

MINUTES OF THE AVONDALE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF AVONDALE, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
October 3, 2022

A **Special Meeting** of the City Council of the City of Avondale, Arizona was convened at 11465 West Civic Center Drive in open and public session at 5:32 p.m.

Members Present: Mayor Kenn Weise; Vice Mayor Veronica Malone; Council Members Tina Conde, Curtis Nielson, Mike Pineda, and Gloria Solorio.

Members Absent (Excused): Council Member Bryan Kilgore.

Other Municipal Officials Present: Cherlene Penilla, Acting City Manager; Tracy Stevens, Deputy City Manager; Nicholle Harris, City Attorney; Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk; Kirk Beaty, Public Works Director; Ken Chapa, Economic Development Services Director; Andrea Dumbrell, Human Resources Director*; Memo Espinoza, Police Chief; Joel Evans, Facilities Director; Ted Flores, Acting Human Resources Deputy Director; Ken Gilliam, Fire Chief; Bryan Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director; Chris Lopez, Neighborhood and Family Services Director; Dale Nannenga, Public Safety Chief; Jeffrey Scheetz, Chief Information Officer; Pier Simeri, Marketing and Public Relations Director; Aric Stewart, Engineering Services Interim Director; and Renee Weatherless, Finance and Budget Director.

**Andrea Dumbrell, Human Resources Director, attended the meeting virtually.*

Audience: Approximately fifteen members of the public were present.

1. ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK

2. EMPLOYEE INTRODUCTIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS (DISCUSSION ONLY)

The following employee introductions and announcements were presented:

Information Technology - Employee Introductions

- Nicholas Chappey, IT Application Integration Developer
- Raeanne Behe, GIS Technician

Police Department - Employee Introductions

- Carrie Castrovinci, Assistant Chief
- Jenifer Berger, ID Technician Supervisor (Promotion)
- Eric Lady, Sergeant (Promotion)

3. PROCLAMATION - CODE COMPLIANCE MONTH

The City Council presented a proclamation recognizing the month of October 2022, as Code Compliance Month in Avondale and extended their appreciation to Code

Compliance Officers for their dedication and service to Avondale. This item was for discussion only.

4. NRPA'S COMMISSION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PARKS AND RECREATION (CAPRA) RECOGNITION

City Council recognized the accreditation of the Parks and Recreation Department by the National Recreation and Parks Association's Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation (CAPRA). This item was for discussion only.

Bryan Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director, provided an historical overview of the Department's accreditation goals. Qualifications for achieving accreditation were reviewed. The City of Avondale was officially recognized as an accredited agency at the Best of the Best ceremony at the National Parks and Recreation Association Conference in Phoenix. Avondale is now one of 199 (among less than 2 percent of agencies) across the country that are accredited. Requirements include submission of annual reports and repeating the review process every five years. A brief demonstrative video was played. Mr. Hughes thanked all the City departments and staff members who had a role in helping to achieve accreditation.

5. SPECIAL EVENTS UPDATE

City Council received an update from staff regarding upcoming special events. This item was for discussion only.

Stacy Swainston, Recreation Supervisor with the Parks and Recreation Department, gave an overview of the following events:

- Cycle Avondale Ride
- Alamar Park Grand Opening
- Barks & Treats
- Billy Moore Days
- Dia De Los Muertos
- Avondale Championship Open
- Vet Run
- Winterfest
- Force of Nature Tres Rios Nature Festival
- Avondale Family Campout
- Eggstravaganza
- Avondale Kidfest
- Avondale Fiesta
- Memorial Day Event

Council Members expressed appreciation to staff for the coordination and activation of all the events; diverse selection of events; affordability of event options. There was discussion regarding plans to hold a barbeque event in March with the potential for it to be a repeating, signature event.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Malone, Ms. Swainston stated that the number of participants for the Cycle Avondale Ride event was approximately the same as the previous year, ranging from 150 to 200 individuals.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, Council Member Nielson moved to adjourn the Special Meeting; Council Member Solorio seconded the motion.

Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously 6 to 0.

Council Member Conde	Aye
Council Member Nielson	Aye
Council Member Pineda	Aye
Council Member Solorio	Aye
Vice Mayor Malone	Aye
Mayor Weise	Aye

Meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

A **Regular Meeting** of the City Council of the City of Avondale, Arizona was convened at 11465 West Civic Center Drive in open and public session at 6:12 p.m.

Mayor Kenn Weise led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silent reflection in remembrance.

Members Present: Mayor Kenn Weise; Vice Mayor Veronica Malone; Council Members Tina Conde, Curtis Nielson, Mike Pineda, and Gloria Solorio.

Members Absent (Excused): Council Member Bryan Kilgore.

Other Municipal Officials Present: Cherlene Penilla, Acting City Manager; Tracy Stevens, Deputy City Manager; Nicholle Harris, City Attorney; Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk; Kirk Beaty, Public Works Director; Ken Chapa, Economic Development Services Director; Andrea Dumbrell, Human Resources Director*; Memo Espinoza, Police Chief; Joel Evans, Facilities Director; Ted Flores, Acting Human Resources Deputy Director; Ken Gilliam, Fire Chief; Bryan Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director; Chris Lopez, Neighborhood and Family Services Director; Dale Nannenga, Public Safety Chief; Jeffrey Scheetz, Chief Information Officer; Pier Simeri, Marketing and Public Relations Director; Aric Stewart, Engineering Services Interim Director; and Renee Weatherless, Finance and Budget Director.

**Andrea Dumbrell, Human Resources Director, attended the meeting virtually.*

Audience: Approximately fifteen members of the public were present.

1. ROLL CALL AND STATEMENT OF PARTICIPATION BY THE CITY CLERK

2. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Della Logan, Avondale resident, provided comments regarding assistance she received from the City of Avondale and the Red Cross on temporary housing. She also discussed her current living conditions of homelessness and struggles with her previous landlord. She provided suggestions for the City regarding services to the homeless population.

Mayor Weise directed staff to meet with Ms. Logan in the coming weeks.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

Items on the consent agenda are of a routine nature or have been previously studied by the City Council at a work session. They are intended to be acted upon in one motion. Council members may pull items from consent if they would like them considered separately.

Mayor Weise asked if any Council Member wished to have an item removed from the Consent Agenda. Having no requests from Council, motion was made by Council Member Nielson, seconded by Vice Mayor Malone, to approve the Consent Agenda.

Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously 6 to 0.

Council Member Conde	Aye
Council Member Nielson	Aye
Council Member Pineda	Aye
Council Member Solorio	Aye
Vice Mayor Malone	Aye
Mayor Weise	Aye

a. MINUTES

City Council approved the September 6, 2022 City Council meeting minutes.

b. FISCAL YEAR 2023 DEBT BUDGET ADJUSTMENT

City Council approved an adjustment to the Fiscal Year 2023 debt budget to improve financial reporting.

c. FISCAL YEAR 2023 DEVELOPMENT & ENGINEERING SERVICES BUDGET ADJUSTMENT

City Council approved an adjustment to the Fiscal Year 2023 budget in order to purchase a new platform truck for a new Senior Traffic Signal Technician position that was approved in the FY2023 budget by (a) transferring \$192,000 in savings from the completed Fairway Drive Improvements (T0052) project; (b) increasing the award authority for the vehicle purchase; and (c) authorizing staff to complete the necessary documents.

d. FISCAL YEAR 2023 BUDGET ADJUSTMENT FOR A TRAFFIC SIGNAL AT 99TH AVENUE AND ENCANTO BOULEVARD

City Council amended the Fiscal Year 2023 budget in order to create the initial budget of \$300,000 for a Traffic Signal at 99th Avenue and Encanto Boulevard (T0026) and authorized staff to complete the necessary documents.

