

MINUTES OF THE AVONDALE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF AVONDALE, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
January 26, 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 5:31 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; 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 150 members of the public were present.

1. ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK

2. PRESENTATION ITEMS (DISCUSSION ONLY)

a. EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT OF AVONDALE RECOGNITION (AVI STAR STUDENT)

City Council recognized the following Avondale students for their character and achievement. This item was for discussion only.

- Francisco Olivas
- Analaya Salcido
- Declan Blaydes
- Allyson Cooke
- Emily Dang

b. RECOGNITION OF AVONDALE HIGH SCHOOL'S RECEIVING LETTER GRADE A ACHIEVEMENT

City Council recognized La Joya Community High School and West Point High School for their recent accomplishment of receiving a letter grade A from the Arizona State Board of Education. This item was for discussion only.

c. HOLIDAY SCHOOL SPIRIT FOOD DRIVE AWARDS PRESENTATION

City Council recognized schools that participated in the 2025 Holiday School Spirit Food Drive and provide special recognition to the schools that generated the greatest amount of food to support the community. This item was for discussion only.

The following schools were recognized for being a participating school.

- Agua Fria High School
- Avondale Middle School
- Corte Sierra Elementary School
- Estrella High School
- Estrella Vista STEM Academy
- Imagine Schools Avondale
- Legacy Traditional School
- Rancho Santa Fe Elementary School
- West Point High School
- Westview High School

The following schools were recognized for generating the greatest amount of food.

- West Point High School
 - Pounds of Food – 1,420 pounds
 - Number of Meals – 1,183 Meals
- Avondale Middle School
 - Pounds of Food – 1,475 pounds
 - Number of Meals – 1,229 Meals
- Legacy Traditional School
 - Pounds of Food – 2,004 pounds
 - Number of Meals – 1,670 Meals

d. AVONDALE BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT PROGRAM AWARD

City received an update from the Economic Development Department relating to the Avondale Business Spotlight Program Award.

Panaderia La Central was awarded the Business Spotlight Award for their generosity in 2025 for offering free, custom wedding cake for couples in need. This item was for discussion only.

3. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Adrian Almanza, an Avondale resident and junior at Aqua Fria High School, presented the City Council with several student safety concerns regarding 530 East Riley Drive. The first issue he raised involved insufficient or unusable crosswalks in the area. He also addressed the problem of speeding along 530 East Riley Drive, particularly by student drivers. Additionally, Mr. Almanza highlighted difficulties caused by parking before and after school, which often result in gridlock conditions. He noted that limited visibility due to parked vehicles poses a significant risk, as drivers may not see students suddenly crossing between cars, potentially leading to serious accidents.

Mayor Pineda thanked Mr. Almanza for sharing these important concerns with the Council and encouraged him to continue collaborating with City Management to identify appropriate solutions.

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 agenda item 4a be pulled for separate consideration.

Motion was made by Councilmember White, seconded by Councilmember Solorio, to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of agenda item 4a.

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. CALL AND NOTICE OF ELECTION

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

b. SERIES 10 (BEER AND WINE STORE) LIQUOR LICENSE — LA FIESTA MARKET CARNICERIA 2 LLC

City Council recommended approval to the Arizona Department of Liquor License and Control of an application for a Series 10 (Beer and Wine Store) Liquor License submitted by Martha Chimán for the sale of alcohol at La Fiesta Market Carniceria 2 LLC located at 27 N Dysart Road in Avondale and authorized the City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

c. QUARTERLY BUDGET TRANSFER

City Council approved quarterly budget transfers as summarized in the attached Exhibit A, increase the award authority for the projects and authorized Finance and Budget Department staff to take the steps necessary to execute the transfers.

d. RESOLUTION 1007-0126 — ADOPTING THE STATE OF ARIZONA NOMINATION FILING DATES, BALLOT PREPARATION DATES, AND STATE ELECTION PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR THE AUGUST 4, 2026 MUNICIPAL ELECTION

City Council adopted Resolution 1007-0126, adopting the State of Arizona nomination petition filing dates and ballot preparation date for the August 4, 2026 election (unless otherwise amended by the Arizona State Legislature), adopting the Arizona Secretary of State Election Procedures Manual, and declaring an emergency; and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

e. RESOLUTION 1008-0126 — AUTHORIZING GRANT ACCEPTANCE FROM ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY FOR A LITHIUM-ION BATTERY DIVERSION INITIATIVE

