

**SANTA CLARA CITY COUNCIL WORK MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2026
MEETING MINUTES**

THE CITY COUNCIL FOR SANTA CLARA CITY, WASHINGTON, UTAH, met for a Work Meeting on Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at 4:00 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 Mark Hendrickson
Councilwoman Christa Hinton
Councilwoman Janene Burton
Councilman Justin Caplin

Excused: Councilman Dave Pond

Staff Present: Brock Jacobsen, City Manager
Selena Nez, City Recorder
Matt Ence, City Attorney
Dan Cazier, Fire Chief
Casey Stratton, Public Works Director
Gary Hall, Power Director
Ryan VonCannon, Parks Director
Lance Haynie, Government Affairs Director
Jaron Studly, Police Chief

Others Present: Laynce Bartruff
Forest
Katie Whipple
Jerold Nodvik

1. Call to Order

Mayor Jarett Waite called the Santa Clara City Council Work Meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. Present from the council were Councilwoman Christa Hinton, Councilwoman Burton and Councilman Justin Caplin. Councilman Hendrickson was excused, as he was leading an economic development tour, and Councilman Pond was absent due to family travel.

2. Working Agenda

A. General Business:

1. Introduction of new K-9 Unit. Presented by Jaron Studley, Police Chief.

Police Chief Jaron Studley introduced Officer Laynce Bartruff, who recently joined the department from the City of Washington, bringing with him his canine partner, Forrest. Chief Studley noted that Forrest is the only explosives detection dog in Washington County and is also trained in firearms detection. Officer Bartruff, who has 16 years of law enforcement experience including 10 years with the bomb squad, shared that Forrest has been deployed three times to Afghanistan and once to Jordan.

Chief Studley also took the opportunity to introduce Detective Katie Whipple, who joined the department in April 2025 and recently transitioned into the investigations unit, a position that was funded through the new budget year. Chief Studley expressed enthusiasm for the perspective she brings to the department.

2. Discussion regarding Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) City Map. Presented by Dan Cazier, Fire Chief.

Fire Chief Dan Cazier presented the city's proposed Wildland Urban Interface map and provided context for its development. He explained that WUI designates areas where undeveloped or wildland property interfaces with residential development, and that large fires across the nation have driven insurance companies to drop coverage or significantly raise premiums on properties in these zones. In response, the state developed a statewide WUI map, which Santa Clara had initially early-adopted before determining it needed adjustment.

Chief Cazier explained that the state map included areas the city felt were not genuinely high-risk, such as portions of the Black Desert, while omitting areas of legitimate concern, most notably the Santa Clara River corridor. The city's own map is intended to address those discrepancies at a local level. Importantly, he clarified that the city's map cannot be used by insurance companies to justify rate increases or coverage drops, as insurers are bound to the state map. The city map's primary function is to establish a construction standard for new development within designated zones, specifically requiring fire-rated assemblies for exterior walls and roofs. The estimated added construction cost for meeting this standard is approximately \$20,000 to \$30,000 per home, depending on size.

Chief Cazier noted that existing homeowners in the zone are not required to make any changes to their properties, though he encouraged voluntary hardening measures such as removing dead debris, reducing combustible landscaping, and creating defensible space around structures. Properties in the state WUI map are subject to an annual risk assessment that categorizes homes on a spectrum of fire risk, which can affect fire insurance premiums. Homes built to the fire-rated assembly standard would fall into the lowest risk category.

The council discussed the appropriate buffer distance along the Santa Clara River corridor. The map presented used a one-eighth mile buffer (660 feet on either side of the river), which is common among other municipalities. Chief Cazier indicated he was personally leaning toward a smaller one-sixteenth mile buffer (330 feet), noting it would still capture the most at-risk and undeveloped parcels along the river without unnecessarily extending into already-developed areas.

Councilwoman Hinton and Mayor Waite both expressed support for the one-sixteenth mile buffer. Council also discussed whether to include additional washes in the map, including the Arboretum area, Tuacahn Wash, and a wash running through the Solace townhome development. Chief Cazier noted that Tuacahn Wash had recently been cleared by an ACE crew and is in good condition, but that regular maintenance cannot be guaranteed indefinitely. Council indicated general support for including the Solace wash on the map for informational purposes, acknowledging that while it does not currently carry WUI requirements for that ongoing development, it is useful to identify for future reference. The arboretum wash and areas within the conservation easement footprint were not recommended for inclusion at this time.

Chief Cazier confirmed that the map is a working document and will be updated over time as development occurs and conditions change. A formal adoption process will come before the council at a future meeting.