e. RESOLUTION 1068-1022 – DECLARING AS A PUBLIC RECORD THE CITY OF AVONDALE DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS PLAN, OCTOBER 3, 2022 AND ORDINANCE 2056-1022 ADOPTING AVONDALE'S DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS PLAN AND AMENDING THE DROUGHT ORDINANCE

City Council adopted Resolution 1068-1022, declaring as a public record approving the City of Avondale Drought Preparedness Plan, October 3, 2022 and adopted Ordinance 2056-1022 amending the Avondale City Code by amending the Drought Ordinance and adoption of the document made public by Resolution 1068-1022 and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

f. RESOLUTION 1069-1022 - INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH SALT RIVER PROJECT AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT AND POWER DISTRICT (SRP) FOR THE WATERFLUENCE PROGRAM

City Council adopted Resolution 1069-1022, accepting the Intergovernmental Agreement with Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District (SRP) for the use of the Waterfluence program and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

g. RESOLUTION 1070-1022 - AMENDED AND RESTATED FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT WITH MGN1 LLC.

City Council adopted Resolution 1070-1022, approving an Amended and Restated First Amendment to the Economic Development Agreement with MGN1 LLC for certain development timing obligations pertaining to the MGN1 property and authorized the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

h. ORDINANCE 2057-1022 - ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY FOR A PRESSURE REDUCING VALVE FACILITY

City Council adopted Ordinance 2057-1022, authorizing the acquisition, by purchase, dedication, or condemnation of real property for public use for a Pressure Reducing Valve Facility and authorized the Mayor or Acting City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

i. ORDINANCE 2058-1022 - AUTHORIZING THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY FOR ALAMAR COMMUNITY PARK

City Council adopted Ordinance 2058-1022 authorizing the acquisition, by dedication, purchase or condemnation of real property for public use as a community park and authorized the Mayor or Acting City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

4. REGULAR AGENDA

a. PUBLIC TRANSIT PROGRAM UPDATE

City Council received an update from Public Works staff on the current status of Avondale's Public Transit program and proposed changes that were presented to Council and discussed previously on February 22nd, 2022. This item was for discussion only.

Harold Siguenza, Deputy Director of Public Works, stated that the Maricopa Association of Governments completed the Avondale Goodyear Transit Study in fall, 2021. Recommendations included a changed Zoom service, due to low ridership as well as implementation of a new micromobility program. A review of the new Zoom reconfiguration and route was provided. Valley Metro has moved forward with a no fare pilot for the reconfigured Zoom. This will provide residents an opportunity to try the new Zoom risk-free. Once the new route and ridership has been reviewed, there can be a reevaluation regarding instituting the old or modified fare. Service days, hours, and transfers were outlined. Outreach on the reconfiguration has been conducted by Valley Metro. Based on the results of the findings, they will move forward with the service changes. Additional public outreach will be conducted by Valley Metro and the City of Avondale, to include the posting of fliers at impacted bus stops. Other outreach will occur via social media.

Mr. Siguenza provided an update on microtransit. The City issued a request for proposal in March, 2022 and a contract was subsequently entered into with First Transit and RideCo. These companies provide many microtransit turnkey services in communities around the country. An evaluation committee, comprised of Avondale, Goodyear and Valley Metro Staff selected the team after a comprehensive evaluation of proposals over the summer. The program launch schedule was reviewed, to culminate in an official launch on November 14th for both the Avondale and Goodyear routes. The unified brand is WeRIDE. The marketing plan and color scheme was discussed.

Mr. Siguenza provided an overview of the service zone locations, consisting of 12 square miles and many points of interest and destinations as well as hours of service. Vehicles will be minivans, which feature wheelchair accessibility and bike racks. Price per trip is \$2, in line with the cost for a one-trip Valley Metro bus ride. A network of 273 virtual stops has been developed. Next steps were discussed. Staff will return to Council in late Fiscal Year 2023 with a recommendation forward beyond the pilot program and for a reconfigured Zoom.