City Council adopted Resolution 1008-0126, authorizing the City Manager to accept grant funds in the amount of \$20,490 from the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's Waste Reduction Assistance (WRA) program for the development and implementation of a lithium-ion battery diversion program, and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

f. ORDINANCE 2001-0126 — ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY FOR PUBLIC USE LOCATED SOUTH OF EAST HILL DRIVE AND WEST OF NORTH SIXTH STREET

City Council adopted ordinance 2001-0126, approving the acquisition of real property for public use located south of East Hill Drive and west of North Sixth Street, and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk to execute the necessary city documents.

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

a. CALL AND NOTICE OF ELECTION

City Council (a) called a Primary Election on August 4, 2026, or on a date otherwise prescribed by state law, and if necessary, a General Election on November 3, 2026; (b) authorized staff to add issues to the ballot as directed by Council, or by appropriate administrative action; and (c) authorized the City Clerk and the City Attorney to take all action necessary to conduct the election.

Councilmember White asked about the requirements and timelines for adding items to the November ballot. Ms. Sarmiento explained that she is directed to add a referendum, recall, or initiative if petitions are filed with the City Clerk's office.

Councilmember White asked if it was the right time to request putting last year's failed bond back on the ballot. Mayor Pineda explained that discussions were still happening. City Attorney Harris added that more work was needed, and as with last year, the City Council would need to authorize it. The current rules prevent the Clerk's Office from

proceeding with the bond; the matter must return to the Council to officially call for an election, just like before. In response to Councilmember White, Ms. Sarmiento noted that the bond was previously scheduled for the ballot around April.

Councilmember White asked whether charter questions would be handled by forming a committee or directly reviewed by the council. City Attorney Harris explained that a committee would be established. This charter committee would collaborate with the City Manager's and City Attorney's offices to suggest amendments, discuss them with the Council, and then decide on how to implement those changes. Ultimately, all amendments would need to be presented to the voters.

Councilmember White explained why she asked clarifying questions, mentioning issues like outdated language or guidance and their effects on Councilmembers. She also suggested holding a future study session to understand these matters require elections, it's important to thoroughly examine the charter review process and work toward getting the bond back on the ballot. Mayor Pineda discussed his communication with leadership, expressed his intent to present the bond to voters again, and stated that he would share more details with the Council as they become available.

Councilmember Weise moved to (a) call a Primary Election on August 4, 2026, or on a date otherwise prescribed by state law, and if necessary, a General Election on November 3, 2026; (b) authorize staff to add issues to the ballot as directed by Council, or by appropriate administrative action; and (c) authorize the City Clerk and the City Attorney to take all action necessary to conduct the election; Councilmember Weise 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

5. REGULAR AGENDA

a. PUBLIC HEARING AND ORDINANCE 2002-0126 - ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS – CHAPTER 28, ARTICLE 1 (ADMINISTRATION AND PROCEDURES); ARTICLE 5 (SPECIAL DISTRICTS; OVERLAYS); ARTICLE 8 (PARKING); ARTICLE 9 (SIGNS); ARTICLE 12 (LANDSCAPE, WALLS, AND FENCES) — APPLICATION PL-25-0291

City Council held a public hearing and considered a request to adopt Ordinance 2002-0126, approving city-initiated text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, and

authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents. The amendments will remove references to the obsolete City Center District (CCD) zoning district and allow for continued refinement of the Zoning Ordinance, allow for clerical corrections, provide for cross-references, and address the overall accuracy and usability of the Zoning Ordinance.

Monika Smriti, Senior Planner, provided an overview of Application PL-25-0291 City initiated Zoning Code Text Amendment for City Center District (CCD). The CCD Zoning Code was added in 2009 with more than 250 acres rezoned to this designation. In 2019, the BLVD Zoning District was adopted to create a vibrant urban core, ultimately replacing all but 79 acres of CCD. In 2022, a portion of the remaining 79 CCD acres was rezoned to PAD Fuze 623 and in 2025 the remaining parcel was rezoned PAD Avondale Tech Center.

With no properties remaining within CCD zoning and per Section 28-91(k), the zoning district is to be deleted, including any subsections that contain CCD land uses and development standards. Any references to CCD throughout the Zoning Code would be replaced with references to the BLVD Zoning District where applicable.

