

MINUTES OF THE AVONDALE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF AVONDALE, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
March 02, 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; 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; Barbara Coppage, City Auditor; Memo Espinoza, Police Chief; Joel Evans, Facilities Director; Craig Jennings, Elisabeth Kahn, Assistant City Engineer; Judge; Corey Larriva, Parks and Recreation Director; Chris Lopez, Neighborhood and Family Services Director; Mark Neerings, Assistant Chief Information Officer; Jodie Novak, Development Services Director; Abril Ruiz-Ortega, Court Administrator; Larry Rooney, Fire Chief; Harold Siguenza, Public Works Assistant Director; Pier Simeri, Marketing and Public Relations Director; Jennifer Stein, Economic Development Director; and Renee Weatherless, Finance and Budget Director.

Audience: Approximately 20 members of the public were present.

1. ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK

2. PRESENTATION ITEMS (DISCUSSION ONLY)

a. EMPLOYEE ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

City Manager's Office

- Sandra Salas, Management Analyst

Court

- Salina Marquez, Court Clerk I

Fire and Medical Department

- Kristin Zipprich, Senior Management Analyst

Neighborhood & Family Services Department

- Angelique Chavez, Customer Service Representative
- Rosalia Munoz, Neighborhood & Family Services Specialist
- Adela Cornejo, Senior Services Coordinator
- Cristal Alejandra Navarro, Senior Services Coordinator
- Mitchell Padilla, Senior Services Coordinator
- Adrian Gomez, Senior Programs Assistant

b. PROCLAMATION – PROCUREMENT MONTH

City Council presented a Proclamation recognizing March 2026 as Procurement Month. This item was for discussion only.

c. PROCLAMATION – WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

City Council presented a Proclamation recognizing March 2026 as Women's History Month. This item was for discussion only.

d. GOOD SAMARITAN RECOGNITION

City Council recognized the following Good Samaritans for their assistance in locating a missing child on February 22, 2026. This item was for discussion only.

- Skyler Emmons
- Robert Hernandez
- Ralph Vollmert
- Christopher Dixon
- Kevin Place
- Kevin Kimes
- Gerardo Galacia
- Kobe Brown
- Michael Macallum

3. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Rhonda Bell, resident and member of the Municipal Art Commission, spoke about the 2026 Senior Art Scholarship Contest and encouraged everyone to spread the word about the program.

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 Solorio, 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. RESOLUTION 1014-0326 AND 1015-0326 – MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 46 - SHADOW RIDGE PHASE I

City Council: (a) approved the Petition for Formation; (b) adopted Resolution 1014-0326 declaring its intention to form the City of Avondale Maintenance Improvement District No. 46, Shadow Ridge Phase I, providing for the assessment; (c) adopted Resolution 1015-0326, declaring its intention to order the improvements within the newly established maintenance improvement district, providing for the assessment and declaring an emergency; and (d) authorized the Mayor, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

b. RESOLUTION 1016-0326 AND 1017-0326 – MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 47 - SHADOW RIDGE PHASE II

City Council: (a) approved the Petition for Formation; (b) adopted Resolution 1016-0326 declaring its intention to form the City of Avondale Maintenance Improvement District No. 47, Shadow Ridge Phase II, providing for the assessment; (c) adopted Resolution 1017-0326, declaring its intention to order the improvements within the newly established maintenance improvement district, providing for the assessment and declaring an emergency; and (d) authorized the Mayor, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

c. ORDINANCE 2005-0326 – ABANDONMENT OF A PUBLIC ALLEY RIGHT-OF-WAY

City Council adopted Ordinance 2005-0326 authorizing the abandonment of a public alley right-of-way generally located south of Belmont Drive and west of 6th Street, reserving a public utility easement thereon, and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

5. REGULAR AGENDA

a. POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Staff provided the City Council with an overview of accomplishments during Calendar Year 2025, a review of 2025 crime statistics, and an outline of priorities and initiatives for 2026. This item was for discussion only.

Police Chief Espinoza shared slides outlining major achievements for 2025 within the Avondale Police Department. Among the highlights were the completion of the Communications Center expansion and technology update in September 2025, and the opening of the new K-9 Training Center with modern indoor kennels in July 2025. Other accomplishments included launching a wellness performance program for all employees, establishing a formal Chaplain Program, offering advanced leadership training, replacing portable radios, partnering with Glendale on the Real-time Crime Center, implementing a mid-year compensation adjustment, and starting a take-home vehicle program.

Several new roles were created in 2025. A Victim Advocate Supervisor position was established to replace a Police Officer Sergeant who had previously supervised Victim Advocates. In response to increased workload, a second Forensic Interviewer was hired.

