MINUTES OF THE SALT LAKE CITY COUNCIL
Thursday, May 14, 2026

The City Council of Salt Lake City, Utah, met in Work Session on Thursday, May 14, 2026.

The following Council Members were present:
Victoria Petro, Alejandro Puy, Chris Wharton, Erika Carlsen, Daniel Dugan, Sarah Young

Present Legislative Leadership:
Jennifer Bruno – Executive Director, Lehua Weaver – Deputy Director

Present Administrative leadership:
Mayor Erin Mendenhall, Rachel Otto – Chief of Staff, Megan Yuill – Deputy Chief Administration Officer

Present City Staff:
Mark Kittrell – City Attorney, Keith Reynolds – City Recorder, Caitlin Carlino – Minutes & Records Clerk, Scott Corpany – Staff Assistant, Allison Rowland – Senior Public Policy Analyst, Sylvia Richards – Public Policy Analyst, Michael Sanders – Budget & Policy Analyst, Mary Beth Thompson – Chief Financial Officer, Tammy Hunsaker – Director of Community & Neighborhoods, Mike Akerlow – Deputy Director of Community Services, Brian Redd – Chief of Police, Felica Baca – Arts Division Director, Renato Olmedo-Gonzalez – Arts Council Program Manager, Shellie Dietrich – Financial Manager, Laurel Cannon Alder – Arts Council Assistant Director, Brent Beck – Financial Manager

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

For more information on the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget, visit the Council's hub: link.slc.gov/slcfy27.

Click Here for the Mayor's Recommended Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27.

Work Session Items

1. **Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget: Council Staff Overview** ~ 3:00 p.m. 30 min.

The Council will receive an overview from Council Staff of the Mayor's Recommended Budget for Salt Lake City for Fiscal Year 2026-27.

FYI – Project Timeline: (subject to change per Chair direction or Council discussion)
Briefing - Thursday, May 14, 2026
Set Public Hearing Date - Tuesday, April 21, 2026
Hold hearing to accept public comment - Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at 7 p.m.
TENTATIVE Council Action - TBD

Summary:

Jennifer Bruno provided an overview of the Mayor's Recommended Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget from the legislative branch perspective, including the Council's role in the budget process, the proposed property tax increase, departmental budget reductions and efficiencies, affordable housing investments, and proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding priorities.

Council Members and Jennifer Bruno discussed:

- Truth in Taxation requirements and how residents could identify City-related tax increases on property tax bills
- Departmental budget reductions, including requests for departments to identify approximately 5% in cuts and operational efficiencies
- Concerns regarding the long-term sustainability of budget reductions and examples of previous cuts affecting road maintenance and public lands services
- The proposed property tax increase and efforts to reduce reliance on sales tax revenues
- Cost savings associated with vacant positions and future department staffing evaluations
- Proposed allocations of property tax increases toward fire services, youth and family programming, Justice Court, legal services, and CIP projects
- Additional financial impacts to residents, including utility fee increases and voter-approved bond issuances
- Potential future revenue strategies, including updates to City impact fees to diversify revenue sources

2. Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget: Police Department ~ 3:30 p.m.
45 min.

The Council will receive a briefing about the proposed Police Department budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27.

FYI – Project Timeline: (subject to change per Chair direction or Council discussion)
Briefing - Thursday, May 14, 2026
Set Public Hearing Date - Tuesday, April 21, 2026
Hold hearing to accept public comment - Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at 7 p.m.
TENTATIVE Council Action - TBD

Summary:

Michael Sanders introduced the item and provided an overview of the proposed Fiscal Year 2026-27 Police Department budget, including a 5% budget increase and additional staffing requests. Chief Brian Redd presented department accomplishments, reductions in crime and response times, operational efficiencies, and proposed investments in community engagement, traffic safety, drones, and the Real Time Crime Center.

Council Members and staff discussed:

- School Resource Officer funding and reimbursement details with the School District
- Partnerships and reimbursements from the University of Utah and other entities for event-related staffing
- Utah Inland Port tax increment reimbursements supporting additional staff near the Westside/Pioneer Precinct
- Operational efficiencies through drones, alternate response models, civilian response teams, and social worker utilization
- Resident concerns regarding speeding, traffic safety, and neighborhood responsiveness, along with plans to improve proactive enforcement and community presence
- Concerns regarding artificial intelligence, data retention, and civil liberties protections related to policing technologies with clarification that the Police Department did not have contracts with Flock Safety
- Use of data-driven deployment strategies and how Real Time Crime Center operations could improve long-term efficiency and reduce future staffing demands
- Progress along the Jordan River Trail through green space bike squads and possible expansion of foot patrols to other areas
- Inflationary increases related to uniforms, equipment, drones, and public safety technology
- Recruiting and retention challenges, including labor agreement cost drivers

Council Request:

Council Member Wharton requested a meeting with the Police Department regarding coordination and efficiency opportunities with the University of Utah and Greek Row operations. Chief Redd said staff would coordinate a meeting.

