

MINUTES OF THE AVONDALE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF AVONDALE, ARIZONA
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER
May 4, 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; Jennifer Stein, Assistant City Manager; Katie Gregory, Assistant City Manager; Dale Nannenga, Assistant City Manager; Nicholle Harris, City Attorney; Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk; Liz Barker Alvarez, Intergovernmental Affairs Administrator; Kirk Beaty, Public Works Director; Memo Espinoza, Police Chief; Joel Evans, Facilities 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; Stacy Swainston, Parks, Recreation & Libraries Assistant Director; Cheryl Covert, Interim 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. PROCLAMATION – LAW DAY

City Council presented a proclamation recognizing May 1, 2026, as Law Day. This item was for discussion only.

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

City Council presented a proclamation recognizing May 2026 as Economic Development, Tourism, and Small Business Month. This item was for discussion only.

c. PROCLAMATION – BUILDING SAFETY MONTH

City Council presented a proclamation recognizing the month of May 2026 as Building Safety Month in the City of Avondale. This item was for discussion only.

d. LOCAL FIRST ARIZONA SMALL BUSINESS UPDATE

City Council received an update on Local First Arizona, an organization that supports the small business community by offering programming, events and resources. This item was for discussion only.

e. 2026 CITIZEN POLICE ACADEMY

The Avondale Police Department presented the 2026 Citizen Police Academy graduates to the City Council. This item was for discussion only.

3. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC APPEARANCES

- Eileen Ginns, addressed the Council regarding the recent death of her 12-year-old son, who was struck and killed near 121st Lane and Lower Buckeye Road on April 17. She described the profound impact of this loss on her family and the surrounding neighborhood and emphasized that the incident occurred only steps from their home in an area where two residential communities sit directly across from one another without safe pedestrian access.

She urged the City to implement immediate safety improvements, including reduced speed limits, enhanced lighting, and the installation of safe crosswalks or other protected pedestrian connections between the adjoining neighborhoods. She stated that children currently must travel several blocks to reach the nearest crosswalk despite a posted speed limit of 45 mph, which she described as inappropriate for a residential corridor.

Mrs. Ginn noted that many children, families, and community members are grieving alongside her, and she expressed concern that the lack of safe passage between homes, parks, recreation centers, and nearby stores places all children at risk. She asked the Council to consider the preventable nature of her son's death and to prioritize safety infrastructure in this and other developing areas.

She concluded by calling for urgent action, stating that the community stands united in seeking change so that no other family experiences a similar tragedy, and urged the City to take her concerns to heart as part of its broader commitment to public safety.

Mayor Pineda expressed the Council's empathy for Mrs. Ginn and her family's loss. He stated that the City hears her concerns and acknowledged that she has been connected with staff for continued discussions. He noted that the Engineering team will conduct studies to identify appropriate locations for potential sidewalk installations and related safety improvements.

Mayor Pineda affirmed that change will come and emphasized the City's commitment to supporting Ms. Ginn, ensuring she has a voice in the process, and honoring the legacy of her son.

- Barney Hernandez addressed the Council regarding the April 17 fatality involving a child near 121st Lane and Lower Buckeye Road. He noted that the area has transitioned rapidly from former farmland to a growing residential community with new businesses and future development, while roadway infrastructure has not kept pace with that growth. He emphasized that Lower Buckeye Road functions as a daily pedestrian route for families, students, and children, despite lacking design features that support safe crossings.

He acknowledged that crosswalk improvements are included in the City's plans and expressed appreciation that these efforts are being prioritized in response to community concerns. He also recognized an independent assessment will be conducted to determine the safest placement for new crosswalks and stated his support for that process.

Mr. Hernandez requested consideration of a reduced speed limit along Lower Buckeye Road, stating the corridor between Avondale Boulevard and El Mirage Road has become a high-speed thoroughfare. He suggested that a 30-mph speed limit would be more appropriate given the presence of families and children. He also referenced similar concerns along El Mirage Road near Alamar Park.

He thanked the many residents, neighbors, and families who have united in support of improved safety measures and emphasized that the issue extends beyond a single neighborhood. He urged the City to ensure that roadway infrastructure reflects the needs of the community it serves and to prioritize measures that protect lives.

- Lisa Collins spoke in support of the Ginn family and emphasized that, although she does not know the family personally, she shares their concerns as a parent. She stated that the community needs not only safer streets, visible crosswalks, and reduced speed limits, but also consistent enforcement to ensure compliance. She noted that without enforcement, signage and infrastructure improvements alone would not be effective.

Ms. Collins referenced her own experiences driving through the Littleton school zone, where she frequently observes drivers speeding or attempting to pass her despite posted warnings. She encouraged the City to prioritize both the installation of safety measures and the enforcement of those measures to protect families and prevent future tragedies.

- Jackie Grant addressed the Council regarding a pedestrian collision she experienced in October 2023 while crossing Lower Buckeye Road between Cantada Ranch and Del Rio Ranch. She stated that she was struck by a vehicle despite wearing bright clothing and waiting for traffic to clear. As a result of the incident, she was hospitalized for a week and sustained multiple injuries, including a broken collarbone, two fractured vertebrae, a knee injury, and several torn ligaments. She noted that she continues to experience ongoing medical issues.

Mrs. Grant reported that after her incident, she submitted concerns to the City but was informed at the time that there were not enough documented cases to warrant changes. She emphasized that the installation of new traffic signals at El Mirage

Road and Lower Buckeye Road was previously presented as part of the solution, yet a child has now been killed in the same general area.