Additionally, one sworn officer role was reclassified as a full-time Recruiter to attract new applicants to Avondale. The department also added two Patrol Lieutenant positions to help mentor and support younger officers.

Throughout 2025, the department brought on twenty-one sworn officers, saw three retirements, and had eleven separations occurring mostly during training or at the academy stage. Fourteen professional staff members were hired, one retired, and fifteen left the department; many of these were Communications Specialists (Dispatchers), often due to the challenging nature and scheduling demands of the position.

Assistant Police Chief Bates provided an overview of Avondale Police Department's 2025 crime statistics, which are compiled using the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), the nationwide standard for such data. He reviewed the three main crime categories person, property, and society and discussed the specific offenses included in each group. In comparison to 2024, crimes against persons rose by 11.25 percent, while property crimes fell by 3.2 percent, and crimes against society dropped by 8.4 percent. Overall, total crime saw a slight increase of 1.23 percent. As Avondale continues to grow, the Police Department remains committed to proactively creating strategies aimed at reducing crime.

Mayor Pineda and Councilmembers were given an opportunity to comment and pose questions. Vice Mayor Nielson addressed the number of incidents managed by the department daily, referencing the data provided. Assistant Chief Bates clarified that the statistics may be affected by incidents being classified into multiple categories. Mayor Pineda referenced the reported increase in Domestic Violence incidents, a major contributor to crimes against persons, and inquired about the nature of proactive educational efforts. Assistant Chief Bates responded that, using the statistics, the department intends to expand education and resource offerings for children via the School Resource Officer and Victim Advocates. Councilmember White expressed concern over the high frequency of Domestic Violence incidents and questioned whether multiple offenses are typically associated with each case. Assistant Chief Bates indicated that underlying issues are often present. Councilmember Garcia emphasized the significance of educating and supporting children.

Police Chief Espinoza continued the presentation with an overview of the Avondale Police Department's priorities and initiatives for 2026. These priorities include evaluating AI-assisted report-writing software, implementing the Drone as First Responder (DFR) program, expanding the number of FLOCK cameras, and pursuing reaccreditation through the Arizona Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (ALEAP). Both the FLOCK and DFR programs will be discussed in greater detail during the budget presentation at the April 20 Council meeting.

The department's goals for 2026 include establishing a Traffic Safety Committee, in partnership with the Engineering Department, to identify strategies that improve traffic flow

and reduce collisions. Additional goals include training four new officers for the Traffic Unit, acquiring 18 laser speed-measuring devices and 15 radar devices, and implementing a modular building-clearing training area with movable walls. The department also aims to maintain a vacancy rate of five percent or less, increase participation in the physical fitness program by five percent annually, and increase the number of Crisis Intervention Trained (CIT) officers by five percent each year. Work is underway to host a CIT training session that would allow participation by up to 100 percent of sworn officers. These items will also be discussed in depth at the April 20th budget presentation.

Assistant Police Chief Bates continued the presentation by outlining the department's goal of reducing property crime by two and a half percent. Strategies to achieve this reduction include reestablishing specialty units such as the Community Action Team and the Criminal Investigations Bureau, as well as holding staff accountable for meeting expectations related to proactive policing during downtime and strengthening community-based policing efforts to deter crime. The department also plans to use technology, including AI-assisted report-writing tools, to reduce the time officers spend completing reports and increase proactive time in the field.

The next goal discussed was reducing traffic accidents by three percent. Adding four officers to the Traffic Bureau will support this objective. The acquisition of 18 new laser speed-measuring devices and 15 moving radars will also help address speeding concerns. As a participating member of the West Valley Speed Task Force, the City of Avondale will receive additional enforcement resources from other member cities. The newly established Traffic Committee will identify areas of concern and recommend future projects aimed at improving traffic flow through measures such as public education, social media outreach, and infrastructure improvements, all of which will support the department's goal of maintaining a three-percent reduction in traffic accidents.

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

Councilmember Solorio asked several questions to clarify matters, such as whether the K-9 Center will provide training or be accessible to other groups. She also referenced part of the City's Strategic Plan for ensuring residents feel safe and supported and asked how the Chaplain would be utilized. Additional questions covered the current leadership program and its use, details about Lieutenant pay and recruitment such as whether any applications have been received before the pilot process, if there is a backup plan, and if comparisons were made with other cities' retention strategies. She praised the FLOCK cameras, DFR, and AI Assessment discussed at the National League of Cities.

