MINUTES
ALTA TOWN COUNCIL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING
Wednesday, March 12, 2025, 4:00 PM

Alta Community Center, 10351 E. Highway 210, Alta, Utah

PUBLIC HEARING

PRESENT:	Mayor Roger Bourke Councilmember John Byrne (attended virtually) Councilmember Dan Schilling
STAFF PRESENT:	Chris Cawley, Town Manager Mike Morey, Town Marshal Jen Clancy, Town Clerk Molly Austin, Assistant Town Manager Brooke Boone, Deputy Town Clerk Craig Heimark, Treasurer
ALSO PRESENT:	Cameron Platt, Legal Counsel
NOT PRESENT:	Councilmember Carolyn Anctil Councilmember Elise Morgan

1. **CALL THE PUBLIC HEARING TO ORDER**

Mayor Bourke called the public hearing of March 12, 2025 to order to receive comments on the proposed fiscal year 2025 budget amendments.

2. **PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE COMMENT ON PROPOSED FY 2025 BUDGET AMENDMENTS AND CAPITAL PROJECTS PLAN AMENDMENTS**

No public comment was received.

3. **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

MOTION: Dan Schilling motioned to adjourn the public hearing, and John Byrne seconded.

VOTE: All were in favor. The public hearing was unanimously adjourned.

RESULT: APPROVED

ALTA TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

PRESENT:	Mayor Roger Bourke Councilmember Carolyn Anctil (attended virtually part way through the meeting) Councilmember John Byrne (attended virtually) Councilmember Dan Schilling
STAFF PRESENT:	Chris Cawley, Town Manager Mike Morey, Town Marshal Jen Clancy, Town Clerk Molly Austin, Assistant Town Manager Brooke Boone, Deputy Town Clerk Craig Heimark, Treasurer
ALSO PRESENT:	Cameron Platt, Legal Counsel
NOT PRESENT:	Councilmember Elise Morgan

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

00:05:25

Mayor Bourke called the March 12, 2025 Alta Town Council meeting to order.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

00:05:45

Sara Gibbs, of Alta Community Enrichment expressed disappointment regarding the town's decision to place a bid on the Our Lady of Snows building, which ACE, an organization in the community for nearly 30 years, had also bid on. Gibbs compared the situation to living in a home for decades, only to have a close friend compete for its purchase. While acknowledging that people have the right to change their minds, Gibbs noted that the town's bid came as a shock to some community members who had little time to process it. Gibbs stated that the town had suggested ACE could remain a tenant if the town acquired the building but had not provided written confirmation or lease details. Gibbs emphasized that ACE had operated in the building with minimal financial impact and questioned whether the town would be amenable to their lease terms. Additionally, Gibbs expressed concerns about the use of town funds, arguing that a recent $75,000 study suggested the Town Community Center should be either remodeled or demolished, along with Alta Central. Gibbs suggested that the potentially significant cost of purchasing the building could be allocated elsewhere and urged the town to allow ACE to secure the property instead. Despite concerns, Gibbs remained hopeful that the town and ACE would maintain a strong partnership regardless of the outcome. Gibbs also called for a public hearing on the matter, particularly regarding any necessary budget adjustments, citing concern among community members.

Mayor Bourke stated that the town was still evaluating its options regarding the matter and had not made a final decision. Mayor Bourke emphasized that the town was considering what would be in its best interest and remained open to dialogue, including the discussion initiated by Gibbs. Mayor Bourke assured Gibbs that once a decision was reached, the town would clearly communicate both the outcome and the reasoning behind it.

Mark Haik recounted attending the February Town of Alta Planning Commission meeting, where Wade Budge presented a new proposal on behalf of a client. Haik noted that Budge emphasized transparency in the process and introduced a water expert to explain the necessary administrative steps before the Utah State Engineer. Haik stated that following the expert's remarks, the only question came from Commissioner Rob Voye, who asked why the discussion focused on the State Engineer rather than Salt Lake City Public Utilities. Haik highlighted that Voye had served as a town official for a long time, possibly second only to Nepstad, and had attended multiple executive sessions on public utilities. Haik questioned how Voye could still be uninformed about the water applications governing municipal water diversions in the Town of Alta. Haik further noted that no one present at the meeting, including council members, staff, Niermeyer, or the town's consultant, provided an answer to Voye's question. Haik concluded by asking how Voye remained uninformed on this issue after years of service and when he would be adequately informed about the details of public utility operations in the town.

Creighton Hart addressed the council, noting that it had been some time since their last attendance at a town meeting. Hart announced that the following day marked ACE's 28th anniversary as a 501(c)(3) organization recognized by the Town of Alta and extended birthday wishes to the organization, expressing hope for its continued success in the years ahead.