Mrs. Grant urged the Council to move quickly with crosswalk installation and reducing vehicle speeds along that corridor. She emphasized her experience serves as a personal example of the dangers present and the need for immediate safety improvements.

- Veronica Malone spoke regarding serious safety concerns along Lower Buckeye Road, particularly east of El Mirage Road. She referenced the recent fatality involving a child in the area, stating such incidents highlight the urgent need for safer infrastructure. She requested the installation of marked crosswalks to protect pedestrians and urged the City to take a proactive approach as development continues along that corridor, including the upcoming Fry's development.

Ms. Malone noted there is currently a one-mile stretch between Avondale Boulevard and El Mirage Road with no traffic signal, limited lighting, a posted speed limit of 45 mph, and few safe crossing options. She stated that waiting until development is complete to address these issues places the community at continued risk.

She encouraged the City to prioritize safety by approving improved lighting, adding crosswalks, and investing in infrastructure ahead of development rather than reacting afterward. She acknowledged current budget constraints but respectfully asked that funding for these safety improvements be included as the Council considers adoption of the tentative budget. She concluded by stating that residents, especially children, deserve to feel safe walking and crossing the street.

Teresa Desanti addressed the Council regarding an interaction that occurred at the Avondale Fiesta event. She stated that while gathering signatures in the designated free-speech area, Councilmember Jeannette Garcia made comments about her petition activity and discouraged a voter from signing. The speaker expressed concern about the accuracy of statements posted on social media following the event and stated that she believed the situation was misrepresented. She concluded by stating that her concerns relate to conduct and representation, not personal dislike.

Councilmember Garcia responded, stating that she did not claim the speaker hated her personally but had referenced political differences in the context of petition activity. She stated that she has been the subject of repeated false allegations and that she is entitled to correct misinformation in public settings. Councilmember Garcia referenced a prior incident involving accusations made against her, noting that the related lawsuit was withdrawn after police reports were released. She stated that her comments were made in defense against what she viewed as inaccurate statements and emphasized that she has consistently supported City initiatives and votes in alignment with community interests.

- Ashley Archer expressed concerns regarding the data center located near her neighborhood. She stated that she and other community members have recently experienced loud, unexplained noises that she believes may be associated with the facility. She shared that the noises have caused distress for her family and raised questions about potential impacts on health, utilities, and the surrounding environment.

Ms. Archer voiced concern about the placement of the data center near residential areas and a public park and stated that she intends to continue researching the facility's approvals and operational requirements. She also referenced personal and neighborhood health concerns, noting that she plans to follow up with medical providers and continue monitoring the situation.

She reported contacting the Avondale Police Department regarding the noises and was informed no other similar reports had been received. She also noted that she has reached out to external advocacy resources for additional guidance. The speaker concluded by stating that community members are organizing to further engage on this issue and expressed hope that the City will review and address their concerns.

- Daniel Berriel addressed the Council regarding environmental and infrastructure concerns related to ongoing development in the area. He stated he has lived in Avondale for many years and has been closely following rezoning activity, utility planning, and long-term infrastructure discussions. He expressed concern that community members may not be fully aware of the scope of development occurring, including data center projects and proposed battery-storage facilities.

Mr. Berriel referenced issues such as water supply, utility capacity, and environmental impacts, and encouraged the City to ensure that scientific data and long-term sustainability considerations are fully evaluated as part of future approvals. He also noted concerns about safety, crime, and community behavior in certain areas, as well as the pace of growth along Lower Buckeye Road and surrounding corridors.

He urged the Council to continue asking detailed questions, to ensure transparency in development decisions, and to prioritize the long-term well-being of residents. He concluded by encouraging the City to verify that new technologies and cooling systems meet safety and environmental standards and to remain attentive to the cumulative impacts of growth.

- Nick Gonzales, a Sgt. Nick Gonzales with the Avondale Police Department, offered condolences to the Ginn family. He then recognized City Manager Ron Corbin for his leadership and ongoing support of public safety. Sgt. Gonzales stated that effective policing requires partnership, trust, and investment from City leadership, and that Mr. Corbin has consistently demonstrated these qualities.

He highlighted several initiatives supported by the City Manager, including the implementation of the take-home vehicle program, which he noted has improved officer readiness, visibility, and safety. He also acknowledged Mr. Corbin's role in extending TIGER Act protections to non-sworn personnel, reinforcing a culture of fairness and inclusion within the department.

Sgt. Gonzales further recognized Mr. Corbin's commitment to employee wellness, citing support for benefits and quarterly physical-fitness assessments that promote long-term health and resilience. He also noted Mr. Corbin's openness to innovative approaches, including exploration of a drone-as-first-responder program and support for the Axon Drop 1 proposal to reduce administrative workload and enhance service delivery.

He concluded by stating that these efforts reflect a broader leadership philosophy centered on valuing people and strengthening the department. On behalf of the Avondale Police Department, he thanked Mr. Corbin for his continued support and forward-thinking leadership.

- Calen Smith on behalf of the Avondale Professional Firefighters Association, Local 3924, offered condolences to Mrs. Ginn and her family. He stated that he was speaking on behalf of the association regarding the City Manager's contract, which appeared on the consent agenda, and wished to share the department's perspective on Mr. Corbin's leadership.

He highlighted several recent accomplishments that have significantly benefited the Fire Department, including the opening of the new fire training center, expanded presumptive cancer coverage that exceeds state requirements, and provisions within the current MOU that support recruitment and retention. He noted that while these achievements were carried out by many individuals across the organization, they reflect the leadership, direction, and team-building fostered by the City Manager.