3. Tentative Break ~ 4:15 p.m.
20 min.

FYI – Project Timeline: (subject to change per Chair direction or Council discussion)
Briefing - n/a
Set Public Hearing Date - n/a
Hold hearing to accept public comment - n/a
TENTATIVE Council Action - n/a

4. Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget: Community and Neighborhoods Department ~ 4:35 p.m.
45 min.

The Council will receive a briefing about the proposed Community and Neighborhoods Department budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27.

FYI – Project Timeline: (subject to change per Chair direction or Council discussion)
Briefing - Thursday, May 14, 2026
Set Public Hearing Date - Tuesday, April 21, 2026
Hold hearing to accept public comment - Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at 7 p.m.
TENTATIVE Council Action - TBD

Summary:

Allison Rowland introduced the item. Tammy Hunsaker, alongside Mike Akerlow and Brent Beck, presented the proposed Fiscal Year 2026-27 Community and Neighborhoods Department budget, highlighting department accomplishments, operational efficiencies, transportation and housing initiatives, and proposed reductions and funding requests.

Council Members, Tammy Hunsaker, and staff discussed:

- Youth and Family departmental programming impacts, including prioritizing K-6 and teen afterschool and summer programming, consolidating adult programming, and pursuing future grant and philanthropic funding opportunities
- Potential impacts of eliminating the Hive Pass program (reduced fee public transit pass) while maintaining low-income and student transit pass programs
- Future plans for internal and external process efficiencies and technology improvements (ie permitting and development review processes, etc)
- Impacts of County-led cuts in childcare programming and avoiding similar public outcry with budgetary cuts
- Continuation of the Fix the Bricks program at a reduced level through grant funding with income qualification requirements
- Other potential cost-saving strategies and Council priorities regarding programs and services to maintain or reduce

Council Requests:

Council Member Dugan requested Youth and Family programming metrics, including participation, waitlist, and demographic information. Tammy Hunsaker said staff would provide the data.

Council Member Dugan requested information regarding alternative transit pass resources available to residents affected by the proposed elimination of the Hive Pass program. Tammy Hunsaker said staff would coordinate with the transportation team and explore creating a webpage with transit resources and pass options.

Council Member Carlsen requested additional information regarding transit program ridership, including usage and trip metrics related to on-demand transit services. Tammy Hunsaker said staff would provide that information.

Council Member Puy requested follow up conversations regarding: 1) electric vehicle (EV) charging station costs and possible cuts 2) the possibility of vacating an EV site on North Temple, and 3) maintenance costs and disposition strategies for City-owned properties

5. Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget: Arts Council Division ~ 5:20 p.m. 30 min.

The Council will receive a briefing about the proposed Arts Council Division budget for Fiscal Year 2026-27. The briefing will include an overview of the Public Art Program and a discussion of programming for the coming year.

FYI – Project Timeline: (subject to change per Chair direction or Council discussion)
Briefing - Thursday, May 14, 2026
Set Public Hearing Date - Tuesday, April 21, 2026
Hold hearing to accept public comment - Tuesday, May 19, 2026 at 7 p.m.
TENTATIVE Council Action - TBD

Summary:

Sylvia Richards introduced the item and reviewed the proposed 5.8% budget reduction for the Arts Council Division, along with departmental goals and ongoing work. Felicia Baca and Laurel Cannon Alder provided an overview of the Arts Council's structure as a hybrid governmental nonprofit organization, recent accomplishments, proposed budget reductions, funding sources, and efforts to maintain programming quality and community impact despite reduced funding. The presentation also highlighted public art initiatives, mural program successes, future capital art projects, and opportunities for private-public partnerships and alternative funding strategies.

Council Members and staff discussed:

- Proposed budget reductions and potential impacts to Arts Council programming and events
- Fundraising efforts and alternative funding mechanisms for public art and arts programming
- Mural program growth, and comparisons showing Salt Lake City exceeding peer cities in mural installations
- The Twilight Concert Series, including operational structure changes, use of private vendors, City financial contributions, and economic impacts to downtown businesses
- General appreciation for the Arts Council's programming, public art efforts, and community impact

6. Informational: Cultural Core Summary and THE BLOCKS Update ~ 5:50 p.m.
20 min.

The Council will receive an update on the Cultural Core initiative, now known as "THE BLOCKS." The update will include an executive summary of year nine and the budget plan for year ten. The annual update is a requirement of the interlocal agreement between Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County to develop, improve, and market arts and cultural activities in downtown Salt Lake City. The goal of the Cultural Core initiative is to enhance downtown as a key cultural center for the city, region, and nation.

