

Town of Mantua Regular Meeting Minutes

Date: September 17, 2026 **Location:** Town Hall, 409 North Main, Mantua, Utah

Time: 6:30 PM

Attendance

Council Members Present: Mayor Annette Ash, Mayor Pro Tempore Matt Jeppsen, Council Member Scott Ross, Council Member Cheryl Burgan, Council Member Henry Dovey

Commissioners / Board Members Present: Pam Eaves (Commissioner)

Town Staff Present: Recorder Sherita Schaefer, Marcus Abel (Public Works Director),

Applicants or Presenters

1. Harper Johnson, Mantua resident
2. Chris Haramoto, Utah State Parks representative
3. Alexander Engar, Business License Applicant
4. Josh Barker, Little Valley Hideaway Short-Term Rental Applicant
5. Brittany Barker, Little Valley Hideaway Short-Term Rental Applicant
6. Karen Nelson, Grant Update

The meeting was opened by Mayor Ash.

Invocation by Gini Newman. Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Ash; all in attendance participated.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Motion: Council Member Ross motioned to approve the minutes for the Town Council Regular held on August 20, 2026.

Second: Council Member Dovey seconded the motion.

Yes votes: Mayor Annette Ash, Matt Jeppsen, Scott Ross, Cheryl Burgan, Henry Dovey

No votes: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

MOTION PASSED

Consideration to Pay the Bills: Approve and Sign Bills

Motion: Mayor Pro Tempore Jeppsen motioned to approve the payment of bills signed tonight.

Second: Council Member Burgan seconded the motion.

Yes votes: Mayor Annette Ash, Matt Jeppsen, Scott Ross, Cheryl Burgan, Henry Dovey

No votes: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

MOTION PASSED

Public Comment

No comments were made during the general public comment period.

Presentations & Informational Items

State Park – Harper Johnson, Mantua resident: opposed the proposed state park, arguing that the survey materials biasedly emphasized benefits over disadvantages. He warned that increased park activity could harm Mantua's rural character, traffic, roads, and public works. Johnson questioned the impact on local control, the enforcement of town ordinances on state property, potential access fees, and campground plans on private land. Doubting the state's ability to handle the reservoir's algae problem, he urged the council to resolve the algae issue before reconsidering the park and asked them to oppose the proposal.

State Park / Reservoir Meeting – Address the outcome from the State Park Meeting Aug 22 – Chris

Haramoto Deputy Director at State Parks: reported that the August 22 state park listening session produced 39 comment cards. Algae and water quality received the most votes (96), followed by invasive species (48), fishing and stocking (32), and multiple-use trails (28). Residents also raised concerns about fees, campgrounds, access, traffic, and infrastructure; one suggestion was to consider the Box Elder Campground rather than develop a campground at the reservoir. Haramoto said the state had not yet completed studies on infrastructure costs or operations because no agreement had been signed. He noted that \$2 million had been appropriated for planning and that, if the proposal moved forward, State Parks would hold more community discussions.

Review Survey Results for State Park – Mayor Ash: reviewed 236 surveys about the proposed state park: 123 opposed it (52.1%), 70 supported it (29.7%), and 43 wanted more information (18.2%). The main concerns were traffic (75.4%), loss of small-town character (55.5%), public safety (33.1%), and environmental impacts (28.8%). Expected benefits included state investment (43.2%), better management (43.2%), and improved facilities (38%). Respondents' top town priorities were road maintenance (68.6%), neighborhood protection (50.8%), traffic improvement (47%), and environmental protection (38.1%). The mayor will seek more details from the state about its proposed arrangements with Brigham City.

State Park Q&A / Public Comment:

1. Kimberly Cantrell – Mantua resident

Urged the council not to rush a decision on the proposed state park, emphasizing preservation of Mantua's existing character and parks, and calling for more meetings and dialogue, including with Brigham City. She noted that residents distrust Brigham due to past treatment but do not harbor hatred toward the city.

2. Martin Soholt – Mantua resident

Stated he needs more information before taking a position, asking what realistic alternatives exist if Mantua rejects the state park and whether there is any timeline pressure for a decision. He also questioned the town's current authority over the reservoir area, given the community's volunteer-built trails.

3. John Hurd – Mantua resident

Expressed opposition to the proposed state park, aligning with Harper Johnson's concerns and citing his own comparisons to Echo Reservoir that showed no meaningful benefit to Mantua. He warned of increased traffic and disruption without sufficient financial return and urged residents to oppose the proposal.

4. Keith Johnson – Mantua resident

Opposed the state park under current conditions, criticizing Brigham City's absence from the meeting and demanding proof that the algae bloom can be effectively resolved before any park is considered. He also objected to potential fees for biking and hiking on local trails, arguing that residents should not be charged to use areas they already access.

5. Maria Jeppsen Combs – Mantua resident

Raised concerns about how a fee-based state park would affect daily local access for bikers and hikers, questioning the practicality of enforcing fees without extensive fencing or barriers. She argued that Brigham City appears to be retaining the benefits of water use while shifting management burdens and conflicts to the State and Mantua.

6. **Scott Muirbrook – Mantua resident**

Described the reservoir as a key community asset he regularly uses and noted that effective algae treatment by BlueGreen Technologies in 2023 was followed by a weaker, unsuccessful effort by Brigham City. He indicated potential support for a state park if there is a firm, funded commitment to comprehensive early-season algae treatment and long-term water-quality improvement.