3. **ALTA SKI AREA UPDATE, MIKE MAUGHAN**

00:14:00

Mike Maughan provided an update beginning with a recap of a major power failure at the ski area on February 26. The outage occurred around noon during a meeting with the Forest Service and resulted in a full loss of power to the ski area. Maughan stated that within approximately 30 minutes, auxiliary systems and generators were activated, allowing operations to continue with minimal disruption. The ski area ran on backup systems for three days, with most visitors unaware of the issue aside from increased noise levels. Maughan reported that full utility power was restored after nearly six days, with the issue traced to a problem in the loop system's line across Crosstow. The outage caused damage to various electrical components and equipment, including transformers, which would require replacement during the summer. Maughan commended the Alta team's efforts in managing the situation and apologized for any disruptions in the town.

Maughan also provided an update on ski area visitation and business performance, stating that visitation was currently down about 6% compared to the previous year. Based on projections, Maughan anticipated ending the year approximately 5% below the prior year's numbers.

4. **ALTA SKI AREA SUMMER PROJECTS UPDATE, MIKE MAUGHAN**

00:16:45

Mike Maughan provided an update on upcoming projects at the ski area, emphasizing the need to manage skier distribution while preserving the quality of the skiing experience. Maughan highlighted the impact of climate change and increasing demand, outlining key focus areas including snowmaking, infrastructure maintenance, and transportation improvements.

A major project this summer involves replacing a high-pressure snowmaking line along the rope tow, which has deteriorated and failed multiple times. This project includes digging a trench approximately 10 feet wide and 10 feet deep, installing two 42-inch culverts for water storage, replacing the snowmaking line, and adding a new power line. The Town of Alta will also be installing a water line within this trench. Additionally, upgrades to the pump house will be made, increasing pumping capacity to enhance snow production during optimal temperature windows.

Future projects include replacing the snowmaking line from the top of the Corkscrew ski run to the angle station, targeted for summer 2026. The ski area is also exploring additional water storage solutions to maximize snow production efficiency. Long-term plans involve potential snowmaking expansion into the Supreme area, though not in the immediate future.

Several terrain modifications are planned to improve safety and accessibility. The High Traverse project, which began last year, will continue with further work near the sunspot area. Another project near the bottom of Rock and Roll ski run aims to remove loose rocks and dead trees to improve skier safety. At the bottom of Supreme Cutoff, a terrain modification is planned to eliminate a blind spot; this involves reducing the steep break-over, widening the path, and removing trees to improve visibility.

Building projects include a two-year expansion of the Albion Day Lodge, which will add three levels, including restrooms, additional seating, updated coffee shop, and employee housing. Additionally, a new cold equipment storage facility is planned adjacent to the Albion parking lot, designed to be avalanche-resistant and provide easier access to essential equipment.

Lift improvements will also be a major focus. The Sugarloaf lift is set to receive an upgrade with new AC motors and communication lines. The Supreme lift will be straightened by removing the angle and repositioning the top and bottom terminals. Construction for this project begins May 15, with work expected to impact campground access and trails in the area.

Additional infrastructure improvements include installing a new base-to-base power line, repaving the south Flagstaff lot in collaboration with UDOT, and replacing an aging culvert coming out of the Tom Moore mine under SR 210. Four new Wyssen avalanche control towers will be installed on Sugarloaf Peak to enhance safety.

Maughan noted that these projects will significantly impact parking and public access this summer. The Albion parking lot may be fully unavailable this summer, while the Wildcat lot will be partially affected. Construction will also lead to temporary trail closures. Mayor Bourke raised concerns about the trench's proximity to the park and potential safety hazards for park users. Maughan acknowledged the concern and stated that temporary closures might be necessary to ensure public safety.

Mayor Bourke inquired about helicopter operations, noting that it is always a topic of interest to residents. John Byrne commended Maughan on the extensive list of summer projects, acknowledging the ambition behind them and expressing appreciation for the ongoing efforts to protect the skier experience.

Maughan also highlighted some challenges with the parking system, which has been in place for four years. Maughan noted that while it is functioning well, some individuals have found ways to use it to their advantage, leading to instances where lots were sold out but only filled to 75% capacity. Maughan stated that refinements would be made before the next season to address no-shows and improve efficiency.

5. **QUESTIONS REGARDING DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

00:43:10

No questions.

6. **APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 12, 2025 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, FEBRUARY 14, 2025 EMERGENCY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, MARCH 4, 2025 SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, AND FEBRUARY STAFF AND FINANCE REPORTS**

00:43:50

MOTION: Dan Schilling motioned to approve the February 12, 2025 Town Council Meeting Minutes, February 14, 2025 Emergency Town Council Meeting Minutes, March 4, 2025 Special Town Council Meeting Minutes, and February staff and finance reports. John Byrne seconded.