- Mr. Smith stated that the City's high level of collaboration and operational effectiveness begins with the direction set by Mr. Corbin and supported by the Council. He described Mr. Corbin as honest, transparent, and accountable, and emphasized his support for public safety employees as well as all City staff and residents. He also referenced Mr. Corbin's participation in community events, charitable efforts, and public-safety initiatives.

He concluded by thanking the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Council for selecting and retaining Mr. Corbin as City Manager, and for empowering him to cultivate a positive organizational culture that enables employees to better serve the community.

The following written comments were received:

- *"Good evening, Mayor and Council. My name is Natosha Edmonds I am here tonight not just as a resident, but mother to mother, and parent to parent. On April*

17th, the 'nightmare' we all pray never happens became a reality for one of our own. We lost 12-year-old Louis Ginns IV—a beautiful soul, a son, and a neighbor—just 500 feet from his front door. Every morning, we send our children out into this city. We tell them to look both ways. We tell them to be careful. But as mothers, we know that all the 'caution' in the world can't protect a child against a road that isn't designed for their safety. According to ADOT, pedestrian deaths in our state have hit a five-year high. MAG data identifies this stretch of Lower Buckeye as a danger zone. But we don't need a spreadsheet to tell us what we feel in our gut every time a car flies down that road. I know there are plans for widening roads and future budgets. But as a mother, I'm asking you: How many more 'future plans' can we afford? Louis couldn't wait for the next fiscal year. We are asking for immediate action. We need HAWK signals, high-visibility crosswalks, and lighting that ensures our children are seen. We cannot bring Louis back, but we can honor his life by making sure no other mother has to stand at this podium with a broken heart, asking why their child's safety wasn't a priority.” – Natosha Edmonds

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 White, seconded by Councilmember Weise, to approve the Consent Agenda.

Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously 6 to 1.

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

a. MINUTES

City Council approved the March 23, 2026, and April 6, 2026, City Council meeting minutes.

b. SERIES 10 (BEER AND WINE STORE) LIQUOR LICENSE — MJ MERCADO DEL VALLE 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 Murad Rida Jreissat for the sale of alcohol at MJ Mercado Del Valle LLC located at 425 N Central Ave in Avondale and authorized the City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

c. AMENDMENT TO THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT WITH RON CORBIN (CITY MANAGER)

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

d. RESOLUTION 1027-0526 - COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL POLICIES

City Council adopted Resolution 1027-0526, adopting Comprehensive Financial Policies and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

e. RESOLUTION 1028-0526 - ADOPTION OF REIMBURSEMENT RESOLUTION FOR WATER UTILITY REVENUE OBLIGATIONS AND WASTEWATER UTILITY REVENUE OBLIGATIONS

City Council adopted Resolution 1028-0526, adopting a reimbursement resolution for Water Utility Revenue Obligations and Wastewater Utility Revenue Obligations to declare official intent to be reimbursed in connection with certain capital expenditures relating to environmental mitigation and water and wastewater utility system capital improvement projects and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

f. ORDINANCE 2012-0526 — APPROVING THE SALE, EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF WASTEWATER SYSTEM REVENUE AND/OR REVENUE REFUNDING OBLIGATIONS, IN ONE OR MORE SERIES; APPROVING THE FORM AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF NECESSARY AGREEMENTS, INSTRUMENTS, AND DOCUMENTS; DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE CERTAIN MATTERS WITH RESPECT TO THE FOREGOING; AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

City Council adopted Ordinance 2012-0526, approving the sale and execution and delivery of Wastewater System Revenue and Wastewater System Revenue Refunding Obligations, in one or more series; authorizing the completion, execution and delivery with respect thereto of agreements necessary or appropriate as part of financing a portion of the Charles M. Wolf Water Reclamation Facility expansion and refinance existing Water and Sewer Revenue Obligations, Series 2016 and pay the cost of issuance; approving the form and authorizing the execution and delivery of agreements necessary for such sale; delegating to the Mayor, the City Manager, and the Finance and Budget Director authority to determine certain matters and terms with respect to the foregoing, authorizing all actions to further this ordinance; and declaring an emergency; and authorizing staff to transfer the necessary appropriation authority to the Wastewater Enterprise Funds and modify the interfund transfer schedule as necessary; and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

g. ORDINANCE 2013-0526 — AUTHORIZING THE SALE, EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF WATER SYSTEM REVENUE OBLIGATIONS; APPROVING THE FORM AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF NECESSARY AGREEMENTS, INSTRUMENTS AND DOCUMENTS; DELEGATING AUTHORITY

**TO DETERMINE CERTAIN MATTERS WITH RESPECT TO THE FOREGOING;
AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY**

City Council adopted Ordinance 2013-0526, approving the sale and execution and delivery of Water System Revenue Obligations; authorizing the completion, execution and delivery with respect thereto of agreements necessary or appropriate as part of financing various design and construction projects for the water system, and pay the cost of issuance; approving the form and authorizing the execution and delivery of agreements necessary for such sale; delegating to the Mayor, the City Manager, and the Finance and Budget Director authority to determine certain matters and terms with respect to the foregoing, authorizing all actions to further this ordinance; and declaring an emergency; and authorizing staff to transfer the necessary appropriation authority to the Water Enterprise Funds and modify the interfund transfer schedule as necessary; and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

