

MINUTES OF THE AVONDALE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF AVONDALE, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
March 24, 2025

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 5:30 p.m.

Mayor Mike Pineda led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silent reflection.

Members Present: Mayor Mike Pineda; Vice Mayor Curtis Nielson; Councilmembers Tina Conde, Jeannette Garcia, Gloria Solorio, Shari Weise, and Max White.

Members Absent: None.

Other Municipal Officials Present: Ron Corbin, City Manager; Tracy Stevens, Assistant City Manager; Katie Gregory, Assistant City Manager; Dale Nannenga, Deputy City Manager; Nicholle Harris, City Attorney; Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk; Edith Baltierrez, Neighborhood and Family Services Assistant Director; Kirk Beaty, Public Works Director; Barbara Coppage, City Auditor; Memo Espinoza, Police Chief; Joel Evans, Facilities Director; Julie Knoll; Deputy City Clerk; Craig Jennings, Judge; Corey Larriva, Parks and Recreation Director; Andy Mesquita, Human Resources Director; Kimberly Moon, Engineering Director; Mark Neerings, Assistant Chief Information Officer; Jodie Novak, Development Services Director; Abril Ruiz-Ortega, Court Administrator; Larry Rooney, Fire Chief; Pier Simeri, Marketing and Public Relations Director; Jennifer Stein, Economic Development Director; and Renee Weatherless, Finance and Budget Director.

Audience: Approximately 30 members of the public were present.

1. ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK

2. PRESENTATION ITEMS (DISCUSSION ONLY)

a. PROCLAMATION – TWO LIGHTS FOR TOMORROW

City Council presented a proclamation recognizing the nationwide celebration of the Two Lights for Tomorrow initiative and urged all citizens to participate by lighting two lights to honor the past and illuminate the path forward for future generations. This item was for discussion only.

b. PROCLAMATION – FAIR HOUSING MONTH (APRIL)

City Council presented a proclamation recognizing April 2025 as National Fair Housing Month. This item is for discussion only.

c. PROCLAMATION – WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

City Council presented a Proclamation recognizing March 2025 as Women's History Month. This item is for discussion only.

3. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Mayor Pineda reminded residents Councilmembers cannot respond from the Dais. Adding that in accordance with processes and procedures an Executive Session will be held March 25, 2025, to discuss the nature of many comments being made this evening.

- Teresa DeSanti spoke about concerns related to Councilmember Garcia using her employment with Turning Point to push for the recall of a councilmember in Mesa, even though she preaches "*freedom of speech*". Additional concerns raised include Councilmember Garcia's alleged lack of respect for her position and the citizens of Avondale. Ms. DeSanti asks the Council to uphold the Code of Conduct.
- Linda Yaeger spoke of the policies and regulations that all Avondale residents, employees, Councilmembers, and Mayor are required to abide by. Noting Councilmember Garcia violated the Code of Conduct by using her title to post the lies pertaining to Mr. Hanks. Ms. Yaeger encouraged Councilmember Garcia to have dignity and resign and for Mayor to do the right thing. Lastly, she commended Councilmember Garcia for her service, noting the many tours members of her family served and are still serving.
- Veronica Malone addressed the Council, noting the importance of Freedom of Speech and the right to express opinions. As an elected official it is imperative to remember you represent the community, must be nonpartisan, the oath of office means understanding your actions and opinions must reflect a commitment to all residents regardless of background or political affiliation. Negative Rederick deters developers, businesses, and residents from calling Avondale home. Ms. Malone encouraged the Council to hold each other accountable by upholding the standards within the Code of Conduct, which is the framework for governing bodies and leaders to maintain integrity, respect, and professionalism in public services.
- Robin Velasques addressed the Council noting she is a fourth-generation resident who lives, works, and plays in Avondale. Concern was raised on behalf of outraged residents and business owners who are fearful of retaliation. As a Councilmember, one should hold themselves to a higher standard and not post things on personal social media accounts that are seen as violating Avondale's Code of Conduct. Using God, being a Veteran, lies and denial to avoid responsibility and the First Amendment to assert her right shows disrespect for the constituents. If Councilmember Garcia can lie about this, what else can she lie about and how can any of you or the citizens trust her. Ms. Velasques asked the Council to censure Councilmember Garcia.
- Walter Gonzales addressed the Council again regarding disappointment with Councilmember Garcia's actions and asks the Council to act with integrity and accountability. Words and actions have consequences no matter what your title, position, political affiliation, or wealth may be. Mr. Gonzales commended

Councilmember Garcia's faith but noted Jesus would not post hateful and divisive comments.

