



City of Green River
460 East Main Street, Green River, Utah
City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, May 12, 2026

ATTENDING: Mayor Larry Packer; Council Members: Bo Harrison, Kent Nelson, Guy Webster, Tonya Bigelow; Employees: Edward Bennett, Julie Spadafora, David Wilson, Bryan Meadows, Kerry Bigelow, Janet Smoak, Gayna Salinas; Citizens: Karen Richards, Shaylee Richards, James Saunders, Jo Anne Chandler, Katrina Stansfield, Mick Robinson, Sandi Silliman, Phillip Stubbfield, Ben Coomer, Frank Vetere Jr., Conra Weber, Michael Silliman, Dorothy Carter, Chalyn Francis, Brayden Liechty, Candice Cravin, Anne Elliott, Greg Winn, Lance Erwin, Josh Opp, Misti Bastian, Julie Steuer, Darrel Mecham, Diane Smith, Kathy Ryan, Christine Sheeter; Utah Inland Port; Jenna Draper.

CONDUCTING: Mayor Larry Packer, the meeting began at 7:07 p.m.

ABSENT: Stephanie Crabtree asked to be excused.

ORDER OF BUSINESS:

The Pledge of Allegiance as directed by Kent Nelson

New Business:

1. Presentation of Meeting Rules of Order/Expectations of Decorum

Edward Bennett walked everyone through how meetings will run going forward. The big change is that new business gets discussed first, then the public gets their turn to weigh in on anything that was brought up. The goal is to stop the "we just got this info and now we're voting on it" problem. From here on out, anything that needs a vote will be presented the month before, so council has time to actually think it over.

Edward Bennett also covered the basics of Robert's Rules of Order, which the city is already required to follow per city ordinance from October 12, 2010. Key reminders: you need three of five council members to have a quorum, meetings are for board business (not open community workshops), and everybody gets three minutes for public comment - no transferring your time to someone else. That three-minute limit is content-neutral and First Amendment compliant, so it applies equally to everyone who signs up.

2. Utah Inland Port Authority Presentation - Jenna Draper

Jenna Draper from the Utah Inland Port Authority gave a solid rundown of how the port tool works and cleared up a bunch of the confusion that's been floating around town. The big thing to know: the port doesn't own any land in Green River; they cannot change your zoning or ordinances and has zero land use authority. The city keeps full control over all of that. What the port does is freeze the existing tax base on parcels inside the project area — so nobody loses anything they're already getting — and then when those parcels develop, 25% of the new tax revenue keeps flowing to taxing entities (school district, fire district, etc.), and 75% comes to the port to be reinvested right back into Green River. The port takes a 5% admin fee off that 75%, and the rest has to be spent locally. They literally cannot move Green River's money somewhere else. Tonya Bigelow asked about housing and how that tool could work locally. Jenna Draper pointed to Salina City as a fresh example. The port helped them secure a \$4.6 million Authority Infrastructure Bank (AIB) loan to put in roads, waterlines, and sewer for a roughly 300-unit housing development (market-rate apartments and townhomes, not low income). The loan gets paid back from the tax differential once the parcels develop, so no money comes out of the city's or developer's pocket upfront.

Jenna Draper noted that Green River has "really become the prettiest girl at the prom". Great rail access, I-70, land, and growing outside interest. Though landing a big outside company is tough (Utah had a 6% success rate on outside projects in all of 2025). She said the biggest wins are likely to come from local entrepreneurs and expanding existing businesses, not just recruiting outsiders. Tonya Bigelow asked about expanding the project area boundaries if a specific project doesn't fall inside current lines. She confirmed that's easy to amend and can take as little as six weeks.

Financial Impact & Community Benefit

The port tool is a revenue-generating mechanism with no upfront cost to the city. The existing tax base across project area parcels is frozen, meaning the \$0 currently generated on undeveloped city-owned land stays at \$0 until development happens. When parcels do develop, 75% of the tax increment comes back to Green River (less a 5% admin fee to the port), and those funds must be spent locally on city priorities like infrastructure, housing, or economic development. The AIB loan structure, illustrated by Salina City's \$4.6M loan for 300 housing units. It shows how the tool can bridge financing gaps that private lenders won't touch in rural markets. The rationale for moving forward now is clear: Green River has real outside interest, an existing project area already in place, and local entrepreneurs who could use the support. Oversight is built in: funds generated in Green River stay in Green River, spending is directed by the city council, and the full plan and budget document (including tax base projections) is publicly available on the Utah Inland Port Authority website under the Castle Country project area.

