

**SANTA CLARA CITY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2026
MEETING MINUTES**

THE CITY COUNCIL FOR SANTA CLARA CITY, WASHINGTON, UTAH, met for a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers located at 2603 Santa Clara Drive, Santa Clara, Utah. The meeting will be broadcasted on our city website at <https://santaclarautah.gov>.

Present: Mayor Jarett Waite
Councilman Justin Caplin
Councilwoman Janene Burton
Councilwoman Christa Hinton
Councilwoman Dave Pond
Councilman Mark Hendrickson

Staff Present: Brock Jacobsen, City Manager
Selena Nez, City Recorder
Matt Ence, City Attorney
Jim McNulty, Planning Director
Casey Stratton, Public Works Director
Gary Hall, Power Director
Ryan VonCannon, Parks Director
Lance Haynie, Government Affairs Director
Jaron Studly, Police Chief
Rich Rogers, Police Captain

Others Present: Deborah Jacobs
Rick Rosenberg
Suzannah O'Brein

1. Call to Order

Mayor Jarett Waite called the regular scheduled meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The mayor welcomed everyone and noted that a full council was present: Councilman Justin Caplin, Councilwoman Janene Burton, Councilwoman Christa Hinton, Councilman Dave Pond, and Councilman Mark Hendrickson.

2. Opening Ceremony

Pledge of Allegiance: Councilwoman Burton

Opening Comments: Pastor Daniel Solis, Iglesia Monte Zion

3. Conflicts and Disclosures

No other conflicts were disclosed by council members.

4. Working Agenda

A. Public Hearing(s) 6:00 pm

1. None

B. Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes and Claims:
 - July 22, 2026, City Council Work and Regular Meeting
 - Claims through August 12, 2026
2. Calendar of Events:
 - August 26, 2026, City Council Work and Regular Meeting (Cancelled)
 - September 7, 2026, Pioneer Day (Offices Closed)
 - September 9, 2026, City Council Work and Regular Meeting

Motion: Councilwoman Hinton moved to APPROVE the consent agenda as presented. Councilman Hendrickson seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Hendrickson - Aye, Pond - Aye, Hinton - Aye, Burton - Aye and Caplin - Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

C. General Business

1. Discussion and action to approve a Proclamation declaring September 17 through September 23, 2026 as Constitution Week. Presented by Karen Shuman, Daughters of the American Revolution.

Deborah Jacobs appeared on behalf of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Color Country Chapter, in place of Karen Shuman. She addressed the Council on the historical significance of Constitution Week, noting that September 17, 2026 marks the 239th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution at Independence Hall in 1787. She recounted that the DAR petitioned Congress to formally recognize this occasion, resulting in Public Law 915, signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, which designated September 17 through 23 as Constitution Week. She expressed gratitude to the Mayor and Council for continuing the tradition of issuing this proclamation.

Mayor Waite read the proclamation in full, which called upon citizens to reaffirm the ideals of the framers of the Constitution and to vigilantly protect the freedoms it guarantees, noting that "lost rights may never be regained." Following the reading, a photograph was taken with the DAR representative and members of the Council.

Motion: Councilwoman Burton moved to APPROVE the Proclamation declaring September 17 through September 23, 2026 as Constitution Week. Councilman Pond seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Hendrickson - Aye, Pond - Aye, Hinton - Aye, Burton - Aye and Caplin - Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Life Saving Awards. Presented by Jaron Studley, Police Chief.

Police Chief Jaron Studley presented Life Saving Awards recognizing personnel from two separate incidents that occurred on July 24, 2026. He was joined by Fire Captain Ryan Moore for the presentations. The following personnel were recognized: Captain Heyder, Engineer Costello, Firefighters Glaze and Fernandez, Officer Pondoyo, and Officer Pikyavit.