- Mari Alvarado spoke to the Council noting Councilmember Garcia's behavior is shocking and unacceptable for a nonpartisan elected position. After citing a portion of the Code of Conduct, Ms. Alvarado recognized tomorrow's meeting and asked the Council to do the right thing because such behavior has no place in Avondale.
- Roger Pickerill addressed the Council citing Matthew 7:1 and 7:1-2 pertaining to judging, as well as Psalms 51:10 pertaining to forgiveness.
- Jose Hernandez spoke to the Council regarding the personal impact that resulted from Councilmember Garcia's comments from the Avondale Website, indicating that he would be a person of interest if anything happened to her or her family. Mr. Hernandez discussed threats received, severe disruption in his personal and professional life, and measures taken to protect himself and family. Councilmember Garcia's supporters are paid employees of Turning Point who never addressed her actions or lack of accountability. Adding, Councilmember Garcia is dishonest, deflects accountability, hides behind religion and her service and is not fit for public office or the residents of Avondale.
- Natosha Edmonds addressed the Council as the Chair of the West Valley NAACP Economic and Development Committee, encouraging correction, understanding, accountability, and growth. Those in leadership should reflect values they wish to see in the community and know words and actions can bring people together or push them apart, like now the city is experiencing a division. The principles of faith should be embodied, follow the core values of the city and leadership when speaking or commenting. This is a reminder that forgiveness and accountability may allow forward movement together.

The City Clerk read the following comments into the record:

- Katie Maxwell: "It's a shame to see the city council of Avondale sit by as one of their members is targeted and attacked by a partisan operation simply because she is a strong outspoken mother with a minority political opinion. As a fellow mother I'm disappointed in my city and the outsiders trying to hijack it but I'm also inspired by her strength during these lame and quite frankly racist attacks against her by radical leftists. Avondale mothers salute you Ms. Garcia!"
- Jose F Gonzales: "My name is Joe Frank Gonzales and my wife is Amelia Gonzales. I was born and raised here in Avondale. My family worked on a farm on 103rd just south of Encanto. Just behind where the now Harkins theater is.. I have served our community in many ways. I even worked for the city of Avondale as a street sweeper for 27 years before I retired. I have first hand seen the growth of Avondale. From just being farmland to the now apartments on top of apartments. This city has seen nothing but growth, and that is contribute to the many council

members and mayors throughout the years. The behavior that I have read in the newspaper about one of our council members has me disgusted, something I never thought I would feel about my beloved City. If this isn't taking care of, this would only impede our cities growth. Do not allow this council member to be the eyesore of our city that my family, and so many families have built and worked and served and loved for so many years. This is not Avondale. Be Avondale and do what's right. Thank you."

- Mark Gonzales: "Good evening and thank you for accepting and reading my comments tonight. I am unable to attend tonight's meeting but would like to comment on the Code of Conduct and the integrity and honor that all political figures should be held to. I am a longtime School Board member for the Avondale Elementary School District and knowing that I represent more than just myself and my views, conduct and social media postings as displayed and posted by Council Member Garcia should not be allowed, tolerated and accepted as common practice as she represents more than just her political views. Representing the City of Avondale should be held in the highest esteem and every citizen should be represented in the highest regard. Those political views and comments made, publicly and/or on social media accounts, she should be held accountable for, whether in good or bad taste, it is a reflection of our city and its citizens. Your response as that you have a right to your freedom of speech is true but there needs to be an understanding that, when representing us lifelong citizens in that manner is uncalled for and should not be dismissed without fault and/or repercussions. There have been many other Council members that have represented us in the highest of standards and for you and your comments to be announced as such is irresponsible and detrimental to us as other cities and their citizens look upon us as the residents that you represent. You should be held accountable and reprimanded to the highest level for violation of the Code of Conduct and the integrity and honor that your position holds. Thank you for your time, Mark Gonzales lifelong resident and longtime School Board member of Avondale and Avondale Elementary School District."
- Laura C Gonzales: "Good evening, Mayor and Council, I am Laura Castillo Gonzales, a 3rd generation Avondale resident and former business owner of Laura's Burgers and More in Old Town Avondale. I feel I must voice my frustration and concerns about Councilmember Jeannette Garcia and why I feel it's your responsibility to intervene, holding her accountable for her words and actions. Councilmember Garcia was causing problems even before she became a city councilmember. During the city campaign last year, Jeannette posted on social media, calling out Avondale councilmembers Veronica Malone, Gloria Solorio, Tina Conde, Max White, Curtis Nelson, and running mates, Sherri Weiss and Natosha Edmonds, as "spineless" on July 14, 2024, for not giving their condolences to Donald Trump when he got shot in the ear and inferring that they condone political violence. On July 30, 2024, the day of the Avondale city election, I went to City Hall to drop off two ballots and I saw Mike Peneda standing outside City Hall, so I went to say hello. Jeannette was standing within earshot

(approximately 7 feet) of my conversation with Mike and inserted herself, interrupting our conversation. Jeannette proceeded to tell me that I could not drop off anyone's ballots. Mike and I looked at each other like, "what is she talking about" and we said to each other "everyone brings other people's ballots in." Jeannette goes inside the City Hall building to tell on me and even though I knew that I was not doing anything wrong, I didn't turn in the ballots because Jeanette intimidated me making me feel like I was doing something wrong. When Jeannette came out of City Hall, I confronted her asking why she treated me that way while recording her on video because I was not sure what she would do next, and we exchanged some words. I just don't understand why someone trying to get elected to be a councilmember would use voter intimidation to get elected. Why not be nice about it and introduce yourself to me instead of interrupting a private conversation and attempting to intimidate me. In the end, Jeannette was told by the Avondale City Clerk that I was not doing anything wrong, but I have NEVER received an apology to this day. Regarding the Tom Hanks issue, you already know what Councilmember Garcia did and said, and you know she is lying to avoid getting in trouble. Councilmember Garcia MUST follow the City of Avondale City Council Code of Conduct, and I expect each one of you will listen to our valid concerns and reprimand her. Before I close, allow me to quote what Jeannette posted on her social media account during the city campaign, "I'm not running to make friends, I'm running to keep people accountable." Well, Councilmember Garcia, we, the citizens of Avondale are here tonight to keep you accountable."

