

MINUTES OF THE AVONDALE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF AVONDALE, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
February 27, 2023

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 5:30 p.m.

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

Members Absent: None.

Other Municipal Officials Present: Ron Corbin, City Manager; Cherlene Penilla, Assistant City Manager; Tracy Stevens, Assistant City Manager; Nicholle Harris, City Attorney; Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk; Edith Baltierrez, Neighborhood and Family Services Assistant Director; Liz Barker Alvarez, Intergovernmental Affairs Administrator; Kirk Beaty, Public Works Director; Margaret Carey, Deputy City Clerk; Ken Chapa, Economic Development Services Director; Memo Espinoza, Police Chief; Renee Weatherless, Finance and Budget Director; Ted Flores, Acting Human Resources Director; Bryan Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director; Craig Jennings, Judge; Dale Nannenga, Public Safety Chief; Jodie Novak, Development Services Director; Abril Ruiz-Ortega, Court Administrator; Larry Rooney, Acting Fire Chief; Jeffrey Scheetz, Chief Information Officer; Pier Simeri, Marketing and Public Relations Director; and Aric Stewart, Engineering Director.

Audience: Approximately five members of the public were present.

1. ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK

2. EMPLOYEE INTRODUCTIONS (DISCUSSION ONLY)

The following employees were introduced to City Council.

City Manager's Office

- Aneyssa Romo, Management Analyst

Municipal Court

- Rosanna Blanco, Court Clerk III

3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EARNS THE ACCREDITED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION DESIGNATION

The City Council received a presentation from the City's Economic Development staff on the department's recent achievement in earning the Accredited Economic Development Organization designation from the International Economic Development Council. This item was for discussion only.

Ken Chapa, Director of Economic Development & Tourism, apprised the Council of Avondale recently being recognized as the 72nd Accredited Economic Development Organization by the International Economic Development Council. This accreditation tells the community, customers, and prospects that Avondale has attained a measure of excellence which assures their trust is well placed and their businesses are in good hands. He explained how the peer review process works, documents that were provided, onsite visit, the areas that impressed the approval committee the most, and the presentation of a plaque on January 30th.

Cheryl Covert, Assistant Director of Economic Development, apprised the Council of her award by the Phoenix Business Journal as one of the Most Outstanding Woman in Business for 2023.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, Council Member White moved to adjourn the Special Meeting; Vice Mayor Pineda seconded the motion.

Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously 7 to 0.

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

Meeting adjourned at 5:42 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 6:01 p.m.

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

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

Members Absent: None.

Other Municipal Officials Present: Ron Corbin, City Manager; Cherlene Penilla, Assistant City Manager; Tracy Stevens, Assistant City Manager; Nicholle Harris, City Attorney; Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk; Edith Baltierrez, Neighborhood and Family Services Assistant Director; Liz Barker Alvarez, Intergovernmental Affairs Administrator; Kirk Beaty, Public Works Director; Margaret Carey, Deputy City Clerk; Ken Chapa,

Economic Development Services Director; Memo Espinoza, Police Chief; Renee Weatherless, Finance and Budget Director; Ted Flores, Acting Human Resources Director; Bryan Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director; Craig Jennings, Judge; Dale Nannenga, Public Safety Chief; Jodie Novak, Development Services Director; Abril Ruiz-Ortega, Court Administrator; Larry Rooney, Acting Fire Chief; Jeffrey Scheetz, Chief Information Officer; Pier Simeri, Marketing and Public Relations Director; and Aric Stewart, Engineering Director.

Audience: Approximately five members of the public were present.

1. ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK

2. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES

None.

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 Solorio, seconded by Council Member White, to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of agenda item 3b.

Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously 7 to 0.

