

MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BISBEE, COUNTY OF COCHISE, AND STATE OF ARIZONA, HELD ON TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2026, AT 7:00 PM AT COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT 118 ARIZONA STREET, BISBEE, ARIZONA.

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY MAYOR BUDGE AT 7:00PM.

ROLL CALL

COUNCIL

Councilmember Karen Schumacher, Ward I
Councilmember Pete Skinner, Ward II
Councilmember Trish Damon, Ward III
Mayor Ken Budge
Councilmember Anna Cline, Ward III, Mayor Pro Tempore
Councilmember Mel Sowid, Ward II
Councilmember Lori Reynolds, Ward I

STAFF

Ashlee Coronado, Interim City Manager / City Clerk
Keri Bagley, Finance Director
Matthew Gurney, Public Works Director
Logan Dodd, Operations Manager
Tim Cox, Police Chief
Jay Ritchie, Deputy Police Chief
Mike Normand, Construction Project Manager Camp Naco

CITY ATTORNEY

Joseph Estes

INVOCATION: Mayor Budge called for a moment of silence for personal reflection.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MAYOR'S PROCLAMATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Mayor Budge wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day.

CALL TO THE PUBLIC

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE DISCUSSED, CONSIDERED, AND/OR DECIDED UPON AT THIS MEETING:

GENERAL BUSINESS:

1. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE: Subject to availability of funds.

MOTION: Councilmember Cline moved to approve accounts payable in the amount of \$370,036.42.

SECOND: Councilmember Skinner

Councilmembers Damon, Cline, Skinner, and Schumacher inquired about items on the accounts payable report, and staff responded.

MOTION PASSED: UNANIMOUSLY

4. Discussion and Possible Approval of Ordinance O-26-06; Authorizing the Sale and Transfer of Certain Surplus City Property, being an unaddressed parcel located adjacent to 300 Williams Avenue APN 103-60-247.

J. Emanuel Stuart, City Planner

Mr. Stuart explained that at the February 3, 2026, council meeting, the council had designated the land as surplus property and set the minimum acceptable bid at \$8,500. The auction was held on March 3rd, with Joseph Scott and Deborah McCall being the successful bidders. This ordinance would officially authorize the sale and transfer of the property.

MOTION: Councilmember Damon moved to approve Ordinance O-26-06 authorizing the sale and transfer of certain surplus city property being an unaddressed parcel located adjacent to 300 Williams Avenue, APN 103-60-247.

SECOND: Councilmember Cline

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Councilmember Schumacher, Skinner, Damon, Reynolds, Sowid, Cline and Mayor Budge

NAYS: 0

MOTION PASSED: AYES-7 NAYS-0

5. Discussion and Possible Approval of Resolution R-26-08; a Resolution of the Mayor and City Council, City of Bisbee, County of Cochise, State of Arizona, Adopting a Notice of Intent to Establish a 6-year Rate Plan of annual increases for Wastewater Rates and setting the date for a Public Hearing on the proposed increase on May 19, 2026 at 7:00pm.

Keri Bagley, Finance Director

Ms. Bagley announced a proposed six-year wastewater fee increase, based on a rate study, to fund needed repairs to the aging system. Staff recommended flat-rate increases for consistency and planning.

Mayor Budge noted rates have barely increased in eight years despite significant inflation and past recommendations, leaving the city behind on funding critical upgrades.

Councilmember Sowid supported the increase but requested a detailed spending plan.

Mr. Gurney, Public Works Director, outlined major repair needs, including costly system replacements and long-overdue maintenance.

Councilmember Schumacher requested a facility tour and rate comparisons.

Mr. Estes, City Attorney, highlighted unique infrastructure challenges and funding gaps, especially in Old Bisbee.

Councilmember Skinner clarified that increases would be gradual over six years, not immediate.

MOTION: Councilmember Reynolds moved to approve Resolution R-26-08 adopting a notice of intention to establish a 6-year rate plan of annual increases for wastewater rates and setting the date for a public hearing on the proposed increase on May 19, 2026, at 7:00pm.

SECOND: Councilmember Sowid

MOTION PASSED: UNANIMOUSLY

6. Discussion and Possible Approval of Resolution R-26-07 amending Public Works Section; Airport, of the City Fee Schedule by establishing fee for Airport Ground Lease.

Matthew Gurney, Public Works Director

Mr. Gurney proposed a standard airport ground lease rate of \$0.25 per square foot annually to ensure fair value, fund maintenance, and meet FAA requirements. The rate falls mid-range compared to other Arizona airports.

Council discussed existing leases, noted some outdated agreements, and requested a review of current hangar rates, with plans to revisit the topic with the airport advisory group.

MOTION: Councilmember Cline moved to approve Resolution R-26-07, establishing an airport ground leasing fee of 25 cents per square foot per year for tenants at Bisbee Municipal Airport to ensure fair market value, support airport maintenance, and comply with FAA requirements.

SECOND: Councilmember Damon

MOTION PASSED: UNANIMOUSLY

7. Discussion and Possible Approval of a bid award to Bisbee Plumbing to upgrade three park restroom plumbing systems.

Matthew Gurney, Public Works Director

Mr. Gurney outlined a project to upgrade plumbing in three park restrooms to reduce vandalism, maintenance costs, and closures. Bisbee Plumbing submitted the lowest bid. The upgrades include durable, vandal-resistant fixtures.

Council supported the project, noting benefits for residents and visitors, while clarifying it focuses on plumbing improvements, not expanded restroom hours or security changes.

