

TOWN OF ALTAMONT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Date & Time: Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at 7:00 PM

Location: Altamont Town Office, 15588 West 4000 North, Altamont, UT 84001

Attendance Registry

Roll call was formally conducted at the commencement of the meeting. A quorum of elected officials was confirmed present to conduct legal town business.

Name	Title/Role	Status (Present/Absent)
Scott Allen	Mayor	Present (Full Session)
Russell Sorensen	Council Member	Present (Full Session)
James Helms	Council Member	Present (Full Session)
Mike Foy	Council Member	Present (Full Session)
Chris (Porter) Baca	Council Member	Present (Full Session)
Amanda Gardner	Town Clerk	Present (Full Session)
Craig Kettle	Maintenance	Present (Full Session)
Jared Thacker	Fire Chief	Present (Full Session)
Clint Curtis	Resident / Visitor	<i>Present (7:00 PM – Left at 7:04 PM)</i>
Chelise Curtis	Resident / Visitor	<i>Present (7:00 PM – Left at 7:04 PM)</i>
Von Johnson	UBMC Representative	<i>Present (Arrived late at 7:33 PM)</i>

Opening Procedures

Call to Order & Welcome: Mayor Scott Allen officially called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and welcomed those in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance: The Town Council and attending citizens stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Mayor Scott Allen.

Public Comment: The mayor opened the floor for public comment regarding items not formally listed on the agenda. It was noted that no members of the public requested floor time during this segment. The Council proceeded to the next business item.

Approval of Prior Session Minutes

The Town Council reviewed the written minutes of two prior legislative sessions. Amendments, additions, or corrections were solicited by the Mayor. None being heard, the Council proceeded to formal adoption.

Legislative Action: Approval of July 8, 2026 Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes

The Council thoroughly reviewed the minutes from the regular town council session held on July 8, 2026. *Motion*

Proposed By: Russell Sorensen

Motion Seconded By: James Helms

Voting Record: Unanimous Approval (All in favor: "Aye"; Opposed: None)

Legislative Action: Approval of July 20, 2026 Special Town Council Meeting Minutes

The Council reviewed the minutes of the July 20, 2026 special session, during which the town's fireworks and fire safety ordinances were drafted and amended. *Motion Proposed By: James Helms*

Motion Seconded By: Mike Foy

Voting Record: Unanimous Approval (All in favor: "Aye"; Opposed: None)

Scheduled Presentations & Special Guest Matters

Property Boundary Adjustment: Clint & Chelise Curtis

A property boundary line adjustment proposal was presented on behalf of Clint and Chelise Curtis to bring their physical property boundaries into full compliance with existing Altamont municipal codes. Town Clerk Amanda Gardner (Mandy) previously distributed an explanatory memo detailing the plat map. The adjustment involves reconciling a property piece currently owned by Susie Backer, separating it off from other parcels, and integrating it into a single compliant parcel for the Curtis family.

The mayor noted that the paperwork was prepared and ready for the final plat map signature of the mayor. The council discussed the simplicity of the adjustment, with Mayor Scott Allen and Clerk Gardner expressing full agreement. Hearing no additional discussion, the mayor called for a motion.

Legislative Action: Approval of Curtis Property Boundary Line Adjustment

Motion Proposed By: Russell Sorensen

Motion Seconded By: Chris (Porter) Baca

Voting Record: Approved by Majority Voice Vote (All in favor: "Aye"; Opposed: None)

Emergency Services Regional Restructuring: Von Johnson (Uintah Basin Medical Center)

Von Johnson, representing Uintah Basin Medical Center (UBMC) Emergency Medical Services, arrived at 7:33 PM to present a critical update regarding rural ambulance licensing. Johnson informed the Council that the Utah State Legislature passed a bill during its recent session that fundamentally restructures the ambulance licensing process.

Under the new legislation, control over designating 911 emergency and inter-facility transport providers is transferred to local municipalities and counties. Johnson requested that the Town of Altamont formally select UBMC as its preferred and authorized ambulance provider. This designation will allow Altamont to fall under Duchesne County's concurrent Request for Proposal (RFP) process, sparing the town the heavy administrative and financial burden of conducting its own independent RFP.

Johnson detailed that UBMC currently operates at a high "Paramedic" licensure level, providing a significantly higher tier of advanced clinical care than most of rural Utah, which typically operates under an Advanced EMT model. He proudly noted that UBMC was the first agency in the entire state to be permanently granted this paramedic level of licensure over twenty years ago, serving as a model for other rural districts.

