

**STATE OF UTAH
COUNTY OF SEVIER
TOWN OF ANNABELLA**

**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
October 8, 2026**

Minutes from the Annabella Town Council Meeting held Thursday, October,8, 2026, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers, located at 295 East 300 North, Annabella, Utah. Mayor John Chartier conducting.

1. ROLL CALL. Mayor John Chartier confirmed the presence of a full Council. Councilmembers Louis Brown, Kelvin Johns, Stephanie Morgan and Christopher Nielson all present.

2. OPENING REMARKS. Councilmember Brown offered the prayer.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilmember Johns.

4. CITIZEN INPUT. Mayor Chartier read into the record a written letter submitted by resident Kent Higgins, who was unable to attend in person. Mr. Higgins described an ongoing nuisance caused by unregulated feral cat feeding in his area, citing increased cat populations, property damage, loss of pets, and sanitation issues. He requested that the Town of Annabella, in cooperation with Sevier County, adopt a local ordinance requiring feral cat feeders to register as caretakers, participate in trap-and-sterilization programs at their own expense, restrict feeding to designated areas, and allow enforcement when feeding creates a nuisance or sanitation problem.

The Council discussed the matter at length. It was noted that the Town currently follows Sevier County's animal control ordinance, which was adopted in 2002. Maintenance Supervisor Eric Nielsen confirmed that a significant feral cat population exists in town, and that the problem is exacerbated by residents who actively feed the cats. He noted personally observing as many as 25 cats gathered at a single feeding location.

The Council acknowledged the practical and legal challenges of drafting and enforcing a cat-specific ordinance, including the difficulty of distinguishing between residents feeding their own cats versus feral ones. Officer Murdock noted that the existing county ordinance does contain general sanitation and nuisance provisions that could apply to the situation. He also confirmed that residents are legally permitted to set live traps on their own property to catch feral cats. It was further noted that the County Animal Shelter, in partnership with Best Friends Animal Society, offers a Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) program that residents may utilize. The Council agreed that drafting a new town ordinance at

this time was not warranted, given the difficulty of enforcement and the existing resources available.

The Council directed Town Clerk Tina Mitchell to draft a written response to Mr. Higgins summarizing the county's existing nuisance provisions, the TNR program resources available, and the option for residents to trap cats on their own property.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES. Motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Councilmember Johns and seconded by Councilmember Morgan. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: Yes-4 (Brown, Johns, Morgan, Nielson).

6. APPROVAL OF WARRANT REGISTER. Motion to approve the warrant register as presented was made by Councilmember Brown and seconded by Councilmember Johns. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: Yes-4 (Brown, Johns, Morgan, Nielson).

7. JACK REIDER TO DISCUSS GRANT OPPORTUNITIES. Jack Reider addressed the Council regarding potential grant funding opportunities for a trailhead facility. Mr. Reider outlined two possible locations that had been discussed previously—the Old Town Hall and a site on the west parking lot of the Community Center. He noted that the Old Town Hall location was not suitable for a trailhead due to inadequate parking capacity, as a functioning trailhead could generate 25–30 truck-and-trailer units at a time.

Mr. Reider described a funding model through the Pioneer Trail Committee in which ATV registration fees are directed into a grant fund. He referenced a similar project in Beaver where approximately \$98,000 was funded through this mechanism.

Mr. Reider suggested the Council consider developing the area near the west parking lot as a trailhead by adding a paved access road running along the edge of the property, organized parking for truck-and-trailer units, restroom facilities, and informational kiosks—with the existing kiosk from its current location relocated to the site. He further noted that pickleball courts and a pavilion could potentially be incorporated in future phases, funded through separate grants.

Councilmember Brown noted the added benefit of reducing lawn irrigation if paved areas replaced some of the existing grass. Maintenance Supervisor Nielsen observed that the parking layout described would also resolve previously identified concerns about vehicle access for pickleball court users.