MOTION: Councilmember Schumacher moved to approve the bid award to Bisbee Plumbing to upgrade three park restroom plumbing systems.

SECOND: Councilmember Sowid

MOTION PASSED: UNANIMOUSLY

8. Discussion and Possible Approval of two municipal lease purchase agreement with GM Financial for two Chevrolet 2500 Silverado Trucks for the Wastewater Department and one Chevrolet 1500 Silverado Truck for Sanitation Department, each with a five-year lease term.

Matthew Gurney, Public Works Director

Mr. Gurney proposed leasing three trucks, two for wastewater and one for sanitation—through a state contract to replace aging, high-mileage vehicles and improve operations.

Councilmember Reynolds asked about long-term fleet planning.

Mr. Gurney noted new efforts to better track maintenance and replacements.

Councilmember Sowid requested clarification on vehicle use.

Mr. Gurney explained the trucks would be fully equipped for sewer maintenance and daily sanitation needs.

MOTION: Councilmember Cline moved to approve two 5-year municipal lease purchase agreements with GM Financial for two wastewater department Chevrolet 2500 Silverado's at \$30,219.86 annually and one sanitation department Chevrolet 1500 Silverado at \$9,657.93 annually.

SECOND: Councilmember Sowid

MOTION PASSED: UNANIMOUSLY

9. Discussion and Possible Approval to award the bid to purchase seventeen dark sky compliant roadway Lumineers to C&W Energy Solutions.

Matthew Gurney, Public Works Director

Mayor Budge outlined a cost-saving plan to add lighting to the bikeway using existing poles, reducing the cost from \$375,000 to about \$14,000 through a partnership with APS.

Mr. Gurney noted only one bid was received.

Councilmember Schumacher asked about timing, with hopes to install before construction, while Councilmember Sowid confirmed funding would come from ARPA and street funds without impacting other needs.

MOTION: Mayor Budge moved to award the solicitation to purchase 17 dark sky compliant roadway luminaires from C&W Energy Solutions.

SECOND: Councilmember Damon

MOTION PASSED: UNANIMOUSLY

10. Discussion and Possible Approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement between Cochise County and the City of Bisbee for Disbursement of Opioid Settlement Funds.

Ashlee Coronado, Interim City Manager

Ms. Coronado explained that this intergovernmental agreement with Cochise County would allow collaboration in administering and allocating opioid settlement funds. The agreement would establish an advisory group with Bisbee having a seat to vote on how funds should be spent. Bisbee would receive 3.47% of whatever settlement funds Cochise County received.

Mr. Estes, City Attorney, explained that there were multiple settlements providing different amounts paid over 10-20 years, with the county expected to receive a few hundred thousand dollars total. The funds were restricted for opioid-related treatment, education, abuse prevention, or recovery programs. The county had proposed pooling all municipalities' funds to have enough money to accomplish meaningful projects.

Councilmembers noted they had discussed this issue previously, with the decision being made to pool resources rather than receive minimal individual allocations.

MOTION: Councilmember Sowid moved to approve the intergovernmental agreement between Cochise County and the City of Bisbee for disbursement of opioid settlement funds.

SECOND: Councilmember Schumacher

MOTION PASSED: UNANIMOUSLY

11. Discussion and Possible Approval to remove attorney client privilege on a memo sent to Council regarding the petition received related to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Ken Budge, Mayor

Mayor Budge explained that this item was brought forward from the previous meeting to allow council discussion about releasing a legal memo regarding the immigration and customs enforcement petition. He stated his opposition to releasing the memo, citing concerns about the "slippery slope" of waiving attorney-client privilege, even though he didn't believe this particular memo contained problematic content.

- Circles Robinson spoke during public comment, supporting the release of the memo in the name of transparency over secrecy and referencing Councilmember Schumacher's previous statements about finding ways to take action on immigration issues.

Councilmember Schumacher explained that she requested the release for transparency and public education, believing people deserved to understand the reasoning behind council decisions. She argued it wouldn't create a slippery slope since each release required a separate vote and noted the memo was informative about the complex interplay of federal, state, and local laws.

Councilmembers Reynolds, Damon, and Sowid agreed, emphasizing the importance of transparency on this emotionally charged issue and their obligation to share the legal basis for their decision with the community.

Councilmember Cline and Skinner also supported releasing the memo, noting it was based on law rather than political considerations.

Mayor Budge reiterated his position that while this particular memo wasn't problematic, he opposed waiving attorney-client privilege on principle, fearing it could set a precedent for future demands to release legal advice.

Mr. Estes, City Attorney, stated he had no issues with releasing this particular memo and clarified that his role was to provide legal advice based on applicable laws, not to tell council what they could or couldn't do. He noted that the memo detailed potential financial consequences and legal risks of various actions but emphasized that other jurisdictions like Tucson and Pima County hadn't released their legal advice on similar matters.

MOTION: Councilmember Schumacher moved to remove attorney client privilege on the memo sent to council regarding the petition received related to immigration and customs enforcement.

SECOND: Councilmember Damon

MOTION PASSED: 6/1 (Budge)

12. City Manager's Report:

COUNCIL COMMENTS OR FUTURE AGENDA ITEM SUGGESTIONS: (Council members may suggest topics for future meeting agendas, but Council will not here discuss, deliberate, or take any action on these topics.):

Mayor Budge stated that, as there was nothing else before this Council this meeting was adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:36PM

Ken Budge, Mayor