The first incident occurred at 9:55 AM when Medic Engine 31, Medic Ambulance 31, and SEI Police responded to a cardiac arrest involving a construction worker in Ivins. Bystander CPR was initiated with assistance from 9-1-1 dispatchers at the Saint George Communication Center. Emergency personnel arrived on scene in approximately 3.5 minutes and continued basic and advanced cardiac life support efforts, including defibrillation. Return of spontaneous circulation was achieved approximately 14 minutes after the witnessed cardiac arrest. The patient was transported to St. George Regional Hospital and was subsequently discharged. Chief Studley noted that the patient later contacted the department to personally thank the officers involved.

The second incident occurred the same day at 2:57 PM, when the same personnel responded to a pediatric drowning in Santa Clara involving a 5-year-old child who was found floating face down while wearing a life jacket, having been unresponsive for approximately 5 minutes. Bystanders initiated CPR prior to the arrival of emergency personnel. Units arrived on scene in approximately 2.5 minutes and administered pediatric advanced life support measures including rescue breathing and assisted ventilations. The patient was transported to St. George Regional Hospital, admitted, and later discharged.

Chief Studley remarked that both survivors are alive today because of the efforts of the recognized personnel. A group photograph was taken following the presentations.

3. Discussion regarding Virgin River Trust Land Conservation Easement update. Presented by Rick Rosenberg.

Rick Rosenberg, who was engaged by the city to develop the conservation easement, presented an update alongside Susannah O'Brien of the Virgin River Land Trust. The presentation focused on a proposed two-phase conservation easement for city-owned property in the lava field area.

Rosenberg explained that Phase 1 encompasses approximately 70 acres of lava field, specifically excluding city utilities, floodplain areas, existing trails, and a 100-foot buffer along Pioneer Parkway to allow for future road expansion. A 50-foot buffer was also retained along the existing trail on the east side to accommodate maintenance and any future improvements. Phase 1 was described as a preservation parcel with no planned new improvements, no new utilities, no new structures, and no vehicle access. Pedestrian access would be permitted throughout, not limited solely to the existing unimproved trail, following a suggestion from Councilman Caplin. Existing trail maintenance, including limited weed control and herbicide application currently carried out by parks staff and a volunteer, would continue to be permitted.

Rosenberg explained that Phase 2 was separated from Phase 1 because it involves areas where additional planning is still needed. Phase 2 includes the arboretum area, potential future park improvements such as a possible skate park, new utility corridors not yet fully located, potential mitigation banking with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and possible trail development. Parks Director Ryan VonCannon noted that the existing ramada structure rebuilt as an Eagle Scout project appears to be located near the Phase 1 boundary, and Rosenberg indicated he would adjust the Phase 1 boundary line to ensure that structure falls within Phase 2 where it can be properly maintained and improved.

Rosenberg also walked through a questionnaire provided by the Land Trust intended to guide the drafting of the conservation easement agreement. The questionnaire addressed goals, public access, permitted recreational activities, vehicle access, trail improvements, signage, utility rights, emergency access, maintenance responsibilities, and educational uses. Key determinations from the discussion included: no new trails, structures, benches, lighting, irrigation, or parking in Phase 1; invasive species and weed control would be permitted; educational and interpretive signage would be allowed; organized nonprofit educational events without ticketing would be permitted; and emergency services access would be maintained via existing trailheads and the unimproved trail network.

Councilman Caplin requested that the completed questionnaire answers be provided to the Council in writing for review prior to any further action, rather than relying solely on the verbal presentation. He also asked whether a public hearing would be required before the easement is signed. City Attorney Matt Ence indicated that a public hearing is not legally required but noted it may have value. Councilman Hendrickson and the Mayor agreed that public hearings would be appropriate as each phase moves forward, to give residents an opportunity to provide input.

O'Brien clarified the nature of the conservation easement as a perpetually binding legal agreement between the city and the Land Trust. She described the Land Trust's role as a monitoring partner, responsible for conducting annual inspections and documenting the condition of the property. If the terms of the easement were found to be violated, the Land Trust would notify the city and establish a remediation plan. She also noted that a stewardship fund would be requested from the city as a national requirement of the Land Trust's organizing body to support ongoing monitoring in perpetuity. In response to a question from Councilman Caplin, O'Brien confirmed that the Virgin River Land Trust has filed no lawsuits to date, though it does maintain a legal defense fund.

