



Duchesne City Council Work Meeting

Minutes

Monday, August 17, 2026 at 6:00 pm

A specially scheduled work meeting of the Duchesne City Council will be held at the Duchesne City Office Building, 500 E Main, Duchesne, UT 84021. The agenda will be as follows:

AGENDA

1. Roll Call

Minutes:

Mayor Deborah Herron conducted the meeting. City Recorder, Jessica North took minutes. City Council Members present were Bryce Hamilton, Mark Nielsen, Marty Herrera, Cody Ivie, Jason Baker was absent
Duchesne City Employee Attendees: Myra Young
Public Attendees: Clay Crozier, Lynn Bell, and Janice Shipman

2. Discussion Regarding Animal Control Ordinance Regulations and Applicable State Law

Minutes:

Purpose of Work Meeting:

The work session purpose was to review Duchesne City's animal-control system and consider a comprehensive overhaul of the City's animal-control ordinance, enforcement structure, shelter/holding process, and coordination with Duchesne County and the Duchesne County Sheriff's Office. The discussion was intended to identify workable options and prepare language and service arrangements for later consideration; no ordinance was adopted during the work meeting.

Animal Control Ordinance Review:

Mayor Herron and the City Council reviewed the City's existing animal-control framework and discussed creating clearer definitions, procedures, enforcement tools, and consequences for recurring animal-control problems. It was emphasized that the ordinance must be consistent with Utah law and federal requirements and must clearly distinguish responsibilities belonging to the City, the courts, law enforcement, shelters, and any proposed civilian liaison or advisory board. Discussion also included nuisance animals, dangerous or vicious animals, repeat violations, owner responsibility, impoundment, animal disposition, and the need for objective standards that law enforcement and the court can apply consistently.

Proposed Pilot Program, Holding, and Shelter Capacity Lynn Bell presented a possible 90-day pilot program was discussed to test a revised animal-control process before determining whether it should continue long term. Options included temporary City holding space or pods, limited City holding capacity, and continued use of county or

other shelter resources for longer-term placement.

Discussion included intake, care, documentation, owner notification, reclaim procedures, transfers, and final disposition. A five-business-day holding period was discussed where applicable, with the understanding that animals must remain available for owner reclamation during the required holding period even if they are physically transferred to another appropriate location.

Shelter capacity was identified as a major practical problem. It was noted that the current system can leave residents and law enforcement without a place to take animals when available kennels are full. The group discussed the reality that adding only a small number of kennels would not, by itself, resolve the broader capacity problem.

County and Sheriff's Office Coordination:

Considerable discussion focused on Duchesne City's reliance on the Duchesne County Sheriff's Office and county resources for animal-control enforcement and related services. Participants discussed reviewing or revising the existing service agreement or contract so that responsibilities, response expectations, enforcement authority, availability, and costs are clearly stated.

It was also discussed whether the City could receive a more dedicated level of service through the Sheriff's Office, including the possibility of an additional deputy or dedicated assignment funded in whole or in part by the City. Off-duty or secondary-employment arrangements were also mentioned as possible concepts, subject to Sheriff's Office approval and applicable requirements.

Participants recognized that increased service would likely require increased funding. Concerns were raised that the City should understand exactly what level of service is guaranteed under any contract and whether the arrangement provides sufficient enforcement capacity to make the revised ordinance effective.

Animal-Control Officer, Civilian Liaison, and Training:

The discussion included whether Duchesne City could appoint or employ a civilian animal-control officer without operating its own police department. It was noted that a civilian appointment may be possible, but expressed concern about training, constitutional requirements, property seizure, liability, and the limits of non-law-enforcement authority. An animal-control officer training course was discussed as a possible requirement in a standard operating procedure. The group also discussed the need to clearly define when a civilian employee or liaison must defer to law enforcement.

The proposed liaison concept would focus on receiving and organizing complaints, documenting incidents, gathering information, tracking repeat problems, coordinating with rescues and foster resources, and preparing information for law-enforcement referral. The liaison or board would not independently exercise powers reserved to law enforcement or the courts.

Animal-Control Board or Advisory Committee:

Participants discussed establishing an animal-control board or advisory committee with a defined charter. The board could help organize community resources, maintain contacts with rescue organizations and foster homes, assist with placement efforts after required holding periods, and provide ongoing attention to animal-control issues that law enforcement does not have the capacity to manage on a daily basis.

The group discussed maintaining a list or network of rescue organizations, including out-of-area or out-of-state rescues willing to pull animals from the Basin. The goal

would be to move eligible animals to appropriate rescues more quickly once they are legally available, reduce the time animals occupy limited kennel space, and relieve some pressure on law enforcement and shelters. Any board or committee would need clearly defined authority and procedures and would not independently order euthanasia or make judicial determinations.

Dangerous Animals, Provocation, and Nuisance Provisions:

The group discussed dangerous or vicious animal provisions and the importance of distinguishing an unprovoked attack from an incident involving provocation. Examples included animals kept behind barriers or on private property and situations where a person reaches through or crosses a barrier to interact with an animal.

