

CITY OF OREM
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
56 North State Street Orem, Utah
August 25, 2026

3:30 P.M. WORK SESSION - CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE ROOM

CONDUCTING	Mayor Karen McCandless
ELECTED OFFICIALS	Karen McCandless, Crystal Muhlestein, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, Quinn Mecham ZOOM LaNae Millett, Chris Killpack
APPOINTED STAFF	Brenn Bybee, City Manager; Ryan Clark, Assistant City Manager; Keri Rugg, Deputy City Manager; Steve Earl, City Attorney; Chris Tschirki, Public Works Executive Director; Bryce Merrell, Community Services Executive Director; Brandon Nelson, Chief Finance Officer; Marc Sanderson, Fire Chief; BJ Robinson, Police Chief; Gary McGinn, Community Development Executive Director; Peter Wolfley, Community Services Executive Director, PIO; Teresa McKitrick, City Recorder

NOTE: The referenced report and presentation documents for each discussion may be viewed at orem.gov/meetings under “City Council Presentations”

WORK SESSION ITEMS

Union Bench Utility and Trail Study Presentation *Presenter: Marty Asay, Methods Consulting*

Mr. Asay of Methods Consulting launched the Union Bridge Utility and Trail Study (shortened to the Union Bench Canal Study), an exploratory initiative prompted by the North Union Canal Company and Provo Bench Canal Company deciding to cease running water through their canal systems. Mayor McCandless noted that acknowledging community feedback remains a priority, citing certified letters and emails she had already received regarding the corridor. Mayor McCandless, supported by Councilmember Lamson and Councilmember Mecham, emphasized that the city is at "ground zero" with zero preconceived notions, pre-approved construction projects, or predetermined outcomes regarding whether a public trail should be built. Councilmember Gale further clarified that the study's scope extends far beyond a simple trail proposal, framing trail development as the lowest priority on a list that primarily focuses on identifying land ownership, analyzing underlying legal easements, clarifying liability, addressing physical hazards, determining maintenance responsibilities, and evaluating city infrastructure needs along the roughly five-mile corridor running through Orem.

Mr. Asay framed the study's complex nature using the analogy of *Moby Duck*—a book chronicling how thousands of lost rubber bath toys triggered unforeseen oceanographic studies—explaining that what appears to be a straightforward question about a dry canal actually uncovers a "10,000-piece puzzle" of legal, technical, and logistical challenges. Mr. Asay explained that Methods Consulting, which was awarded the contract in mid-July 2026, will lead a 10-month evaluation supported by an interdisciplinary team of engineers, hydrologists, surveyors, and land-use professionals, with funding assistance from a grant secured by the city. The team is tasked with documenting existing physical conditions, mapping easement constraints across approximately 330 adjacent parcels, analyzing stormwater discharge rights, and developing cost estimates for various potential outcomes, which could later involve seeking state or federal grant funding through divisions like Utah's trail network. Mr. Asay, Councilmember Lambson, and City Manager Bybee all noted that because the canal's width varies dramatically—from wide spans to sections no wider than an elevator shaft—and encounters unique property configurations, such as split residential lots or commercial car dealerships on 800 North, the city will need to evaluate customized, section-by-section solutions rather than applying a single "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Public engagement was highlighted as a core priority under a strict "listen and learn" mandate outlined in the project's Request for Proposals. Mr. Asay detailed a multi-channel outreach strategy that includes direct mailings sent via tax record addresses to all 330 adjacent property owners, group email updates, small-group neighborhood "walkabouts," collaborative design charrettes, and an initial scoping open house targeted for late October to share preliminary findings. To serve as a central information repository, the project team launched a digital Story Map featuring an interactive map where residents can zoom in on their specific parcels, drop comments, submit concerns, and log contact information, while Mr. Asay personally committed to live phone responses or a 24-hour callback window. Councilmembers welcomed the structured data-gathering process, noting that while public feedback cannot act as a complete veto over all decision-making, the study will successfully equip the council with a comprehensive roadmap to evaluate all possible future uses for the corridor—ranging from underground utility installations like buried drainage pipes or UTOPIA fiber-optic cables, to converting specific segments into public space, or leaving the land entirely as is.

Residential Rental Dwelling License Ordinance Update Presentation *Presenter: Brandon C. Nelson, Chief Financial Officer*

Mr. Nelson presented an upcoming city ordinance change designed to align local code with recent Utah state legislation regarding rental dwelling licenses. Mr. Nelson explained that the state legislature passed a mandate allowing property owners who do not charge rent for a dwelling—such as individuals housing a child or relative without financial compensation—to submit an annual signed affidavit confirming the non-compensatory arrangement. Upon filing this affidavit, the city is legally prohibited from charging the owner a rental license fee until the dwelling is rented for compensation. Mr. Nelson noted that the city plans to require owners to

re-verify this status yearly during the standard rental dwelling licensing cycle and informed the council that the formal ordinance to adopt this state requirement into Orem city code would be officially brought forward for a vote at the September 8 council meeting.

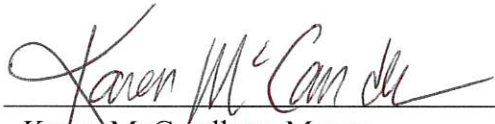
Mayor McCandless confirmed that the proposed code update is a direct procedural change to ensure city compliance with newly enacted state law. Councilmember Mecham voiced strong support for the measure, sharing that he had previously been approached by local families—including parents and grandparents housing family members for free—who had been flagged for rental license violations and charged fees by the city. Mr. Mecham noted that affected residents felt these enforcement actions were unfair given their family arrangements, and Mr. Nelson confirmed Mr. Mecham's understanding that the new affidavit process will successfully remedy those situations for Orem property owners going forward.

ADJOURN

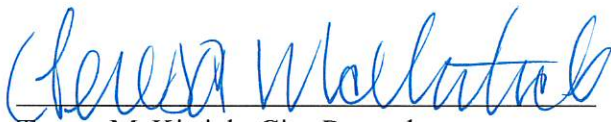
Ms. Gale moved to adjourn, **seconded** by Ms. Muhlestein. Those voting yes: Karen McCandless, Chris Killpack, Crystal Muhlestein, Jeff Lambson, Jenn Gale, LaNae Millett and Quinn Mecham. The motion **passed**.

(These minutes were created with the help of AI)

PASSED and APPROVED on this 8th day of September 2026.


Karen McCandless, Mayor

ATTEST:


Teresa McKittrick, City Recorder



COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Karen McCandless
Chris Killpack
Crystal Muhlestein
Jeff Lambson

AYE NAY ABSTAIN ABSENT

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Jenn Gale
LaNae Millett
Quinn Mecham

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