- Jessica Bajarano: "As citizens of the city of Avondale, we will not tolerate this type of behavior that Council member Garcia has showed. She needs to be reprimanded as she serves the public. I do hope the council comes together and put favors and friendship aside and do what's right for the residents of Avondale. If you wouldn't like to hear or see your kids talking or posting the way Garcia does, then why should we allow a city council member. So put all that election and campaigning alliances aside and follow the code of conduct. It's the right thing to do!"
- Colin White: "Subject: Taxpayer expense caused by Elon Musk repost of a city council member. Question: How much did this cost the city in regards to: 1. Receiving complaints and commentary? 2. Meetings hosted and/or held to address Avondale appearing in national media? 3. The cost it will take to close this issue for the city? The post seemed very adversarial and aggressive from a body who is considered to be non-partisan and serving of the people only for the sake of civil service."
- Mark Vasquez: "No one actually cares about Tom Hanks. It is unfortunate that at this time Avondale is in a negative light for other residents discrimination towards a Councilmember who has a different political view then them. This is showing our city is unwelcoming of all people. I follow the council closely and have witnessed other Councilmembers encouraging the actions on facebook (Councilmember Solorio) and another in fact begin the attacks on Councilmember Garcia since the day she was appointed, Councilmember White. This is not organic but in fact being

used for their political gains and soon campaigns. Councilmember White and Avondale Ambassador Natosha Edmonds are both members of an organization who held a town hall with Phoenix Councilmember and all the residents who have been speaking against Councilmember Garcia this past week. The next day a Facebook event was created and shared with the community. This is not organic, our city should be passed this and Avondale City resources are being abused at this point. Councilmember White has led the charge. Avondale has always been a welcoming city but now I second guess if it is because we will get attacked for our differences. Businesses who will want to invest may not now because of the discrimination. Their business may not be welcomed and as you see in the news now, Tesla has been attacked viciously and the customers. This has NOTHING to do with Code Of Conduct - they found an opportunity to harass Councilmember Garcia. Whatever the Council decides tomorrow will be a statement to the community that you will stand by the First Amendment or be intimidated and allow discrimination in our city."

- Veronica Gonzales: "I'm writing to address the ongoing attention that Councilwoman Garcia has been bringing to our city. Following her controversial "Pedo" comment involving Tom Hanks, she continues to use her platform to express her views, but in doing so, she's drawing unnecessary attention to our city. I believe the council has been slow to act, taking over a month to address her conduct. Start working for the people and hold one of your members accountable for their behavior, because right now, it looks like you're all tolerating it. Mayor, show the residents of Avondale that you stand with us and will not accept this behavior from any of your members."
- Liz Gonzalez: "March 23, 2025 - City of Avondale Mayor and City Council Members, My name is Liz Gonzalez, and I am a resident of Avondale. I am writing this statement out of concern for Councilperson Jeannette Garcia's comments made on her social media account regarding Tom Hanks being a "pedo" (pedophile) and all the negative attention it has brought to our city. I am a Spanish speaking Latina, and I can tell you all that we (Latinos) do not use the word "pedo" or "fart" to insult another person. I feel this excuse was used by Councilmember Garcia to avoid any negative repercussions. I have read the Avondale City Council Code of Conduct, which I feel Councilperson Garcia has specifically violated the "Conduct of Members" section of the code of conduct that states, "The professional and personal conduct of members must be above reproach and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Members shall refrain from abusive conduct, harassment, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other members of Council, boards, commissions, the staff or public. Members shall demonstrate civility and respect at all times. This remains true in both public and private encounters as members should be aware that the public nature of the office they hold means they are always on display." Based on this excerpt the code of conduct, the post written by Councilperson Garcia and the fact that she is lying to avoid negative repercussions, I respectfully request that you censure

Councilperson Garcia or at the very least formally reprimand her. Thank you for considering my request and for your service to our city. Sincerely, Liz Gonzalez.”

