

CITY OF OREM  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
56 North State Street Orem, Utah  
March 10, 2026

**3:00 P.M. WORK SESSION - CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM**

CONDUCTING	Mayor Karen McCandless
ELECTED OFFICIALS	Karen McCandless, Crystal Muhlestein, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett, Quinn Mecham, Chris Killpack
APPOINTED STAFF	Brenn Bybee, City Manager; Ryan Clark, Assistant City Manager; Steve Earl, City Attorney; Chris Tschirki, Public Works Director; Bryce Merrell, Library and Recreation Director; Brandon Nelson, Finance Director; BJ Robinson, Police Chief; Gary McGinn, Community Development Director; Peter Wolfley, Communications Manager, PIO; Teresa McKittrick, City Recorder

**NOTE: The referenced report and presentation documents for each discussion may be viewed at [orem.gov/meetings](http://orem.gov/meetings) under “City Council Presentations”**

**WORK SESSION ITEMS**

**Water Reuse and Nutrient Removal Facility Ribbon Cutting**

The City Council and City staff attended the Water Reuse and Nutrient Removal Facility Ribbon Cutting. This facility allows for water reuse at Lakeside Sports Park, Springwater Park, and Sleepy Ridge Golf course. This was approved on July 23, 2003 for up to 9,600 acre-feet per year of reuse water. This will reduce potable water demand and promote sustainable growth.

**HomeServeUSA Waterline Insurance Presentation** *Presenter: Steve Bieranowski, HomeServeUSA Manager of Partner Success*

Mr. Nelson introduced Mr. Baranowski. He explained the partnership that has existed since 2015, aimed at educating residents on their specific utility responsibilities. Mr. Baranowski explained that many homeowners are unaware that they are financially responsible for the water and sewer lines running between their homes and the city’s main connections. This often leads to "unfortunate conversations" at City Hall when unexpected line breaks occur. To mitigate this, the program offers optional, low-cost coverage—currently \$4.07 per month for water lines and \$6.57 for sewer lines—with no deductibles, no service charges, and no annual coverage caps. This includes full line replacements to meet federal guidelines, which is particularly relevant for Orem’s aging infrastructure where pipes often reach their life expectancy after 20 to 30 years.

The program's success in Orem is evidenced by a high 90% retention rate among the 2,500 active customers, which is significantly above the industry average of 75%. To date, the program has completed over 1,200 claims in Orem, saving residents a total of \$1.7 million. Mr. Baranowski also introduced "HomeServe Cares," a charitable foundation that provides no-cost emergency repairs for low-income residents who are not currently enrolled in the program. He maintained that the partnership remains a high-value, no-cost asset to the city, as the company handles all marketing and administrative expenses while maintaining a 4.82 out of 5 customer satisfaction rating.

The council's discussion focused on the educational value of the partnership and the physical reality of Orem's aging neighborhoods. Council members noted seeing "chain reactions" of line failures in subdivisions built 40 to 50 years ago, confirming the need for such protection. While the city last sent a direct mailer to residents in 2021, the council expressed interest in revitalizing communication through social media and the city website ([orem.gov/serviceline](http://orem.gov/serviceline)). City officials reaffirmed their support for the program, noting that it provides a proactive solution for residents and reduces the friction often caused when homeowners mistakenly expect the city to pay for private-side repairs.

**Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG) Presentation** *Presenter: Bob Allen and Kevin Feldt, MAG Representatives*

Mayor McCandless introduced the presentation by emphasizing the critical nature of regional collaboration, noting that MAG serves as the primary forum for Orem to access federal and state transportation funding. Mr. Allen explained that as an Association of Governments, MAG focuses on three core areas: aging services, community and economic development, and transportation planning. Specifically, because Utah County has an urban population exceeding 50,000, it is federally mandated to operate as a Metropolitan Planning Organization. This designation allows MAG to manage the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), a long-range blueprint looking out to 2055, and the Transportation Improvement Program, which acts as a five-year capital facilities plan where actual project funding is allocated. Allen clarified that for a project to receive any state or federal money, it must first be included in the RTP, which in turn relies on being part of Orem's own Master Transportation Plan.

