

City of La Verkin

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La Verkin City Council Work Meeting Minutes Wednesday, May 6, 2026, 5:30 pm. 111 S. Main, La Verkin, Utah

Present: Mayor Kelly Wilson; Council Members: Amanda Barr, John Valenti, and Scot Pectol; Staff: Kyle Gubler, Derek Imlay, Fay Reber, and Nancy Cline; Public: Joseph Elison.

Called to Order –Mayor Wilson called the work meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

1. State Representative Joseph Elison

Representative Elison reported the session centered on a legislative posture that blends fiscal conservatism with targeted intervention: the House advanced measures to tighten gambling definitions amid active litigation, stand up a statewide retirement-plan exchange to close a small-business access gap, impose a default no-phone policy during classroom time to curb distraction and performance erosion, and shield ratepayers from subsidizing power for massive data centers while preserving diversified energy generation (including coal, gas, geothermal, and exploring nuclear). The representative framed Utah's financial position as strong (cash exceeding outstanding bonds, repeated income tax cuts, improved child tax credit), and signaled interest in streamlining concurrent resolution amendments during interim to reduce session churn. Proof points included passage of the retirement marketplace bill (HB 250), the gambling bill prompting preemptive lawsuits, default district-level controls for cell phones in classrooms, and an energy policy that rejects cost-shifting from high-load consumers to citizens. The stakes are clear: in a desert state, water and energy use by large entrants must not degrade community infrastructure or household costs; small businesses need retirement access to mitigate Social Security pressure; classroom discipline is tied to youth outcomes; and process efficiency matters for timely governance. We are taking the bet that public-private infrastructure (retirement exchange) and disciplined guardrails (education tech limits, energy cost protections) will deliver long-term resilience without sacrificing Utah's growth magnet status.

Legislative Outcomes and Policy Positions

Retirement Savings Access (HB 250):

Problem: ~700k Utah workers lack access to employer-sponsored plans; small employers face prohibitive admin costs (\$5k–\$8k/yr); advisors avoid low-balance accounts.

Response: A state-run platform enables small businesses to offer payroll-deducted retirement (individual accounts or pooled 401(k)s) with shared admin costs and access to large advisory firms.

Stakes: Reduces reliance on Social Security and builds household financial resilience.

Gambling Restrictions and Litigation:

Phenomenon: Betting platforms barred in Utah are skirting via technical interpretations (federal exchange framing).

Mechanism: The House passed a bill clarifying definitions to align with Utah's long-standing anti-gambling posture.

Result: Named platforms filed preemptive lawsuits; the representative expects eventual federal-state jurisdiction clarifications.

Education Technology Discipline:

Policy: Default district rule—no student cell phones during class between bells; districts retain opt-out autonomy.

Rationale: Data indicates negative impacts on younger students; teachers report classroom disruption.

Adjustment: Movement to limit non-instructional device use except for computer-specific coursework (e.g., programming, keyboarding) due to declining test scores.

Fiscal Position and Tax Policy:

Status: Utah's outstanding bonds are lower than cash reserves; road projects are largely funded with cash.

Moves: Income tax reduced six consecutive years; child tax credit improved.

Implication: Strong balance sheet sustains growth pressures (zoning, housing) while maintaining top-tier national rankings.

Energy Policy and Large Consumer Guardrails:

Context: A proposed ~40,000-acre data center raises questions on water and power draw vs. claimed jobs.
Policy: Large consumers cannot offload power costs onto citizens via rate subsidies; they must carry their own burden.
Portfolio: Continued coal generation, gas integration, geothermal online, exploration of small modular nuclear; positioning for lowest electric rates nationally.

Process Efficiency for Concurrent Resolutions:

Change Under Consideration: Allow amendments to adopted management/compliance frameworks (e.g., CD58-type items) to be handled in interim committees rather than requiring full concurrent resolutions during session.
Goal: Reduce session load and handle technical amendments efficiently.

Mayor Wilson asked about the bill increasing the water bills for all cities.

Representative Elison replied that it didn't pass but he wasn't sure that it wouldn't come back before them.

Councilwoman Barr asked about the Rural Community grants and if La Verkin would be eligible for them and if it only cover gymnasiums and indoor facilities.

Representative Elison replied he would check on that.

Mayor Wilson closed the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

B. Adjourn:
The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

May 20, 2026
Date Approved

ATTEST: Nancy Cline
Nancy Cline
City Recorder

Kelly B. Wilson
Mayor Kelly B. Wilson