FYI – Project Timeline: (subject to change per Chair direction or Council discussion)
Briefing - Thursday, May 14, 2026
Set Public Hearing Date - n/a
Hold hearing to accept public comment - n/a
TENTATIVE Council Action - n/a

Summary:

Sylvia Richards introduced the item and provided an overview of THE BLOCKS program, formerly known as the Cultural Core initiative. **Lucus Horns** (THE BLOCKS Program Manager) and **Dee Brewer** (Downtown Alliance Executive Director) presented a year-nine update on THE BLOCKS, including organizational goals, programming metrics, marketing efforts, economic impacts, regional and national arts visitation trends, public art initiatives, collaborative partnerships, and planned programming and activations for 2026.

Council Members, Lucas Horns, and Dee Brewer discussed:

- THE BLOCKS mission to promote downtown Salt Lake City as a regional arts and cultural destination
- Programming metrics including events, public art commissions, artists and performers hired, and regional visitation to downtown arts venues
- Arts and cultural programming as an economic driver supporting downtown businesses, restaurants, tourism, and neighborhood activation
- Marketing and outreach efforts, including newsletter engagement, social media reach, and promotion of downtown arts organizations
- Clarification that THE BLOCKS performance and activation metrics were separate from Arts Council-produced programming metrics, with limited overlap between programs
- Partnerships with arts organizations, businesses, property owners, and community organizations to support downtown activations
- Future plans to expand public art, performances, and downtown activation efforts through additional funding and partnerships
- Appreciation for the breadth of programming and amount of activation accomplished with existing funding resources

7. **Tentative – Fiscal Year 2026-27 Budget: Property Tax Impact Schedule** TENTATIVE -

The Council will discuss the proposed property tax impact schedule that was received with the Mayor's Recommended Budget for Salt Lake City for Fiscal Year 2026-27, including reviewing and discussing the items proposed for funding through a property tax increase.

FYI – Project Timeline: (subject to change per Chair direction or Council discussion)
Briefing - Recurring Briefing Through May and June 2026
Set Public Hearing Date - Tuesday, April 21, 2026
Hold hearing to accept public comment - Tuesday, May 19, 2026
TENTATIVE Council Action - TBD

This item was not held.

Standing Items

8. Report of the Chair and Vice Chair -

Report of the Chair and Vice Chair

This item was not held.

9. Report and Announcements from the Executive Director -

Report of the Executive Director, including a review of Council information items and announcements. The Council may give feedback or staff direction on any item related to City Council business, including but not limited to scheduling items.

Summary:

Lehua Weaver provided an update regarding the District 4 Council vacancy process, including the timeline and legal requirements for appointing a replacement Council Member. The discussion included application timelines, interview scheduling, public notice requirements, conflict of interest disclosures, interview procedures, voting processes, and communication and outreach efforts related to the vacancy appointment process. Council Members were requested to review and provide potential edits to the vacancy application questions by the following day so the application could be made available on schedule.

10. Tentative Closed Meeting -

The Council will consider a motion to enter into closed meeting. A closed meeting described under Utah Code Annotated (UCA) Section §52-4-205 may be held for specific purposes including, but not limited to discussing:

a. discussion of the character, professional competence, or physical or mental health of an individual.
b. strategy sessions to discuss collective bargaining.
c. strategy sessions to discuss pending or reasonably imminent litigation.
d. strategy sessions to discuss the purchase, exchange, or lease of real property, including any form of a water right or water shares, if public discussion of the transaction would:
    (i) disclose the appraisal or estimated value of the property under consideration, or
    (ii) prevent the public body from completing the transaction on the best

possible terms.

e. strategy sessions to discuss the sale of real property, including any form of a water right or water shares, if:

(i) public discussion of the transaction would:

(A) disclose the appraisal or estimated value of the property under consideration, or

(B) prevent the public body from completing the transaction on the best possible terms.

(ii) the public body previously gave public notice that the property would be offered for sale, and

(iii) the terms of the sale are publicly disclosed before the public body approves the sale.

f. discussion regarding deployment of security personnel, devices, or systems.

g. investigative proceedings regarding allegations of criminal misconduct.

A closed meeting may also be held for attorney-client matters that are privileged pursuant to Utah Code § 78B-1-137, and for other lawful purposes that satisfy the pertinent requirements of the Utah Open and Public Meetings Act.

This item was not held.

Meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Minutes Approved: August 18, 2026

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City Council Chair – Alejandro Puy

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City Recorder – Keith Reynolds

Please refer to Meeting Materials (available at https://data.slc.gov by selecting City Council Meeting Information) for supportive content including electronic recordings and comments submitted prior to or during the meeting. Websites listed within the body of the Minutes may not remain active indefinitely.

This document along with the digital recording constitutes the official minutes of the City Council Work Session meeting held Thursday, May 14, 2026 and is not intended to serve as a full transcript. Please refer to the electronic recording for entire content pursuant to Utah Code §52-4-203.