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

a. MINUTES

City Council approved the January 23, 2023 City Council meeting minutes.

b. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE CITY'S BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

This item was pulled from the consent agenda to be considered separately. Full discussion and vote is listed below.

c. ORDINANCE 2012-0223 – SRP POWER DISTRIBUTION EASEMENTS FOR CIVIC CENTER PARK

City Council adopted Ordinance 2012-0223, authorizing the granting of two power distribution easements to Salt River Project (SRP) in connection with the Civic Center Park Project and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

d. ORDINANCE 2013-0223 - CITY CODE AMENDMENT, CHAPTER 21, ARTICLE I, SECTION 21-2; RELATING TO THE OBSTRUCTION OF STREETS OR SIDEWALKS

City Council adopted Ordinance 2013-0223 amending Avondale City Code Chapter 21, Article I, Section 21-2, Relating to the Obstruction of Streets and Sidewalks and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

e. ORDINANCE 2014-0223 - THIRD AMENDMENT TO THE OFFICE LEASE AGREEMENT WITH PHOENIX SPEEDWAY

City Council adopted Ordinance 2014-0223, approving the Third Amendment to the office lease agreement between the City of Avondale and Phoenix Speedway, LLC. and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS PULLED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA TO BE VOTED ON SEPARATELY:

b. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE CITY'S BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

City Council considered a request to approve the appointment recommendations of the City Council Subcommittee on Boards, Committees, and Commissions.

Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk, provided the Council with an overview of the Board and Commission program. Avondale has 14 Boards and Commissions with 66 residents, council members, and employees serving in various capacities. The City Clerk's Office recruits board and commission members using media releases, social media, and an annual ad in RAVE Magazine. Two of the three vacancies are for the Judicial Advisory Board and require special qualifications. Their next meeting is not until 2024 so there is time to fill those vacancies. The third vacancy is on the Volunteer Firefighter Pension Board that meets annually for 5-10 minutes, making this a hard position to fill. The board does have enough members to establish a meeting quorum.

Anyone who is interested in applying for a board or commission can apply using the Avondale AZ.gov/boards website. The appointment process consists of three steps: receipt of the application; presenting the application to the Council Subcommittee; and making a recommendation to the Council for approval.

Council Member White moved to approve the following appointment recommendations of the City Council Subcommittee on Boards, Committees, and Commissions; Council Member Solorio seconded the motion.

Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously 7 to 0.

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

Mayor Weise stated he received notice that former Council Member and Vice Mayor Frank Scott passed away and spoke of Mr. Scott's benefits to the Council.

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

- Cecilia Lopez as a Regular Member for a partial term to expire on 12/31/2024
- Vanessa Cornejo as an Alternate Member for a full term to expire on 12/31/2025

MUNICIPAL ART COMMITTEE

- Sara Ivey as a Regular Member for a full term to expire on 12/31/2025
- Valentina Dima as a Regular Member for a full term to expire on 12/31/2025

NEIGHBORHOOD AND FAMILY SERVICES COMMISSION

- Shari Weise as a Regular Member for a full term to expire on 12/31/2025
- Pearlette Ramos as an Alternate Member for a full term to expire on 12/31/2025

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

- Vanessa Cornejo as a Regular Member for a partial term to expire on 12/31/2023

CORRECTION OFFICERS RETIREMENT PENSION BOARD

- Mari Aguilar as a Regular Member for a full term to expire on 12/31/2025

EMPLOYEE BENEFIT TRUST BOARD

- Mari Aguilar as a Regular Member for a partial term to expire on 12/31/2024

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT PENSION BOARD

- Renee Weatherless as the Mayor's Designee for a partial term to expire on 12/31/2026

Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously 7 to 0.

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

4. REGULAR AGENDA

a. PUBLIC HEARING - INTENT TO ADOPT REVISED DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEES

City Council conducted a public hearing on the City's intent to adopt revised development fees. This item was for discussion only, no action was taken.

Robert Baer, Budget Manager of Finance & Budget, provided a brief review of the proposed revised impact fees as governed by State Statutes. Mr. Baer stated he will come before the board again on April 3, 2023, for the official adoption of the revised impact fees, which will go into effect in June 2023.

The proposed impact fees for single family residential will be \$1,600 lower than the current fees. Non-residential / non-utility development impact fees will also be lower than current fees. Utility development impact fees are charged per meter size and projected to decrease as well.

Mayor Weise opened the public hearing, did not receive any requests to speak, and closed the public hearing. Mayor Weise opened the floor for comments from Council and did not receive any comments from Council.

b. CITY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE UPDATE

City Council received an update from Al Kuffner, City Prosecutor. This item was for discussion only.

