

**MINUTES OF THE AVONDALE CITY COUNCIL**  
CITY OF AVONDALE, ARIZONA  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER  
January 12, 2026

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 and Councilmembers Tina Conde, Jeannette Garcia, Gloria Solorio, Shari Weise, and Max White.

**Members Absent:** Vice Mayor Curtis Nielson.

**Other Municipal Officials Present:** Ron Corbin, City Manager; Katie Gregory, Assistant City Manager; Dale Nannenga, Deputy City Manager; Nicholle Harris, City Attorney; Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk; Liz Barker Alvarez, Intergovernmental Affairs Administrator; Kirk Beaty, Public Works Director; Barbara Coppage, City Auditor; Memo Espinoza, Police Chief; Joel Evans, Facilities Director; Corey Larriva, Parks and Recreation Director; Chris Lopez, Neighborhood and Family Services Director; Andy Mesquita, Human Resources Director; Kimberly Moon, Engineering Director; Jodie Novak, Development Services Director; Larry Rooney, Fire Chief; Jeffrey Scheetz, Chief Information Officer; 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. EMPLOYEE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

New Finance and Budget Department employee Marco Ponce, CIP Project Manager, was introduced to City Council. This item was for discussion only.

**b. RECOGNITION OF POLICE EMPLOYEES - OFFICER BENAVIDEZ & OFFICER REDFEARN**

Daniel Benavidez and Jaret Redfearn, Police Department Police Officers, were recognized before City Council for their recent award they received from the Rancho Santa Fe Elementary School. This item was for discussion only.

**c. PROCLAMATION – 80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

City Council proclaimed the 2026 year as the celebratory year of Avondale's 80th anniversary. This item was for discussion only.

**d. PROCLAMATION – NOT IN OUR CITY**

City Council proclaimed January 2026 as Not In Our City Month. This item was for discussion only.

**3. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES**

Gerald Meau, resident of Avondale, submitted a request to speak; however, he withdrew his request when called to the podium.

**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 Councilmember Weise, seconded by Councilmember Conde, to approve the Consent Agenda.

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

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

**a. MINUTES**

City Council approved the December 1, 2025 and December 15, 2025 City Council meeting minutes.

**b. SERIES 4 (WHOLESALE) LIQUOR LICENSE — GREEN LIGHT DISTRIBUTORS**

City Council recommended approval to the Arizona Department of Liquor License and Control of an application for a Series 4 (Wholesale) Liquor License submitted by Andrea Dahlman Lewkowitz, authorizing the distribution of all types of liquor (beer, wine, and distilled spirits) to Arizona-licensed retailers at Green Light Distributors, located at 1100 North 127th Avenue, Suite 102, in Avondale and authorized the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

**c. SERIES 4 (WHOLESALE) LIQUOR LICENSE — ESTACA 1992 LLC**

City Council recommended approval to the Arizona Department of Liquor License and Control of an application for a Series 4 (Wholesale) Liquor License submitted by Andrea Dahlman Lewkowitz, authorizing the distribution of all types of liquor (beer, wine, and distilled spirits) to Arizona-licensed retailers at Estaca 1992 LLC, located at 1100 North 127th Avenue, Suite 105, in Avondale and authorized the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

**d. RESOLUTION 1001-0126 – FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF GLENDALE FOR LANDFILL SERVICES**

City Council adopted Resolution 1001-0126, approving the First Amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Glendale relating to landfill disposal services and authorizing the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

**e. RESOLUTION 1002-0126 - GRANT-IN-AID AGREEMENT WITH TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION**

City Council adopted Resolution 1002-0126, accepting grant funding from the Tohono O'odham Nation in the amount of \$162,051 (\$125,056 for training equipment that will be used by the Avondale Police Department SWAT team and \$36,995 for equipment to be used by the Public Works Department to help maintain a healthy wetland ecosystem at Crystal Gardens), and authorizing staff, the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

**f. RESOLUTION 1003-0126 - SUPPORTING HABITAT FOR HUMANITY GRANT APPLICATION THROUGH MARICOPA COUNTY HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM COMMUNITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION FUNDING**

City Council adopted Resolution 1003-0126, associated with a grant application submitted by Habitat for Humanity of Central Arizona to Maricopa County for HOME Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO) funds, and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

**g. RESOLUTION 1004-0126 - SUPPORTING TRELIS GRANT APPLICATION THROUGH MARICOPA COUNTY HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM COMMUNITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION FUNDING**

City Council adopted Resolution 1004-0126, associated with a grant application submitted by Trellis to Maricopa County for HOME Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO) funds, and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

**5. 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.

Renee Weatherless, Finance and Budget Director, presented and discussed the proposed amendments to the Development Impact Fees, which are governed by State Statute. The revisions are intended to ensure that new growth is self-sustaining, thereby preventing any undue financial impact on current residents or businesses.