Mr. Reider advised the Council that to initiate the grant process, the Town would need to identify a project budget and a point of contact to work with him. The Council expressed support for pursuing the trailhead grant opportunity and agreed to identify a budget and a responsible party to move the project forward.

Tina Mitchell noted that the Sevier Valley OHV Club generously donated two new tables for the Old Town Hall and also repaired several of the older tables that were in need of attention.

8. DISCUSS STORM DRAINAGE NEEDS AND CONCERNS. Mayor Chartier provided an update on the Town's storm drainage situation. He reported that he and Councilmember Brown are scheduled to meet with Jones & DeMille Engineering the following Monday to discuss initiating a stormwater master plan to identify permanent drainage solutions across the town.

In the interim, Maintenance Supervisor Nielsen has been coordinating with Frank Batty (the canal company representative) on temporary measures for two problem locations: 3rd East and Annabella Road. The proposed approach involves running a culvert over the top of the existing irrigation pipe to carry stormwater past those intersections. Nielsen noted that both roads carry significant water flow and that a recent rain event nearly undermined the canal pipe, underscoring the urgency of implementing at least a temporary fix. A contractor has been scheduled to assist with the installation on 3rd East the following Friday, with Annabella Road to follow.

The Council also discussed the more complex situation on 2nd East, where the terrain is too flat to easily route drainage. A possible long-term solution would involve routing water eastward along a property line and daylighting it at Dusty Wilkinson Park, but this would require survey-grade elevation data before proceeding.

9. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURES FOR STORM DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS. Maintenance Supervisor Nielsen presented cost information on the culvert materials he had ordered. He indicated that material had been ordered for 3rd East and Annabella Road, plus additional footage to keep on hand for future needs, totaling approximately \$16,000 in materials for the full order. The Council discussed whether to purchase only what was immediately needed or the full quantity ordered and concluded that the 33% overage beyond immediate needs was a reasonable and cost-effective decision, as prices are unlikely to decrease and the additional pipe would be used for future drainage work.

Motion to approve the purchase of all culvert pipe as ordered and to authorize contracting with a contractor for installation of drainage solutions on 3rd East and Annabella Road was made by Councilmember Brown and seconded by Councilmember Morgan. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: Yes-4 (Brown, Johns, Morgan, Nielson).

10. DISCUSS CULINARY WATER RATE ADJUSTMENT OPTIONS RELATED TO THE WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECT. Kyler Nielson (Jones & DeMille Engineering) presented an overview of the financial implications of the Town's recently approved Water Improvement Project funding package, which was

awarded on a 70/30 grant-to-loan basis. The loan portion equates to an annual debt service obligation of approximately \$34,873.30, with the first payment due October 1, 2028.

Kyler explained that to sustain normal operations while servicing this new debt, the Town will need to increase its water rates. The minimum required increase is approximately \$8.26 per connection per month to cover the loan payment alone, applied to the existing base rate of \$39.33. However, he strongly encouraged the Council to consider a more substantial increase, noting that the Town's current rates are on the lower end for maintaining a water system, and that adding a \$35,000 annual loan obligation on top of existing debt leaves little margin for system maintenance. He pointed to the prior year's pressure reducing valve (PRV) failures as an example of unanticipated costs that can strain the water budget.

The Council discussed the relative merits of raising the base rate versus adjusting the tiered overage structure. The Council discussed concentrating the increase in the base rate, as overage revenues are variable and unpredictable, whereas fixed loan payments require reliable coverage. Kyler agreed that the base rate is the appropriate vehicle for covering fixed costs, while overages can contribute to maintenance reserves.

Kyler proposed conducting a rate analysis as part of the project scope—at no additional engineering fee—to model several rate scenarios based on historical usage data and present them to the Council and the public. He recommended the Council hold one or two work sessions prior to the public hearing to align preferred options before presenting them publicly, suggesting that offering one to two clear choices at the public hearing would be most effective.