3. Code Compliance Letter to be Presented to Main Street and Broadway Property Owners

Edward Bennett brought forward a draft code compliance letter intended to go out to all property owners along Main Street and Broadway. The letter introduces a formal code enforcement program focused on voluntary compliance, community pride, and getting those two key corridors cleaned up. The pitch: Main Street and Broadway are the first things people, tourists, potential investors, company reps see when they roll into town, and right now the impression isn't great.

David Wilson explained the current 30-60-90-day notice process: notice of violation, second notice, and then a final notice with potential fines or liens if nothing happens after 90 days. The goal is never to slap a lien on someone's private property. It's just to get the stuff cleaned up. Extensions are available if someone is actively making progress.

Kent Nelson emphasized that if council sends this letter, they have to be committed to following through. Guy Webster agreed, noting that the state of the town affects the city's ability to attract companies and investment. Edward Bennett added that the program has to be applied equitably. You can't just go after one person you don't like. The plan is to start at the corner of Broadway and Main and work outward, using that as a model to eventually expand to other parts of town.

The landfill question came up as a practical obstacle to cleanup. Edward Bennett noted that an RFP for landfill engineering services is already out, and that the preliminary work from a prior effort (several years ago) is already done and ready to go. In the meantime, city sanitation can drop big roll-off containers for larger demolition projects. He only learned about recently himself.

Public Comment:

Karen Richards, Emery County Assessor's Office employee, introduced herself as a candidate for Emery County Recorder. She emphasized her decade of county experience, commitment to transparency and accuracy, and the importance of cross-office collaboration.

Mick Robinson, Emery County IS/GIS Technician employee, introduced himself as a candidate for Emery County Clerk /Auditor. He highlighted his experience across multiple county departments, his EMT service since 2009, and his work on election system overhauls. He flagged that veterans' abatements are often underutilized and encouraged anyone with a disabled veteran in the family to contact the assessor's office.

Phillip Stubblefield made several suggestions: that the council include project status updates on meeting agendas so the public knows where things like the museum irrigation, landfill, and Broadway right-of-way projects actually stand; that the city reconsider its relationship with Better City and whether those funds might be better directed toward a local project manager; and that the city

consider having a city attorney present at meetings rather than relying on outside counsel in Provo.

Ben Coomer asked whether there is a salary cap on the administrative portion of the port's 75% return to the city, noting he's seen similar arrangements where administration consumes nearly all available funds. He also raised serious concerns about the liability exposure of opening a city landfill, noting that when he was on the council the old landfill was closed specifically because of federal pressure over liability. He cautioned that construction debris from older structures often contains hazardous materials. He also suggested that the mayor and council members should be the first to receive code compliance letters and clean up their own properties by setting the example.

Michael Silliman asked the city to look into closing one block of his street to through traffic. He explained that semi-truck drivers seeking repairs routinely park on his street, sometimes resulting in late-night calls to him from the sheriff's office, and that traffic speeds on that street are a safety concern. He noted he owns property on both sides of the block and there are four other routes to the high school.

Frank Vetere Jr., expressed frustration about repeated flooding damage to his properties from city infrastructure issues, including foundation damage and basement flooding he attributed to water main work on Main Street. He stated he intended to pursue legal action if the issues are not addressed.

Greg Winn, owner of River Rock Inn, spoke directly to the code compliance letter discussion. He noted this is not a new idea; he received a similar letter from Mayor Brady in 2012 threatening a \$30,000 cleanup charge if he didn't act. His point: the 2012 letter didn't change anything, and Green River looks worse today. He called on council to actually enforce this one. He also shared that in six years of business; his hotel has served roughly 20,000 guests, 25% of them truckers, and the number one question he gets is "why is Green River such a dump?" He emphasized the town sits in the middle of some of the most visited national parks in the country and has enormous tourism potential that's being undermined by its appearance.

Old Business:

4. Discuss/Approve/Deny Tentative FY2027 Budget

Edward Bennett presented the tentative FY2027 budget, explaining this is a statutory formality required before June's actual budget hearings. The tentative budget includes a possible 10% wage increase across all departments and a \$50,000 reduction in city funding to the Museum fund compared to last year. Edward Bennett explained the museum reduction is intentional and gradual. The goal is to transition the museum toward more independent funding through its Friends Board over the next few years, rather than cutting the cord all at once.

Guy Webster brought up a related staffing idea: reassigning Stephanie Crabtree (currently doing museum grounds maintenance) to Public Works, with her

primary summer responsibility staying the museum grounds and her winter work shifting to building maintenance across city facilities. He also floated the idea of having the city's event coordinator work out of the museum part-time, since a large share of walk-ins there are actually looking for tourist information, essentially using the museum as a visitor center.