Chief Espinoza responded that the K-9 training center will offer certification opportunities, but the facility will not be shared with other organizations for now. He explained the Chaplain Program assists families during and after incidents. The outcomes of the leadership program were outlined, noting participation was required for current supervisors and those interested in becoming supervisors. At Mr. Corbin's prompting,

Chief Espinoza described their visit by the City of Scottsdale, sharing that the department wanted outside perspectives and collaborated with Scottsdale's FBI Academy to train staff and exchange knowledge.

Currently, there are three Lieutenant vacancies, temporarily filled by Sergeants to determine suitability. External advertising has not yet started, but there are plans to post these vacancies both internally and externally to attract a wide pool of applicants. Mr. Corbin commented that this approach lets individuals see if the position suits them due to major changes in responsibilities.

A follow-up discussion on the FLOCK system, DFR, and AI Assessment is scheduled for April 20th during the Budget presentations. It was noted that trade-offs will be necessary to make these additions possible for Avondale.

Councilmember Weise noted that the department is moving in the right direction by leveraging technology and expanding CIT training. She asked whether the DFR units can communicate with the officers and whether FLOCK cameras can be used to locate stolen vehicles. In response, Chief Espinoza explained that the goal is to keep the DFRs airborne for as long as possible, and adding communication equipment would increase their weight and reduce flight time. He also clarified that FLOCK cameras are used solely for investigative purposes.

Councilmember Conde commented on the much-needed improvements at the Communication Center and commended Chief Espinoza for his accessibility and willingness to support staff. She also recognized the success of the Take-Home Vehicle Program and for acknowledging the need to hire a second Forensic Interviewer. In addition, she asked how mental-health-related calls are handled, whether the department is fully staffed with dispatchers, and how long dispatcher training takes. In response, Chief Espinoza explained that only one-third of patrol officers are currently CIT trained; however, the department consistently emphasizes Avondale's culture of treating people with respect, which has a significant positive impact. Officers who are not CIT trained can request assistance from those who are when needed. He also noted that the department is not yet fully staffed with dispatchers, but they are actively working with the recruiter to expand the candidate pool. Dispatcher training typically takes four to six months.

Councilmember Garcia expressed strong support for the Police Department's innovative advancements, particularly those involving new technologies. She also highlighted the importance of CIT training and the value of responding appropriately to residents experiencing difficult situations. She concluded by pledging her full support for any needs the department may have.

Councilmember White commented on the department's goals and priorities, noting that many of them reflect true innovation. She challenged the department to identify one additional way to keep Avondale police officers out of harm's way, emphasizing that officer safety is a top priority for her. She also noted her continued efforts to secure additional funding and encourage federal recognition of the department's work on behalf

of Avondale residents. She urged continued focus on public safety and asked the community to be kind and refrain from harming one another.

Mr. Corbin noted the increase in the reimbursement amount for life vests that was included in last year's budget. Chief Espinoza added that this increase is a significant benefit, as it allows officers to obtain the highest-quality vests available.

Vice Mayor Nielson expressed his appreciation for the presentation, recognizing the vision, innovation, and commitment to the safety of both officers and the City of Avondale.

Mayor Pineda shared his gratitude for the presentation as well, acknowledging the department's capabilities and the innovative technologies being used to provide the highest level of service and protection to residents. He also commended the department's efforts to proactively reduce criminal activity in the River Bottom area through creativity and innovation. Additionally, he encouraged the department to consider what prompts and techniques officers will use when employing AI-assisted report writing.

Chief Espinoza concluded by emphasizing the department's philosophy that success is driven by its end users and its staff who bring forward ideas and initiatives through the department's Change Initiative Program.

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

- Councilmember White reported on her participation in the Black History Month Rock Show at ASU, where her son performed. She also noted recent visits to Tres Rios, Fry's Marketplace, and Friendship Park. Additionally, she commended the Parks and Recreation Department for their diligent maintenance of the city's parks.
- Councilmember Weise highlighted the opening of Donatela Park, emphasizing that it offers amenities designed to accommodate residents of all abilities.
- Mayor Pineda described his and the Council's attendance at events related to Fry's Marketplace and associated developments. He participated in the 25th Anniversary Avondale Little League Opening Ceremonies, recognizing exceptional involvement, particularly among children aged six to nine. Mayor Pineda also acknowledged John Perell, President of the Avondale Little League, for preparing and displaying a commemorative plaque honoring a late board member, coach, umpire, and parent.

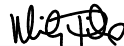
7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Council, Councilmember White moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting; Councilmember Garcia 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 7:30 p.m.


Mike Pineda (Mar 26, 2026 16:57:17 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 2nd day of March 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.



Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk

March 23, 2026

Date Approved by City Council