Regarding timing, the Council discussed a proposed schedule: adopting the bond parameters resolution at the November meeting and providing general rate increase notice to residents on November utility bills, then holding the public hearing on the bond in December. A rate-specific public hearing would then be scheduled for January. Kyler confirmed that the rate adjustment must be formally adopted before the loan can be closed but noted there is no immediate rush and the project team is ready to proceed once an engineering agreement is signed.

No formal action was taken at this meeting; the item was continued to the November and December meeting cycle.

Councilmember Morgan was excused from the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

11. YOUTH COUNCIL BUSINESS. Youth Council Advisor Maddi Brimhall presented the following upcoming activities on behalf of the Youth Council and received Council approval for each:

- Halloween Movie Night – Scheduled for October 30th, to be held indoors at the Community Center using the Youth Council's projector and inflatable screen.
- Grinch Movie Night – Planned for December, featuring a double feature of the animated and Jim Carrey versions of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, to be held indoors.
- Pheasant Hunters Dinner Raffle – The Youth Council plans to conduct a raffle at the Pheasant Hunters Dinner in lieu of a bake sale. Raffle tickets for a television will also be sold, with the drawing for the television to take place at the Christmas event in December.
- Christmas Lights at Old Town Hall – Decorating is planned to begin in November, with lights displayed on the fence and the large pine tree in front. The first Monday of December was identified as the Town Christmas party. It was noted that the bucket truck used in prior years had been sold, but an alternative vehicle from KMECO was identified as a potential resource.
- Light Fight Competition – The Youth Council plans to hold a light-decorating competition similar to last year's event, with a discount on a town utility bill as the prize. The Council indicated the same prize structure as the prior year would be appropriate, and Town Clerk Mitchell agreed to confirm the exact details with Brimhall.

12. DEPARTMENT BUSINESS

PARKS & BUILDINGS. The Council briefly noted citizen interest in restroom improvements at the Old Town Hall, which was also referenced in the context of the potential trailhead grant discussion.

ACTIVITIES. Councilmember Nielson updated the Council on the status of the senior volunteer recruitment effort for the Pheasant Hunters Dinner fundraiser. Three students had signed up to date, and the high school counselor at South Sevier had sent a general notice to all seniors. Councilmember Nielson indicated he would follow up with school counselors by the end of the week to determine final participation before moving forward.

CEMETERY. Town Clerk Mitchell noted that Kent Higgins had expressed interest in having the trees at the cemetery professionally trimmed. Councilmember Nielson agreed to visit with Mr. Higgins on the matter, as he also had some thoughts on tree removal at the cemetery.

ROADS. No new road issues were reported beyond the storm drainage matters addressed under Agenda Item 8 and 9.

WATER- ERIC NIELSEN – BACKFLOW REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

Maintenance Supervisor Eric Nielsen presented an overview of the Town's cross-connection control obligations under the state-mandated backflow prevention program. He explained that any resident running culinary water through an outdoor irrigation system is required to have a backflow prevention device installed, and that this requirement extends to exterior hose bibs and any connection where culinary water could come into contact with an external source such as a swimming pool or irrigation line.

Nielsen noted that the Utah plumbing code has been updated to align with the International Plumbing Code, making backflow protection a legal requirement rather than a recommendation. He expressed particular concern about residents who switch between culinary and irrigation water sources through the same outdoor system without a backflow device in place, noting that irrigation water is not potable and poses a contamination risk to the entire culinary system if allowed to back-siphon.

Nielsen requested that Council members assist by informally alerting him if they are aware of neighbors using culinary water through irrigation systems without backflow protection. He emphasized that his approach is educational and protective rather than punitive, and that he attempts to conduct annual hazard assessments and inform new construction projects of the requirements. He noted that failure to comply can ultimately result in termination of culinary service, though that outcome is a last resort.

13. ADJOURN. At 7:35 p.m. a motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Brown and seconded by Councilmember Nielson. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: Yes – 4 (Brown, Johns, Morgan, Nielson).

Minutes of the Town Council meeting held Thursday, October 8, 2026, were approved this 12th day of November, 2026.

John Chartier, Mayor

Tina Mitchell, Town Clerk