member LeMone stated that having been on the Council for 13 years, she knows the amount of time and effort it requires to serve. It takes a lot of courage to put your name out there, and she appreciates the candidates' willingness to do so. This was the most candidates she has ever seen, and she would love to see them run in a general election to give the people of Pleasant Grove the opportunity to vote on who their next Council Member or Mayor will be. She also hopes that they find other ways to serve in the community.

Council Member Rogers expressed his gratitude to the citizens of Pleasant Grove for stepping up. There have been times when the City did not even have an election because there were not enough candidates. They had 16 overly qualified candidates, any of whom he would have been happy to serve and work with. Pleasant Grove is a community that cares for each other and wants its residents to feel safe, accepted, and heard. He hopes that the candidates carry on with their conviction to the City and for resolving conflicts with them. He was inspired by their willingness to serve, qualifications, and support of each other. They represent the best of the community.

Council Member Andersen stated that it was a joy to read through the packet. She is sad that she has not been friends with all the candidates but hopes for the opportunity to do so. She was impressed with every one of them and is grateful to have been part of the process.


Council Member Williams stated that he was humbled by how many qualified candidates there were, from educators to veterans to doctors and scholars. It was a difficult decision, and he would like all 16 candidates to serve in some capacity. Serving is sometimes lonely, but it is quietly satisfying to improve the City you love. It is a pleasure to serve Pleasant Grove, and having so many people who want and are qualified to serve makes the City better. He thanked the candidates for being neighbors and friends.

Mayor Jensen asked the candidates to reach out to him at mayor@pgcityutah.gov so they can speak about how to make the community better together.

6) **ADJOURNMENT**

ACTION: At 8:34 p.m. Council Member Andersen moved to ADJOURN. Council Member Rogers seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Council Members Andersen, Rogers, LeMone, and Williams voting "Aye."

The City Council Minutes of January 27, 2026, were approved by the City Council on March 24, 2026.



Wendy Thorpe, CMC
City Recorder