In response to council queries about municipal alternatives, Johnson and the council discussed the extreme costs associated with running an independent municipal ambulance service. A single ambulance vehicle costs approximately \$300,000, with essential clinical equipment adding at least \$125,000. Staging a fully equipped ambulance in a local bay represents a capital expenditure of roughly \$500,000, excluding the massive ongoing operational costs for 24/7 staffing. The only other regional provider is Gold Cross, which operates out of Vernal—representing highly problematic response times.

Council Member Russell Sorensen remarked, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," a sentiment echoed by Council Member James Helms. The mayor noted that a formal signed letter of preference will be executed in coordination with the county's finalization of their RFP process.

Legislative Action: Designation of UBMC as the Town's Preferred 911 Ambulance Provider *Motion Proposed By: Russell Sorensen Motion Seconded By: James Helms*
Voting Record: Unanimous Approval (All in favor: "Aye"; Opposed: None)

Property Management & Code Enforcement Updates

The mayor led a detailed administrative review of municipal code violations, tax delinquencies, and utility non-payment associated with local property owner. A summary of known facts and legal steps discussed by the council is documented below:

Summary of Ashley Webb Delinquencies & Code Infractions:

- **Delinquent County Taxes:** Information obtained from the Duchesne County Assessor's office and Treasurer's office reveals that the property is currently \$13,000 delinquent in property taxes from the 2025 tax year across three specific parcels located within Altamont Town limits.
- **Unpaid Municipal Licensing Fees:** Audit records indicate that the property owner has failed to pay or renew his Altamont business license since the year 2022. Under Utah State Code (as reviewed by Clerk Amanda Gardner), if a business license is delinquent for more than three years, it cannot be processed as a standard renewal; it must be filed as an entirely new application subject to full regulatory review.
- **Delinquent Utility Balances:** The property is heavily delinquent on municipal secondary water fees and sewer utility payments, dating back continuously to 2022.
- **Building Code Infractions & Red-Tag Defiance:** The property owner recently moved an unauthorized mobile home trailer onto his property in front of the local laundromat, in direct violation of a structural 'Red Tag' placement issued by Mayor Scott Allen. The owner subsequently bypassed the tag, moving the unit to a location adjacent to the RV storage area.
- **Administrative Holding Status:** Clerk Amanda Gardner confirmed that she sent a certified, formal letter to the property owner placing his municipal business license on an administrative holding status. This hold will remain active until all delinquent unpaid utility balances, are paid in full and after consulting with legal counsel on how to proceed.

The mayor reported that the property owner had threatened the town during an hour-long discussion three weeks prior, asserting that he possessed a '\$500,000 war chest' backed by private investors and would 'bleed the town dry' and 'make the town go bankrupt' in court if Altamont pursued enforcement. The council strongly agreed that the town must avoid direct, unrepresented verbal conflict. Instead, the council determined that no further informal administrative letters would be sent. Altamont will instead retain formal legal counsel and proceed strictly through an attorney to obtain binding court orders and judicial injunctions.

The council noted that Duchesne County has expressed jurisdictional hesitation, stating they lack authority to enforce municipal ordinances inside town limits. However, the County Assessor's office (specifically Brandy from the assessor's department) notified the town that because of the massive tax delinquency, certain mobile homes located in Webb's park may be subject to formal county seizure and public auction under Utah state code.

Procurement of Town Attorney Services

Following consultations with the Uintah Basin Association of Governments (UBAG), specifically Representative Nate Zillis, the town issued a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) for a contracted Town Attorney. Rather than placing an attorney on an expensive monthly retainer, the RFP requested competitive bids for an hourly billing model, ensuring the town only pays for services rendered.

The RFP was issued with a strict proposal deadline of 5:00 PM on the evening of August 12, 2026. Upon the deadline's passage, only one competitive proposal was received. Since only one bid was received, the town could formally vote to bypass the standard three-member scoring rubric and proceed with direct evaluation. The sole proposal was formally unsealed and read aloud during the meeting.

Review of Sole Proposal: John Sterner (Kunz PC)

John Sterner, a highly experienced municipal attorney based in Vernal, Utah, submitted the proposal on behalf of the firm Kunz PC.

