



WEST VALLEY CITY

City Council Regular Meeting Minutes August 11, 2026

THE WEST VALLEY CITY COUNCIL MET IN ELECTRONIC REGULAR SESSION ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2026 AT 6:30 P.M. AT WEST VALLEY CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 3600 CONSTITUTION BOULEVARD, WEST VALLEY CITY, UTAH.

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AND CONDUCTED BY MAYOR LANG.

THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS WERE PRESENT:

Karen Lang, Mayor
Lars Nordfelt, Councilmember At-Large
Don Christensen, Councilmember At-Large
Tom Huynh, Councilmember District 1
Scott Harmon, Councilmember District 2
William Whetstone, Councilmember District 3
Cindy Wood, Councilmember District 4

STAFF PRESENT:

Ifo Pili, City Manager
Nichole Camac, City Recorder
John Flores, Assistant City Manager
Eric Bunderson, City Attorney
Colleen Jacobs, Police Chief
John Evans, Fire Chief
Jim Welch, Finance Director
Steve Pastorik, CED Director
Dan Johnson, Public Works Director
Jamie Young, Parks and Recreation Director (*electronically*)
Jonathan Springmeyer, RDA Director
Sam Johnson, Strategic Communications Director
Craig Thomas, Community and Culture Director
Paula Melgar, HR Director (*electronically*)
Travis Crosby, IT
Jeanette Carpenter, Finance
Nic Hales, Finance

OPENING CEREMONY- COUNCILMEMBER SCOTT HARMON

Councilmember Harmon offered condolences to Councilmember Christensen and his family regarding the loss of his wife and asked members of the Council, staff, and audience to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. **ACCEPT PUBLIC INPUT REGARDING THE FINAL BUDGET FOR WEST VALLEY CITY FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JULY 1, 2026, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2027**
Mayor Lang informed a public hearing had been advertised for the Regular Council Meeting scheduled August 11, 2026 in order for the City Council to hear and consider public comments regarding the Final Budget for West Valley City for the Fiscal Year Commencing July 1, 2026, and Ending June 30, 2027.

Written documentation previously provided to the City Council included information as follows:

This resolution adopts the final budget for West Valley City for the 2026-2027 fiscal year and sets a date for public comment at a hearing to be held on August 11, 2026.

West Valley City will adopt a tentative budget that will be made available for public inspection during regular office hours in the City's Recorder's office and gave notice of a hearing to receive public comment, before the final adoption of this tentative budget for FY 2026-2027.

The Property Tax Impact Schedule is Available Separately from All Other Budget Documents. It is Available on the Website, Attached to this Agenda, and in Person in this Meeting.

Mayor Lang stated that, pursuant to State law, the only matters before the City Council were the proposed property tax increase and adoption of the final budget. She explained that the Council would not approve minutes or hold a general public comment period. The meeting would include a presentation on the proposed budget, followed by a public hearing for comments regarding the budget and proposed tax increase. Following the public hearing, the Council would discuss the matter, consider any motions, take action on the budget, and adjourn.

Mayor Lang explained that the City was considering a property tax rate exceeding

the certified tax rate. The proposed increase was anticipated to generate approximately \$1,907,662 in additional ad valorem tax revenue, representing an approximately 5% increase in the City's ad valorem tax revenue. The additional revenue would be used for operational and employee compensation costs. She noted that additional information was provided in the property tax impact schedule, available on the City's website and in paper copies at the meeting.

Jim Welch, Finance Director, presented the Fiscal Year 2026–2027 budget and explained that the public hearing was required because the City was considering an adjustment above the certified tax rate. He reviewed the disclosure requirements established by Senate Bill 29 and stated that the required information was available in paper form, on the City's website, and through public notice resources.

Jim stated that the proposed property tax increase would generate approximately \$1.9 million in additional revenue, representing an approximately 5% increase in the City's ad valorem tax revenue. For an average homeowner, the estimated impact would be approximately \$32 per year, or \$2.73 per month. The additional revenue was intended to support nine new firefighter positions and increased compensation for non-sworn and Police Department personnel.

Jim reported that the City's total proposed budget was approximately \$176 million, with the majority of City operations funded through the General Fund. He explained that General Fund revenues primarily consisted of sales tax at approximately 41%, property tax at approximately 33%, and other revenues, including utility taxes, court fines, interest, and permit revenues. More than half of General Fund expenditures were dedicated to public safety, including approximately 36% for Police and 19% for Fire.

Jim noted that the proposed budget represented an approximately 5% increase over the prior year and included projected increases in sales and property tax revenues. He explained that, absent Council action, property tax revenues generally remain at the prior year's level, with additional revenue generated through new construction. Significant budget additions included four new police officers, nine new firefighters, three additional public employees, employee compensation adjustments, and operational adjustments associated with contractual obligations and increased costs.