O'Brien observed that Santa Clara City is the first municipality in Washington County, and in southern Utah, to pursue an official conservation easement partnership with a land trust for city-owned land, calling it a meaningful step toward permanent preservation of an environmentally and culturally significant area.

Rosenberg noted that the survey work for Phase 1 is substantially complete and that a legal description and plat could be finalized within approximately one week once authorized. He also raised the possibility of extending the conservation easement process in the future to the rim area around the Santa Clara Heights, including the slope above the pioneer fort site, where the city owns the majority of land and where prior development requests have been turned away. He suggested the Council authorize work to identify and begin that discussion as a next step. Councilman Hendrickson expressed support for moving in that direction.

Rosenberg also mentioned potential future easement areas along reaches of the Virgin River and in the South Hills area as development activity increases.

No formal action was taken. The item will return to the Council for approval once the questionnaire is finalized, the easement terms are drafted and legally reviewed, and a baseline documentation report is completed.

5. Reports

A. Mayor / Council Reports

Staff Reports

Various department heads provided updates:

Police Chief, Jaron Studley reported:

- Reported on an ongoing investigation involving a 17-year-old that resulted in the recovery of 169 THC vape products, 56 nicotine products, and 12 pre-rolled marijuana joints. Social media warrants connected the items directly to local middle and high schools, preventing the products from reaching students.
- Welcomed two new officers who began the Field Training Officer (FTO) program during the week.
- Introduced Lance Bartraff, a 15-year veteran from Washington City and handler of K-9 Forest, the only explosives detection dog in Washington County, also serving Iron and Kane Counties. The City purchased the canine from Washington City for \$1,500.
- Clarified that the Police Department does not use Flock license plate readers. The department uses Vigilant cameras, operated by Motorola, which do not use facial recognition or artificial intelligence features.
- Shared reflections on his recent 10-week attendance at the FBI National Academy, where he completed coursework through the University of Virginia in strategic communications, constitutional law, terrorism, and related subjects. He also earned the fitness award known as the “Yellow Brick.”

Government Affairs Director Lance Haynie reported:

- Reported that a new code enforcement violation tracking system has been implemented through the City’s Esri subscription and is now live on the City website.
- Noted that the system allows residents to submit complaints with photographs and precise location mapping.
- Reported that code violations have increased approximately 30 to 35 percent.
- City Manager Brock Jacobsen and City Attorney Matt Ence clarified that while the City’s policy is not to proactively disclose the name of a complainant, a formal GRAMA request could potentially require disclosure.

Parks Director, Ryan VonCannon reported:

- Reported that the annual field leveling and reseeding project at Gubler Park is underway and will continue for several weeks.
- Noted that flags are flying at half-staff by order of the Governor in honor of firefighters killed in a recent helicopter crash and will remain at half-staff until after the final interment.

Power Director, Gary Hall reported:

- Reminded the Council and relevant staff of the upcoming UAMPS conference and noted that the opening dinner will have a MASH theme.
- Reported that transmission costs have increased approximately 30 percent compared to the prior year.
- Reported that a transmission line failure on Pioneer Parkway several weeks ago was caused by a beehive that had hollowed out the interior of a utility pole, which was subsequently compromised by a microburst.
- Reported that line crews are currently pulling cable in Silver Reef and continuing preventive maintenance on aging poles and lines.