**h. ORDINANCE 2014-0526 – ACCEPTANCE OF AN EXCLUSIVE UTILITY
EASEMENT FROM RANCHO SANTA FE HOA**

City Council adopted Ordinance 2014-0526, authorizing the acceptance of an Exclusive Utility Easement from Rancho Santa Fe HOA and authorized the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

**i. ORDINANCE 2015-0526 – ACCEPTANCE OF DEDICATION OF REAL PROPERTY
FROM BROOKFIELD LAKIN, LLC, FOR PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY AND
DECLARING SAID PROPERTY AS PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY**

City Council adopted Ordinance 2015-0526, authorizing the acceptance of dedication of real property generally located along the west side of Dysart Road and south of Vermeersch Road from Brookfield Lakin, LLC, and declaring said real property as public right-of-way and 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.***

**c. AMENDMENT TO THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND EMPLOYMENT
AGREEMENT WITH RON CORBIN (CITY MANAGER)**

City Council considered a request to approve an amendment to the Professional Services and Employment Agreement ("Employment Agreement") with City Manager, Ron Corbin, and authorized the Mayor, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

Councilmember White inquired how often off-cycle pay adjustments are implemented. Mr. Mesquita responded that pay is reviewed when department heads submit information indicating a need, particularly related to retention or specific position titles. He noted that a citywide market study is typically conducted every other year, subject to budget capacity, and the most recent study was completed in FY2025 to prepare for anticipated adjustments within the FY2026 budget.

Councilmember White further asked how the proposed changes would affect the General Fund Forecast. Ms. Weatherless stated the \$5,700 adjustment to the current contract would have minimal impact and could be absorbed within the existing budget. She noted the impact on the FY2027 budget is approximately \$44,000 and would be incorporated into the final adopted budget, noting that this would become an ongoing expense.

Councilmember White moved to postpone Agenda Item 4(c). Councilmember Solorio seconded the motion.

Councilmembers engaged in discussion related to Councilmember White's motion.

- Councilmember Solorio read a prepared statement explaining her reasons for voting against the proposed salary increase for the City Manager from \$306,000 to \$339,000. Sighting the importance of providing full context for residents, she noted that the proposed increase of approximately \$33,000 was being considered in connection with retention efforts following the City Manager's exploration of an external opportunity in Gilbert. She also stated that an additional increase related to cost-of-living and merit is up for consideration next month as part of the City Manager's annual review.

Councilmember Solorio referenced the City's broader financial outlook, noting that the Council unanimously approved a 5 percent organizational pay adjustment in the previous year while aware of upcoming fiscal challenges. She stated that the City is now in a different position, citing recent discussions on balancing the budget and reductions to programs and services, including the elimination or scaling back of several community events. She also referenced departmental reductions and vacant positions included in the budget, as well as rising water rate increases for residents.

She emphasized that her comments were not intended to diminish the City Manager's contributions but to maintain transparency and a fiscally conservative approach. Approving a significant executive salary increase while reducing services and asking departments to do more with less sends the wrong message to employees and the community. For these reasons, she stated she would not support the proposed increase.

- Councilmember Weise stated since 2013 the City has had six different City Managers, and the cost of recruiting a new City Manager would likely be significant. She noted that the Council previously requested updated salary comparisons for recently hired City Managers in other jurisdictions and emphasized that, like recent adjustments made to recruit and retain high-quality police personnel, the City should also ensure it can retain strong executive leadership.

Councilmember Weise referenced feedback from department directors, noting that many provided detailed comments regarding Mr. Corbin's leadership, work ethic, and commitment to fairness. She highlighted examples of Mr. Corbin's leadership style, including empowering department heads, fostering collaboration, breaking down departmental silos, and ensuring alignment with Council priorities. She noted that Mr. Corbin has strengthened organizational culture through weekly department-head meetings, quarterly all-staff meetings, and a more unified approach to citywide initiatives. She also referenced his role in improving the budget process, supporting staff development, and leading a successful Council retreat that incorporated external stakeholders and private-sector perspectives.

Councilmember Weise stated that there are often reasons beyond salary that may cause an employee to explore other opportunities, and she expressed her support for retaining Mr. Corbin. She concluded by stating that she believes the proposed salary adjustment would help ensure the City continues to benefit from his leadership.

- Councilmember Conde thanked Councilmember Weise for reading the department-head feedback and noted all that information had been previously reviewed by the City Manager. She stated that, given the strong support expressed by staff and public safety personnel, she was surprised and disappointed to learn that Mr. Corbin had recently explored employment opportunities in other cities. She expressed concern that this occurred during a period of significant growth when strong leadership is especially important.

Councilmember Conde stated that she did not believe salary was the primary factor influencing the City Manager's decision to explore other opportunities, noting if compensation was the issue, he could have waited for his upcoming annual review. She expressed that while she does not oppose providing an increase, she does not believe that offering additional compensation alone will ensure retention. She referenced language in the employment agreement indicating that the City Manager would withdraw from current external opportunities but noted that nothing in the agreement requires him to remain with the City for a specified period.

She reiterated that she values the City Manager's contributions but remains disappointed that he pursued multiple external opportunities. She concluded by stating that she would vote "no" on the proposed adjustment.

- Councilmember Garcia stated as Councilmember Weise noted, employees often explore other opportunities for reasons unrelated to salary. She commented that even if the proposed adjustment were not approved and the City Manager chose to leave, the City would still need to recruit a replacement who would likely expect

a comparable salary or potentially higher than what is being proposed for an individual who already knows the organization and works effectively with staff.