A public notice regarding these changes was issued in August, followed by two stakeholder meetings with representatives from the development community. A public

hearing addressing the updated Land Use Assumptions and Infrastructure Improvement Plan took place on November 17, 2025. Subsequently, a Notice of Intent to Assess Development Fees was posted on November 22, 2025. The current public hearing concerns the revised Development Impact Fees, which are scheduled for City Council consideration on February 23, 2026. Should the fees be adopted, they will become effective 75 days thereafter, starting May 9, 2026, for all new projects.

The primary purpose for this update stems from increased costs associated with the Water Reclamation Facility Expansion project, including the need to recover additional expenses and debt finance. The estimated cost for this initiative has risen from \$80 million at the time of the previous fee schedule approval to \$155 million currently.

Ms. Weatherless provided a detailed explanation of the methodology used to calculate wastewater development impact fees for single-family residences, indicating an approximate increase of \$7,700. She further noted that, in comparison to other cities within the region, this adjustment would position Avondale slightly above the midpoint rather than in the lower tier.

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

Councilmember White asked about the Water Reclamation project's start date. Mr. Corbin responded that design is underway, with construction requested for next fiscal year, lasting about two years. The project remains at \$155 million and will be presented to City Council soon.

Councilmember White inquired about the original project cost estimate. Ms. Weatherless responded that \$79 million approved in 2022.

This item was for discussion only.

***Note from the City Clerk: The following agenda items were presented together and voted on separately.***

**b. RESOLUTION 1005-0126 - AMENDMENTS TO AVONDALE PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, CHAPTER 4 RECRUITMENT & SELECTION**

City Council considered a request to adopt Resolution 1005-0126, amending the Personnel Policies and Procedures Chapter Policy 4, Recruitment & Selection to increase the maximum duration of a certified list from one year to two years, modify the promotional probation section of current policy to align with recent changes to A.R.S. 38-1104 regarding the demotion of promoted law enforcement officers for unsuccessful completion of promotional probation, and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

Andy Mesquita, Human Resources Director, presented and discussed the amendments to Chapter 4, Duration of Certified List and Promotional Probation.

The Certified List consists of eligible and qualified candidates to consider for a vacant position, that currently remains active for six months, with an option to be extended to one year with approval from the Human Resources Director. The recommendation is to establish the ability for the certified list to be extended to two years. This proposed amendment was a priority topic during negotiations with the Avondale Professional Firefighters Association (APFFA), which they support. The amendment is beneficial to the City of Avondale and the candidates, particularly given the time, effort, and cost related to promotional testing for sworn public safety positions. It is also beneficial to streamline hiring for anticipated vacancies.

Under the current policy an employee can be dismissed if it is determined they have unsuccessfully completed the promotional probationary period and no lower-level vacant position exists for which the employee qualifies. Changes associated with revised statute A.R.S. 38-1104, removes the ability for employers to dismiss Law Enforcement Officers that were promoted due to unsuccessful completion of the promotional probation. Rather, the employer would demote the employee. It should be noted that this does not limit the employer from terminating an employee at anytime for just cause. Adopting this amendment will bring the City of Avondale into compliance with State Law.

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

- Councilmember White described a situation where an employee was promoted but faced disciplinary action during their probationary period. Ultimately, it was determined that the employee did not successfully complete the promotional probation. Mr. Mesquita clarified that department directors and the leadership team consider various qualifications when reviewing candidates for promotion. Employees receive training and coaching to maximize their chances of success. If an individual does not pass the promotional probation, they would be demoted to another qualifying position within the City rather than dismissed outright, since the demotion is not due to misconduct or behavioral issues.
- Councilmember White clarified her question by expressing concern that a person who failed to secure a promotion might be demoted and return to work alongside team members they previously did not discipline appropriately, which could lead to issues. Mr. Mesquita responded that if an employee does not meet job expectations, they will be given corrective steps to help them improve. If these measures do not succeed, it should be assessed whether the employee is suitable for the position; if not, demotion is appropriate.