Mr. Siguenza provided an update on the following transit CIP elements:

- Current Park and Ride interim facility
- The BLVD parking garage new parking structure
- Transit Center

In response to a question from Mayor Weise regarding availability in the Google App Store, Mr. Siguenza stated that it is not yet active, but will eventually be available and titled "WeRIDE Micro."

Mayor Weise questioned how the potential ending of Prop 400E funding in 2025 may impact these types of transportation projects. Mr. Siguenza stated that they have created key performance indicators on the service specifically in relation to cost. Staff will provide an update to Council next year.

Council Member Conde stressed the need to make the app user-friendly for seniors and disabled individuals. Mr. Siguenza said there will be a telephone number for service reservations for the ease of seniors and the disabled.

Council Member Conde inquired as to the minimum age for riders. Mr. Dudley stated that the minimum age requirement is 16 and older. Youth are free to ride, but must be accompanied by a fare-paying adult.

Council Member Conde asked about the storage location for vehicles. Mr. Dudley said that for the first year, vehicles will be stored at the mosque.

Council Member Conde inquired as to whether seniors and the disabled can be dropped off at their homes. Mr. Dudley stated that a family of services is available. Other options include Valley Metro Ride Choice and regional paratransit, funded by Proposition 400. These may be utilized as alternatives.

Council Member Solorio asked whether drivers will be able to accept tips. Mr. Dudley said that tips are absolutely not allowed.

In response to a question from Council Member Solorio, Mr. Dudley stated that upcoming phases will expand from the northern portion of the City to include weekend service in other zones in the City.

Council Member Nielson asked what will happen with old, unused bus shelters. Mr. Siguenza stated that staff is in the process of removing some of these shelters, many of which are 10 to 20 years old. Notifications are being placed at each of these locations.

In response to a question from Council Member Nielson, Mr. Siguenza said that staff can look into including a button and/or other information on the City's AviWise app.

In response to a question from Council Member Pineda on the first phase, Mr. Siguenza stated that based on the MAG study, ZOOM ridership was very low in Northern Avondale. The reason why the bus stop on the southeast corner of Indian School Road and 107th Avenue is the busiest, is due to the fixed route service provided by Valley Metro that goes east and west along Indian School Road. Zoom service in southern Avondale is the most utilized and staff wanted to ensure it remains in place. Eliminating the fare shows the importance and commitment to continuity of service.

Council Member Pineda recommended holding off on utilizing bus shelter signage as a revenue generator at this time in order to prioritize marketing Avondale and its resources. Mr. Dudley commented that the benefit of the shelters is that they belong to the City and

can be used for City purposes. Staff will work with Council and the marketing team regarding what information will be displayed.

Vice Mayor Malone discussed engagement with the schools to get the word out to students about the free service available in the evenings.

b. BUSINESS LICENSES UPDATE

City Council discussed the current business license requirements, the results of a recent market study, and recommended changes. This item was for discussion only.

Keith Fallstrom, Assistant Director of Finance and Budget, listed the factors that contributed to the need for a code revamp, including: Obsolete items contained in the last update of 2006; suggestions from stakeholders; need to improve customer services; be more business friendly, process improvements, uniformity with other cities. Key benefits include: Public safety; communication; credibility; data and statistics and compliance (sales tax). The current business license program and requirements were reviewed. A market analysis was conducted, including review of data from ten of the largest cities in the metro area.

Mr. Fallstrom discussed a list of recommendations, including:

- No license requirement for businesses located outside of the City
- Business license exemptions (for some in-City businesses)
- Eliminate temporary business license
- Streamline internal review process
- Acquire and implement online business license solution
- Establish late renewal fee
- Prorated annual business license fee

The financial impacts include an estimated \$121,850 in revenue losses, while making Avondale a more business-friendly City with a simpler business license process. Next steps were reviewed.

Mayor Weise voiced approval of the proposed structure and that business licenses should only be required for businesses located in Avondale.

Council Member Conde thanked staff for their work on this long-overdue issue. She is in favor of a more business and customer service friendly process. Council Member Solorio concurred, noting that the most significant change will be setting up the online payment system.