Al Kuffner, City Prosecutor, stated he and his partner Manny Bustamante have served as City Prosecutors since April 2002 and provided an overview of the staff at Bustamante and Kuffner. The Prosecutor's office is responsible for all misdemeanors and property maintenance, zoning, and tax code violations filed in the Avondale City Court. They hang their hat on being efficient, prepared, and dedicated to Avondale. The duty of the Prosecutor is to review citations and police reports and to be fair in seeking justice, not merely convictions. Another form reviewed is a long-form submittal, that is completed when the arresting agency believes there is probable cause and the defendant is being transported to a hospital, mental facility, or not around and the Prosecutor has to decide if there is a reasonable likelihood of conviction and if the case will go to trial.

The Prosecutor's Office also talks to pro se litigants and defense attorneys at arraignments and pretrial conferences with an eye on resolving matters at the first court appearance. They also attend hearings at Avondale City Court related to various motions that are filed by defendants or their counsel and any bench or jury trials related to DUI (the only charge eligible for a jury trial), reckless driving, and shoplifting. They are required to attend hearings at the Superior Court for matters transferred for competency, appeals, and special actions.

An important and fulfilling part of the position is collaborating with other agencies to provide advice and insight on case presentation and trial testimony. The mindset of staff, including the court security officers at the Avondale City Court, is customer service and treating individuals with respect, which has a positive impact on getting cases resolved.

The Avondale Police Department recently completed a project of incorporating all no trespassing signs into an interactive map, which is beneficial when proving beyond a reasonable doubt that there was reasonable notice prohibiting entry.

Another aspect of the prosecutors' position includes attending training and providing training, such as mock trials.

In response to Council Member questions, Attorney Kuffner stated there are times when cases from Superior Court are sent to Avondale City Court, especially when the County Attorney feels there is not enough evidence to support a felony charge. Through communication with the County Attorney's office there are times when a case that was referred back can be reconsidered and ultimately charged as a felony.

Mayor Weise, Council Members Solorio, and Nielson thanked Attorney Kuffner for the presentation that provided information of what goes on behind the scenes and the collaboration between the prosecutor, police department, and the court.

c. CITY OF AVONDALE PUBLIC TRANSIT PROGRAM UPDATE

City Council received an update from Public Works staff on the current status of Avondale's Public Transit program and the recent changes to several public transportation programs that occurred late last year. This item was for discussion only.

Harold Siguenza, Assistant Director of Public Works, presented an update on the transit program. As a result of low ridership and recommendations from a study conducted by the Maricopa Association of Government (MAG), Zoom was discontinued in northern Avondale but continues to serve southern Avondale. A microtransit pilot system called WeRIDE had a soft launch in northern Avondale in late October 2022 and a grand opening on Monday, November 14, 2022.

Microtransit is an on-demand service, similar to Uber and Lyft, contracted through First Transit offered Monday - Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The normal fare is \$2 per ride with rates discounted to \$1 per ride for veterans, students, and senior citizens. Services can be booked using a cell phone, through the website, or calling dispatch.

The fleet, which is split between Avondale and Goodyear, consists of eight Chrysler minivans, several of which are ADA accessible and equipped with bike racks. All vehicles are professionally maintained and uniquely branded. Drivers are professionally trained, undergoing ADA training, customer service, safety, and sensitivity training. This service covers 13 miles with several destinations and connects to the Goodyear transit zone, all Valley Metro fixed bus routes, and the current Zoom service. Residents have access to virtual stops, which can be found at werideaz.com, usually located at a community mailbox as outlined in the Master Plan of Communities as well as a significant amount of handicap accessible stops. Points of interest include Avondale Civic Center, educational locations, and medical destinations. The goal is to not make riders walk more than 5-10 minutes from their current location to access public transportation.

Since the soft launch in October 2022 to today, WeRIDE has serviced over 4,000 riders with an average daily boarding of 50-60 riders, with 15-20 new riders per week. Another component is the ride share portion, where 37% of the rides will be shared with others, where each rider pays the \$2 fare. Estrella Mountain Community College students are the highest ridership group. Ridership is at its highest during the mornings and on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Ridership decreased to 945 in January 2023 compared to 1,000 in December 2022. Several factors contributed to the dip, including the holiday season and the introduction of the \$2 fare.