3. Discussion regarding Resident Communication Strategies. Presented by Lacie Haynie, Government Affairs Director.

Government Affairs Director Lance Haynie led a discussion on how the city communicates with residents during emergencies such as power outages and water main breaks. He outlined the city's current tools, including Yoppify for text and email notifications and Facebook for social media outreach, and acknowledged that each has limitations. Text messages are immediate but can be intrusive at late hours; Facebook has broad reach but is subject to algorithmic irregularities that can surface outdated posts and is not used by all residents.

Director Haynie proposed moving toward the city website as the authoritative hub for emergency and public notices, with a streamlined process where a single post on the website would automatically trigger notifications across all other platforms, including text, email, Facebook, and Instagram. This would reduce the current disjointed process in which different staff members must separately manage each platform during an incident. He also suggested the possibility of time-based rules, such as suppressing text messages sent after midnight while still pushing updates to social media and email.

Councilwoman Hinton expressed continued support for social media alongside the website, noting that her first instinct during an emergency is to check the city's Facebook or Instagram. She also suggested posting to Instagram Stories in addition to standard posts, as stories are displayed more prominently and avoid the algorithmic ranking issues that affect regular feed posts. Director Haynie said he would look into whether that could be automated.

Councilwoman Burton recounted the recent countywide power outage and noted that when cell networks are overwhelmed, accessing websites and social media becomes unreliable. She emphasized the value of a direct, clear message sent via text or Messenger, which was the most effective communication residents received during that event. Director Haynie acknowledged the challenge and noted that even during the outage, staff had difficulty sending a follow-up Yoppify notification due to network congestion.

Councilman Caplin raised the importance of ensuring residents can easily opt in and keep their contact information current, noting that some residents have not been receiving notifications due to outdated phone numbers. Director Haynie agreed and said the city is also exploring a unified system that would be less dependent on Pelorus, the utility billing software, so that renters, temporary residents, and others not captured in that system could still subscribe to notifications. He also mentioned the possibility of running periodic campaigns encouraging residents to verify their contact information, similar to how Washington County promotes its reverse 9-1-1 system.

The council reached general consensus that no single platform is sufficient and that the goal should be a unified, streamlined back-end process that reaches residents through multiple channels simultaneously, with the city website serving as the consistent and authoritative source of record.

4. Discussion regarding proposed revision of Construction Design Standards to coincide with the new Sensitive Land Ordinance. Presented by Casey Stratton, Public Works Director.

Public Works Director Casey Stratton presented proposed revisions to Section 3.4 of the city's Construction Design Standards, which covers drainage and flood control. He explained that the changes are necessary to align this section with the new Sensitive Lands Ordinance, which is replacing the previous framework that directed developers based on the 100-year flood zone.

The primary changes involve removing language throughout Section 3.4 that referenced the 100-year flood zone and replacing it with references to the Sensitive Lands Ordinance, which will now govern permitting and approval requirements for development near wetlands, intermittent streams, washes, and drainage basins exceeding 0.15 square miles. The updated section also directs developers to the Santa Clara City Floodplain Development Permit and applicable permits from the Utah State Engineer, FEMA, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Additional updates include a reference to the updated city stormwater master plan currently in progress, new Low Impact Development standards applicable to any property exceeding one acre, and the removal of now-obsolete subsections governing irrigation ditches no longer in use within the city. The council had no questions and found the changes straightforward.

5. Discussion regarding Spence Gunn Improvements. Presented by Ryan VonCannon, Parks Director.

Parks Director Ryan VonCannon presented plans to upgrade Spence Gunn Field, noting that the

facility's fencing and lighting have not been significantly updated since the field was originally constructed. The improvements are needed on safety and operational grounds: the current backstop is not tall or wide enough to protect spectators and vehicles, the outfield fence at approximately five feet presents a hazard to trail users adjacent to the field, and the existing lighting system is inefficient, prone to failure, and difficult to restore once shut off.

The city submitted a request for \$180,000 in Tourism, Recreation, and Tax funding through Washington County under a 50 percent match program. The county was awarded \$135,000, which, while short of the request, was deemed sufficient to move the project forward. The plan calls for replacing the outfield fence with a 15-foot structure from left field through at least right center, drawing on former Mayor Rick's suggestion of a green monster aesthetic to be achieved through green slats in the chain link. Side fencing would be raised to eight feet. The remainder of the outfield fence from right center to the corner would drop to approximately ten feet.