- Angel Soberano: “It’s time for this council to start working for the people and stop turning a blind eye to unacceptable behavior from one of your own. The longer you allow this to continue, the more it looks like you’re all complicit. Mayor, it’s your responsibility to show the residents of Avondale that you stand with us and won’t tolerate this kind of conduct from any council member. Holding one of your own accountable is not optional – it’s a duty. The people are watching, and we demand action now, not more delays and empty words.”
- Maasiai Montenegro: “I write to the council today and ask that my comments be heard and recorded in strong support of Council Member Garcia. While her recent social media post has sparked controversy, this response feels less about genuine accountability and more like a targeted effort driven by political differences. She clarified her statement, and it’s clear her words were misinterpreted — yet the outrage continues. Are we really going to punish someone for expressing an opinion, simply because it’s unpopular? If so, who’s next? Freedom of speech is a foundational right in this country — including for elected officials. Silencing someone because they think differently is not democracy, it’s censorship. Weaponizing the Code of Conduct to settle personal grievances is a misuse of council resources and taxpayer time. And let’s not forget the work Council Member Garcia has done since winning her race in June, being appointed early in October, and sworn in this January. In just a few short months, she’s shown up for this community over and over again — attending 3 to 4 community events weekly, including Shop with a Cop and the Cashion With Love Christmas event, where she served food and drinks to residents in need. She’s engaged with interfaith groups to build stronger relationships across Avondale, and met with educators and school administrators who’ve asked her to be their voice at the council table. She was also the only member to vote against raising utility costs — proving her commitment to putting residents first. Council Member Garcia is not just a public servant — she’s a mother, a dedicated church volunteer, and someone who leads through action, not just words. She listens. She shows up. She serves. Avondale cannot afford to lose a council member who is clearly here for the people — not for politics. If we allow outrage and personal bias to override facts, how can any resident feel safe expressing themselves? How can we trust the process? I urge this council to set politics aside and focus on what truly matters: the well-being of this city and the residents you were elected to serve. Thank you for your time.”
- Eric Gonzales: “Mayor and council, you must do better. The people of Avondale deserve leadership that upholds integrity and accountability. Your inaction is not just disappointing—it’s a betrayal of the trust we’ve placed in you. It’s time to stop tolerating behavior that undermines the community, and take decisive action. The residents are watching, and we won’t stand by while this continues. My question for each of you do newly elected members of the council receive training on how to conduct themselves as impartial, non-partisan representatives? Councilmember

Garcia's posts suggest she is only interested in representing those who share her views. As a Republican, but not part of the MAGA movement, I wonder if she would be willing to meet with me. She has already shown us the type of elected official she is—one who only serves those who agree with her, rather than representing the entire community. This kind of behavior is not what we expect from our elected leaders."

Councilmembers were given an opportunity to respond to criticism.

Councilmember White discussed the personal attack on herself and accusations of being involved in this matter. She reviewed all public appearances over the past week, noting all public appearances are visible on her public calendar. It was clarified that Ms. Edmonds had invited her to share a video at an event, but that did not happen. Further commenting she has a very private life, nothing to do with this matter, and has not made social media posts. She serves the city with integrity and excellence and the allegations are untrue.

Councilmember Solorio advised she was not invited to the NAACP meeting and did not participate in it, nor was she part of the Facebook post. For clarification, during the campaign others participated in slandering but she took the higher route and did not do anything for political gain.

Mayor Pineda stated he ran his own campaign and did not align with or receive money from any political organization, including Turning Point. Therefore, the accusation of any alignment clouding his judgment in any decision is false. All decisions in this matter will be made in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Councilmember Weise stated she did not receive any funding and was not in alliance with anyone. It was clarified that on occasion, Mayor Pineda invited her to walk with him to knock on doors, otherwise it was her and her family knocking on doors during the campaign.

Councilmember White asked for a rough estimate of how much money the city has spent on this issue so far prior to tomorrow's meeting. Mr. Corbin advised that it is not possible as they do not track hours and minutes.

4. 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. Councilmembers may pull items from consent if they would like them considered separately.

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

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

Councilmember Conde	Aye
Councilmember Garcia	Aye
Councilmember Solorio	Aye
Councilmember Weise	Aye
Councilmember White	Aye
Vice Mayor Nielson	Aye
Mayor Pineda	Aye

a. MINUTES

City Council approved the February 10, 2025, February 24, 2025, and March 3, 2025, City Council meeting minutes.

b. APPOINTMENTS AND REAPPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

City Council a) approved various appointments to the City's Boards and Commissions as recommended by the City Council Subcommittee on Boards and Commissions and as listed in the staff report; b) approved the reappointment of various members to the City's Boards and Commissions; and c) authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

c. SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT AND PAYMENT FOR THE CLAIM OF ROGELIO JACQUEZ

City Council approved the settlement agreement with Rogelio Jacquez in the amount of \$250,000 and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

d. RESOLUTION 1009-0325 - DESIGNATING THE CITY'S HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AS THE CERTIFYING OFFICER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS CONDUCTED PURSUANT TO 24 CFR PART 58

City Council adopted Resolution 1009-0325, designating the City's Housing and Community Development Manager as the Certifying Officer for Environmental Reviews conducted pursuant to 24 CFR Part 58 and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

e. RESOLUTION 1010-0325 - AUTHORIZING THE GRANT APPLICATION AND ACCEPTANCE FROM THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY FOR OCCUPANT SAFETY PROGRAM

City Council a) adopted Resolution 1010-0325, to apply for grant funding from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety for the Occupant Safety program in the amount of \$26,560; b) authorized and direct staff to take all steps necessary to cause the execution of the application and if awarded the acceptance of the agreement and to take all steps necessary to carry out the purpose and intent of this Resolution; and c) authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

f. RESOLUTION 1011-0325 - AUTHORIZING THE GRANT APPLICATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF FUNDS FROM THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPAIRED DRIVING PROGRAM

