

Bluff Town Council Work Session Approved Minutes

Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at 4:00 pm MDT

In Person

Bluff Community Center Building
190 N 3rd E Street, Bluff, UT 84512

Virtual Meeting

via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/92499673928>
via Phone: 7193594580, 92499673928#

4:01pm Meeting Called to Order and Roll Call

Town Council: Mayor Josh Ewing, Jennifer Davila, Gary Haws (4:08pm), Britt Hornsby, Spencer Wade

Staff: Erin Nelson, Malia Collins, Michael Haviken

Unfinished Business

1. Review Comments from Public Hearings on the Proposed Amendments to FY2025-2026 Budget and Amendments to the Master Fee Schedule (4:02pm): No additional public comments have been received, will remain open until Friday, April 17 at 5:00pm. Discussion & Vote to approve at next meeting, April 21, 2026.

New Business

2. Vialytics Report Out and FY2027 Budget Comments/Requests from the Roads Department

(Haviken) (4:03pm): Haviken began with defining Vialytics, an AI program that Jones & DeMille Engineers use to first evaluate the roads in town then spell out price estimates & time phasing for repairs and upgrades. Pavement Management Plan contains all streets with details of: planned year (of repair), area, width, length, cost to repair and life extension. Haviken emphasized that this is a helpful tool for setting goals, he plans to segment out projects and present them to the County Transportation Board for matching funds. FY27 Roads budget request includes: Road Maintenance on Bluff Bench Road & Improvements on 5th East (Hwy 191 to Black Locust), Sagebrush (Recycled Asphalt) & Mulberry, 4th E, 3rd E & Black Locust (Chip Sealing). Recommendation to look at 3rd E near 191 & Black Locust/7th E. The roads budget will be a set amount and each line item is less strict, but must equal the total Roads Expenses. Projected Road C Revenues are ~\$25,000 less than Haviken has budgeted.

3. Discuss FY2026-2027 Budget Draft (4:21pm): Nelson shared a presentation of how the budget is created, including property taxes, which Ewing introduced the discussion of increase. Ewing emphasized that opening discussion around the potential increase now is to ensure transparency and that council and residents alike have plenty of time to ask questions and understand the reasoning. It is a long process in which all will learn many things along the way. Ewing explained that property taxes are collected at a set amount (Bluff is ~\$30,000/year) and that they do not increase annually unless approved for increase. Therefore, if the assessed value of a property goes up, the amount Town receives does not. Primary Residences in Utah are taxed at 55% of the assessed value of home & Secondary Residences are taxed at 100% of the assessed value. Utah taxes are Revenue-based vs Percentage-based, we collect the same total amount as opposed to a percentage from each resident. Nelson explained the slide showing the current property valuation of Bluff has increased from \$24.7M in 2021 to over \$60M in 2025. As a result of not raising property taxes, Bluff has been collecting less of each assessed dollar & ultimately decreased individual taxes for bluff specific things. The recommendation is to increase property taxes by ~\$50,000 annually (total \$83,000/year) and allocate the increase to Public Safety, including an Emergency Service Part Time position, Equipment & Supplies and Maintenance/Operational Expenses. Running preliminary numbers, if currently paying ~\$70/year for Bluff Property Taxes, they will increase to ~\$160/year. Specific figures will be shared with residents in May, if change is pursued.

Bluff's other options: additional 1% Transient Room Taxes (implemented), ZAP (Zoo, Arts & Parks) Sales tax (wouldn't increase revenues by a substantial amount), Additional Fees (must be tied to a service). Additional Personnel Considerations: Part-time Minute Taker/Document Specialist to assist with ADA Compliance; Health Insurance for Full-time staff & Retirement Benefits for Full-time & Part-time staff; Maintenance Position at 20-30 hours/month (1099 to ensure they provide equipment). Projects: Increased funding for Business Owners of Bluff (BOBs); Way Finding Project – suggested by BOB's – a friendly and creative way to guide visitors to businesses and town buildings while potentially keeping them in town; Dark Sky Program – initial idea to provide resources to residents and businesses to come into compliance with Ordinance – small investment to move toward Dark Sky Goals. Capital Projects that are possible in FY2027: Solar Panel Install at Bluff Community Center ~\$125K - a way to use the Generator Grant to create a plug in for mobile generator and panels, rough estimate that includes wiring work and potential roof repairs; additional funding for Secondary Water Project ~\$95K. FY2027 Budget, Column I 'yellow highlights' are items discussed today and public comments received.

Discussion not to adjust the budget to meet the ~\$25,000 Roads deficit budget request unless there is excess later in the year. Nelson mentioned a comment made to her from a member of the Transportation Board over concerns for Bluff's values and stance on Oil & Gas and the risk it puts us in for receiving funds. Ewing responds that there is a difference to supporting fracking above the aquifer our water is coming out of and a general stance. Also, Bluff Volunteer Fire Department regularly responds to Oil & Gas calls and supports the safety of the site and workers. Hornsby observed that a comment of that nature is unconstitutional, it is a first amendment right to speak without repercussions, specifically to receiving funds and budgeting. Nelson spoke briefly on a meeting with Jeremy Hoggard, EMS Director of a proposed County-wide 1% Sales Tax to support EMS, Hoggard to present this the first meeting of May.

4. Discuss Truth in Taxation Process for Property Taxes and Review Preliminary Calculations(spoken about during #3) Truth in Taxation Process: Multiple steps which requires a lot of transparency. Notification to State by June 1 that the change is being pursued. County Assessor and Bluff work together to share tax bill increases with the public showing the cost with increase and without. A separate public hearing (that does not conflict with any public entity's public hearing in SJC) is held in August, while Bluff operates off a preliminary budget (approved in June) awaiting approval in August. Clarification that new property assessments are not a requirement or part of the Truth in Taxation Process. Reminder that Bluff is on SJC Assessors list for updated property assessments, there is a chance that they could both occur in the same year by coincidence. Nelson to inquire when Bluff is anticipated to be assessed. Davila supports regular gentle incremental increases of taxes versus a large increase less often.

5. Discuss Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) (5:21pm): Bluff has a list that has never been allocated, previously discussed to allocate the funds to projects, review of the allocation proposal. Ewing encourages Council to review list. To be discussed at another meeting with the recommendation to add things to the list that may not be on the radar. One question Ewing is hoping to have answered for next week: how specific does the project name need to be? Possible addition: Hosting Utah Navajo Fair.

6. Create Plan to Address Digital ADA Compliance Laws taking effect April of 2027 (5:29pm): If in budget with notetaker position, this would be a great way to meet the need. Skills required for notetaker position are similar to those for ADA Compliance.

7. Other/Adjourn (5:30pm): International Dark Sky Week!
Adjourned at 5:31pm

For requests to receive emails/meeting invitations, email office@townofbluffutah.gov

Minute Taker: Malia Collins

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