The technical breakdown of funding revealed a significant gap between massive state-level projects and local city needs. While the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) manages billions for major freeways and interchanges, MAG administers a smaller "missing middle" pot of approximately \$110 million every two years. This fund is designed for regionally significant roads that are too expensive for a single city to fund but are not high-profile enough for UDOT's primary budget. Recent and upcoming Orem projects mentioned as examples of this partnership include the Lakeview Parkway, the new roundabout at 1200 South and 400 West, and the planned widening of Center Street between I-15 and Geneva Road. Mr. Feldt noted that these plans must remain "fiscally constrained," meaning the cost of proposed projects cannot exceed the projected tax revenues for the 2055 horizon.

The City Council raised concerns about increasing traffic congestion stemming from neighboring growth, specifically citing the Provo Canyon commute and the impact of the new Lindon Temple on Orem's 400 West. Mr. Allen acknowledged that transportation is a "long game," and because funding is often committed five to six years in advance, early identification of these "fires" is essential to avoid playing catch-up. The discussion also pivoted to emerging technologies, such as the proliferation of electric bikes on regional trails like the Murdock Canal and the potential for autonomous vehicles to increase road capacity. MAG officials expressed their intent to facilitate a "Regional Growth Forum" where Orem and its neighbors can create unified regulations for micromobility and air mobility. The presentation concluded with a reminder that MAG staff meets monthly with Orem's engineering team to ensure the city's infrastructure remains a priority within the regional hierarchy.

**Know Your Force Presentation** *Presenter: Jeremy Jamison, Police Lieutenant*

This item will be moved to an upcoming meeting.

**CITY COUNCIL / STAFF REPORTS (BOARDS & COMMISSIONS, NEW BUSINESS, ETC.)**

**AGENDA REVIEW & PREVIEW OF UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS**

**ADJOURN TO A CLOSED SESSION IN THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE ROOM**

**To discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation; the character or professional competence of an individual; the purchase or lease of real property; or the deployment of security personnel, devices or systems**

**Ms. Gale moved** to adjourn to a closed meeting in the Summit conference room to discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation; the character or professional competence of an individual; the purchase or lease of real property; or the deployment of security personnel, devices or systems, **seconded** by Ms. Millett. Those voting yes: Karen McCandless, Chris Killpack, Crystal Muhlestein, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett and Quinn Mecham. The motion **passed**.

**6:00 P.M. REGULAR SESSION - COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

CONDUCTING

Mayor Karen McCandless

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Karen McCandless, Crystal Muhlestein, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett, Quinn Mecham, Chris Killpack

APPOINTED STAFF

Brenn Bybee, City Manager; Ryan Clark, Assistant City Manager; Steve Earl, City Attorney; Chris Tschirki, Public Works Director; Brandon Nelson, Finance Director; Marc

Sanderson, Fire Chief; BJ Robinson, Police Chief; Bryce Merrill, Library and Recreation Director; Gary McGinn, Community Development Director; Peter Wolfley, Communications Manager, PIO; Teresa McKitrick, City Recorder

## **CALL TO ORDER**

**INVOCATION / INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHT** – Jeff Madsen

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / FLAG CEREMONY** – Susan Madsen

## **MAYOR'S REPORT/ ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL**

**Water Reuse and Nutrient Removal Facility Ribbon Cutting Recap** *Presenter: Chris Tschirki, Public Works Director and Reed Price, Assistant Public Works Director*

Mr. Tschirki and Mr. Price presented the culmination of a vision 25 years in the making, celebrating a monumental ribbon-cutting ceremony held earlier that day. The facility serves a dual purpose: treating wastewater for high-quality irrigation and removing harmful phosphorus to protect the health of Utah Lake. Historically, Orem's phosphorus discharge ranged from 1.5 to 4 milligrams per liter, but new state regulations effective January 1, 2026, mandate a drop to 1.0 mg/L or lower. The new facility not only meets this requirement but uses advanced filtering technology that can be scaled down to 0.1 mg/L if future regulations tighten. This initiative is a regional success, as the plant treats 100% of Lindon's wastewater and serves portions of Vineyard, with current plans for expansion in partnership with the Central Utah Water Conservancy District.