City Council a) adopted Resolution 1011-0325, authorizing the application and acceptance of grant funds by the Governor's Office of Highway Safety in the amount of \$39,420, which supports the Police Department's funding of Personnel Services (Overtime) and Employee Related Expenses to enhance DUI/Impaired Driving Enforcement Overtime through the City of Avondale; b) authorized and directed staff to take all steps necessary to cause the execution of the Agreement and to take all steps necessary to carry out the purpose and intent of this Resolution; and c) authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

g. RESOLUTION 1012-0325 - AMENDMENT NO. 3 TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH MARICOPA COUNTY HOME CONSORTIUM

City Council adopted Resolution 1012-0325, authorizing Amendment No. 3 to the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with Maricopa County to allow the City to receive an allocation of federal funding under the HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program in the amount of \$199,777 and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

h. RESOLUTION 1013-0325 - AMENDMENT NUMBER 3 TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT (IGA) WITH MARICOPA COUNTY FOR AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN (ARP) FUNDING

City Council adopted Resolution 1013-0325, approving Amendment No. 3 to an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Maricopa County and the City of Avondale relating to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funding (ARPA) for the construction of affordable housing and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

i. RESOLUTION 1014-0325 - 2025-2026 HUD ANNUAL ACTION PLAN AND FIVE-YEAR HUD CONSOLIDATED PLAN (2025-2029)

City Council adopted Resolution 1014-0325, approving the City's 2025-2026 Annual Action Plan and the Consolidated Plan and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents. The Annual Action Plan identifies housing and community development needs and strategies and defines how Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds will be allocated next fiscal year. The Consolidated Plan outlines the City's goals for housing and community development for the next five years.

j. ORDINANCE 2007-0325 - AMENDMENT OF CITY CODE CHAPTER 4.5 CABLE TELEVISION SYSTEMS TO ADD A NEW ARTICLE II TELECOMMUNICATIONS LICENSE

City Council adopted Ordinance 2007-0325, amending Avondale City Code Chapter 4.5 Cable Television Systems to add a new Article II Telecommunications License and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

k. ORDINANCE 2008-0325 - AMENDMENT OF CITY CODE CHAPTER 8 DRAINAGE AND FLOOD CONTROL

City Council adopted Ordinance 2008-0325, amending Avondale City Code Chapter 8 Drainage and Flood Control and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

l. ORDINANCE 2009-0325 – GRANTING OF A RIGHT-OF-WAY EASEMENT ACROSS CITY-OWNED PROPERTY TO ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE

City Council adopted Ordinance 2009-0325, authorizing the granting of a right-of-way easement across City-owned property to Arizona Public Service and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

m. FINAL PLAT OR PARK 10 PHASE 4 - LOT 1, PHASE 3 REPLAT – APPLICATION PL-25-0006

City Council approved a request by Jeff Behrana, PE, with Optimus Civil Design Group, on behalf of GUNBO, LLC, c/o Parkland Development, for: a) approval of Application PL-25-0006, a Final Plat for Park 10 Phase 4 - Lot 1, Phase 3 Replat located at the southeast corner of McDowell Road and 107th Avenue; and b) authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

n. MAP OF DEDICATION FOR ENTRADA - ILLINI STREET – APPLICATION PL-24-0303

City Council approved a request by Daniel Auxier, PE, with EPS Group, Inc., on behalf of Meritage Homes of Arizona, Inc., for: a) approval of Application PL-24-0303, a Map of Dedication for Entrada – Illini Street generally located north of Broadway Road and west of 107th Avenue; and b) authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

5. REGULAR AGENDA

a. PUBLIC HEARING AND ORDINANCE 2010-0325 - HOPEWELL AVONDALE ANNEXATION APPLICATION PL-24-0242

City Council held a public hearing and considered a request to adopt Ordinance 2010-0325, approving a request by Kimberly Schroeder of Kaeko Inc., on behalf of the property owner Hopewell Avondale, to annex an approximate 5-foot wide strip of land located east of the northeast corner of El Mirage and Indian School roads, which is the southeastern portion of the Hopewell parcel and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

Sylvia Willem Marcor, Planner with the Development Services Department, presented an overview of the annexation of Hopewell Avondale. The five foot wide by five hundred feet long, 2,501 square foot parcel is located within Maricopa County Jurisdiction east of the northeast corner of El Mirage Road and Indian School Road on the southeastern part of the Hopewell Parcel. This parcel was previously a

Maricopa County right-of-way, and this annexation is proposed by the property owner Hopewell Avondale.

Currently the property is vacant with no buildings or residents in the area. A site plan and design review was approved by the City on June 29, 2023, for warehouse or industrial uses. The site is zoned A-1. Annexing this small parcel would put it within the City's jurisdiction and bring the entire parcel into conformance and developable.

The proposal meets State requirements, all required notifications have been completed, and the Petition has been signed and recorded by the property owner. Staff conducted research on this annexation along with filing a blank petition and affidavit. The first public hearing was held on February 24, 2025, at the City Council meeting and there were no comments.

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

Councilmember White moved to adopt Ordinance 2010-0325 annexing a 5-foot-wide strip of land approximately 2,501 square feet, located east of the northeast corner of El Mirage and Indian School roads on the southeastern portion of the Hopewell Avondale parcel; Councilmember Weise seconded the motion.

