
PANGUITCH CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

PANGUITCH CITY OFFICE
CONFERENCE ROOM, 25 S 200 E
PANGUITCH, UTAH 84759
MAY 27, 2025, 5:30 PM

Those present at the City Council meeting were Mayor Kim Soper, City Manager Mat Houston, City Recorder Tyrissa Howell, City Treasurer Carla Farnsworth, City Attorney Barry Huntington, and Council Members Paul Dastrup, Tracy Wright, and Mike Sarles. Council Members Cindy Stewart and David Dodds were absent.

Others present were Jerry Smith, Harshad Desai, Ed Ryan, and Beth Ryan.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

OPENING CEREMONY

City Manager Mat Houston conducted the opening ceremony.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Mike Sarles moved, seconded by Paul Dastrup to adopt the agenda. The motion passed with all in favor.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Tracy Wright moved, seconded by Mike Sarles to approve the minutes. The motion passed with all in favor.

PUBLIC HEARING: COMPENSATION INCREASES FOR SPECIFIC CITY OFFICERS

Mayor Kim Soper opened the meeting for a public hearing. The mayor reviewed the compensation increases listed in the ordinance, which included Mat Houston for \$10,000, and Carla Farnsworth, Tyrissa Howell, David Owens, Kory Owens, Rick Miller, Lance Miller, and Karma Albrecht, each for \$6,240.

Harshad Desai stated that there is a law requiring each employee seeking a raise to come to the City Council and explain what they did better in the past year compared to the previous year. The City Council then decides whether the employee should receive an increase. He questioned who the city uses for a wage comparison. There should be records available for public review. He mentioned that Panguitch City employees are peons and just say yes, sir, when they should act as subordinates. He also noted that when the city hires, they advertise positions with low wages to attract locals and subsequently give significant raises, which he believes discourages outsiders from applying. He expressed concerns about the challenges in hiring local individuals.

City Attorney Barry Huntington clarified that there is no law mandating the process Mr. Desai referred to. Mayor Kim Soper explained that in Panguitch City, policy dictates that the mayor and city manager review compensation every three years. They examined 15 fifth-class cities with budgets similar to Panguitch and discovered that Panguitch City employees are underpaid. He affirmed that the employees are not peons but rather outstanding individuals, and the raise will help bring their salaries in line with current standards.

Ed Ryan stated that through his work with Panguitch City, he has found them to be efficient. Council Member Tracy Wright mentioned that the City Manager position was opened to applicants from all over the state, resulting in numerous applications. She praised Mat Houston for being excellent to work with and noted that he has performed well in his role. She expressed that all employees go above and beyond, and she would love to offer them larger increases.

Council Member Mike Sarles emphasized that Panguitch City has great employees and that competitive wages are essential to retain them. Council Member Paul

Dastrup remarked that many qualified individuals were interviewed for the City Manager role, and the right person was chosen for the job. He reiterated that the employees are not peons.

Mayor Kim Soper stated that working with Mat Houston has been a positive experience. He remarked that Panguitch City's employees are exceptional in their roles, and they deserve a more substantial increase.

Mayor Kim Soper closed the public hearing at 5:47 PM.

ORDINANCE 2025-2 COMPENSATION INCREASES FOR SPECIFIC CITY OFFICERS

Tracy Wright moved, seconded by Paul Dastrup, to approve Ordinance 2025-2 Compensation increases for Specific City Officers. The motion passed with all in favor.

PUBLIC HEARING 2025-2026 BUDGET

Mayor Kim Soper opened the meeting for a Public Hearing at 5:50 PM.

Harshad Desai stated that in 2023, the city's budget was \$1.9 million, while in 2024, it was \$4.1 million. He then asked what the public gets from this. Mr. Desai mentioned that Panguitch City receives funds for all the roads in Panguitch, but only chip seals a fourth of the town. So, where does the rest of the money go? He noted that the water fund is always in the plus, and three times the city has transferred money to the general fund three times. He believes the city should return that surplus to the public. Mr. Desai also pointed out that the budget allocates \$118,000 for economic development, yet Panguitch remains the same as it was 20 years ago. He then stated that there is 2.4 million budgeted for the airport, and asked if Panguitch even needs an airport and who is using it now that there is a helipad at the hospital.

Mayor Kim Soper responded that Panguitch City undergoes annual audits and meets state requirements. Additionally, the state mandates that cities maintain a surplus. The Mayor further explained that it's not possible to compare budgets

year to year due to rising costs and changing projects. He emphasized that money received for roads must be used for that purpose.

City Manager Mat Houston noted that it takes 10 years to chip seal all of Panguitch with the funds received.

Council Member Mike Sarles mentioned that the FAA contributed \$2 million toward the airport, indicating that they must see a need for it. He highlighted that the airport is still utilized for LifeFlight services. Mike added that he has lived in many places, and Panguitch has good people and is a great place to be.

City Treasurer Carla Farnsworth stated that 2012 was the only instance in which a transfer occurred from the water and sewer fund to the general fund, which was allocated for the heating and air system in the city office.

City Council member Paul Dastrup remarked that the budget is limited, and they do the best they can with it.

Mayor Kim Soper closed the Public Hearing at 6:04 PM.

2025-2026 BUDGET

Paul Dastrup moved, seconded by Mike Sarles, to adopt the 2025-2026 Budget. The motion passed with all in favor.

CULINARY WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Paul Dastrup moved, seconded by Tracy Wright, to approve the culinary water management plan. The motion passed with all in favor.

Jerry Smith addressed the council regarding safety. He believes there should be a crosswalk on Main Street at 400 North to give pedestrians a way to access Napa, Family Dollar, and Silver Eagle.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

ADUs – The Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance will go to Planning and Zoning for a Public Hearing on June 2nd.

Summer food program – The summer program was approved for 9 weeks and will start on Wednesday, June 4th, during story time.

Social Hall Security – Another bid was received for the Social Hall Security.

Fire Department Compressor – The fire department's compressor isn't working properly. Three bids have been received, ranging from \$62,000 to \$92,000. It was suggested that the fire department might consider applying for a grant to help offset the cost of replacing the compressor.

Mainstreet Permanent Lighting – Installation of the Mainstreet lighting will begin on June 7th.

Bike Path – The bike path is beginning to crack. The council discussed ways to repair the path.

Road edges – The edges of the road are deteriorating. There was discussion on placing milling on the edges to attempt to stop the deterioration.

National Day of Service – The National Day of Service committee will be looking for projects to complete this September.

Joanne Miller Week – The City Council and City Employees cleaned gutters and drains on Main and Center during the city-wide cleanup.

Crime – City Attorney Barry Huntington stated that \$20,000 in tickets were written in April. He feels crime is up.

Springs – The Mayor, City Manager, inmates, and city personnel will be holding a field day on June 5th to repair the fence at the springs.

ADJOURNMENT

Tracy Wright moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:34 PM.

Kim Soper, Mayor

Tyrissa Howell, City Recorder