- Councilmember Garcia expressed support for accountability, efficiency, and attracting high-performing personnel, stating she believes the City Manager demonstrates those qualities. She noted that despite recent budget reductions, Mr. Corbin led efforts to identify responsible cuts and prioritize essential services. She stated that while community events are valuable, she would prioritize safety improvements, such as crosswalk installations over optional events when budget reductions are necessary.

She emphasized the City Manager did not request the proposed salary increase and the recommendation originated from the Council. She stated that Mr. Corbin is highly engaged in the community and supportive of public safety and City staff. Councilmember Garcia concluded by stating that she would vote in favor of the adjustment.

- Vice Mayor Nielson stated that City Manager Corbin has made a significant positive impact on City staff and the community, noting that he has worked to rebuild relationships and support employees. He commented that while the City Manager has strong support from staff, the Council has not always aligned with his vision.

Vice Mayor Nielson noted that if the City were to recruit a new City Manager, the process would require substantial time and effort, and other cities are currently experiencing challenges filling similar positions. He stated that while a new hire could be better or worse, the City already knows the quality of Mr. Corbin's leadership and the direction he provides. He concluded by stating that he would vote in support of the proposed adjustment.

- Councilmember White explained her thought process regarding the proposed salary adjustment and that she consulted an AI tool to find general HR practices for off-cycle pay increases, especially when it is related to the employee seeking other employment opportunities. She clarified she is not opposed to providing additional compensation to the City Manager but believed the discussion should occur during his upcoming annual review, which is only a month away. She stated after last year's review Mr. Corbin stated he felt undervalued and created governance challenges and Council participating in Good Governance training. Councilmember White expressed concern with approving a non-performance based increase at a time when departments were asked to implement 3 percent reductions, stating that doing so could appear inconsistent or hypocritical. She also referenced the City Manager's applications to three external positions, highlighting the one Mr. Corbin was a finalist for.

She stated that while she believes the City Manager is performing well, there have been periods in the past when performance concerns existed, and she personally has experienced exclusion and negative interactions. She emphasized that her position is not personal but procedural, and that compensation discussions should occur during the established review process. She concluded by reiterating her belief that the matter should be postponed until the annual evaluation.

- Councilmember Solorio stated she agreed with Councilmember White's comments and reiterated that her position was not based on whether the City Manager deserves additional compensation. She noted the annual review is only one month away, during which the City Manager would already be eligible for a cost-of-living adjustment and potentially a merit increase. She emphasized that postponing the discussion would simply align the decision with the established review process.

Councilmember Solorio expressed disappointment as the City Manager sought external opportunities, particularly after stating the issue was not related to salary. She acknowledged the positive feedback shared by staff but noted that employees are unlikely to submit negative comments about their supervisor. She stated that while the City Manager is performing well, the Council must also consider budget priorities, including the possibility that the proposed \$33,000 adjustment could instead support safety improvements such as crosswalk installations.

She concluded by stating that the request was only to postpone the matter for three weeks until the scheduled review and doing so would maintain consistency and transparency in the City's compensation practices.

- Mayor Pineda offered clarification regarding earlier statements. He noted that the previously referenced Council agreement was in the context of placing the item on the agenda for discussion, not in reference to any prior vote or decision.

Mayor Pineda emphasized the proposed salary adjustment for the City Manager was not arbitrary but was brought forward as a retention effort after learning that Mr. Corbin had been a finalist for another City Manager position. He stated, as Mayor, he believed it was his responsibility to act in the City's best interest by presenting an offer intended to retain the City Manager, subject to Council approval. Further noting the Mr. Corbin is currently compensated 13 percent below market rate, based on information provided by Human Resources. Replacing him would require hiring a consultant at an estimated cost of \$28,000–\$32,000 in addition to offering a competitive salary to any new candidate. He stated retaining proven leadership, maintaining organizational stability, and avoiding turnover costs were key considerations in bringing the proposal forward.

Mayor Pineda emphasized the adjustment should not be viewed as a bonus or incentive but as an investment in continuity and leadership. The City Manager's upcoming annual evaluation is a separate process, and the intent was to address retention concerns before reaching that point. Further, under the proposed agreement, the City Manager would withdraw from pursuing external employment opportunities.

Mayor Pineda encouraged Council to set aside personal differences and focus on the organizational impact of potentially losing the City Manager. He stated that while Councilmembers may disagree, the discussion reflects healthy debate and a shared desire to act in the City's best interest.

He concluded by explaining the procedural implications of the pending motion: a "yes" vote would postpone the item to the evaluation period, while a "no" vote would allow the Council to proceed with consideration of the proposed adjustment.

Upon vote, the motion failed 3 to 4.

Councilmember Conde	Aye
Councilmember Solorio	Aye
Councilmember White	Aye

Councilmember Garcia	Nay
Councilmember Weise	Nay
Vice Mayor Nielson	Nay
Mayor Pineda	Nay

Mayor Pineda moved to approve an amendment to the Professional Services and Employment Agreement ("Employment Agreement") with City Manager, Ron Corbin, and authorized the Mayor, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents; Councilmember Garcia seconded the motion.

Upon vote, the motion carried 4 to 3.

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

Councilmember Conde	Nay
Councilmember Solorio	Nay
Councilmember White	Nay

Mayor Pineda congratulated City Manager Corbin and stated that, despite the debate and differing viewpoints expressed, much of the Council supports him. He noted that the Council looks forward to his continued service and that any future compensation considerations will occur during the upcoming evaluation period, which is a separate process from the action taken that evening.

Mr. Corbin thanked Mayor Pineda and the Councilmembers.