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

Councilmember Conde	Aye
Councilmember Garcia	Aye
Councilmember Solorio	Absent for Vote*
Councilmember Weise	Aye
Councilmember White	Aye
Vice Mayor Nielson	Aye
Mayor Pineda	Aye

**Councilmember Solorio stepped away for a moment and was absent for the vote.*

b. COUNCIL BUDGET DISCUSSION

City Staff presented an update on the City's finances and sought Council's feedback on the Fiscal Year 2026 budget. This item was for discussion only.

Renee Weatherless, Director of Finance & Budget, presented and discussed the Draft Budget for Fiscal Year 2026, that was developed with Council's recommendations and priorities taken into consideration. Specifically, Economic Development as well as Parks and Recreation, Public Safety, Connected Communities, maintaining high quality services, and taking care of city employees.

An overview of the forecast assumptions included.

Revenue:

1. There is no impact of any recession, no changes to the structure of sales tax or state shared revenues other than the Residential Rental Sales Tax that ended on January 1, 2025.
2. The contracting sales tax has been higher than planned for a couple years, but during the budget process, it is assumed it will come back to a normal sustainable level. The same for single-family home permits, which should be between 300-500 per year.
3. No revenue from the Data Center projects is incorporated in this forecast.

Expenses:

1. Include salary increases for cost-of-living allowances (COLA), merit, and the recent compensation study.
2. Overall inflation assumptions of three percent per year.
3. Staffing for the Alamar Public Safety Substation is part of the forecast for the Fiscal Year 2027.

Future Financing:

1. A committee was formed to review and present General Obligation Bonds (GOB).
2. Future discussion with Council to restudy of a Wastewater Development Impact Fees, Financing the Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion, PFAS (Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances), and the Bartlett Dam.

Ms. Weatherless reviewed the General Fund ongoing revenue and expenses, noting although the revenues slightly increase the City experiences the impact from the loss of the Residential Rental Sales Tax during the second half of the year. Expenses continue to increase and the surplus decreases in Fiscal Years 26 and 27. The goal is to maintain a structurally balanced budget, and this does not include data center revenue. One-time expenses out pace revenue, assuming all CIP projects are completed in Fiscal Year 25 and not carried over into the following year. The fund balance is above the stabilization amount that equals thirty-five percent of the prior year's budget, and \$5 million capital reserve for unanticipated events. The fund balance for Fiscal Year 2030 is \$5.7 million.

Ms. Weatherless provided an overview of projected funding from sources outside of the general fund, that included where and how the funds can be utilized. The enterprise funds, water, sewer, and solid waste include proposed and future utility rate increases. An in-depth overview of expenses recommended in the budget was provided for personnel. Noting the Associate Engineer Plan Review position includes one-time technology expenses, Traffic Control Inspector which is funded through Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) includes a vehicle and one-time technology expenses, the Parks Supervisor position includes a vehicle, and the Fleet Coordinator is funded by revenue generated from services the Fleet Department provides.

Departmental highlights within the budget were reviewed and included.

- The City Auditor has one-time expenses for consultant assisted audits.
- The City Clerk has one-time expenses for the 2025 election.
- Human Resources has a one-time software enhancement expense.
- Inflationary increase of \$700,000 to WeRide on top of the \$3.6 million contract.
- One-time expense to build a plan that prioritizes annexations, access ways, and land acquisition along the Gila River Scenic district.
- One-time expense for software to manage inventories and services in the Fleet Department.
- Operational services include rate assumptions.

In April the City Manager's Recommended Budget will be presented to the City Council. In May, the Tentative Budget will be presented for adoption. Once the Tentative Budget is adopted, that sets the budget number that cannot be increased. In June the Final Budget will be presented for adoption and setting of the tax levy.

The Mayor and Councilmembers were given an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

- ▶ Mayor Pineda commented on the budget not fully representing the job and constraints staff are working under. He commended leadership on being efficient and staying withing the limitations of the budget.
- ▶ Councilmember Conde commented on many of her priorities for the city being incorporated in the budget. In addition, she recognized the hard-working staff and the need for additional employees as the city and workload continues to grow.
- ▶ Councilmember Garcia recognized City Manager Corbin for assisting her in understanding the budgeting process. Further commenting on the ability to provide additional personnel to support the hard-working city employees.
- ▶ Councilmember White noted WeRide is one of her priorities and commented on its success. Another priority is the Audit and Finance department and appreciates that outside support.
- ▶ Councilmember Weise thanked department directors and noted Councils support and appreciation. Further inquiring what the Economic Incentives were. Mr. Corbin explained it is monies used by Economic Development to attract and retain businesses in the community.
- ▶ Councilmember Solorio commented on the addition of staff within the Economic Development Department.
- ▶ Vice Mayor Nielson inquired if the potential changes in State Legislation will affect the Photo Radar positions. Mr. Corbin explained one position is for the Court, which is funded by revenue from the photo radar and if funding goes away the position will be retitled and funded through other sources. The second position is within the police department, and it is believed that position can be absorbed into other duties.