On the water reuse side, the facility allows the city to "use water twice," saving millions of gallons of precious culinary drinking water annually. The treated water is classified as "Type 1" reuse water, undergoing a rigorous double-disinfection process involving both UV light and chlorine injection. This recycled water will be used to irrigate the Sleepy Ridge Golf Course and Lakeside Sports Park, with Spring Water Park slated for future connection. Officials highlighted that this water is "drought-proof" because wastewater remains a constant resource, and it acts as a natural fertilizer by retaining beneficial nitrogen and phosphorus that would otherwise have to be manually added to city parks.

Financially, the project overcame significant hurdles after the COVID-19 pandemic caused costs to nearly double from an initial \$10 million estimate to a final total of \$21 million. To bridge this \$11 million gap, the city secured \$13.5 million in outside funding, including a \$7 million ARPA grant from the Utah County Commission, a \$3 million federal appropriation via Senator Curtis, and various grants from the Utah State Legislature and the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity. The remaining \$7.5 million was funded through bonding to be repaid by utility users. Council members expressed appreciation for the "forward-thinking" generations of

Orem leaders who laid the necessary piping decades ago, noting that this facility proves Orem is a leader in water conservation and infrastructure stewardship within the state.

**Employee Appreciation Day Presentation** *Presenter: Amy Peterson, HR Manager*

Ms. Peterson opened the presentation by reflecting on the previous Friday's national celebration, using the opportunity to publicly recognize the "incredible people" who maintain Orem's reputation as a clean and friendly city. She emphasized that much of the city's essential work occurs behind the scenes during early mornings and late nights, often escaping public notice despite its critical impact on the community's mission. Ms. Peterson noted that Orem's internal culture is frequently described by staff members coming from other organizations as truly unique and special, a sentiment she personally validated through a poignant account of her recent cancer diagnosis. She described an "overwhelming" outpouring of support from the "Orem family," which included flowers, gift baskets, and dinners brought to her family by city firefighters, proving that the dedication of Orem employees extends far beyond their official job descriptions.

Mayor McCandless and the City Council offered their own tributes to the municipal workforce. Mayor McCandless expressed her profound gratitude for the "amazing environment" created by the staff and offered her personal support for Ms. Peterson's ongoing treatments. Councilmember Gale, reflecting on her two years in office, remarked that she is continually struck by the excellence of the city staff, noting that the city moves so seamlessly that residents often don't realize how much effort is being exerted on their behalf. Councilmember Killpack concluded the remarks by characterizing the city's employees as a "blessing" to the community, stating that the strength of Orem's collection of families is built directly upon the culture of service and power demonstrated by those who work for the city.

## **CONSENT ITEMS**

**Meeting Minutes Approval** - February 24, 2026

**Mr. Killpack moved** to approve the February 24, 2026 City Council meeting minutes, **seconded** by Mr. Mecham. Those voting yes: Karen McCandless, Chris Killpack, Crystal Muhlestein, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett and Quinn Mecham. The motion **passed**.

## **PERSONAL APPEARANCES**

**Opened at 6:34 PM**

Leisha Ceddes urged the City Council to adopt a clear regulatory policy rather than an outright ban on short term rentals (STR), arguing that regulation provides the city with essential tools like licensing, inspections, and parking standards to manage "bad actors." She contrasted the well-maintained, quiet short-term rentals in her neighborhood with several neglected

long-term rentals. Ultimately, she advocated for a balanced approach that protects neighborhood character while allowing responsible homeowners to earn the supplemental income necessary to offset rising living costs.