7. **Paul Jensen – Mantua resident**

Sought clarification on Mantua's existing financial benefit from the reservoir and was informed that the town receives a small amount of related tax revenue. He argued that Brigham City's primary benefit is water use and that, while the reservoir is a burden for Brigham, Mantua does receive some benefit under the current arrangement.

8. **Brian Barnick – Mantua resident**

Voiced support for the state park concept, contingent on adequate time and analysis, stating that the reservoir is a long-used community resource that has been neglected by Brigham City. He suggested that State Parks could improve management and facilities, and that a modest annual fee would be reasonable, urging residents to study other similar state parks before rejecting the proposal.

9. **Cherish Sorensen – Mantua resident**

Expressed strong caution and opposition, stating she would rather tolerate a stinky lake than accept additional impacts such as traffic, infrastructure strain, noise, safety and environmental concerns, and loss of small-town character. She noted that many of these issues already challenge Mantua today and warned that a state park could bring significant unforeseen costs and burdens to the town.

Action Items

Business License – Alexander Engar: requested a combined business license for four LLCs to operate from his home, providing remote financial consulting, fractional CFO services, and property management. Council members asked about the LLCs' ownership and registration; he explained the entities and his services.

Motion: Council Member Dovey motioned to approve the business license application for Alexander Engar and his four LLCs, with issuance of the license conditioned upon receipt of the required state tax identification numbers.

Second: Council Member Ross seconded the motion.

Yes votes: Mayor Annette Ash, Matt Jeppsen, Scott Ross, Cheryl Burgan, Henry Dovey

No votes: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

MOTION PASSED

Little Valley Hideaway Short-Term Rental/Business License – Josh and Britany Barker: requested a business license for a short-term rental in an internal ADU at their home, located at 105 South 300 East. Planning and Zoning had approved the application. The council discussed the required tax registration; the state tax ID was still pending, so the license would not be issued until it was received.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tempore Jeppsen motioned to approve the short-term rental business license, pending receipt of the state tax ID number.

Second: Council Member Burgan seconded the motion.

Yes votes: Mayor Annette Ash, Matt Jeppsen, Scott Ross, Cheryl Burgan, Henry Dovey

No votes: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

MOTION PASSED

Zoom / Electronic Meetings Policy – Mayor Ash: proposed using Zoom and YouTube to expand public access to Town Council meetings. The Council discussed the use of Resolution No. 2023-12-07B (Conducting Council Meetings, Electronic Meetings, and Establishing Agendas), electronic meetings, remote participation, security, and procedures for verifying residents who wish to participate remotely.

Motion: Council Member Scott Ross motioned to approve the Zoom and YouTube software and resources to expand town council meetings and access to town information.

Second: Council Member Dovey seconded the motion.

Yes votes: Mayor Annette Ash, Matt Jeppsen, Scott Ross, Cheryl Burgan, Henry Dovey

No votes: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

MOTION PASSED

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Grants Update – Karen Nelson: reported that the town’s Newcore application was not on the cooperative network, so the CIB grant for the maintenance building was pushed to January. The town had also submitted a corridor grant application for 1st South; with \$50,000 available through the program, the grant could help cover the town’s match for the federal Main Street grant. She planned to apply for a \$15,000 UCOR grant for children’s outdoor recreation programming and equipment, including binoculars for birdwatching and stargazing. The proposed match included \$6,000 from Parks and about \$13,000 in in-kind contributions. She also noted that the town would hold public meetings and pursue a possible CDBG grant later in the year. These were applications and potential funding, not confirmed awards.

Employee Handbook – Continued Section Review – Mayor Ash: The council had not completed its review of the employee handbook. They agreed to add comments to the shared drive and continue the review at the next meeting.

September Day of Service – Project Confirmation & Communication – Cheryl Burgan: coordinated with a church representative on the September Day of Service projects. Volunteers planned to meet Saturday at 8:00 a.m., when less rain was expected. Projects included painting at Main Street Park; cleanup, planting, and sprinkler work at Danes Park; cleanup at the reservoir; and cemetery cleanup and road-base spreading. Marcus Abel Public works director. would provide trucks, road base, and paint. Burgan and Abel would provide leftover water from Little Valley.

Department Updates

Planning and Zoning: Commissioner Pam Eaves – The commission began work on secondary driveway regulations, which went well, and Pam expected to provide an update. They also started a civic review program, which she said would benefit the town.

Public Works: Public Works Director Marcus Abel – reported that water-system inspections identified some galvanized lines and leaks. Lead tests passed, chlorine levels were good, and the new tank had been treated, flushed, and leak-tested; it was expected to enter service soon. Bids for Main Street and 100 South were expected in November or December, with work likely to start in spring. Abel said the town needs an emergency generator, estimated to cost 85,000–120,000, and planned to discuss grant funding with Bear River Conservation District in October. He also said a new well is important and that preliminary planning is underway. He urged caution when considering the state park’s potential utility connections and thanked community members who had volunteered on town projects.

Adjournment

Motion: Mayor Pro Tempore Jeppsen motioned to adjourn the regular meeting.

Second: Council Member Ross seconded the motion.

Yes votes: Mayor Annette Ash, Matt Jeppsen, Scott Ross, Cheryl Burgan, Henry Dovey

No votes: None

Abstained: None

Absent: None

MOTION PASSED