- ▶ Vice Mayor Nielson asked about the Fleet software and if it will track the buses. Mr. Corbin explained this is a result of an audit and the software will keep track of vehicle usage, gas usage, supplies, among other things.
- ▶ Vice Mayor Nielson inquired how the CIP carryovers fit into the “tentative” budget. Ms. Weatherless explained a contingency line is included that allows for transfers once the year is closed to true up carryovers.
- ▶ Mayor Pineda commented on the importance of funding programs and being aggressive in attracting restaurants and grocery stores to come to Avondale, which is a top priority for the Council and the community.

City Council recessed the Regular Meeting at 7:13 p.m.

City Council reconvened the Regular Meeting at 7:22 p.m.

Andrew Mesquita, Human Resources Director, presented and discussed employee compensation and benefits for Fiscal Year 26. The recommended compensation increases, and benefit changes are responsive to feedback from the Employee Benefits Committee and employees throughout the city.

Recommended compensation changes were reviewed for police officers and sergeants, Fire Department MOU, and general staff. A common theme was a two percent one-time merit payment for topped out employees. An exception is any general staff that have a range movement and receive more than a three percent COLA increase. The difference above three percent up to two percent would be paid as a one-time payment. An amended Fire MOU that incorporates the two percent one-time payment will be submitted at a future meeting for approval. As a result of the recent market study, it is recommended to amend the on-call and shift differential pay.

An overview of recommended changes through collaboration with the police department was provided. Included is an increase to the allotment for ballistic vest and uniform allowances for eligible employees. The implementation of a city contribution of \$5,000 to a Post Employment Health Plan (PEHP) account for sworn officers and sergeants who retire with twenty or more years of service. This plan contains similar verbiage to the fire department’s MOU and aid in recruitment and retention. The Public Safety Retention Program was implemented in Fiscal Year 25 to promote rewarding and retaining public safety employees by allowing eligible sworn employees to receive a retention pay out based on where they were in their twenty plus year career. Approximately, fifty eligible sworn employees opted to receive their retention cycle payout, which will be paid in July 2025.

The compensation market study utilized one-time funding to conduct a market study and ensure Avondale remains competitive and an employer of choice. The city engaged Public Sector Personnel Consultants to conduct the study specific to market ranges. 170 jobs were surveyed, representing fifty-two percent of the positions across the City of Avondale. Overall, eighty percent of the positions surveyed were withing

five percent of the market midpoint, leaving twenty percent needing further review and possible adjustments.

Approximately, eighty jobs were advanced one grade equating to a five percent increase above the five percent merit and three percent COLA increases. Thirteen jobs were identified for further review and possible reclassification evaluations and another market study. Twenty-one job titles were removed to clean up the compensation plan and ensure an accurate representation of jobs throughout the city.

An overview of the benefits noted a recommendation for increased deductibles for health plans based on IRS regulations. Changes from last year to the health plans were reviewed. The vision plan is voluntary and based on feedback is anticipated to change vendors to VSP Vision Care with an anticipated ten percent increase in premiums. The dental plan will have a five percent increase in premiums. Employee Assistance Program vendors are being reviewed to determine levels of service and enhanced employee resources. Open enrollment will be mid-April for a two-week period.

The Mayor and Councilmembers were given an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

- ▶ Councilmember White noted there were forty-seven people on the EPO health plan, and inquired how low it would have to go before it was sunset. Mr. Mesquita advised it is unclear what the number would be, but the decision would be made in consultation with the benefits manager and outside consultant and take into consideration how many employees migrate to other plans.
- ▶ Councilmember Solorio expressed appreciation for the switch to VSP Vision Care and for the clear understanding of the health plan options. Regarding the \$5,000 PEHP for sworn officers and sergeants, can it be clarified who Avondale Police United is. Mr. Mesquita advised it is an association out of the Avondale Police Department that represents sworn employees as well as different titles and positions within the police department who want to join. A discussion ensued regarding the number of Lieutenants and above who have twenty years or more with good standing. Mr. Corbin explained part of this long-term program was created from a similar agreement with the fire department and to fix prior inequities. This is a test run and will eventually come before the Council to expand beyond senior officers and firefighters. It is imperative to make sure whatever benefit is started can be sustained for the long haul. There are other options being considered such as converting sick leave into a contribution to the PEHP. Councilmember Solorio believes it is important to provide the \$5,000 to all sworn officers including the eleven Lieutenants and above, which total \$55,000 and can come from salary savings within the police department.

- ▶ Councilmember White expressed concern with ballistic vests not being provided to security officers. Mr. Corbin clarified anyone who buys a ballistic vest through the program is eligible for reimbursement.
- ▶ Councilmember Conde inquired how often compensation studies are conducted. Mr. Mesquita advised Chapter 5 and the Compensation Policy indicates every two years permitting budget funding is available. This study did not include classification but will be included in the next one.
- ▶ Mayor Pineda sought clarification on how competitive Avondale was based on the market study data. Mr. Mesquita advised, with eighty percent of the jobs within the market midpoint, the number of applications received by individuals interested in coming to Avondale, and working for the organization shows competitiveness. The Council's commitment to review this every couple of years speaks to the testament of ensuring that position is maintained.

James Milanese, City Projects Administrator, presented and discussed the capital improvement plan (CIP) update. An overview of the larger projects completed this year within the community was provided. A review of the \$70 million funding shows most funds have not been encumbered.