Chapter 18 had not been reviewed since it was created in 2014. The Human Resources team has reviewed Chapter 18 and proposes several recommendations to promote transparency, consistency, and accountability.

Mr. Mesquite provided an overview of the following proposed amendments within Chapter 18:

- Progressive Discipline
- Administrative Investigations
  - Provides transparency to what is entailed when embarking on an Administrative Investigation
- Employee Representative Rights and Responsibilities
  - In January 2024, City Council approved amendments to Chapter 18 to include representatives, allowing an employee to have a current employee (not an attorney) present during an administrative investigation interview or pre-disciplinary hearing.
- Pre-Disciplinary Process
  - Ensures a notice of intent for discipline includes reasons, policy violations, and rights)
- Disciplinary Matrix

Councilmember White provided feedback on the matrix and its approach to disciplinary categorization. He recommended delineating the types of reprimand, distinguishing between options such as coaching, verbal warnings, formal reprimands, or termination and dismissal. Councilmember White also noted that, while current policy allows for termination upon an employee's arrest for criminal conduct, it should specify that dismissal is warranted only when an employee is found guilty of a criminal offense. Additionally, he suggested including action-based outcomes and further consolidating information within the matrix. In response, Mr. Mesquita explained that the discipline matrix concept was adapted from prior practices to meet the City of Avondale's requirements. As this represents the city's first discipline matrix, staff will continue to assess and refine it as necessary.

Councilmember White asked about feedback from employee associations regarding the proposed changes. Mr. Mesquita explained that input was collected from the leadership team during the overhaul process, and direct feedback came from the Avondale Professional Firefighters Association during negotiations. There is consensus that certain actions are unacceptable, while others present opportunities for learning and coaching. The key update is to guarantee complete transparency in the disciplinary process.

Councilmember White also asked whether any departments enforce stricter disciplinary measures due to specific rules and laws. Mr. Corbin responded that it varies by department; for example, law enforcement, firefighters, and drivers or heavy equipment operators with DOT certification may fall under different standards. Mr.

Mesquita agreed, suggesting that focusing on departments related to public safety is appropriate, as these roles carry higher expectations and responsibilities.

Mayor Pineda thanked Mr. Mesquita and team for bringing the information into compliance and ensuring transparency of the processes. Mr. Corbin expressed his appreciation to all employee associations, department directors, and the City Council for dedicating their time to review the proposed amendments and offer valuable feedback that contributed to the development of the comprehensive document presented here.

Councilmember Solorio moved to adopt Resolution 1005-0126, amending the Personnel Policies and Procedures Chapter Policy 4, Recruitment & Selection, and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents; Councilmember White seconded the motion.

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

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

**c. RESOLUTION 1006-0126 - AMENDMENTS TO PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, CHAPTER 18 DISCIPLINE**

City Council considered a request to adopt Resolution 1006-0126, amending the Personnel Policies and Procedures Chapter Policy 18, Discipline to: incorporate a progressive discipline framework; memorialize procedures related to administrative investigation interviews; enhance clarity regarding roles/responsibilities associated with employee representation rights; adopt a clear pre-determination hearing process; establish a disciplinary matrix to serve as a tool and guidelines for determining discipline; and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

Councilmember White moved to adopt Resolution 1006-0126, amending the Personnel Policies and Procedures Chapter Policy 18, Discipline, and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents; Councilmember Garcia seconded the motion.

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

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

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

Councilmember Garcia shared her experience attending the Patriot All-America Golf Tournament with the West Valley Mavericks. Additionally, she met Vice President J.D. Vance.

Councilmember Weise shared her attendance at the opening of the pickleball courts and dog park.

Mayor Pineda shared his attendance at the opening of the pickleball courts and dog park and the Alamar Community 5-Year Anniversary Celebration. Additionally, he discussed time spent with the "ROMEO" (Retired Old Men Eating Out) Organization for breakfast and discussion at McDonalds on the corner of 99<sup>th</sup> Avenue and McDowell Road where they meet every Thursday morning.

## 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 6 to 0.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

*Mike Pineda*

Mike Pineda (Feb 11, 2026 16:13:02 MST)

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 12<sup>th</sup> day of January 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.

*Marcella S.*

Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk

**February 9, 2026**

Date Approved by City Council