Tauni Merrill supported short-term rental regulation, emphasizing that these properties generate a 14% tax revenue for the city and state while providing essential quiet housing for families and medical patients. She suggested that rather than a ban, the council should implement standards such as mandatory host training, residency requirements for owners, and strict guest limits. Ms. Merrill concluded that these proactive measures would ensure rentals remain a beneficial, well-managed community asset.

Kris Hammond urged the City Council to adopt objective regulations rather than a ban, noting that peer cities like Midway have successfully balanced property rights with occupancy and parking standards. She challenged the claim that short-term rentals deplete housing availability. Expressing concern over increasingly divisive local dialogue, Ms. Hammond called on the Council to reject "prejudice" and preserve Orem's "Family City, USA" spirit by allowing diverse housing options to coexist respectfully.

Jeff Gaufin urged the City Council to convert the decommissioned North Union Canal into a paved trail similar to the Murdock Canal. He noted that state and federal grants could cover up to 80% of costs if the project is added to the Regional Transportation Plan via MAG. Gaufin requested that the city immediately initiate feasibility talks with MAG and UDOT to secure a spot in the current statewide funding pipeline.

Dean York advocated for professional standards and occupancy limits rather than a ban on STRs. He challenged the "transient" argument by noting that high-turnover student apartments already dominate his neighborhood's demographics far more than small-scale rentals. Mr. York highlighted the emotional value of his property for renters.

Jeanette York shared how converting her duplex into a short-term rental provided vital retirement income after experiencing significant property damage from long-term tenants. She emphasized the local economic benefits. Ms. York shared testimonials from guests who described her rental as a high-quality "home base" that provides essential comfort during high-stress family events.

Zach Goulding urged the Council to convert the North Union Canal into a pedestrian pathway to improve safety for the 70+ students and parents who ride together weekly. He emphasized that a dedicated trail would foster student independence and alleviate "nightmare" parking at the City Center Park farmers market by encouraging bicycle commuting. Mr. Goulding offered his full support to help the city navigate the hurdles of creating this community connection.

Bennett Cookson warned that the decommissioned North Union Canal will become a neighborhood hazard unless converted into a safe pedestrian trail away from dangerous traffic on State Street. Regarding short-term rentals, he advocated for "well-regulated" rules over a ban, suggesting that the city require a local representative to address issues rather than strictly

requiring owner residency. This allows families with local ties to maintain productive, occupied homes in Orem rather than leaving properties vacant.

Shauna Mecham praised recent city safety improvements and described the decommissioning of the North Union Canal as a unique opportunity for a regional trail connection. While acknowledging that the project may require creative, interim solutions and long-term effort, she reminded the Council that Orem has successfully overcome similar hurdles before, as with the Murdock Canal. Ms. Mecham pledged Bike Orem's continued partnership to help navigate the complexities of this once-in-a-generation project.

Joshua Moore highlighted Orem's status as a "distance running Mecca," noting that the area attracts NCAA champions and Olympians. However, he pointed out that local high school teams are currently forced to train on dangerous city streets, risking their safety against distracted drivers. Mr. Moore urged the Council to convert the North Union Canal into a dedicated trail to provide a safe, connected training environment for the city's next generation of athletes.

Kim Poole shared how she and her daughter worked closely with city staff in 2021 to ensure their short-term rental plan was code-compliant, only to have the city later claim a "long-standing" prohibition existed. She criticized this "reactional" shift in leadership, noting that these rentals provide vital income against rising housing costs and fill Orem's hotel shortage. Ms. Poole argued for enforcing existing noise and parking laws rather than punishing responsible small business owners with a ban.