VOTE: All were in favor. The February 12, 2025 Town Council Meeting Minutes, February 14, 2025 Emergency Town Council Meeting Minutes, March 4, 2025 Special Town Council Meeting Minutes, and February staff and finance reports were approved.

RESULT: APPROVED

7. **MAYORS REPORT**

00:45:00

Mayor Bourke noted that unfortunately interlodge rules are being violated, emphasizing that when interlodge is in effect, individuals must remain indoors. Mayor Bourke encouraged people to check the town's website for updates. It was reiterated that enforcement is the responsibility of building managers and that while the town prioritizes persuasion over coercion, citations could be issued if necessary.

Mayor Bourke provided an update on the monthly SR 210 road meeting, noting that despite significant snowfall, the main line had generally remained open, with only occasional traffic disruptions. UDOT crews were commended for their work in maintaining traffic flow. Additionally, Mayor Bourke noted the conclusion of the 45-day legislative session, highlighting the passage of traction bill HB 196, which grants UDOT authority to regulate vehicle equipment requirements based on weather conditions.

Mayor Bourke also noted changes to vote-by-mail procedures, with residents being required to opt in starting in 2029. A comprehensive review of legislation affecting the town was planned for the next meeting.

Mayor Bourke reminded everyone that two council terms and the Mayor's seat would soon expire. Mayor Bourke encouraged multiple candidates to declare so voters could be presented with a choice. The candidate declaration filing dates are June 2 – 6 in person at the town office.

Mayor Bourke concluded with an astronomy update, discussing the Europa Clipper spacecraft's recent flyby of Mars and its upcoming Earth flyby in 2026. Mayor Bourke also noted an asteroid previously considered a potential impact threat had been ruled out after further orbital calculations.

The next town council meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, April 9, at 4:00 PM Mountain Daylight Time.

8. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO ADOPT THE MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER (SEWER) PLANNING PROGRAM FOR 2024**

00:52:30

Cawley introduced the Municipal Wastewater Planning Program (MWPP) annual report, a required submission to the state. Cawley noted that the version included in the council packet appeared incomplete due to formatting issues with the Google form used to generate it. Given the missing and unclear responses, Cawley proposed postponing discussion until the next meeting.

Byrne commented on an incorrect response in the report, specifically regarding the number of lift stations in town. Steve McIntosh clarified that while there is a lift station near Byrne's residence, it is not part of the town's sewer system but rather the service area's. A discussion followed regarding ownership distinctions between the Town and Service Area #3, with McIntosh explaining how and where these systems connect to the larger regional infrastructure.

McIntosh also provided an overview of wastewater system maintenance over the past year, noting routine inspections and flushing activities. McIntosh mentioned work on a sagging pipe in the Goldminer's Lot, which remains a future project. Efforts to locate inflow and infiltration from snowmelt were also discussed. Additionally, McIntosh highlighted regular maintenance in the Superior Lot to prevent grease buildup, which could reduce costs.

Mayor Bourke confirmed that a more complete version of the MWPP report would be presented next month. Council members took the opportunity to thank McIntosh for years of dedicated service to the town's wastewater management.

9. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-R-2 REPEALING AND REPLACING DOG LICENSE NUMBERS**

00:59:00

Brooke Boone explained that the town had approved a total of 94 dog licenses annually, and that six licenses had recently been forfeited. Staff recommended to evenly distribute these six licenses between categories A and B. Clancy explained that the redistribution was based on past council preferences and that commuter licenses were reallocated accordingly. However, the final decision remained with the council.

Mayor Bourke opened the topic for discussion, noting the absence of some council members. Dan Schilling expressed support for the proposed approach without further opinion. John Byrne disclosed that both he and a family member held dog licenses but stated that he believed the program was well managed and supported the suggested allocation.

MOTION: Dan Schilling motioned to approve Resolution 2025-R-2. John Byrne seconded.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Mayor Bourke – yes, Councilmember Byrne – yes, Councilmember Schilling – yes, Resolution 2025-R-2 was unanimously approved.

RESULT: APPROVED

10. IMPACT FEE UPDATE

01:02:00

The council discussed whether to proceed with an impact fee study, given the financial and administrative burdens associated with impact fees. Cawley explained that impact fees are a regulated municipal revenue source used to fund public infrastructure expansion in response to new development. However, enacting and managing impact fees requires extensive technical analysis, financial accounting, and compliance with evolving state regulations.

The town's existing impact fee ordinance has not been updated since 1998, lacks proper documentation, and does not specify fee amounts. Currently, Alta has approximately $23,579 in its impact fee account, but these funds are not encumbered due to the absence of required technical studies. While state code allows funds collected after 2021 to be used for an impact fee study, most of Alta's collected fees predate this and cannot be used for this purpose.