Public Works Director, Casey Stratton reported:

- Reported that crews have been actively repairing water leaks and, in preparation for the first day of school, painted crosswalks and school zones at several intersections.
- Noted that crews worked as early as 3:00 AM at the Rachel/Pioneer and Canyon View/Santa Clara Drive intersections to avoid traffic disruption.
- Reported that at the most recent Dixie MPO committee meeting, members voted to allow the City to redirect funds from the Pioneer Parkway shared-use path project to the Tuacahn Wash Trail project, pending executive committee approval.
- Reported that the committee approved narrowing the scope of the Hamlin Parkway project to the segment from Rachel Drive east to the SITLA property due to insufficient funding for the full roadway and Ivins City's withdrawal from the existing allocation.
- Noted that both the SITLA and Black Desert developments are projected to be built within two years, making the Hamlin Parkway segment a priority connection.
- Reported that the street sweeper is temporarily out of service while awaiting a part from Salt Lake City. Councilwoman Burton's subdivision is first on the list for sweeping once the equipment is back in service.

Planning Director, Jim McNulty reported:

- Reported continued progress on the Hillside Protection Overlay Zone rewrite, with meetings scheduled through September in preparation for ordinance adoption.
- Reminded the Council of the Planning Commission meeting scheduled for the following evening.
- Reported that the hillside overlay zone committee, chaired by Rick Rosenberg, is making progress toward a finalized draft ordinance.
- Noted that a presentation will be made to the City Council and Planning Commission before public hearings are scheduled.

City Manager, Brock Jacobsen reported:

- Reported staff are researching commercial street impact fee structures used by other municipalities and anticipates a future City Council discussion regarding potential changes.
- Reported that the annual audit is scheduled for the first week of September and that staff is actively preparing.
- Alerted the Council to a recent fraud attempt in which a scammer posed as the City's Planning Department and contacted a developer with fraudulent wire payment instructions.
- Reported that staff is working to communicate more clearly with builders and developers regarding the City's actual invoicing and payment procedures.
- Reminded the Council about the Utah Legacies Conference and the National League of Cities Conference in November. Councilwomen Burton and Hinton have expressed interest in attending, and other Council members were invited to notify him if they would like to participate.
- Noted that the Utah League of Cities will hold a training webinar on August 26 regarding six-member council duties and procedures.

Mayor / Council Reports

Councilman Justin Caplin noted he had received inquiries from residents regarding utility bills and indicated that further follow-up with the utilities department would be warranted. He also relayed a constituent concern that water fountains at Gubler and Heritage Parks are frequently non-operational. Director VonCannon confirmed that the fountain at Gubler Park has broken components awaiting parts and that the Heritage Park fountain would be inspected.

Councilwoman Janene Burton reported that a swim party and dinner for the Youth Council is scheduled for the following week, with approximately 10 students participating, and noted that she has been in contact with local royalty participants regarding performances at Swiss Days.

Councilwoman Christa Hinton reported that she attended a Utah League of Cities housing and land use subgroup work session, where discussions centered on HOA-related legislation expected in the coming legislative session.

Councilman Dave Pond had nothing to report, noting that his Solid Waste District board meeting was cancelled.

Councilman Mark Hendrickson reported attending the One Utah Summit at SUU, which included the graduation ceremony for the Utah Rural Leaders Academy. He noted that the Governor is actively promoting rural economic development. He, along with Director McNulty and a representative named Colette, met as an economic development committee and are moving forward with a shop local initiative planned for April in conjunction with National Shop Local.

Mayor Waite reported that he attended a city staff lunch on July 30th and intends to participate in future staff lunches more regularly. He also informed the Council that the city's current Yopify resident notification platform, which was initially funded through a Water District grant, is approaching the end of that grant period. Staff has been directed to evaluate whether to renew the subscription or pursue alternative communication tools, including a potential in-house solution.

6. Closed Meeting Session

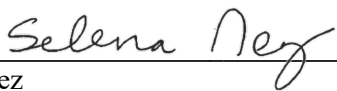
Mayor Waite confirmed a closed meeting session at 7:33 pm.

Motion: Councilman Pond moved to go into a Closed Meeting Session to Discuss Imminent Litigation. Councilman Hendrickson seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Adjournment

Motion: Councilman Hendrickson moved to adjourn. Councilwoman Hinton seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

The City Council meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.



Selena Nez
City Recorder

Approved: _____ September 9, 2026