Bluff Town Council Regular Meeting DRAFT Minutes
Tuesday, July 7, 2026, at 4:00 pm MDT

4:01pm 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 Period: Carolyn Harmon – Letter to Town of Bluff and Stakeholders: Disappointment in most recent Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting in which the interview process was mistaken as a something other than a governmental procedure. A single applicant for a Planning and Zoning Role that expires in 6 months was not recommended. Mr. Hiserodt has been a member of the community for many years and actively serves on other volunteer boards. Stating that 'he didn't interview well' and 'I know someone else who wants to apply' implies that this commission is an exclusive 'who-knows-who' club rather than volunteer based positions with the Town's best interest at core. This will have lasting ramifications for a town that already struggles to fill roles.
Ewing responded with many thanks and an update that the agenda item was removed due to the P&Z Recommendation, ongoing conversation that will be on a future meeting once additional conversations are had.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 16, 2026 Regular Meeting: Clarification of Plot Line vs Lot Line, minutes adjusted to state 'Lot Line' instead of 'Plot Line' and acceptance of all Nelsons' edits. Ewing called to approve June 15 minutes: Haws, Davila, Hornsby, Wade & Ewing voted in favor, motion passes unanimously.

Unfinished Business

1. Discussion and Vote to Approve Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Overlay Map and Ordinance (4:07pm): Planning & Zoning and Town Council have recommended that Bluff adopt a WUI overlay map, as required by law. Members of the Council plan to create this overlay map to match the residential and business zoned areas. The complication is that some of the mentioned zoned areas are assigned Zone 4 and not included by default into the State Code requiring certain regulations to be followed, resulting in approval from State prior to this inclusion. Ewing has spoken in person and emailed the request for approval, while it is not yet approved he is confident that it will be. This is brought up today, as it relates to another agenda item: Utah League of Cities & Towns (ULCT) hosted a webinar after Governor Cox put the Fireworks ban in place. ULCT stated that the only way to ban fireworks in an entire town is if the entire town is in a Wildland Urban Interface, where it is defensible to ban fireworks. Statements cannot be made stating 'no fireworks in our town', however, statements can be made stating, 'no fireworks in the Wildland Urban Interface'. Governor Cox's ban ended July 5 with questions around how Pioneer Day will be handled. To address this, Hornsby & Ewing has spoken and recommend protecting the Town from dangerous situations and doing what they can to limit fireworks by adopting the WUI map as presented. This will provide justifiable reason to disallow fireworks until October 31 in agenda item #4. Utah does not implement 2024 codes until January 1, 2027, currently adhering to the 2006 code. This ordinance is written as adopting the 2024 code to prevent revisions early next year.

Ewing calls a roll call vote to approve the Wildland Urban Interface Overlay Map and Ordinance: Hornsby: yes; Davila: yes; Wade: yes; Haws: yes, Ewing: yes. Wildland Urban Interface Map & Ordinance passes unanimously.

New Business

2. Discussion and Potential Vote to Approve Letter Confirming Town of Bluff (ToB) will Continue to Utilize San Juan County Ambulance Services (Jeremy Hoggard, All)(4:15pm): Hoggard summarized SB215 requiring municipalities and counties to state EMS is an essential service. Following the legislation requirements, an RFP was issued for anyone willing to provide EMS services to San Juan County with no bids received. To prevent Bluff from needing to issue our own RFP, a letter stating that we will be utilizing services suffices. Every 4 years, San Juan County must reapply with the State and the same conversations will occur. A positive of this process is that it opens dialogue between municipalities and the EMS service provider. Mention of UNHS Ambulance passing through Town while we receive service from San Juan County, may be a future discussion point. Ewing stated that he will sign, no council discussion.
Inquiry of the ballot initiative for EMS, Hoggard reported that there is not a proposition number yet, hoping to have one soon. San Juan County Commissioners have advanced this initiative to be on the ballot. Ewing requested to stay in the loop and offered to host a meeting to share details as November approaches.
Emergency Services Coordinator Position has been funded this FY, a draft of Job Description given to Hoggard with request for his feedback and distribution, once released.
Ewing called for vote to approve Mayor's signature on ToB utilization of SJC Ambulance Services letter: Haws, Davila, Hornsby, Wade & Ewing voted in favor of signature, motion passes unanimously.