5. REGULAR AGENDA

a. RESOLUTION 1029-0526 - ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2027 TENTATIVE BUDGET

City Council considered a request to adopt Resolution 1029-0526, setting forth the fiscal year (FY) 2027 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, Finance and Budget Director, presented the Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2027 for adoption. She explained that adoption of the tentative budget establishes the maximum expenditure limit for the fiscal year. When the Final Budget is presented in June, total expenditures may be reduced but cannot exceed the amount approved in the tentative budget. She noted that the budget may be amended throughout the year as needed.

Ms. Weatherless reviewed changes made since the last budget presentation, including:

1. An increase of \$102,000 in lease expenses for the Southwest Family Advocacy Center.
2. A \$200,000 increase to the Dysart Road Water Line Capital Improvement Project.
3. The movement of Intergovernmental Agreements to the Intergovernmental Agreements Fund.
4. Ongoing carryover adjustments as final FY2026 expenditure figures are finalized and incorporated into the FY2027 budget.

Ms. Weather less provided an overview of FY2027 funding sources and compared total revenues to total budgeted expenditures across all funds, as well as within the General Fund.

Ms. Weatherless outlined the next steps in the budget process, including posting required public notices in May, returning to City Council on June 1, 2026, to present the Final Budget, conducting the Property Tax Levy Public Hearing, and seeking adoption of the FY2027 budgets for both the City of Avondale and the Alamar Community Facilities District, along with the Property Tax Levy.

In response to a question from Councilmember Conde regarding potential funding for crosswalk installations or other improvements on Lower Buckeye Road, Ms. Weatherless explained that depending on the funding source, the Finance Department

could return to Council with a budget adjustment request if additional funds were needed.

Vice Mayor Nielson moved to adopt Resolution 1029-0526, setting forth the fiscal year (FY) 2027 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; Councilmember Weise seconded the motion.

Upon vote, the motion was carried 5 to 2.

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

Councilmember Solorio	Nay
Councilmember White	Nay

b. RESOLUTION 1030-0526 - AVONDALE GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND ELECTION 2026 - RESOLUTION ORDERING AND CALLING ELECTION

City Council considered a request to adopt Resolution 1030-0526, ordering and calling a special bond election to be held on November 3, 2026, and authorizing the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents.

Renee Weatherless, Finance and Budget Director, presented the Avondale General Obligation Bond (GOB) Election 2026 Resolution to order and call a Special Election in November 2026 for Public Safety. She reviewed City Council's direction last year to form a Citizen Bond Committee to review the City's Capital Improvement Plan, remaining bond authorization, prior bond usage, and the City's property tax rate. The committee met four times and recommended placing two bond questions on the ballot: one for Parks, Recreation, and Libraries, and one for Public Safety. The Parks, Recreation, and Libraries bond passed; the Public Safety bond failed by 13 votes.

City Council subsequently directed staff to return with the option of calling another Public Safety bond election in November 2026 for up to \$55 million. Ms. Weatherless explained that the proposed Public Safety bond would include the same five projects previously recommended by the committee:

1. **Southern Avondale Fire and Police Substation** – Located on dedicated land within the Alamar subdivision and currently under design. The facility would improve response times, support major events at Phoenix Raceway, and provide a police briefing and office space. Bond funding would cover a portion of project costs.
2. **New Public Safety Headquarters** – Needed to centrally house the Office of Public Safety, Fire and Medical Administration, and essential support staff. Fire Administration currently shares space in the Phoenix Raceway building, and other

functions are dispersed across the City Hall campus. A new facility will be necessary within the next 10 years.

3. **Police Firearms Training Facility** – Avondale does not have its own training facility, requiring officers to travel to Glendale for required training. Access to those facilities is increasingly limited. A local facility would improve training access, certification maintenance, and patrol availability.
4. **Main Police Station Expansion** – The existing headquarters houses dispatch, evidence, crime lab, and support services. The building was designed for future expansion, and this project would complete the final build-out to accommodate growth.
5. **City Court Office Expansion** – Due to increased caseloads and statutory file-retention requirements, the court has exceeded its available space. Staff are currently working in filing rooms not intended for office use. The project would provide additional office and storage capacity.

Ms. Weatherless reviewed the property tax implications, noting that due to continued growth and stable property values, new bonds can be issued without increasing the City's property tax rate. As older debt is paid down, new capacity becomes available, allowing projects to be timed to maintain a steady rate. Council must approve each bond issuance before it proceeds.

Council was asked to consider whether other taxing districts may place measures on the November ballot, noting that cities and towns appear last in ballot order. She also noted that voter participation is expected to be higher this year compared to last year's all-mail special election.

If Council approves the call for election, next steps include notifying Maricopa County, preparing public informational materials, and conducting outreach. Early voting begins October 7, 2026, and Election Day is November 3, 2026. If voters approve the authorization, projects would be incorporated into the City's CIP Plan in the appropriate years and remain subject to Council approval during the annual budget process.

Vice Mayor Nielson asked how the presence of multiple bond measures from other entities on the November ballot might affect voter participation and outcomes.

Ms. Weatherless explained that cities and towns appear at the end of the ballot, which can impact voter response rates. She noted that in the City's prior election, more voters participated in the first ballot question than in the second, demonstrating a decline in participation as voters progressed through the ballot.

Councilmember Nielson asked whether additional outreach or publicity was planned to ensure the public is informed.