Staff find the proposed text amendment necessary to ensure compliance with the Zoning Code, which will improve usability and enhance our customer service. All required public notifications have been completed and to date no public comments have been received. The Planning Commission meeting and public hearing was held on December 17, 2025, with no discussion and the Commission unanimously voted 6 to 0 to recommend approval to City Council.

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

Councilmember Solorio moved to adopt Ordinance 2002-0126, approving application PL-25-0291, a request for text amendments to the City of Avondale Zoning Ordinance, for the reasons set forth in the staff report and authorizing 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 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

b. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN THE CITY OF AVONDALE AND THE AVONDALE PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION (APFFA) LOCAL 3924

City Council considered a request to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Avondale and the Avondale Professional Firefighters Association Local 3924 which will be effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2028, and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

Andy Mesquita, Human Resources Director who was joined by Calen Smith, President, Avondale Professional Fire Fighters Association (APFFA) Local 3924 presented and discussed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will go into effect on July 1, 2026 and expire on June 30, 2028.

Initially Mr. Mesquita recognized all parties involved in negotiating and supporting the process and proposed MOU. Formal negotiations began in early September and concluded in early November, with many months of preparation prior to that. All requests are considered based on guiding principles. The proposed MOU reincorporates existing language, introduces revised and new language

Mr. Mesquita reviewed and discussed for clarity purposes, 15 sections that had key revisions that were substantive in nature.

- Section 1.3 – Nepotism Policy: This will allow a Battalion Chief to supervise immediate family members during a temporary overtime shift, but they can not be assigned to the same apparatus.
- Section 4.1 – Base Rate of Pay: Allows members on a promotional probation who are meeting expectations to receive a one-step merit increase on the same schedule as other represented employees. This was implemented last year across the City. Additionally, the wage table was updated to support market competitiveness, which is a 6.5 percent increase.
- Section 4.3 - Specialty Pay: Allows an increase for technical rescue pay from \$1.10 per hour to \$1.50 per hour to be competitive within the valley.
- Section 4.5 – Overtime and Premium Pay: The Incentive Premium Pay for approved special assignments was a pilot program within the current contract, which is being made ongoing in the new MOU and maintains the 2,000 hour per fiscal year cap.
- Section 4.7 – Move-up Pay: Once necessary training requirements are completed, Fire Fighters can be placed on move-up status and temporarily fill a vacant assignment for more than 15 minutes and receive the move-up pay.

- Section 4.8 – 56 to 40 Hour Position Pay and Leave Accruals: A conversion formula for leave accruals between 56- and 40-hour assignments has been implemented. This will streamline the process, lessen confusion, and reduce administrative time.
- Section 4.10 – Market Analysis and Resemblance Pay: A structured survey process for fiscal year 2028 was implemented that establishes wage adjustments tied to market results for proposing salary adjustments.
- Section 8.8 – Deferred Compensation: The City’s contribution for 457 accounts will increase from \$50 to \$100 per pay period if the employee continues to make a \$50 minimum contribution.
- Section 8.9 – Post-Retirement Health Plan (PEHP): The program language was cleaned up and enhanced for the premium only universal PEHP. Mr. Mesquita provided a brief overview of the current PEHP Plan. A new benefit proposed is employer contributions to the Universal accounts by rank. A list was provided and reviewed.
- Section 8.11 – Non-Hazardous Duty for Pregnancy: Language was added to clarify the process of moving to a light duty assignment and the pay associated with it.
- Section 8.12 – Holiday Pay: Language was revised to clarify holiday differential pay is based on actual shift and hours worked. Further there will be an annual allocation of 33.6 personal leave hours to the vacation bank for both 56- and 40-hour shifts.
- Section 8.13 – Presumptive Cancer Leave: This is a significant change because of the seriousness of occupational cancer and both the City and APFFA are committed to supporting the health, treatment and recovery of those diagnosed with it. The City agrees to provide up to 26 weeks of paid leave to eligible unit members diagnosed with presumptive cancer who do not qualify for coverage as an occupational disease under state law, covered by workers compensation with accrual eligibility and premium paid protections. Arizona State law indicates that after five years an employee diagnosed with presumptive cancer would be covered by workers compensation.
- Section 9.1 – Fitness Examinations: This will make implement the \$5,000 Universal PEHP contribution to retirement for post- employment medical and fitness exams an ongoing benefit for any retiree.
- Section 11.1 – Productive Pay: The longevity-based productive pay tiers were updated and a \$250.00 Universal PEHP contribution for eligible service milestones was established to support health care and other needs post-retirement. The list was provided and reviewed.