Jim also reviewed the Truth in Taxation notices and explained the relationship between property values and the certified tax rate. He discussed the revenue

adjustment and judgment levy components of the property tax calculation, explaining that the judgment levy allows taxing entities to recover revenue associated with property valuation appeals and resulting refunds and does not represent an ongoing increase. He concluded by reviewing the County's combined notice showing proposed property tax increases among taxing entities and noted that the information was also available on the City's website.

Mayor Lang opened the Public Hearing.

Jeremy Godenbeir expressed opposition to the proposed property tax increase and concerns regarding government spending and taxation. He stated that his property taxes had increased significantly since purchasing his home in 2012 and expressed concern about the cumulative financial burden of taxes on residents and families. He criticized what he viewed as government overreach, excessive taxation and regulation, and questioned whether tax revenues were being used effectively. He also raised concerns regarding infrastructure, water use, and restrictions on property owners.

Jim Vesock acknowledged that while residents generally do not like paying taxes, he supported funding additional firefighters and police officers to maintain adequate emergency response services. He requested greater information regarding the three additional non-public safety employees included in the budget and suggested that the City evaluate and report on the return on investment associated with new positions. He referenced previously added positions related to maintaining City properties and expressed concern that the anticipated benefits had not been evident. He encouraged the City Council to consider the measurable benefit to residents when allocating additional taxpayer funds.

Mike Markham stated that he did not oppose the proposed budget and acknowledged the need to fund City services. However, he expressed concerns regarding certain prior-year expenditures, specifically the City's purchase of three former LDS meetinghouses located near one another and the additional costs associated with improving the properties. He suggested the City consider selling or repurposing the properties in ways that could generate property tax revenue or otherwise provide a financial return to the City.

Judy Burhamlin expressed concern regarding the increasing financial burden of property taxes, particularly for older residents and those living on limited or single incomes. She stated that she was responsible for taxes on two properties and had

experienced significant increases in recent years, making it increasingly difficult to meet her financial obligations. Judy acknowledged the importance of funding community services and expressed appreciation for the programs and services provided by the City but felt that taxation was becoming unaffordable. She encouraged the City to consider ways to reduce the tax burden, particularly for senior residents, and expressed concern that continued increases could make it difficult for longtime residents to remain in their homes.

Ryan Mahoney acknowledged the financial pressures residents face due to increases in the cost of living and stated that he understood the distinction between state and municipal taxes. While noting that no one favors tax increases, he expressed support for additional funding when directed toward infrastructure and public safety. He emphasized the importance of maintaining competitive compensation to recruit and retain qualified police officers and firefighters and avoid losing the City's investment in their training. Ryan stated that inflation also affects City operations and, although he did not welcome the increase, viewed it as necessary to maintain essential services.

Mayor Lang closed the Public Hearing.

ACTION: RESOLUTION 26-89, ADOPT A FINAL BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR COMMENCING JULY 1, 2026 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2027

The City Council previously held a public hearing regarding proposed Resolution 26-89 that would adopt a final budget for West Valley City for the Fiscal Year commencing July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027.

Councilmember Huynh strongly opposed the proposed property tax increase and expressed frustration with the Council's consideration of placing an additional financial burden on residents who were already facing taxes from multiple taxing entities. He argued that Councilmembers were elected to serve and assist residents, not make it more difficult for them to afford their homes, and criticized the City for pursuing a tax increase when he believed other options were available. Councilmember Huynh was particularly critical of the City's ownership and financial support of the golf courses and Maverik Center. He questioned why the City continued to subsidize these facilities rather than consider selling them and using the proceeds to address budgetary needs. He also criticized benefits provided to current and former Councilmembers, including complimentary golf and access to a suite at the Maverik Center, questioning why taxpayers should bear those costs. He requested that the City Attorney review whether such benefits complied with City

policies regarding acceptance of gifts. Councilmember Huynh also criticized the City for encouraging residents to conserve water and xeriscape while using significant amounts of water to maintain City golf courses, describing the City's position as inconsistent. He argued that the City was not adequately exploring alternatives to property taxes and pointed to other Utah municipalities that operate without property tax revenue. He criticized the Council for what he viewed as a failure to think creatively, better manage City resources, and study alternative revenue models. Councilmember Huynh concluded that he could not support increasing property taxes while he believed the City continued to subsidize discretionary facilities and provide benefits to elected officials. He urged the Council to reconsider its priorities and focus on reducing the financial burden on residents.