Proposal Metric	Attorney / Firm Offering Details
Primary Representative	John Sterner, practicing local government law in Utah since 2007.
Firm Experience	Kunz PC founding partner Bart Kunz possesses over 25 years of specialized land-use, planning, and zoning defense experience. The firm represents member counties of the Utah Counties Indemnity Pool (UCIP).
Federal/Appellate Record	Sterner recently served on the primary legal team securing a unanimous decision from the United States Supreme Court in <i>Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County</i> (regarding a Colorado rail line expansion). He has extensive experience in the Utah Court of Appeals, 10th Circuit, and DC Circuit.
Hourly Fee Structure	• Partners: \$275 per hour • Associates: \$215 per hour • Paralegals: \$155 per hour
Billing & Expenses	Invoiced monthly with a standard 30-day payment term. Reimbursable expenses include standard photocopying, courier, travel, and court filing fees.
Conflict of Interest Check	Sterner confirmed that his practice is focused in Uintah County, and a full conflict check revealed no existing conflicts of interest with Duchesne County or Altamont.

The mayor noted that John Sterner came highly recommended by County Commissioner Greg Miles, who responded within '30 seconds' to recommend Sterner, citing his exceptional professional efficacy. Council members noted that Sterner's pricing is in line with the averages for municipal counsel across Utah. However, a lengthy discussion ensued regarding cost management. The council expressed deep concern that Webb would attempt to drain the town's limited financial reserves through protracted legal maneuvers. The council emphasized that the town's contracted attorney must utilize lower-cost paralegals (\$155/hr) to execute the bulk of research and administrative drafting, saving the partner's hourly rate (\$275/hr) strictly for critical court appearances and strategic litigation.

Because a vote to formally award the legal services contract was not listed as an action item on the August 12 agenda, the council could not take definitive legislative action. The mayor proposed inviting John Sterner to attend a special town council meeting scheduled for August 19, 2026, at 6:30 PM. This meeting will allow the council to interview Sterner, establish billing guidelines, and execute a formal vote to retain Kunz PC. The council unanimously agreed to carry the decision over to the August 19 special session.

Departmental Reports & Public Safety Updates

Fire Department Operations & Resolution 2026-05A

Fire Chief Jared Thacker presented a detailed operational report. Chief Thacker highlighted community outreach, including the successful local Longhorn Days parade and the department's participation in the Duchesne County parade, which was requested by County Emergency Manager Josh.

Wildland Fire Deployment Revenue: Chief Thacker reported that on August 9, Altamont Fire Tender 156 was deployed to the Rocky Canyon Fire near Morgan, Utah, on a standard 14-day wildland deployment. During this time, Duchesne County has graciously provided an older surplus military truck as a temporary backfill tender to protect Altamont. If Tender 156 completes its full 14-day assignment, the state deployment is projected to generate approximately \$25,000 in direct revenue for the Altamont Fire Department.

Insurance Services Office (ISO) Audit: On July 30, 2026, a comprehensive ISO safety inspection was conducted by Verisk. The audit evaluates municipal fire defenses on a scale of 1 (best) to 10 (worst) to set local commercial and residential property insurance premiums. Chief Thacker reported that all records, vehicles, and equipment were in excellent condition, and the department expects a highly competitive rating of 6.0 once finalized (for reference, the larger city of Roosevelt oscillates between a 5.0 and 6.0). To further improve the score, the department must implement annual pump and hose testing on its primary structural truck, which currently occurs only once every five years. The pump test costs \$490, and the hose test is a similar amount. The final score is currently on hold pending Verisk's coordination with Upper Country Water.

Review of Resolution 2026-05A: Fireworks and Ignition Sources Restrictions

The council and Chief Thacker conducted a mandatory formal review of Resolution 2026-05A, which established temporary fire restrictions and a ban on unregulated open burning within municipal limits. Although recent regional rain occurred on the day of the meeting, fuel moisture levels remain critically low. The council agreed that dry, windy conditions would immediately return, posing severe fire hazards. The fire chief recommended extending the ban for an additional thirty days.

