



Town of Mantua Council Special Meeting Minutes – Municipal Council Vacancy Interviews

Date: March 4, 2026

Location: Town Hall, 409 North Main, Mantua, Utah

Council Members Present: Mayor Annette Ash, Mayor Pro Tempore Matt Jeppsen, Council Member Cheryl Burgan

Council Members Absent: Council Member Scott Ross

Recorder: Sherita Schaefer

Audience / Applicants Present: Dave Ornelas, Henry Dovey, Sue Hall, Kaden Jennings, Jan Dovey, John Hurd, Shane Stokes, Kaden Jennings, Katie Finders, Cherry Burnett, Kimberly Stokes

Call to Order & Opening Ceremonies

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ash at approximately 5:30 p.m. for the purpose of interviewing candidates to fill a midterm municipal council seat vacancy (term ending December 31, 2027).

The meeting was opened by Mayor Ash. Invocation by Dave Ornelas.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Ash; all in attendance participated.

Overview of Interview Process

Mayor Ash outlined the purpose of the meeting and the interview process:

The meeting was held pursuant to Utah Code § 20A-1-510 to fill a midterm council vacancy.

Interview schedule:

5:35–5:50 p.m. – Dave Ornelas

5:50–6:05 p.m. – Henry Dovey

6:05–6:20 p.m. – Sue Hall

6:20–6:35 p.m. – Kaden Jennings

Each applicant would be asked the same 10 questions, addressing:

1. Motivation and commitment
2. Understanding of the council role
3. Community perspective
4. Decision-making and approach
5. Collaboration and professionalism
6. Ethics and conflicts of interest
7. Public engagement
8. Time commitment and preparedness
9. Long-term vision
10. Temperament under pressure

Discussion Items

Council Vacancy Interview – Dave Ornelas leveraged his years of hands-on experience as a part-time Mantua employee, which includes recent specialized training in water treatment, to demonstrate his readiness for the vacant council seat. He views the position as an active, working partnership with municipal staff rather than a mere title, prioritizing high responsiveness and a willingness to troubleshoot town issues. His primary strategic goals center on managing local growth in strict alignment with the town's General Plan and optimizing internal operations based on his frontline observations. When resolving resident disputes, Ornelas applies a policy-first framework that uses municipal codes as a baseline while remaining open to amending ordinances if valid concerns are raised. Backed by past experience managing diverse technical teams, he counteracts conflicting opinions with transparent communication and grassroots visibility, committing to objective, ethical decision-making.

Council Vacancy Interview – Henry Dovey brought an extensive background in systems management and decades of public sector collaboration to his Council Vacancy interview, leveraging 40 years of aerospace contract experience and advanced degrees in aeronautics and systems management. Inspired by a lifelong public service orientation, he views council members as subject-matter experts responsible for gathering and evaluating data to guide informed, collaborative municipal decisions. Dovey identified three critical near-term challenges facing Mantua, specifically a looming state park proposal, infrastructure constraints from rapid population growth, and regional pressure on emergency services requiring key choices by 2027. To resolve community disputes and conflicting opinions, he relies on robust communication and professional management training to de-escalate tension, actively listen to stakeholders, and chart compliant paths forward. Finally, he maintains strong ethics regarding conflict-of-interest recusals and possesses a highly developed resilience to public criticism, viewing constructive feedback as a tool for continuous operational improvement.

Council Vacancy Interview – Sue Hall highlighted a deep, long-term commitment to Mantua during her Council Vacancy interview, drawing on her active involvement in local community groups and a strong desire to amplify the voices of the town's women. She conceptualizes the town council as a unified governing body, emphasizing the importance of presenting a powerful, collaborative front that firmly supports the mayor, municipal staff, and adopted policies. Her primary strategic priorities focus on navigating the potential reservoir state park proposal, preserving Mantua's historic small-town character, and balancing rising municipal building and hookup fees with actual infrastructure costs. When managing public disagreement or conflicting opinions, Hall advocates for transparency and education, drawing on years of corporate training experience to guide residents through complex procedural changes. Finally, she supports the implementation of modernized digital notification systems and standardized communication protocols to ensure authentic, consistent, and ethical engagement across the entire community.

Council Vacancy Interview – Kaden Jennings showcased deep multi-generational roots and strong civic devotion during his Council Vacancy interview, drawing on a restaurant management background to advocate for the community that raised him. He views Mantua as being at a critical, pivotal moment and defines the council's primary role as providing timely, resource-driven support to the mayor and municipal staff. Jennings identified the potential reservoir state park, land use management, and regional utility and emergency service relationships with Brigham City as the town's top three looming challenges. When navigating public disagreement or conflicting employee opinions, he uses a relationship-first approach focused on empathy, active listening, and mutual respect to ensure stakeholders feel valued even when tough legislative choices are made. Finally, he maintains a strict ethical stance on disclosing personal conflicts of interest and firmly rejects an adversarial governing posture, prioritizing grassroots trust-building over rigid top-down communication.

Appointment to Fill Municipal Council Vacancy (Term Ending December 31, 2027)

Mayor Ash explained at the outset that applicants would be interviewed in open session, scored on standardized questions, and then the Council would reconvene to discuss scores and qualifications and make a selection prior to adjournment.

Following completion of all four interviews, the Council recessed briefly to tally scores and discuss the applicants.

Council Decision (Open Session)

Mayor Ash reconvened the meeting and thanked all applicants for stepping forward and encouraged them to remain involved in town committees and service opportunities.

Announced that, after discussion and review of the interviews and scoring, the Council had selected Henry Dovey to fill the vacant council seat. The selection of Henry Dovey constitutes the Council's action to fill the municipal council vacancy consistent with Utah Code § 20A-1-510.

Action Items

The Mantua Town Council appointed Henry Dovey to fill the vacant municipal council seat, with the term to expire December 31, 2027.

Yes votes: Mayor Annette Ash, Matt Jeppsen, Cheryl Burgan

No votes: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Scott Ross

MOTION PASSED

Adjournment

Mayor Pro Tempore Jeppsen motioned to adjourn the regular meeting. Council Member Burgan made the second.

Yes votes: Mayor Annette Ash, Matt Jeppsen, Cheryl Burgan

No votes: None

Abstained: None

Absent: Scott Ross

MOTION PASSED