Mr. Corbin responded that staff will continue community education and outreach only regarding the ballot measure but will not advocate. However, other organizations may conduct their own advocating efforts independently. He also noted that, based on

discussions with the City's consultant, higher voter turnout is expected in the upcoming election, and they expect the negative effects experienced in the previous election from being on the last page to be mitigated.

The Mayor expressed support for moving forward with the proposed Public Safety GOB election, stating that the City was narrowly short of approval in the prior election and that community organizations are better positioned this year to communicate, advocate, and educate voters on the importance of the measure. He noted that the projects remain current and the City has the infrastructure in place to support a successful effort.

Councilmember Garcia emphasized the importance of voter education, noting that the previous measure failed by only 13 votes. She stated that local elections demonstrate how impactful individual votes can be and encouraged community advocacy. She expressed strong support for the bond, particularly the police training facility and the City Court expansion. Mr. Corbin clarified that the 13-vote margin equated to a difference of only seven voters.

Councilmember White requested the estimated cost of the proposed police training facility. Mr. Corbin advised that all project estimates are preliminary and do not include inflation or other variables. He stated that while the \$55 million authorization may not fully fund all projects, it would significantly advance them, and Council would determine project priorities if the bond passed. Finance and Budget Director Weatherless stated the current estimate for the training facility is \$10–12 million.

Councilmember White asked whether grant funding could be pursued for such a facility. Ms. Weatherless stated that staff could explore applicable grant opportunities. Mr. Corbin added that while grants for constructing buildings are uncommon, grants for equipment or training components may be available, and federal partnerships or congressional direct spending could also be explored. He noted that if the bond does not pass, staff would evaluate alternative funding options, though none would be ideal.

Councilmember White stated she would support the bond, emphasizing the importance of having a dedicated police training facility rather than relying on neighboring jurisdictions. She noted that Glendale has been accommodating but is increasingly limited in capacity. She encouraged strong public communication efforts and stated that messaging will be critical given the narrow margin in the prior election.

Councilmember Solorio agreed with the importance of clear public education, noting that ballot language can be confusing and that voters may lose interest as they progress through the ballot. She stated that simple, accessible explanations will be important and encouraged community volunteers to assist with outreach. She expressed support for the bond, noting the need for a dedicated firearms training facility.

Councilmember Solorio moved to adopt Resolution 1030-0526, ordering and calling a special bond election to be held on November 3, 2026, and authorize the Mayor and 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 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

c. PUBLIC HEARING AND ORDINANCE 2016-0526 HABITAT FOR HUMANITY – HISTORIC AVONDALE INFILL OVERLAY REZONE – APPLICATION PL-25-0236

City Council held a public hearing to considered a request to adopt Ordinance 2016-0526, approving a request by Tana Nichols of Habitat for Humanity of Central Arizona, to apply the Historic Avondale Infill Overlay (HAIO) to 0.16 acres located approximately 150 feet west of the northwest corner of East Hill Drive and North 5th Street and authorize the Mayor or City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk to execute the necessary documents. The site is currently zoned Multi-Family Residential (R-4). Approval of the request will modify development standards and adopt a HAIO development plan on the subject site, allowing two duplex buildings for a total of four dwelling units.

Josh Orton, Lead Senior Planner, presented application PL-25-0236, a request for a Historic Avondale Infill Overlay (HAIO) rezone for a Habitat for Humanity housing project. He explained the purpose of the HAIO district is to promote redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, or abandoned properties within the City’s revitalization area. The overlay provides a mechanism to apply alternative development standards when existing zoning tools cannot adequately address a property’s development needs, while maintaining compatibility with surrounding neighborhood character.

Mr. Orton stated the subject property is located west of the northwest corner of 5th Street and Hill Drive, across from the Hill Tract Estates development constructed approximately 12–15 years ago. The property is currently vacant and contains a Roosevelt Irrigation District easement running through the center of the block. He noted the request includes a development plan establishing the proposed alternative standards. The General Plan land use designation and underlying R-4 Multifamily zoning will remain unchanged; the action before Council is solely the adoption of the HAIO overlay and associated development plan.

The applicant proposes reductions to perimeter setbacks, building coverage, and minimum lot dimensions to allow subdivision and sale of the units to individual homebuyers. No changes are proposed to the district's maximum building height.

The development plan includes two duplex buildings for a total of four single-family attached units. Access would be provided from Hill Drive using a portion of the irrigation district easement. The buildings are proposed as three-story structures with three-car garages on the first floor, private fenced yards, and internal sidewalks. Conceptual elevations were provided, and final designs will be subject to administrative approval and must comply with City design manuals and the International Residential Code.

Staff found the request consistent with the General Plan, applicable design standards, and the intent of the HAIO district, noting the proposal would facilitate development of a long-vacant parcel and result in compatible land-use relationships.

A neighborhood meeting was held on March 3, 2026, at the Avondale Resource Center with four attendees. Questions focused primarily on Habitat for Humanity's program and qualification process. No public comments have been received through the online platform.

On April 15, 2026, the Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on the request. Commissioners asked questions regarding building height and materials on the west side of the property. Following discussion, the Commission voted 6-0 to recommend approval of the rezone to the City Council.

Mayor Pineda and Councilmembers had an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

Councilmember Weise asked whether there were any existing three-story buildings in the surrounding area. Mr. Orton responded that there are currently none; however, the entire block is zoned to allow building heights up to 35 feet. Councilmember Weise also noted the reduced setbacks and asked whether the rear setback would place the building directly against the property line. Mr. Orton confirmed that the western setback was reduced to accommodate the project and that the fenced private yards are located between the units and along the outer edges.