- Section 14 – Representation Rights: This incorporates any amendments to Chapter 18 approved by City Council and reinforces those rights in the MOU. A list was provided and reviewed.

Mr. Mesquita noted the estimated budgetary impact is approximately \$925,000 ongoing dollars which would be included in the fiscal year 2027 annual budget.

Mr. Smith took the opportunity to talk about negotiations and the recommended MOU. Noting the major priorities of the union are paid benefits, working conditions, and fair and equal treatment of all members. Negotiating this MOU was a lot of work but the plan was intentional and collaborative, while ensuring what was most important to the members was being advocated for. In his opinion, that was accomplished and this contract will allow them to recruit and retain the best fire fighters in the valley.

Mr. Smith thanked all those involved in the negotiating process, and those who supported their efforts.

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

Councilmember White requested clarification regarding the contribution to the deferred compensation plan. Mr. Mesquita explained that the City will provide a fixed contribution of \$100 per pay period, if participants contribute a minimum of \$50.

Councilmember White asked if Section 8.13 required employees to appear before the Industrial Commission. Mr. Mesquita clarified that employees are encouraged to file a claim, and if approved, Presumptive Cancer leave ends and transitions to Workers Compensation. Councilmember White expressed concern that this could burden caregivers with paperwork during critical times and suggested reviewing the policy in future negotiations. Mr. Mesquita emphasized that firefighters qualify for leave upon diagnosis, regardless of filing or denial of a claim, and may pursue Workers' Compensation during paid leave. If approved, Presumptive Pay stops. Mr. Corbin cited a case where an employee was initially denied but, with City help, later received Workers' Compensation benefits. Mr. Mesquita also confirmed the City does not seek to reclaim funds paid during the application process.

In response to Councilmember White's inquiry, Mr. Mesquita noted Section 14 is new information in the MOU that correlates with Chapter 18.

Councilmember Solorio addressed Section 8.13, highlighting its compassion and support of individuals who contribute significantly to the community. She expressed appreciation for all involved and noted her frequent remarks regarding the commendable work conducted both within and outside of the Fire Department.

Councilmember Conde expressed sincere gratitude to the firefighters and their families for their service to the city's residents, stating, "You know you are all valued and appreciated."

Councilmember Garcia expressed appreciation for first responders, firefighters, and their families, emphasizing that they are not compensated enough for all they contribute to the community. You truly deserve this recognition and much more. I hope Avondale continues to have outstanding firefighters and can retain the dedicated team we currently have.

Mayor Pineda is pleased that an agreement was reached on important matters. The best interests of all involved have been considered and have been communicated by many council members; it's not only the firefighters who serve the community that benefit from these negotiations, but also their families. Your dedication to the community and your willingness to go above and beyond may never be fully repaid, but we are doing what we can at this time to ensure we both attract and retain the best people. I am glad we were able to come to an agreement and look forward to learning more about the process. I am also grateful that we are considered an employer of choice.

Councilmember Garcia moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Avondale and the Avondale Professional Firefighters Association Local 3924 which will be effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2028, and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents; Councilmember Solorio 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

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

Councilmember Solorio advised the board of her assignments from the National League of Cities Board that include membership and recruitment, Military Communities Council, and Liaison between the National League of Cities Board and the Hispanic local elected officials.

Councilmember White spoke about her attendance at the Arizona MLK Day celebration where Valley Metro was a sponsor. Additionally, she shared her

attendance at the Mercados and Melodies event, suggesting additional lighting in the free speech zone and porta potty area.

Vice Mayor Nielson spoke about his attendance at Mercados and Melodies and challenged Parks and Recreation to have another event that is even better than the first two.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, Councilmember Garcia moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting into Executive Session pursuant to Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 38--431.03(A)(1) and (A)(3) for discussion of the mid-year performance evaluation and salary of the City Manager and for discussion or consultation with the City Attorney for legal advice regarding the duties and responsibilities of the City Manager and City Council; Councilmember White 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 7:06 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 26th day of January 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.

Marcella Sarmiento

Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk

February 9, 2026

Date Approved by City Council