

MINUTES OF THE AVONDALE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF AVONDALE, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
May 05, 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, Shari Weise, and Max White.

Members Absent: Councilmember Gloria Solorio.

Other Municipal Officials Present: Ron Corbin, City Manager; Tracy Stevens, Assistant City Manager; Katie Gregory, Assistant City Manager; Nicholle Harris, City Attorney; Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk; Eric Bay, Public Works Assistant Director; Memo Espinoza, Police Chief; Joel Evans, Facilities Director; Julie Knoll; Deputy City Clerk; Craig Jennings, Judge; Corey Larriva, Parks and Recreation Director; Chris Lopez, Neighborhood and Family Services Director; Ingrid Melle, Communications and Marketing Program Manager; Andy Mesquita, Human Resources Director; Kimberly Moon, Engineering Director; Jodie Novak, Development Services Director; Abril Ruiz-Ortega, Court Administrator; Larry Rooney, Fire Chief; Jeffrey Scheetz, Chief Information Officer; Jennifer Stein, Economic Development Director; and Renee Weatherless, Finance and Budget Director.

Audience: Approximately 13 members of the public were present.

1. ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK

2. PRESENTATION ITEMS (DISCUSSION ONLY)

a. EMPLOYEE INTRODUCTIONS

The following employees were introduced to City Council. This item is for discussion only.

Police Department

- Evan Goldberg, Detention Officer
- Hagan Lombana, Records Clerk
- Samantha Morton, Dispatcher
- Richard Reyes, Detention Manager (Promotion)
- Donald Douglass, Park Ranger Supervisor (Promotion)

Finance & Budget Department

- Maria Garcia, Senior Customer Service Representative
- Selene Garcia, Customer Service Representative

b. PROCLAMATION – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, AND SMALL BUSINESS MONTH

City Council proclaimed May 2025 as Economic Development, Tourism, and Small Business Month. This item was for discussion only.

c. PROCLAMATION – LAW DAY

City Council proclaimed May 1, 2025 as Law Day. This item was for discussion only.

d. PROCLAMATION – NATIONAL WATER SAFETY MONTH

City Council proclaimed May 2025 as Water Safety Month. This item was for discussion only.

3. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Adam Decker spoke on his concerns regarding the In-N-Out Burger located on Dysart Road. He noted the traffic blocking the bike lane. He stated he was almost hit by vehicles multiple times. He referenced violations of the City Code and State Statute with no violations being given. Ron Corbin, City Manager, acknowledged the concern and explained the City is aware of the situation. Mayor Pineda asked Police Chief Espinoza to contact Mr. Decker and provide more information.

Teresa DeSanti expressed concern regarding the care provided to her neighbor by the Avondale Fire and Medical Department. She stated Fire Chief Larry Rooney had not followed up with her as promised. She emphasized the need for fully equipped vehicles staffed with experienced paramedics. In response, Mr. Corbin stated that Chief Rooney had attempted to contact her, but they had not been able to connect. With both present at the meeting, Mr. Corbin suggested they take the opportunity to follow up directly.

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. Councilmember White requested item 4f be pulled for separate consideration, motion was made by Councilmember Conde, seconded by Councilmember White, to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of item 4f.

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

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

a. MINUTES

City Council approve the April 21, 2025 City Council meeting minutes.

b. SERIES 10 (BEER AND WINE STORE) LIQUOR LICENSE - QUIKTRIP #1502

City Council approved a request to provide **no recommendation** to the Arizona Department of Liquor License and Control of an application for a Series 10 (Beer and Wine Store) Liquor License submitted by Perry Charles Huellmantel for the sale of alcohol at Quiktrip #1502 located at 12320 North Indian School Road in Avondale and authorized the City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

c. SERIES 12 (RESTAURANT) LIQUOR LICENSE - MACAYO'S MEXICAN FOOD

City Council recommended approval to the Arizona Department of Liquor License and Control of an application for a Series 12 (Restaurant) Liquor License submitted by Andrea Dahlman Lewkowitz for the sale of alcohol at Macayo's Mexican Food located at 10220 West McDowell Road #160 in Avondale and authorized the City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

d. SERIES 12 (RESTAURANT) LIQUOR LICENSE - INCA-FUSION CANTINA & PERUVIAN GRILL

City Council recommended approval to the Arizona Department of Liquor License and Control of an application for a Series 12 (Restaurant) Liquor License submitted by Juanita Alicia Esparza for the sale of alcohol at Inca-Fusion Cantina & Peruvian Grill located at 1619 N Dysart Rd #104 in Avondale and authorized the City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

e. RESOLUTION 1020-0525 – INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH LITCHFIELD PARK FOR CONSOLIDATED MAGISTRATE COURT SERVICES