Councilmember Solorio expressed support for the project and thanked staff for the presentation, noting her appreciation for Habitat for Humanity's work in providing dignified homeownership opportunities.

Councilmember White asked how many garage spaces each unit would include. Mr. Orton stated that each unit will have a two-car garage.

Councilmember Conde shared her positive experience volunteering with Habitat for Humanity in Avondale and expressed strong support for the project.

Councilmember Garcia also voiced support, noting that Habitat for Humanity brings the community together to help families achieve homeownership and she looks forward to supporting and volunteering with this project.

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.

Mayor Pineda expressed appreciation for the project and the benefits it brings to the neighborhood. Further recognizing Council's discussions related to the importance of providing diverse housing options and acknowledged the strong support expressed for Habitat for Humanity. He added the proposed infill overlay provides an opportunity to activate a vacant parcel in a manner consistent with the surrounding area, particularly given the similar Habitat for Humanity development located directly across the street.

Councilmember Garcia moved to adopt Ordinance 2016-0526, approving a request by Tana Nichols of Habitat for Humanity of Central Arizona, to apply the Historic Avondale Infill Overlay (HAIO) to 0.16 acres located approximately 150 feet west of the northwest corner of East Hill Drive and North 5th Street, and to approve the proposed H A I O development plan, subject to 5 conditions of approval as set forth in the staff report 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 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

d. OPIOD YOUTH PREVENTION SERVICES GRANT PROGRAM UPDATE

City Council received an update regarding the Opioid Youth Prevention Services Grant Program.

Jerie Guajardo, Family Services Manager, presented an update on the City's Opioid Youth Prevention Services Grant. It was noted that the City Council approved participation in the statewide Opioid Settlement Distribution Agreement in November 2021, finalized in 2022 as part of the National Opioid Litigation Settlement.

For the 2025 program year, the City allocated \$200,000, with a maximum award of \$50,000 per proposal. Six nonprofit organizations applied requesting a total of \$244,000. The City's Opioid Settlement Committee, comprised of staff from

Neighborhood and Family Services, Public Safety, Marketing and Public Relations, Finance and Budget, Parks, Recreation and Libraries, and Fire and Medical, conducted comprehensive reviews and recommended funding for five organizations.

- EMPACT served 1,823 residents with evidence-based prevention curriculum;
- Jobs for Arizona Graduates served 200 youth through mentorship and leadership development;
- notMYkid served 2,121 residents with gains in opioid risk awareness and help-seeking behaviors;
- Sounds of Autism served 790 residents through outreach to vulnerable populations and families;
- Youth4Youth Inc. reached 6,372 residents with peer-led prevention, resiliency education, and Narcan training.

Ms. Guajardo provided information on which schools were served and shared a success story from each organization. She reported that all five organizations demonstrated successful outcomes and are being considered for renewed funding in the next grant cycle. Further, at the request of Mr. Corbin, Ms. Guajardo provided an overview of how the Sounds of Autism provide education on prevention to children with special needs.

During discussion, Councilmembers expressed strong appreciation for the program's impact, the value of success stories, and the importance of reaching vulnerable populations, including youth with autism. Members highlighted the innovative work of the nonprofit partners, the leadership of staff in regional collaboration, and the need to continue expanding outreach to additional schools and families. Councilmembers emphasized the importance of prevention education, Narcan access, and continued innovation in the City's use of opioid settlement funds. Suggestions included exploring community events for parents, ensuring equitable school coverage, and improving the rendering quality of opioid-prevention programming on the City's public access channel.

Ms. Guajardo responded that some school overlap was intentional due to nonprofit collaboration and confirmed ongoing efforts to broaden outreach.

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

- Councilmember Solorio reported that she received a scholarship through the National League of Cities to participate in a six-week course on housing as an economic development tool, noting that the course is valued at \$1,500 and has been eye-opening in demonstrating the range of housing types and strategies available to cities
- Councilmember White shared that she attended a presentation at ASU featuring President Michael Crow, who discussed the university's five-year plan and emphasized continued innovation, as well as the importance of supporting

students financially who wish to attend ASU. She suggested the possibility of helping Avondale students attend ASU in the future.

- Councilmember Conde noted the Kingswell Church was successful in fulfilling its mission with the assistance of Neighborhood and Family Services identifying a resident in need. On Saturday volunteers painted the home of an 80-year-old Avondale resident at no cost as part of the church’s mission to serve the community.
- Councilmember Garcia highlighted a monthly veterans’ gathering at Modern Grind, noting its value in fostering connection and support among local veterans. She also shared her experience attending the Fiesta event over the weekend.
- Vice Mayor Nielson shared his opportunity to attend Avondale Middle School’s spring tree-planting event, where 37 trees were planted with the help of approximately 120 students. He also spoke at an autism and abuse awareness event. He added that he and his wife had the unique opportunity to stand on the runway at Luke Air Force Base during aircraft takeoffs.
- Mayor Pineda thanked staff for the recent tour of the Avondale Training Center, emphasizing the importance of local firefighter training resources. He shared that he recently fulfilled a “Lunch with the Mayor” prize for a Read Better Be Better fundraiser, meeting with an eighth-grade student from Desert Mirage Elementary. He also commended staff for a successful Fiesta event and noted positive feedback from attendees.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Mike Pineda

[Mike Pineda \(Jun 2, 2026 15:54:06 PDT\)](#)

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 4th day of May 2026. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that the quorum was present.



Marcella Sarmiento, City Clerk

June 1, 2026

Date Approved by City Council