Council members debated the necessity of an impact fee study, given Alta's limited growth potential. Byrne noted that while residential construction is mostly built out, commercial redevelopment could generate a need for infrastructure improvements, particularly for culinary water. However, Cawley pointed out that redevelopment projects must create new impacts to justify fees, and some developers, like the Shrontz Estate, plan to manage their own water systems.

Byrne emphasized the need for alternative revenue sources to offset infrastructure costs and prevent significant water rate increases for residents. Heimark inquired about the staff burden of conducting a study, with Cawley responding that most of the work would be outsourced but still require staff coordination.

Ultimately, the council acknowledged the uncertain return on investment for an impact fee study but considered allocating funds for one, particularly focusing on potential commercial growth impacts.

They also agreed that, regardless of their decision on impact fees, the town's ordinance must be updated to align with current state code.

(Carolyn Anctil joined the meeting)

11. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-R-4 TO AMEND THE FY 2025 BUDGETS**

01:27:30

The council reviewed and discussed the proposed budget amendment. Clancy outlined the key changes, including incorporating a mental health grant awarded to Ted Spencer for the Alta Marshal's Office, adjustments to impact fees, and modifications to the capital projects fund. Clancy also noted an error in an Excel spreadsheet that caused the deletion of a loan repayment entry and requested its reinstatement in the budget amendment.

Byrne clarified that loan repayments were previously categorized as balance sheet adjustments rather than income statement items. Clancy confirmed this but stated they were still documented for council awareness. Byrne characterized the amendments as primarily housekeeping changes with no major economic impact.

Cawley elaborated on a significant budget amendment related to the water fund, driven by an infrastructure project expected to cost up to $905,000—substantially more than previous estimates. Cawley noted that the project had received Forest Service approval and was progressing through state review, though procurement challenges remained. The increase in cost was attributed to an expanded project scope and more detailed planning.

To finance the project, Cawley suggested the council consider an interfund loan from the general fund to the water fund, with decisions on loan structure and timing in FY26 when the details can be fine tuned. Byrne suggested consolidating existing water fund debt into a single loan with clear repayment terms in compliance with state guidelines.

The discussion also touched on declining general fund transfers to the capital projects fund, with Byrne noting a sharp reduction compared to prior years. Heimark supported a more conservative approach to revenue forecasting, suggesting a shift from a rolling three-year average to a flat projection based on current-year figures. The council acknowledged the need for tighter financial management and potential alternative revenue sources.

MOTION: Dan Schilling motioned to approve Resolution 2025-R-4 including an edit to bring the $61,400 back onto the water fund budget line 51-40-810. Carolyn Anctil seconded.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Mayor Bourke – yes, Councilmember Byrne – yes, Councilmember Schilling – yes, Councilmember Anctil – yes, Resolution 2025-R-4 was unanimously approved.

RESULT: APPROVED

12. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 2025-R-5 TO AMEND THE CAPITAL PROJECTS PLAN**

01:45:50

The council discussed the capital plan, noting that it does not yet incorporate recommendations from the water fund study or facility study. Byrne emphasized prioritizing life safety projects, specifically electrical system upgrades and seismic improvements for Alta Central. Heimark inquired about elevating the priority of a fire suppression water tank. Byrne advised against immediate action, citing a 2014 settlement agreement requiring the Shrontz Estate to fund the project. Cawley affirmed that future development would necessitate the Estate's construction of a tank, reinforcing the need to delay town involvement. Schilling supported prioritizing electrical and seismic upgrades due to their direct impact on safety. The council agreed to incorporate placeholders for these projects in the capital plan ahead of the next budget amendment. Clancy noted progress on fund balance projections for capital expenditures.

MOTION: Dan Schilling motioned to adopt Resolution 2025-R-5 to amend the capital projects plan as discussed. Carolyn Anctil seconded.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Councilmember Anctil – yes, Councilmember Schilling – yes, Mayor Bourke – yes, Councilmember Byrne – yes, Resolution 2025-R-5 was unanimously approved.

RESULT: APPROVED

13. **NEW BUSINESS**

01:54:20

Schilling announced two upcoming book signings for his latest work, a memoir co-written with Dick Fluey, the last living miner from the Alta mines of the 1950s. The book, published by University Press, provides a firsthand account of mining life and its historical significance. The signings will take place on April 1 at King's English and April 11 at Snowbird.

14. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO COMMENCE A CLOSED MEETING TO DISCUSS A MATTER AUTHORIZED BY UTAH CODE SECTION 52-4-205(1)**

01:56:45

No vote was taken.

15. **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

01:57:15

MOTION: Dan Schilling motioned to adjourn, and John Byrne seconded.

VOTE: All in favor. The meeting was unanimously adjourned.

RESULT: APPROVED

Passed this 9th day of April, 2025

Jen Clancy, Town Clerk