City Council adopted Resolution 1020-0525, authorizing an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the City of Litchfield Park to provide consolidated magistrate court services for Litchfield Park beginning on July 1, 2025 and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

f. ORDINANCE 2020-0525 - AMENDMENT OF CITY CODE CHAPTER 23 TRAFFIC, ARTICLE I AND II RELATING TO SPEED LIMITS

This item was pulled from the consent agenda for further discussion. Item is listed below in more detail.

g. FINAL PLAT PLAT OF AVONDALE COMMONS LOT 5 – APPLICATION PL-25-0033

City Council (a) approved Application PL-25-0033, a request by Reed Dalbik with JLD Engineering, on behalf of Michael Holman with Overland Development Corporation, for approval of the Final Plat of Avondale Commons Lot 5 located generally north of McDowell Road and west of Avondale Boulevard, and (b) authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

NOTE FROM THE CITY CLERK: THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS PULLED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA TO BE VOTED ON SEPARATELY.

f. ORDINANCE 2020-0525 - AMENDMENT OF CITY CODE CHAPTER 23 TRAFFIC, ARTICLE I AND II RELATING TO SPEED LIMITS

City Council considered a request to Ordinance 2020-0525, amending Avondale City Code Chapter 23 Traffic, Article I and II relating to speed limits and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

Kim Moon, City Engineer, introduced Raj Thoutam, Senior Traffic Engineer, and discussed proposed changes to the maximum speed limit tables currently embedded in the City Code. She explained that these limits are determined by engineering and traffic studies and must comply with Arizona Revised Statutes. As part of her duties as the City Engineer, she will manage the placement, maintenance, and removal of traffic control devices. Ms. Moon noted that changes are necessary due to changing conditions and the addition of new roads from recent developments, to ensure continued compliance with speed regulations.

Councilmember White explained she requested the item be discussed due to concerns about enforcement and potential constitutional issues. She asked whether the City conducts studies before changing speed limits. Ms. Moon confirmed that a speed study is currently underway by the traffic division and confirmed all the current speed limits are valid and accurate. She noted City Council appointed her to serve in the transit functions on the Valley Metro RPTA and the Maricopa Association of Governments TCP and wants to ensure policies and Code are accurate for both the City and region.

In response to Councilmember White's questions, Ms. Moon noted a speed study looks for the 85th percentile of speeds. Road conditions, horizontal curves, road surface, and a variety of factors are analyzed in a speed study. Speed limits do not always dictate the behavior of drivers, often it is based on what the driver perceives to be safe as they drive along the roadway. It is very rare that the 85th percentile would be wrong for the conditions of the roadway. The arterial roadways in Avondale would never exceed 45 miles per hour unless the speed study dictates otherwise for the conditions of the roadway. Lastly, Ms. Moon noted MC85 is a different type of roadway that has historical references.

Councilmember Conde moved to adopt Ordinance 2020-0525, amending Avondale City Code Chapter 23 Traffic, Article I and II relating to speed limits and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents; Councilmember Weise seconded the motion.

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

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

5. REGULAR AGENDA

a. RESOLUTION 1021-0525 - ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 TENTATIVE BUDGET

City Council considered a request to adopt Resolution 1021-0525, setting forth the fiscal year (FY) 2026 tentative budget and establishing the City's annual expenditure limitation and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

Renee Weatherless, Director of Finance and Budget, presented the tentative fiscal year 2026 budget, noting she will return in June for final budget adoption. She highlighted changes since the City Manager's recommended budget, explaining that the tentative budget sets the maximum expenditure limit which allows for adjustments but not increases. Key updates included updates because of a compensation study, \$961 thousand for the Fire Training Tower Project, \$68 thousand for the Citizen Access Portal in Development Services, \$31 thousand to reclassify the Attorney I position to Attorney II, and other carryover adjustments.

In response to a question from Councilmember Weise, Mr. Corbin stated the final budget will be brought back to City Council in June for final approval.

In response to a question from Councilmember White requesting the City's total budget for the record, Ms. Weatherless stated that it is approximately \$300 million from all funding sources.

Councilmember White moved to adopt Resolution 1021-0525, setting forth the FY2026 tentative budget and annual expenditure limitation and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents; Vice Mayor Nielson seconded the motion.