In response to a question from Council Member Nielson, Mr. Fallstrom confirmed that the Arizona League of Cities and Towns recommends following Chandler's business license model.

Council Member Pineda commented that small businesses have experienced confusion in the past with the application process and requirements. He made suggestions for making the online application process more user-friendly.

c. POLICE OFFICE SALARY DISCUSSION

City Council provided an update regarding a new pay step/range for the following classifications: Police Recruit, Police Officer, Police Sergeant, and Police Lieutenant to ensure the Avondale Police Department's step system is in line with the industry norm for other Valley agencies. This item was for discussion only, input and feedback was requested from City Council.

Memo Espinoza, Police Chief, provided a historical overview of the issue. Several months ago, City Management directed department directors to discuss pay incentives for police officers. Several incentives were identified, including a hiring bonus, physical fitness incentive, increase in shift differential and bilingual pay. Other departments in the county have readjusted their pay scales in order to attract and retain new employees.

The focus of concerns were identified and discussed, including:

- Step system is not within the industry norm
- Gap between officer top-out pay and sergeant starting pay is very minimal
- The pay scale between sergeant top-out pay and lieutenant starting pay overlap

Chief Espinoza addressed turnover, noting that in the last five and a half years, the City has lost a total of 68 employees, an average of 12 individuals per year. It is becoming increasingly difficult to replace departed employees, as all local agencies are fighting for the same small pool of qualified candidates. These agencies are increasing wages, bonuses and other incentives. Avondale must remain competitive in order to attract new employees and one way of doing so is to address the pay scale.

Chief Espinoza discussed a recent employee survey. Top input, concerns and suggestions included increase pay range and reduced steps in the salary schedule. A majority of employees revealed that they had recently thought about leaving employment with the City. These employees identified salary issues as the number one reason for this consideration. The focus of the current discussion is not in terms of the pay scale, as Avondale compares favorably to other agencies, but rather how quickly an employee can achieve the higher scales.

Renee Weatherless, Director of Finance and Budget, reviewed the objectives for a proposed modified rate structure:

- Transition police officer pay schedule from 16 steps to 9 steps
- 5 percent between steps
- Eliminate the training step in order to equate steps with years of service
- Maintain current police officer top-out pay
- Transition sergeant pay schedule from 10 steps to 6 steps

- Adjust lieutenant min-max pay range
- Ensure no overlap exists between top-out pay and starting pay for sergeants and lieutenants

Pay structure costs and proposed revisions were discussed. When applying the new structure to the current employee base, the total costs equates to an addition of \$1.3 million to the City budget. If the changes were effective as of January 1, 2023, the City would have to incur half the cost, or \$666,000 in the current year budget. Ongoing revenue and expenses were reviewed. It has been previously acknowledged that there would be negative amounts in 2023 and 2024 due to fund balance issues. However, years 2025, 2026 and 2027 project surpluses.

Options presented to Council included:

- 1(a): Implement new pay structure, increase ongoing expenses
- 1(b): Implement new pay structure, increase ongoing expenses, and reduce future costs to balance budget
- 2: Pay bonus this year using one-time funds

Mayor Weise commented that Option 2 does not help the situation as a short term solution that does not solve the problem of the step program. The focus should be bringing the step program into alignment. He invited Will Penny, President of the Avondale Police Association, to provide comments.

Mr. Penny commented that only a tiny fraction of individuals will run towards gunfire and not away from it. There is only a small fraction of that portion who can pass a lie detector test, background investigation, physical fitness test, wish to do the job and are able to graduate from the academy. There is a nationwide crisis in terms of hiring and retaining officers. The Police Association fully supports the proposal to reduce the number of steps, as it allows Avondale to be more evenly compared with other agencies in the county.

Council Member Pineda expressed support for Option 1(b). Providing a fair pay structure makes the City more competitive and fair. There is no incentive for personnel to strive to move up, if the pay increase is little to nothing. He is interested in seeing more detailed information from the comp study.