Laura Redford advocated for converting the North Union Canal into a trail, noting that the dry waterway will otherwise become a hazard for weeds and trash. She emphasized that a path would provide a safer route to Timpanogos High School and strengthen the city's active transportation network. Ms. Redford offered her support to help the city navigate the complexities of the project.

Cheryl Radmall voiced concerns about high-density short-term rentals, citing a neighboring Airbnb that houses up to 17 guests and causes constant street parking issues. She described how clusters of large-scale rentals near UVU are altering the neighborhood's character. Ms. Radmall also presented research from the *Harvard Business Review* on how such rentals can distort housing markets and increase displacement, urging the Council to consider the negative social and economic impacts of unregulated short-term housing.

Sarah Bateman supported converting the North Union Canal into a trail to boost community health and quality of life. Acknowledging mixed feelings among neighbors, she urged the Council to lead with "robust outreach" and creative problem-solving to ensure the project becomes a collaborative success.

Varden Hadfield praised Orem's recent trail investments and emphasized the safety benefits for riders with disabilities. While noting the excellence of regional trails like the Murdock, he pointed out the lack of a safe connection through Orem's city center. Mr. Hatfield urged the Council to convert the North Union Canal into a pathway, calling it a wise investment that could eventually link to the Provo River Trail.

**Closed at 7:23 PM**

## **SCHEDULED ITEMS**

### **Natural Resources Advisory Commission Appointment - Robert McFadden**

**Ms. Gale moved** to approve the appointment of Robert McFadden to the Natural Resources Advisory Commission, **seconded** by Mr. Killpack. Those voting yes: Karen McCandless, Chris Killpack, Crystal Muhlestein, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett and Quinn Mecham. The motion **passed**.

### **Natural Resources Advisory Commission Appointment - Tara Bishop**

**Ms. Millett moved** to table the appointment of Tara Bishop to the Natural Resources Advisory Commission, **seconded** by Mr. Muhlestein. Those voting yes: LaNae Millett, Crystal Muhlestein and Jeff Lambson. Those voting no: Karen McCandless, Chris Killpack, Jenn Gale and Quinn Mecham. The motion **did not pass**.

**Ms. Gale moved** to approve the appointment of Tara Bishop to the Natural Resources Advisory Commission, **seconded** by Mr. Mecham.

Councilmember Millett announced her opposition to a proposed board appointee, citing a lack of public decorum. She detailed an incident during a candidate debate at UVU where the individual reportedly interrupted her and required moderator intervention to restore order. Ms. Millett argued that city representatives must maintain a high standard of professionalism and respectful engagement regardless of political differences. She urged the Council to select an alternative applicant who better demonstrates the civility expected of those representing the City of Orem.

Mayor McCandless and Councilmember Mecham responded to the concerns regarding board appointments by emphasizing the necessity of public decorum. Mr. Mecham noted that those serving in a public capacity have an obligation to treat others with grace and respect, expressing hope that the Council itself could role-model this behavior. Mayor McCandless echoed these sentiments, stating she expects all appointees to uphold a high standard of dignity and good behavior while representing the city.

Those voting yes: Karen McCandless, Chris Killpack, Jenn Gale and Quinn Mecham. Those voting no: LaNae Millett, Crystal Muhlestein and Jeff Lambson. The motion **passed**.

### **Planning Commission Appointment - Micah Ladle**

Councilmember Mecham highlighted the significance of the Planning Commission, noting that the Mayor and Council conducted 15 interviews to ensure new appointees have broad support. He thanked Chair Madeleine Komen for her leadership and offered a special

commendation to outgoing Vice Chair Mike Carpenter, who extended his service past his December term to assist the city. Mr. Mecham praised Mr. Carpenter for his dedication to representing the concerns of Orem residents throughout his tenure.

**Ms. Millett moved** to approve the appointment of Michal Ladle to the Planning Commission, **seconded** by Ms. Muhlestein. Those voting yes: Karen McCandless, Chris Killpack, Crystal Muhlestein, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett and Quinn Mecham. The motion **passed**.

