

Bluff Town Council Work Session Approved Minutes

Tuesday, June 9, 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#

4:00pm Meeting Called to Order and Roll Call

Town Council: Mayor Josh Ewing, Jennifer Davila, Gary Haws, Britt Hornsby, Spencer Wade

Staff: Erin Nelson, Malia Collins

Public Comment (4:02pm): None.

Unfinished Business

1. Review and Discuss Public Comments Regarding FY2027 Tentative Budget and Proposed Property Tax Increase from the Budget Public Hearing, Your Town Budget at Work Open House Event, and Other Comments Received (4:02pm): Nelson provided a budget update including a report on the received revenues from Tax Commission, now reflecting through April 2026. Estimation that the revenues will exceed the expenditures on the amended FY25/26 budget, with ~\$35,000 unrealized funds (not yet received) with the anticipation of ~\$80,000 available to move over to FY26/27. Reminder that there are two more months (May & June) of distribution to receive reports on (to be received in August). While it is hard to say that tourism trends are trending in any certain direction, Davila reported her personal business saw 75% capacity in June 2025 while June 2026 is at 40% capacity. She recommends that Council budget even more conservatively than they had in FY25/26 for FY26/27.

Discussion to earmark remaining funds from FY25/26 to the Carryover Fund Balance instead of the Capital Projects, which must be spent on Capital Projects. Ewing suggests that the Carryover Fund Balance be built up as a reserve for future general budget use, if tourism funds continue to drop. Nelson reviewed the process to save money in the Carryover Fund Balance with the statement that FY2028 currently has a small rollover balance based on rough estimates. Emphasis that the rollover funds in this year's budget should not be expected annually. Inquiry to Nelson for opinions of how the rollover funds could be allocated: Town Vehicle & Maintenance (coupled with SERDA funding), Facilities Maintenance & Upgrades, Solar Upgrades, Cemetery Upgrades (single-lane gravel road & beautification).

Town Council Statements based on Community Feedback for FY27 Tentative Budget & Proposed Property Tax Increase:

- Is there somewhere else the funds can come from to fund this position?
- Table the increase and build a strategic plan, starting with an hourly rate
- The proposed position should be a full-time position and ultimately be paid higher than the proposed amount.
- Support for the increase and the Emergency Position.
- Often two separate conversations: Property Tax Increase vs Position Proposal.
- Generational divide is evident with most 'young people' in support of the tax increase while older residents on fixed income and requesting that it not increase.
- Businesses not able to take the 'hit' this year, as it has been a rough year already, especially with the proposed County Sales Tax increase

- An Interlocal Agreement between Town of Bluff and County is recommended by Utah League of Cities and Towns as a first step; Bluff needs more administrative support to complete an interlocal agreement with SJC; Suggestion to form a committee to create and support the agreement.
- No comments received stating that if nothing is done, the problem will fix itself
- Volunteer vs Employee expectations
- Fiscally irresponsible to rely on Tourism funds and only 5% of the budget comes from Property Tax.
- Comfortability with the property tax increase but less convinced with the position, referencing the Strategic Plan, Town has stated that they want this Emergency position.
- Once taxes are raised, they rarely go back down but can!
- EMS and Fire are separate, job position language needs to be clarified, as it is also taking on the annual emergency planning and emergency alert services
- Bluff is not paying less property taxes to SJC, why are the other municipalities receiving more services from the County
- If this is delayed, there are some laws introduced by the National & State legislature that may reduce the town's ability to increase property taxes. Example: only 5% increase/year.
- Is a Bluff employee allowed to perform maintenance on a County asset?; This position is more administrative tasks than maintenance and especially not on County Assets.
- The position can be hourly, nothing in the tax increase announcement states that it must be salary, position structure is up for discussion.
- There are many in town that are miscalculating the amount their tax bill will increase. It will not be the entire bill increasing 150%, just the Bluff Property Tax portion will increase if this is approved.
- This position was not created for a specific person and whoever is sharing this rumor, shame on you.

While it was not voted on, Haws, Hornsby & Davila stated they will be voting no – many with the caveat to continue the discussion for increase. This allowed work on the FY26/27 budget that must be approved June 16.

Ewing stated we now need to cut \$50,000 from the FY26/27 budget or decide to allocate funds from the Fund Balance.

[2. Discussion and Updates to Tentative Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget in Preparation for Tuesday, June 16th Vote \(5:20pm\)](#): Ewing transitioned with the option to cut one-time options from the budget or using the Fund Balance to support them. Council recommends cutting one-time options and saving Fund Balance as a cushion. There is a \$50,000 discrepancy in the budget if the property tax proposal is not accepted. If cutting \$30,000 in the budget and using \$20,000 of fund balance in this FY26/27 budget, a \$65,000 fund balance rolls over to FY28. The \$30,000 cut may include: Dark Sky (from \$15,000 to \$5,000), Community Promotion (\$15,000 to \$10,000), remove Wayfinding (\$10,000). Another budget proposal is to keep Dark Sky & Community Promotion to the same it was this FY. Secondary Water is all coming from Capital Projects Fund. Cemetery budget discussed, beautification is on hold. Haviken presented the C Roads preliminary budget: \$252,000.00 to include Maintenance: Bluff Bench Road, Patching, Sealing, Culvert Cleaning. Improvements: Sagebrush, 4th W, 6th W & 5th W, Chip Sealing & 5th St East. Salary, Engineering Services and purchase of a box grader, mower, etc with SJC Matching Grant of \$85,000.

[3. Reminder of Proposed Property Tax Increase Impact Statement](#)

[New Business](#)

[4. Discussion Regarding Utah House Bill 96 Including Required Emergency Operations Plan \(EOP\), Bluff Emergency Manager Role, Select Three Emergency Interim Successors and List of Individuals Authorized to Send Emergency Alerts \(5:41pm\)](#): Legislation requiring Towns to report to State who the 4 people are in the line of succession and the Emergency Manager. In years past, Nelson has been the

Emergency Manager without succession. By July 1, the 4 people must be shared with State with the order of succession, or it defaults to Mayor as 3 of the 4 people and #4 as Chief Law Enforcement Officer (which we don't have). Emergency Management Plan and Emergency Alert Plan must be completed, will be completed working at current capacity. Ewing is willing to take on the #1 Emergency Manager role, with Nelson as #2. All four need to take training (Incident Command) and be aware of the Emergency Management Plan. Discussion for #3 Malia Collins & #4 filled by: Chief Dawn DiLego, Spencer Wade, Gary Haws, LuAnne Hook, Gary Lichtenstein or Britt Hornsby. Decided #4 is Britt Hornsby. Second part of Legislation: Who in town is authorized to send Emergency Alerts(?) Ewing recommends 4 designated and the Fire Chief.

5. [Review April 2026 Financial Reports \(5:50pm\)](#): Request for Council to review and if any questions, contact Nelson. Some reviewed in Agenda #1.

Reminders / Other

6. Other / Adjourn: None.

5:50pm Adjourned.

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

Minute Taker: Malia Collins

Draft Minutes Published: June 15, 2026

Approved Minutes Published: June 16, 2026