There are many projects scheduled for Fiscal Year 26 from a new fire station in Old Town, traffic signals and improvements at Friendship Park, sidewalk expansion and gap improvements, and the Bridge Housing project. Completing these projects and spending down the funding will flatten out the pyramid shown in Ms. Weatherless' charts.

Many projects will take multiple years for design and construction, such as the Old Town phases IV, V, and VI, Donatela Park, improvements to the intersection of Dysart Road and McDowell Road, trail improvements at Lower Buckeye Road and the connection to Festival Fields, the intersection of 111th Avenue and Thomas Road, and Phase II of the Water Reclamation Facility expansion. The Alamar Combined Public Safety Facility construction will begin upon Brookfield's completion of their work. The Aqua Fria Trail is in negotiations with the railroad company.

Mr. Corbin noted the staff and engine will come onboard prior to the completion of the building.

Mr. Milanese briefly discussed GOBs and the Bond Committee, noting they will be back on April 7, 2025, to present the projects and recommendation to The Council.

New capital projects for Fiscal Year 26 – 31 were discussed, noting a cashflow approach will be used going forward where the project funds will be shown in the budget for the year they will be expended, but can be adjusted based on the Council's priorities. This is because construction projects rarely go to design and construction in the first year. Additionally, a measured approach will be used on projects, which

means they will be done incrementally to have accurate data and to better estimate costs. Unfunded projects are programmed and awaiting potential funding.

Mr. Milanese reviewed and discussed facilities projects, parks projects, transportation projects, utilities projects, and asset and vehicle replacement for Fiscal Year 26.

The Mayor and Councilmembers were given an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

Councilmember Conde commented on the continued focus on improving the parks.

- ▶ Councilmember Garcia commented on the new transit shelters and continued improvements to Friendship Park, including a second outlet.
- ▶ Councilmember White commented on discrepancies in the presentation and the five-year CIP Plan. Mr. Corbin explained the discrepancies are due to the money that has been spent on studies and design. Construction remains unfunded pending sales tax numbers and approval of bond funding.
- ▶ Councilmember Weise noted appreciation for the ADA accommodation at the parks. In addition, she asked about the projected cost of the Pickle Ball court, because there is a \$15 million and \$19 million estimate. Further, would the city be committed to building the infrastructure if the \$1 million design fee is paid. Mr. Milanese explained this is the measured approach previously discussed, where the study has been completed, the next step is design, but there is no commitment until construction begins. Mr. Corbin explained the \$19 million was an early figure and \$15 million is the limit he set. This is a simple construction and does not include locker rooms, but something that can be usable for other things. Indoor recreation was a priority in the Parks and Recreation Plan to provide and improve a quality of life for residents.
- ▶ Vice Mayor Nielson sought to clarify where the Old Town projects are located. Mr. Milanese explained Phase III was in Cashion, Phases IV and V are in Old Avondale, and Phase VI is in the Las Ligas area.
- ▶ Mayor Pineda commented on the CIP plan that demonstrates diversification of projects, commitment to a citywide approach and ensuring the organization is prepared for anticipated growth. In addition, he suggested the Las Ligas Park project comes before the pickle ball design. Mr. Corbin advised it is possible, and bond funds would be used which are not available for several years. The first project to receive bond funding is the Alamar Public Safety Facility, but further discussion on funding will take place during the next budget cycle.

Mr. Corbin recognized Rob Baer, Budget Manager and his team for the professionalism and efforts on this budget.

6. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS FROM MAYOR, VICE MAYOR, AND COUNCILMEMBERS

Councilmember Solorio shared her experience in Washington, D.C. at the National League of Cities and that Avondale will be recognized as a Small City during Junes Small City Month. Vice Mayor Nielson and Councilmember White accompanied Councilmember Solorio to this event.

Councilmember Weise discussed her attendance at the United Way breakfast that highlighted Ladakh Core School and their literacy hub. Also, discussing her attendance at an online meeting for Read on Southwest Valley where they discussed families that attended Ladakh Core School and how it impacted their families.

Councilmember White discussed her attendance at the Neighborhood and Family Services, Youth Empowerment Summit and the Leadership West Class 31 visit to Luke Airforce Base.

Councilmember Garcia discussed her attendance at Historic Avondale Cafecitos – Coffee with the Community and Coffee with Council.

Vice Mayor Nielson discussed his experience at the National League of Cities, noting the highlight was breakfast with the Avondale Youth Advocacy Group.

Mayor Pineda discussed his attendance at the Empowerment event and the Aqua Fria Gala.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, Councilmember Garcia moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting; Councilmember Conde seconded the motion.

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

Councilmember Conde	Aye
Councilmember Garcia	Aye
Councilmember Solorio	Aye
Councilmember Weise	Aye
Councilmember White	Aye
Vice Mayor Nielson	Aye
Mayor Pineda	Aye

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.


Mike Pineda (Apr 29, 2025 10:29 PDT)

Mike Pineda, Mayor

CERTIFICATION AND ATTESTATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Council of the City of Avondale held on the 24th day of March 2025. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.



Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk

April 21, 2025

Date Approved by City Council