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

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

NOTE FROM THE CITY CLERK: ITEMS 5B AND 5C WERE PRESENTED TOGETHER AND VOTED ON SEPARATELY.

b. PUBLIC HEARING AND RESOLUTION 1022-0525 - UPDATING CITY OF AVONDALE WATER AND SEWER RATES

City Council held a public hearing and considered a request to adopt Resolution 1022-0525, modifying water and sewer rates to become effective January 1, 2026 and January 1, 2027 and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

Renee Weatherless, Director of Finance and Budget, presented the proposed adoption of utility rate increases and outlined the required public hearing process per state statute. She noted that the City Council received an initial presentation on the rate increases in February and on March 3rd the Notice of Intent was filed with the Clerk and posted on the City website. Outreach efforts included three public open houses, social media notices, a utility bill impact calculator, paper bill notifications, and bilingual documentation in English and Spanish.

The recommended fiscal year 2026 increases include a 6.7% increase in water rates (base and tier), a 7.5% water treatment fee, a 6.2% water resource fee, a 2.0% increase for sewer; and a \$1.60 monthly increase for solid waste. For fiscal year 2027, proposed increases are 6.1% for water, 2.0% for sewer, and \$1.75 for solid waste. A rate comparison was presented, and Avondale would move from the bottom to the middle range among nearby cities. Operational changes have been made across the water, sewer, and solid waste funds to help offset rising costs.

Key implementation dates include:

- July 1, 2025 - Solid waste first increase
- January 1, 2026 - Water and sewer first increase
- July 1, 2026 - Solid waste second increase
- January 1, 2027 - Water and sewer second increase

Mayor Pineda opened the public hearing and received a request to speak from Natosha Edmonds. Ms. Edmonds expressed concern about the proposed utility rate increases. She acknowledged the importance of sustainable infrastructure and services but urged the City to explore all other options before placing additional financial strain on residents, particularly during challenging times. Ms. Edmonds questioned the urgency of the increase and suggested that, if necessary, the implementation be spread over four years instead of two to allow residents more time to adjust. She recommended the City reconsider moving forward with the proposal, emphasizing the need for thoughtful, inclusive decision-making that prioritizes all members of the community.

Mayor Pineda closed the public hearing and opened the floor for comments from Council.

Mayor Pineda spoke about the operational changes and exploring the other options prior to increasing the rates on any resident. He noted ensuring the organization is being mindful and looking at efficiencies. He stated the rates are currently increasing due to the decisions of past Council who did not raise rates for an extended period of time. He stated the current City Council are responsible for addressing the current needs and concerns. He stated he is not in favor of increasing rates; however, when you look at the future budgets where the expenditure supersedes the revenues.

Councilmember White commended Mayor Pineda for his remarks. She acknowledged the efficiencies implemented by the Public Works Department staff. She noted she does not believe in putting the residents in bad situations; however, keeping the current rates could result in failed infrastructure and the costs doubling for repairs.

Councilmember Weise acknowledged the concerns of the public speaker and noted the Neighborhood and Family Services department has programs to help with utility assistance.

Councilmember Conde stated she has been on City Council since 2017, and it was the decision to increase rates slowly so residents can be used to the change. She explained if the city waits, then a larger one-time increase will be presented, and she believes the recommendation is a good strategy.

Councilmember Garcia explained the items being presented are hypothetical that might not occur. She noted she would rather wait until the infrastructure is needed. She explained she will be voting no on this item and stated disagreed with raising rates based on the actions of other cities. In closing, she stated she understands the burden that \$10 might add on a family.

Councilmember White moved to adopt Resolution 1022-0525, updating City of Avondale water and sewer rates and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents; Councilmember Weise seconded the motion.

Upon vote, the motion was carried 5 to 1.

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

c. RESOLUTION 1023-0525 - UPDATING THE SOLID WASTE FEE SCHEDULE

Councilmember White moved to adopt Resolution 1023-0525, approving the proposed solid waste rates and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents; Councilmember Conde seconded the motion.

Upon vote, the motion was carried 5 to 1.

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

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

Councilmember White attended the Avondale Fiesta and recognized departments who were at the event.

Councilmember Weise sponsored a golf event and her team came in 3rd place.

Councilmember Garcia attended the FAA dinner and noted the importance of agriculture. She also attended the West Valley golf tournament and appreciated the community coming together for the kids.

Vice Mayor Nielson attended the Industrial Commission of Arizona as the City was recognized as a Safe Workplace. He also attended the Lower Gila River Cooperative with various groups who are working together to protect the environment.

Mayor Pineda attended the Arbor Day event and the Avondale Wave Vest event.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Mike Pineda

Mike Pineda (May 22, 2025 10:33 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 5th day of May 2025. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.

Marcella Sarmiento

Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk

May 19, 2025

Date Approved by City Council