Participants discussed nuisance provisions as an additional enforcement tool when an animal repeatedly creates problems or an owner repeatedly violates City requirements. The ordinance should establish objective standards and escalating consequences so enforcement is not arbitrary.

Service Animals:

The City's service-animal language was reviewed. Participants talked about revising the ordinance to remain consistent with federal ADA standards and avoiding language that would improperly require certification or define service animals too narrowly. The distinction between ADA service animals and law-enforcement canines was also discussed. Reckless Owner and Repeat Violations.

The group discussed creating a reckless-owner provision for persons with repeated animal-control violations. One concept was to define a reckless owner as a person and allow repeated qualifying violations to result in restrictions on the person's ability to license or possess animals for a period of time.

It was also emphasized that restrictions on ownership or possession must include due process and should be imposed through the appropriate judicial process rather than by City staff or an advisory board. Additional legal review and ordinance drafting were identified as necessary before finalizing this provision.

Dog Licensing and Registration:

The City currently requires licensing for dogs but not cats. Participants noted that dog licensing has not been consistently enforced and discussed whether the existing registration requirement is accomplishing its intended purpose.

The group recalled that annual veterinary clinics had previously helped residents register dogs while obtaining veterinary services. The possibility of again coordinating a low-cost or free City-hosted clinic was discussed as a practical way to encourage compliance.

Livestock, Private Property, Stray Cats, and Animal Welfare:

Participants discussed animals entering private property, dogs injuring livestock or poultry, nuisance cats, and the legal limits on a property owner's response. The group distinguished an immediate threat to people, livestock, or property from an animal that is merely present or creating a nuisance.

The discussion recognized that Utah animal-welfare and cruelty laws may apply and that residents should have a lawful process for reporting and addressing problems rather than being left to take matters into their own hands. Matters involving possible criminal conduct or unlawful killing or mistreatment of an animal would remain subject to law-enforcement investigation and applicable state law.

Administrative Review and Due Process:

The discussion lead to the need for an administrative review or hearing process when

the City or its enforcement agency takes action against an owned animal, particularly when ownership rights or possession of an animal may be affected. The group discussed using the Justice Court process where appropriate and coordinating with the Sheriff's Office and County regarding how animal-control violations would be adjudicated.

The discussion compared animal-control enforcement with other City ordinance violations prosecuted through the Justice Court and emphasized the need for the revised ordinance to clearly establish procedures and remedies. Recent Animal-Control Incident and Citizen Safety A recent community incident involving a loose dog was discussed as an example of the current system's limitations. According to the discussion, a resident seeking help was advised that animal-control holding space was unavailable, and private citizens and a groomer ultimately became involved in handling and caring for the dog.

Participants expressed concern that citizens are being placed in unsafe or legally uncertain situations when no official resource is available. Questions were raised about the authority of private citizens to take custody of, groom, or otherwise make decisions regarding an animal that may have an owner. The incident reinforced the need for a clear intake, custody, enforcement, and shelter process.

Shelter Capacity, Rescue Resources, and Euthanasia:

The City Council discussed the difficult reality of limited shelter and rescue capacity throughout the Basin. Participants noted that local rescues and shelters are frequently overwhelmed and that some rescue volunteers have stepped away because of the continuing volume of animals and lack of placement options. Euthanasia and the possibility of a kill-shelter model were discussed as part of the broader capacity problem. Participants acknowledged the seriousness and sensitivity of the issue. Others emphasized that a board or liaison focused on rescue placement and foster coordination could improve outcomes by actively seeking alternatives and reducing the number of animals remaining in limited shelter space. No final policy decision regarding euthanasia or shelter operations was made.

Cost and Practicality:

The financial implications of improving animal-control services was brought up. City Council noted that a workable system will require funding for enforcement, holding or shelter capacity, training, contracts, equipment, or some combination of these resources.

There was general recognition that doing nothing is no longer a satisfactory option, but the City must determine what level of service it can fund and what responsibilities should be provided by the City, County, Sheriff's Office, or other partners.

Direction and Next Steps:

The group agreed that the ordinance should be drafted into a complete working document so it can be reviewed and redlined rather than continuing to discuss isolated concepts.

Sheriff Tucker and the sheriff-elect are to be invited to the September 8, 2026 City Council meeting to discuss the animal-control contract, enforcement expectations, available service options, and the issues identified during the work meeting.

The City will continue evaluating the proposed animal-control board/liaison structure, rescue and foster coordination, civilian animal-control authority and training, shelter/holding procedures, administrative review and due process, reckless-owner language, and the cost of improved enforcement and services.

No final ordinance, contract amendment, shelter plan, or enforcement model was approved during the work meeting.

3. Work Meeting: Discussion of City Projects, Budget and Operational Matters, Council Initiatives, and Other Items Properly Brought Before the Council

4. 15-Minute Open Session

Minutes:

No one came forward.

5. Adjournment

Minutes:

The work meeting adjourned at 7:53pm.

Attest:

Jessica North, Recorder _____