#### **Planning Commission Appointment** - Jeff Reeves

Councilmember Millett emphasized the importance of broad geographic representation on the Planning Commission. She argued that because the commission's zoning and land-use decisions affect every neighborhood, the body should reflect Orem's diverse geography rather than having multiple members from the same few blocks. Ms. Millett noted that drawing from different parts of the city ensures all residents feel their specific neighborhood priorities are represented, ultimately strengthening the credibility of the commission's recommendations.

Councilmember Muhlestein expressed concern over the "unusual situation" of replacing five Planning Commission members simultaneously. She specifically questioned the decision to replace a long-standing member at this time, noting that it places an undue burden on the Chair to train so many new appointees at once. Councilmember Millett echoed concerns regarding the simultaneous replacement of multiple Planning Commission members. She emphasized that experience is critical for the commission's effectiveness and expressed her support for the Chair, who faces the challenge of leading a largely inexperienced body. Ms. Millett suggested that retaining seasoned members during this transition would have provided necessary stability.

**Ms. Gale moved** to approve the appointment of Jeff Reeves to the Planning Commission, **seconded** by Mr. Lambson. Those voting yes: Karen McCandless, Chris Killpack, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale and Quinn Mecham. Those voting no: Crystal Muhlestein and LaNae Millett. The motion **passed**.

#### **CITY MANAGER INFORMATION ITEMS**

Mr. Bybee provided an update on city events and legislative progress, beginning with a final reminder for the State of the City event and addressing resident concerns regarding traffic and parking for a nearby temple open house. He expressed optimism following a successful state legislative session, specifically noting that his team is tracking House Bill 492 to secure funding for housing renewal efforts. Mr. Bybee also highlighted the high demand for "Water Wise" classes at Library Hall and announced an upcoming neighborhood meeting at Sleepy Ridge Golf Course to discuss water reuse projects. Finally, he confirmed that the next regular council meeting is set for April 28, as leadership will be traveling to Washington D.C. to lobby for federal project funding—an effort that has brought millions of dollars back to Orem in recent years.

Mayor McCandless commented on city advocacy and fiscal strategy. She emphasized the importance of the upcoming trip to Washington D.C., noting that the city has submitted funding applications for two major projects to the congressional delegation. Her remarks underscored a commitment to securing external resources to support Orem's infrastructure and community initiatives.

Mr. Tschirki detailed the city's proactive communication regarding the transition to water reuse. He noted that the communications team has distributed letters to residents living near the golf course and Lakeside Sports Park to explain the system's benefits. He also stressed the importance of public education regarding the "dos and don'ts" of the new system, specifically reminding residents that the reuse water is not for consumption.

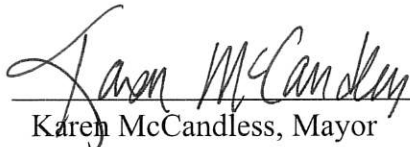
**ADJOURN TO A CLOSED SESSION IN THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE ROOM**

**To discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation; the character or professional competence of an individual; the purchase or lease of real property; or the deployment of security personnel, devices or systems**

**Mr. Killpack moved** to adjourn to a closed meeting in the Summit conference room to discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation; the character or professional competence of an individual; the purchase or lease of real property, **seconded** by Ms. Millett. Those voting yes: Karen McCandless, Chris Killpack, Crystal Muhlestein, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett and Quinn Mecham. The motion **passed**.

*(These minutes were created with the help of AI)*

PASSED and APPROVED on this 28th day of April 2026.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen McCandless, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Teresa McKittrick, City Recorder



COUNCIL MEMBER

AYE NAY ABSTAIN ABSENT

Mayor Karen McCandless	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chris Killpack	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crystal Muhlestein	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jeff Lambson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jenn Gale	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LaNae Millett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quinn Mecham	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