3. Discussion and Award of Accounting Firm Audit Contract (4:25pm): Last month an RFP for Accounting Audit Services was issued, Larson & Company has been our auditing firm and has been great. State of Utah recommends that every 5 years as a best practice and to show transparency, this be put out for bid. Nelson reached out to 14 accounting firms on June 8, including the firms other municipalities in the County utilize and extending up to Salt Lake. One proposal returned from Larson & Company. Nelson reviewed their Fee Schedule and pricing structures emphasizing that their rate is around what we have been paying, ~$10,000-$12,000 annually for audits. Larson & Company also listed a price for a 'single audit' which is required for expenditure of excess of $1M of Federal funds in a Fiscal Year. Ewing inquired if any other local/San Juan County municipalities utilize them, neither Blanding nor Monticello utilize them and each use a different accounting firm. Thanks extended to Nelson for the work and time put into the process. Ewing called to vote to accept the bid and award the contract to Larson & Company, Haws, Davila, Hornsby, Wade & Ewing voted in favor of awarding the Accounting Firm Audit to Larson & Company, motion passes unanimously.

4. Discussion and Vote to Amend Town of Bluff #2026-04 Fire Restrictions to Include Prohibition of Fireworks within WUI Area(4:32pm): This would not ban fireworks in the entire town, but in the area voted on in agenda #1 and will not extend past the already listed October 31, 2026 date on the original ordinance. Public Lands have moved to Stage 2 Restrictions which no longer allow fires in pre-built rings, does Bluff want to follow suit with Public Lands and remove this exception currently in the ordinance? Council discussion regarding restrictions in this ordinance: fire pit vs charcoal grill, fireworks. Davila, Wade, Haws & Hornsby prefer wording around fire pit to say it must be contained. Noted that Council can go back to Stage 1 if things improve. Nelson wrote a new Ordinance as Council worked through the meeting.
(5:14pm): New ordinance presented: '2026-06 Fire Restrictions repealing and replacing ordinance 2026-04 to restrict open fires within Town boundaries and prohibit the ignition, discharge or use of fireworks within the Town of Bluff Wildland Urban Interface Zone.' Fire Restrictions limit open fires while allowing charcoal, gas, propane and electric grills as long as contained and water is present. Also prohibits fireworks in Wildland

Urban Interface (based on map from previous ordinance). Effective immediately and until October 31, 2026. Ewing calls for a roll call vote: Hornsby – yes; Davila – yes; Ewing – yes; Wade – yes; Haws – abstain. Ordinance 2026-06 passes, 4 in favor and 1 abstention.

5. Discuss Emergency Services Coordinator Job Posting (4:56pm no quorum, returned at 4:58pm):
Ewing presented the Job posting that Council has allocated $40,000 for FY2026/2027. Request that Council review the description this week and provide feedback to Ewing or Collins by Friday, planning to post next week. Discussion about salary vs hourly pay and future revisions to budget, if needed. Hornsby likes taking this year by year and that this position can help build a plan, as many public comments were requesting.

Looking Ahead / Reminders / Other

6. Upcoming July Topics: Housing Working Group, Employee Benefits, Award Contracts for Legal Counsel & Maintenance Contractor (5:07pm): New agenda item which Nelson proposed and will be on at least the first agenda of the month, potentially more often. Since Ewing and Nelson have many agendas drafted for the future, this offers a 'sneak peek' of the upcoming agenda items which may allow Council to dive deeper into items of special interest.

Housing Working Group – start thinking about potential members; Employee Benefits Policy drafted; RFP out for Legal Counsel & General Maintenance – review of bids & award. Long Term Fiscal Financial Policy – start discussion early for long-term tax policy and discuss circumstances for raising taxes, fund balance policies and if a consultant will be beneficial.

7. Other(5:11pm): Ewing updated that a contract with Southwest Heritage is in process, property not purchased yet, due diligence and additional items in process including Title Insurance.

Collins reported that next week she will have a full FY26 report on grants and stated that one reimbursement check has been received!

8. Adjourn (5:19pm)

For requests to receive emails/meeting invitations, email office@townofbluffutah.gov
Minute Taker: Malia Collins
Draft Minutes Published: July 10, 2026