Legislative Action: Adoption of Amended Resolution 2026-05A Extension

Motion Proposed By: Russell Sorensen

Motion Seconded By: Mike Foy

Voting Record: Passed Unanimously via Individual Roll Call Vote:

- *James Helms: YES*
- *Russell Sorensen: YES*
- *Mike Foy: YES*
- *Chris (Porter) Baca: YES*
- *Mayor Scott Allen: YES*

Utilities, Maintenance, and Infrastructure Updates

Water & Sewer Operations: Craig Kettle reported that the secondary water ponds remain completely full. Chemical treatments have begun at the municipal sewer ponds, though visual effects cannot yet be accurately measured without a specialized sludge judge (the state is legally required to conduct this testing, but representatives have failed to appear). The sewer pond water level is currently low at 3 feet. Because the biological bugs require a minimum level of 3.5 feet to operate effectively, Kettle plans to open the pond valves to raise the levels once storm runoffs stabilize.

Winter Preparedness & Equipment Maintenance: Kettle confirmed that the town's snow removal equipment is fully functional and remains in the same good condition as the previous winter, with the sander still filled with sand. The town backhoe has developed several minor fluid leaks. Kettle is currently contacting the representative to secure replacement parts and execute repairs.

Cemetery Maintenance & Signage Disputes: The municipal cemeteries are in good physical condition. A few burnt grass patches exist, but Kettle noted limited water resources prevent continuous watering. The council recalled prior public complaints regarding leaning headstones at the Altonah cemetery. Upon physical inspection, the mayor noted that the headstones are not leaning significantly. Kettle explained that most older headstones appear low due to natural sinking and grass overgrowth, which requires raising—an action the town will not perform without written owner authorization.

The council discussed a heated dispute with a resident regarding Kettle's removal of faded holiday decorations and personal property from a headstone. The resident accused Kettle of being 'rude and ignorant.' Kettle directed the resident to the large signs prominently posted at the cemetery entrances, which clearly state that the town is not responsible for personal property or decorations left on gravesites after seven days. The mayor confirmed that the signs are legible and perfectly visible, requiring visitors to drive directly past them to enter.

RV Dump Station Project Planning

The council engaged in conceptual planning for a proposed municipal RV dump station to serve recreational travelers and generate local revenue. The station is proposed for the vacant, town-owned lot south of the mayor's residence, near the storm drain. This site is located at a safe distance to prevent encroachment on the municipal water well, provides easy physical access for vehicles entering from the street and exiting onto 3800 North, and offers direct access to the municipal sewer line.

Craig Kettle raised a major engineering concern, noting that the dumping of highly concentrated RV sewage would place a severe biological load on the town's sewer system, leading to an excessive buildup of sludge that 'doesn't go away' and takes months for the pond bugs to digest. While chemical treatments could help keep the lines clean, Kettle warned that the summer dumping season would require intensive manual cleaning of the line in the spring and summer. The council noted that nearby sites such as Pin Willies (which had nine RVs lined up recently), Yellow Pine, Maverick in Roosevelt, and Duchesne charge high fees, showing strong demand.

The mayor emphasized that the project is in a preliminary, multi-year planning phase. Because the State of Utah strictly regulates sewer connections, the project will require full engineering reviews, formal approval of '52 different plans,' and a detailed impact assessment on the sewer system. The council agreed to consult with municipal operators in Duchesne and Blair to review the design and sump-well configurations used at Gateway.

General Municipal Business & Community Updates

Altamont Days Feedback: The council reviewed the annual Altamont Days celebration, expressing strong satisfaction. A key logistical change was implemented this year in coordination with the local Recreation District, banning all vehicle parking along Main Street. This significantly improved safety and pedestrian flow. Although minor complaints were heard regarding the walk from the designated parking lot, shuttle buses were used to mitigate the distance. The public response was overwhelmingly positive, with very little backlash.

School Crossing Guard: With the school year commencing shortly, the council confirmed that Ana is scheduled to return as the town crossing guard. The council noted with pleasure that Ana recently obtained her driver's license, enabling her to drive to her shifts rather than riding her bicycle in severe winter snowstorms as she did the previous year.

Next Meetings and Adjournment

Future Legislative Sessions:

- Special Town Council Session: Scheduled for Wednesday, August 19, 2026, at 6:30 PM to interview John Sterner of Kunz PC and formally vote on the procurement of town attorney services.
- Regular Town Council Session: Scheduled for Wednesday, September 9, 2026, at 7:00 PM.

Legislative Action: Adjournment of the August 12, 2026 Regular Meeting

Motion Proposed By: Russell Sorensen

Motion Seconded By: James Helms

Voting Record: Unanimous Approval (All in favor: "Aye"; Opposed: None) (Meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM)

Minutes prepared by Town Clerk Amanda Gardner

Read and approved this 9 day of September, 2026