Councilmember Wood stated that she has been a West Valley City resident for more than 40 years and believed residents should receive quality services in return for the taxes they pay. She expressed appreciation for the City's police officers, firefighters, and employees and emphasized that providing these services requires adequate funding. Councilmember Wood stated that property taxes are an important source of revenue for municipalities and help fund both essential services and community amenities. In response to concerns regarding City-owned facilities, she referenced previous public hearings regarding the West Ridge Golf Course and noted that residents had expressed strong support for the facility. She also cited the Family Fitness Center as an example of a City-supported amenity used and valued by residents. She stated that she believed City expenditures were carefully considered and acknowledged that Councilmembers may reasonably disagree regarding individual spending decisions. Councilmember Wood emphasized that municipal government is nonpartisan and that Councilmembers represent the residents of West Valley City. She stated that she strives to support residents and help address their concerns and, as a resident herself, expects the City to continue providing quality services. She emphasized the need for additional police officers, firefighters, and City employees and recognized that competitive staffing and compensation require additional funding. Councilmember Wood expressed support for the proposed property tax increase, noting that the estimated annual impact on an average home was approximately \$30. She stated that she was willing to pay the increase to maintain City services and expressed confidence that the majority of the Council was focused on serving the best interests of residents.

Councilmember Huynh continued his opposition to the proposed property tax increase, arguing that increases in home values do not provide residents with

additional disposable income unless they sell their homes or borrow against their equity. He emphasized that many longtime residents want to remain in West Valley City and should not be forced to sell or incur additional debt to afford increasing property taxes. Councilmember Huynh reiterated his criticism of the City's ownership and operation of the golf courses and Maverik Center, arguing that these facilities should be operated by the private sector rather than subsidized by taxpayers. He referenced the City's previous sale of its hotel as an example and stated that government should focus its resources on core municipal responsibilities, including public safety, roads, sanitation, and other essential services. He argued that selling such assets could generate revenue that could instead be used to benefit residents. Councilmember Huynh again criticized the City and Council for what he viewed as an inadequate effort to identify alternatives to increasing property taxes. He urged the City to study other Utah municipalities that operate without property tax revenue and questioned why similar approaches had not been pursued in West Valley City. He expressed particular concern for senior residents and others struggling with rising costs, referencing earlier public comments regarding the difficulty of remaining in their homes while paying increasing property taxes. He concluded by asserting that the City had not worked hard enough to find alternatives and that increasing taxes was inconsistent with the Council's stated commitment to serving and supporting residents.

Councilmember Nordfelt acknowledged that raising taxes was not something the Council or residents wanted but stated that, under Utah's property tax structure, periodic increases were necessary to maintain a sustainable revenue source for the City. He noted that inflation had affected both residents and City operations and emphasized the need to provide competitive compensation to retain high-quality police officers and employees. Councilmember Nordfelt stated that responsible governance sometimes required making difficult and unpopular decisions that were necessary to maintain essential City services.

Councilmember Nordfelt moved to approve Resolution 26-89.

Councilmember Harmon seconded the motion.

Councilmember Huynh stated that the City needed to look at other municipalities that do not collect property tax.

Councilmember Christensen asked what City in Utah does not collect property tax.

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Councilmember Huynh stated that Councilmember Christensen needed to study that for himself.

Mayor Lang asked how large these Cities were. Councilmember Harmon asked if these Cities had a Police Department or Fire Department. Councilmember Huynh stated they did. Councilmember Harmon disagreed. Councilmember Christensen asked for Councilmember Huynh to name one City. Councilmember Huynh encouraged the Council to do their research. Councilmember Christensen stated that Councilmember Huynh referenced the Mosquito Abatement District tax increase and stated that there wasn't one until next year and it would be a dollar a year. Councilmember Huynh stated that he could manage the City without a property tax increase on residents. The Council continued to disagree briefly.

A roll call vote was taken:

Councilmember Wood	Yes
Councilmember Whetstone	Yes
Councilmember Harmon	Yes
Councilmember Huynh	No
Councilmember Christensen	Yes
Councilmember Nordfelt	Yes
Mayor Lang	Yes

Majority.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

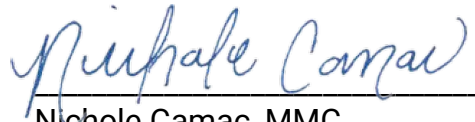
Upon motion by Councilmember Huynh all voted in favor to adjourn.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS OF THE WEST VALLEY COUNCIL, THE REGULAR MEETING ON TUESDAY AUGUST 11, 2026 WAS ADJOURNED AT 7:14 PM BY MAYOR LANG.

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true, accurate and complete record of the proceedings of the Regular Meeting of the West Valley City Council held Tuesday, August 11, 2026.

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Nichole Camac", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Nichole Camac, MMC
City Recorder