Kent Nelson raised the possibility of moving one museum staff person to a receptionist/front office role at city hall to help handle tourist and general public inquiries.

Janet Smoak was present and was specifically invited to be part of these ongoing conversations before any staffing changes are finalized.

MOTION: Kent Nelson made a motion to approve the Tentative FY2027 Budget. Guy Webster seconded the motion. **VOTE:** Bo Harrison, Kent Nelson, Guy Webster and Tonya Bigelow voted aye. The motion carried.

Standing Items:

5. City Council, Mayor, and/or Employee Comments and Concerns

David Wilson gave updates on several ongoing items. The TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) program for feral cats remains on hold due to difficulty finding a mobile vet. Dog activity has picked up significantly with tourist season. Two camping violations were addressed (one near the burn pile, one behind Maverik). Regarding the Elgin area road vacation, preliminary surveying costs are estimated at \$25,000–\$30,000 just for recording the new meets and bounds — more work with the city engineer is still needed before moving forward. On the secondary water feasibility for the museum landscape, David Wilson noted the rough estimate suggests a roughly 20-year payback period, making it a tough sell for now.

Bryan Meadows reported the new granulated carbon building has been up and running for about three to four weeks and is performing well, chlorine consumption is noticeably down. He also noted that the sewer lagoon aerator replacement project is underway, with new diffusers arriving and installation beginning. The city park pump came back online after a brief outage. He also raised the question of whether to pour a concrete curb around the new fall protection area at the park playground or take a different approach. Council generally suggested spreading bark now and revisiting the curb in the fall or considering a sidewalk border instead.

Tonya Bigelow reminded everyone of the Broadway project open house happening the following evening at 6:00 PM. Residents are encouraged to come, give input on design preferences for the corridor (streetlights, landscaping, road widths, etc.). She also flagged a city-wide tree pruning event scheduled for May 28th, 10 AM–1 PM at the city park with a USU extension expert — free, lunch included, RSVP required. She also floated the idea of the city hosting a breakfast for the Fourth of July given that it's the country's 250th anniversary.

Edward Bennett shared two pieces of genuinely exciting news. First, the city received a \$465,000 outdoor recreation grant for the Riverside Park project (the riverbank area from the water treatment plant down to the rail line), with a \$150,000 city match already approved and \$185,000 in required in-kind contributions. Total project value is approximately \$800,000, covering site prep, grading, trail construction, and resurfacing. An RFP will go out soon. Second, the city received a grant for engineering and design work on a quiet zone crossing at Airport Road — the first step toward eventually securing all four railroad crossings in town so trains aren't required to honk around the clock.

Guy Webster raised the idea of formally approaching the school district about opening up the high school gym and indoor track to community members, as happens at other end-of-county schools. He'd like council to write a letter or send a representative to the school board rather than just one person asking informally. He also brought up the broader Rec Center/Event Center conversation, noting that Commissioner Jensen indicated county money could be available if Green River comes with a formal proposal and a plan. Tonya Bigelow confirmed Commission Jensen told her directly: "We can get you money if you have a proposal." Several council members and community members agreed the feasibility study done previously was too narrowly focused on a rec center rather than a multi-use event center, and that a fresh look with an actual proposal to the county is worth pursuing.

Guy Webster also updated the room that six new EMTs are expected to complete their class in roughly three and a half weeks, with three of them planning to run actively, a meaningful improvement for local emergency services.

Dorothy Carter of the Green River Business Alliance announced the alliance has secured new funding. An informational meeting with SBDC is scheduled for May 19th at 8:00 AM at the senior center. She also noted a kids' business fair is in planning, with entrepreneur training by outside presenters scheduled for July 8th. Carter asked that anyone with knowledge of new businesses opening share that with her, as the Emery County Chamber is available to do ribbon cuttings. Edward Bennett agreed that the city can flag new business license issuances to her going forward.

6. Discuss/Approve/Deny Consent Agenda

- Financial Report March 2026
- Payment Approval Report May 2026
- Treasurer Report April 2026
- City Council Regular Meeting Minutes April 14, 2026

MOTION: Guy Webster made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Kent Nelson seconded the motion. **VOTE:** Bo Harrison, Kent Nelson, Guy Webster and Tonya Bigelow voted aye. The motion carried.

7. Closed Session, if necessary, pursuant to Utah Code § 52-4-205

No closed session was held.

8. Adjourn, the meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

MOTION: Bo Harrison made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Tonya Bigelow seconded the motion. **VOTE:** Bo Harrison, Kent Nelson, Guy Webster and Tonya Bigelow voted aye. The motion carried.

Larry Packer, Mayor

Julie Spadafora, City Recorder

Approved: June 9, 2026