First Transit focuses on ensuring all drivers are well trained in customer service. A 98% favorability rating was received through the app with a 4.9 out of 5 stars for excellent service, comfort, and a safe ride to name a few. This public transit service is getting people to where they want to go. Riders experience less than a ten-minute wait time from booking to boarding. Feedback included offering weekend and evening services on Friday and Saturday.

Outreach has been conducted through the app and social media pushes using Facebook, Instagram, and Nextdoor, in addition to in person activities at senior centers, businesses and other city events and advertising on electronic billboards. During November and December fares were free. A recent promotion was to refer a friend and get two free rides. Because microtransit is technology-based push notifications are an easy form of outreach, including offering inactive accounts a free ride. All the above are examples of what the marketing team put together to increase ridership.

Zoom, which is managed by Valley Metro, has been experiencing performance issues, such as fleet management provided by Total Ride Co. There is difficulty in keeping the buses on the road for a variety of reasons, even with only using half the fleet. Since reconfiguration 601 trips have been missed and on time performance is at 79% compared to the 90% benchmark, which is the lowest performing service in the region. Some of the Zoom buses can be tracked through the Valley Metro app allowing riders to see where the buses are. Valley Metro has sent a letter of concern to Total Ride Co. related to their performance and are awaiting a response. Ridership has stayed stagnant even after reducing the fare to free. In FY 23 the City pays \$1.6 million for Zoom with an estimated \$670,000 increase for operations in FY 24 for a total cost of \$2.2 million.

The proposal is to expand WeRIDE into southern Avondale / Lower Buckeye and discontinue the Zoom service, to occur in October 2023. Working with RideCo and First Transit staff decided the service will cover the entire City and anybody can ride from northern to southern Avondale. The dedicated fleet would increase from three to seven. By law a Title VI analysis will be conducted to determine any impacts on the community, as they did with northern Avondale. Service will continue to be Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The transit center, also called the Park and Ride north of the Blvd Garage commonly used by the express bus rides, will be moved to the new Blvd parking garage with two pull outs onto Park Avenue, a new shelter, and kiosk for advertising. Four new bus shelters with a clean, uniform appearance have been installed, two on McDowell Road, the others are at 107th Avenue and Indian School Road.

In response to Council Member questions, Mr. Siguenza stated the existing shelters for Zoom will be removed. The team is discussing what promotions will be offered with the expansion into southern Avondale. The transit contracts have cooperative language, and it is anticipated the cities of Surprise and Peoria will be offering WeRIDE and potential interconnectivity between the cities. If there is significant request to adjust the schedule by adding weekend and late-night hours and the budget allows it, the proposal will be made to Council. Extending the southern boundary will depend on population density and demand for service. Shelters are strategically placed on fixed routes to ensure they are utilized accordingly and more can be added as needed. A total cost proposal was included in the FY24 supplemental budget request for a prorated amount of \$200,000 to keep Zoom until October 2023. Any funds not used for Zoom will be reallocated to the expansion and four-year cost of WeRIDE.

Mr. Corbin stated staff had discussed partnering with Tolleson; however, Tolleson decided to use Uber and Lyft, and subsidizes every ride up to \$9. Valley Metro has been working with Avondale to develop a future interregional system.

The Mayor and Council Members expressed appreciation for the transit and increased ridership and look forward to WeRIDE expanding into southern Avondale as it provides more convenient and reliable option for residents.

Mr. Siguenza recognized Matthew Dudley, Transit Manager for his work in bringing Microtransit to Avondale.

5. ADJOURNMENT

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

Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously 7 to 0.

Council Member Conde Aye
Council Member Malone Aye

Council Member Nielson	Aye
Council Member Solorio	Aye
Council Member White	Aye
Vice Mayor Pineda	Aye
Mayor Weise	Aye

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.


kenn weise (Apr 3, 2023 19:05 PDT)

Kenn Weise, Mayor

CERTIFICATION AND ATTESTATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the 27th day of February 2023. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.



Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk

April 3, 2023

Date Approved by City Council