The lighting upgrade would be handled through Musco Lighting, which the city already uses for other facilities including the pickleball courts. Musco's system reduces the pole count from eight to six, provides remote monitoring that proactively identifies outages, and operates under a multi-year warranty that covers repair costs. Two lighting bids were obtained: approximately \$150,000 for materials with city-handled installation, and approximately \$210,000 for full turnkey installation by Musco. The project will also require running conduit throughout the facility, as all current wiring was installed by volunteers with no conduit protection. A three-year-old fencing bid of \$123,000 from Allied Fencing will need to be updated before proceeding.

The council expressed support for the project. Mayor Waite noted a report from a resident near the field who regularly collects home run balls that clear the current outfield fence, and City Manager Jacobsen acknowledged receiving complaints from residents across the street about foul balls reaching their vehicles. Council directed staff to proceed with obtaining updated bids and a more detailed design.

3. Staff Reports

Various department heads provided updates:

Police Chief, Jaron Studley reported:

- Public Safety Work Group meeting held two weeks ago was productive
- Officer Bartruff has completed field training and is working regular shifts
- Officer Braden Tobler is midway through field training and recently welcomed his first child, Beau Tobler
- Noted that five children have been born to department members or their spouses this year
- Conducted active threat training at Rocky Vista University
- Upcoming events requiring police presence include Heritage Day, Swiss Days, and the PGA event

Government Affairs Director Lance Haynie had nothing to report

- City server migration from cloud to on-premises infrastructure is approximately 80% complete
- City of Ivins has been fully migrated onto the City's ArcGIS system

Parks Director, Ryan VonCannon reported:

- One pickleball court at Gubler is temporarily out of service due to a bent net post caused by repeated net overtightening
- Staff are working on a permanent deterrent solution, with the court expected to be back in service soon
- Two additional pickleball courts are scheduled for resurfacing
- City of Ivins has approached Santa Clara about using the Gubler courts for a Monday night pickleball league due to Ivins not having lighted courts

- Parks crew has completed overseeding and is preparing facilities for Swiss Days
- Four mowers were simultaneously out of service, causing some maintenance delays, three have been repaired, with the last expected back the following week

Power Director, Gary Hall reported:

- Reported on the August 27 countywide power outage and the City's on-site generation, which allowed power to be restored to most residents simultaneously
- A malfunctioning switch delayed restoration in Councilman Caplin's neighborhood
- A CenturyLink subcontractor struck communication and power cables while boring for fiber, requiring repairs that continued until approximately 3:00 AM
- July power bill exceeded \$900,000, largely due to high temperatures and new transmission charges through the EDAM energy market
- UAMPS has a two-year window to true up outstanding charges; further explanation is forthcoming
- Transformer serving the City's generation facility is showing signs of insulation failure and may need to be replaced
- Recommended ordering a larger transformer capable of supporting additional generators and retaining the existing transformer as a spare for other substations
- Transformer costs are approaching \$1,000,000
- Formal update on the UAMPS conference and related issues is planned for the September 23 work meeting

Public Works Director, Casey Stratton reported:

- Began a project at the Little League fields, in coordination with Councilman Hendrickson, to replace soil behind backstops with compacted asphalt rotomill
- Project is intended to reduce mud and improve field usability during wet weather
- Bid packet for a grade control structure in the Santa Clara River behind Swiss Village is nearly ready for distribution
- Bid packet is expected to go out within two to three weeks

Fire Chief, Dan Cazier reported on:

- Department is on its 13th wildland deployment of the year, with a crew currently assigned to a fire in Texas
- Probable crew swap extension is underway
- Department has responded to 14 major fires and an additional 18–20 smaller fires this year, not including local incidents
- Part-time administrative assistant position has been posted and initial applications have been received
- Department is finalizing a major grant application valued at more than \$1,200,000, due within two to three weeks
- Awaiting word on the SAFER grant, with awards expected within three to four weeks

City Manager, Brock Jacobsen reported:

- Annual audit is underway and is expected to be completed before the end of the calendar year
- Reminded Council that the Utah League of Cities and Towns annual conference is scheduled for October 27–28 in Salt Lake City
- Asked Council members planning to attend to confirm so registrations and accommodations can be arranged
- Councilwoman Burton, Councilwoman Hinton, and Councilman Caplin indicated plans to attend

4. Adjournment

Mayor Waite adjourned the work meeting at 5:33 p.m., noting they would reconvene at 6:00 p.m. for the regular meeting.



Selena Nez
City Recorder

Approved: September 23, 2026