Council Member Nielson asked about the number of employees represented by the cited \$1.3 million. Ms. Weatherless said this applies to 150 employees. Council Member Nielson commented that with 40 open positions, additional funding is needed not included in the projections. Ms. Weatherless clarified that the 150 number does include vacancies in the calculation.

In response to a question from Mayor Weise, Chief Espinoza stated that there is currently a vacancy of 14 sworn positions, including a sergeant and assistant chief. In addition, there are 15.5 nonsworn positions vacant.

In response to a question from Council Member Pineda, Chief Espinoza stated that the current structure has been in place since 2012.

Council Member Conde stated that she is in favor of the proposed structure for Option 1(b) and stressed the need to address the step issues, while providing a compensation structure that is well-deserved by police staff.

Council Member Solorio agreed that this is long overdue in terms of transitioning to a lower step system and she is in favor of Option 1(a).

Vice Mayor Malone cited a comparison of salary points for Step 8 officers. An Avondale officer is paid \$34.47. This compares to rates of \$41.28 for Surprise, \$39.19 for Peoria and \$39.17 for Goodyear. This reflects an obvious situation where Avondale is not competitive and the structure must be changed. With the high number of vacancies, she asked for a quote of a sergeant's overtime hours and rates to fill in the gaps. Chief Espinoza said he was unable to immediately provide a figure. A police department staff member stated that sergeants average approximately 100 hours per year in overtime, or approximately \$9,000 per sergeant. There are 21 total sergeants and their approximate overtime pay is \$180,000 per year.

Vice Mayor Malone asked for the number of senior sergeants who have tested for a lieutenant position. Chief Espinoza was unable to provide an immediate figure. Vice Mayor Malone surmised that the number is likely very low, as making this move would eliminate their overtime pay. Chief Espinoza acknowledged that there are sergeants who have not taken the next step, due to the pay issue.

Vice Mayor Malone posed the question of how many senior patrol officers have tested sergeant for a mere bump in pay of \$0.28. Chief Espinoza stated that he knows of only one officer who made the step and received a raise of \$0.28.

Vice Mayor Malone asked about the Department's mission statement. Chief Espinoza said it is "Serving with honor." There are 11 values followed. The vision is to retain the most qualified officers or employees in order to continue to serve the community.

Vice Mayor Malone cited several of the City's multimillion-dollar projects and said that the City cannot afford to wait for a comp study set to occur in March in order to take the necessary steps to solve this issue. She urged having a goal to make the proposed changes effective as soon as possible, in order to preserve current staffing levels. Chief Espinoza stated that data will begin to be available beginning in early December.

Mayor Weise agreed that this should be done as quickly as possible and that police officers need to be paid fairly. However, mistakes can be made if there is not adequate follow-through to determine accurate dollar amounts. Ongoing funding should be used to ensure that rates are sustainable. Vice Mayor Malone said that she would like to at least see the step system revised in the next 30 days. Mayor Weise commented that there has been unanimous support for reducing the steps. Council Member Nielson suggested that staff be given direction to begin the process and return with an update as

soon as possible. Mayor Weise concurred, however he would like Council to have a good handle on costs going forward. He encouraged staff to consider options for a back pay option once the steps and rates have been confirmed.

5. ADJOURNMENT INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

There being no further business before the Council, Vice Mayor Malone moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting and hold an Executive Session for discussion, consideration and legal advice concerning the appointment for the position of City Auditor pursuant to Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 38-431.03 (A)(1) and (A)(3); Council Member Nielson seconded the motion.

Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously 6 to 0.

Council Member Conde	Aye
Council Member Nielson	Aye
Council Member Pineda	Aye
Council Member Solorio	Aye
Vice Mayor Malone	Aye
Mayor Weise	Aye

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.


kenn weise (Nov 8, 2022 09:20 MST)
Kenn Weise, Mayor

CERTIFICATION AND ATTESTATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Special Meeting and Regular Meeting of the Council of the City of Avondale held on the 3rd day of October 2022. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.


Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk

November 7, 2022
Date Approved by City Council