

MINUTES
ALTA TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
October 8, 2025, 4:00 PM

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

PRESENT: Mayor Roger Bourke
Councilmember Carolyn Ancil
Councilmember John Byrne (attended virtually)
Councilmember Elise Morgan (attended virtually)
Councilmember Dan Schilling

STAFF PRESENT: Chris Cawley, Town Manager (attended virtually)
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: N/A

ALTA TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

00:00:00

Mayor Bourke called the October 8, 2025 Alta Town Council meeting to order.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

00:02:00

Mark Haik addressed the council and referenced historical records from the Salt Lake County Board of Commissioners dated October 9, 1940, which documented an easement granted to the Forest Service for constructing a garage and storeroom in Alta. Haik noted that the minutes also referenced a 50-year lease granted to the Forest Service, indicating that the agency's interest in the property was limited to a leasehold rather than ownership. Haik then cited a July 16, 1997 letter he had written to former Mayor Levitt concerning road dedication issues and a subsequent response from Mr. Guldner. In that correspondence, Guldner stated that the mayor believed the Forest Service had turned the summer road over to the town for use and maintenance. Haik concluded by urging the council to clarify the ownership and jurisdictional records for the road in question, emphasizing the need for accuracy given the public resources involved.

Margaret Bourke commented on the staff report prepared by Chris Cawley, expressing appreciation for the inclusion of a progress chart. Ms. Bourke suggested adding more specific timeline details rather

than labeling items simply as “in progress,” noting that some projects may extend over several years. Ms. Bourke recommended including expected timeframes, such as identifying when a water line project is planned for a particular season or year, to make the chart more informative and useful for planning purposes. Ms. Bourke concluded by reiterating support for the chart’s inclusion in the report.

3. ALTA SKI AREA UPDATE, MIKE MAUGHAN

00:06:30

Mike Maughan reported that all ski lifts had passed inspection and were ready for operation, including the Supreme and Sugarloaf lifts, which had new motors and drives installed. The connection of the water line across the cross tow was completed, and crews had begun filling the pipes in preparation for testing the snowmaking system once work in the pump house was finished. Maughan noted that the recent snowfall had delayed work on the Albion Day Lodge project, though concrete pours were scheduled over the coming weeks to allow backfilling and restoration of parking areas before winter. The equipment storage building had one wall pour remaining before steel erection could begin, with the goal of installing a roof before winter weather intensified. Maughan confirmed the resort’s target opening date of November 21, one week earlier than the prior season, and an anticipated closing date of April 26. Sales were reportedly on pace or slightly ahead of last year, and lodging bookings were similar. In response to a question from Mayor Bourke, Maughan clarified that the Alta Lodge tow was still being replaced with a new, adjustable tow expected to be installed within two weeks. Maughan also described construction challenges near the Albion Day Lodge, where unstable soil conditions during deep trenching and a misidentified water line led to accidental damage of water and sewer lines during excavation temporarily disrupting water service. Maughan stated that repairs had since been completed and normal service restored.

4. QUESTIONS REGARDING DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

00:13:30

Cawley reported that the Planning Commission was preparing for an October 22 public hearing to consider adopting the Wildland Urban Interface Code and making a minor amendment to Section 9.3 regarding vegetation preservation during development. Cawley explained that staff were also drafting an amendment to Section 10.19 to remove the outdated requirement to publish public hearing notices in a newspaper of general circulation, aligning the town’s process with current state law and reducing scheduling challenges. The amendment would also shorten the notice period from 15 to 10 days to match state requirements. Cawley emphasized that Planning Commission hearings are required under state code, while Town Council hearings are not, though the town intends to continue the practice due to the infrequency of such amendments.

Craig Heimark noted that the proposed exemption from mandatory tree planting was important given the size of some lots and raised concerns that certain undeveloped parcels near his residence might not meet water access or fire engine access requirements under the new code. Heimark suggested that the town review these conditions before finalizing the recommendation and notify affected property owners if development challenges are likely. Cawley acknowledged the concern, explaining that the

town is required to adopt the Wildland Urban Interface Code but would review how much flexibility exists for amendments.

Mike Morey announced that the town had hired a new law enforcement officer, Virgil Sickels, who brings over a decade of experience, most recently with the Juab County Sheriff's Office. Morey stated that this recruitment process had been especially challenging. Sickels was expected to begin onboarding the following week, with training accelerated to prepare for the ski season. Morey noted that while Sickels would face new challenges specific to Alta's snow safety environment, his investigative and patrol experience would be valuable to the department. Morey also informed the council that another deputy had been injured on duty and would be out for an extended period, making the new hire especially timely. Mayor Bourke and Carolyn Ancil expressed appreciation and support, wishing the injured employee a full recovery.

5. **APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 4, 2025 TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT MEETING MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 10, 2025 ALTA TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES, OCTOBER STAFF AND FINANCE REPORTS**

00:21:45

John Byrne expressed concern that the September 10 minutes did not accurately reflect the council's opposition to the building height of the proposed condominium project. Byrne emphasized that, in response to the developer's direct question about approval, council members had independently expressed significant concerns about height, location, water availability, and access, and that the minutes should clearly convey that no positive support was given on the height issue. Jen Clancy requested additional time to review the recording and update the minutes per Byrne's request; the council agreed to defer approval of minutes to the next meeting so that they better reflect the council's opinions on the project.

Heimark raised a separate concern as town treasurer regarding potential liability related to water for future condominium buyers, noting that purchasers might assume water availability that the town does not control, and suggested measures to mitigate legal risk, such as requiring buyers to acknowledge water limitations. The council acknowledged the point but focused on the procedural issue of accurately capturing the prior discussion in the minutes.

MOTION: Dan Schilling motioned to approve the September 4, 2025 Town Council Strategic Planning Retreat Meeting Minutes, and the October staff and finance reports. Mayor Bourke seconded.

VOTE: All were in favor. The September 4, 2025 Town Council Strategic Planning Retreat Meeting Minutes, and the October staff and finance reports were approved.

RESULT: APPROVED

The September 10, 2025 minutes would be redrafted and presented to the council for adoption at the next meeting.

6. **MAYORS REPORT**

Alta Town Council Meeting
October 8, 2025

00:36:15

Mayor Bourke noted with sadness that Mill Creek Mayor Jeff Silvestrini was retiring before the end of his term due to health reasons, praising Silvestrini as a longstanding intellectual and moral leader who had championed civil rights and supported those in difficult circumstances. Bourke summarized attendance at the Utah League of Cities and Towns annual conference in Salt Lake City with staff members Cawley and Molly Austin, highlighting the value of networking and learning from peers in similar municipalities. Mayor Bourke and staff met with the UTA board chairman and governmental relations manager, learning that improvements to winter bus service to Alta were unlikely in the near future, as implementation was dependent on UDOT and delayed by ongoing litigation. Mayor Bourke also noted discussions at a rural caucus session about the disproportionate use of emergency services by visitors compared to property owners, acknowledging that while widely recognized, it had not yet become a legislative priority.

Mayor Bourke described local observations, including a major traffic backup on September 28 that resembled typical winter weekend congestion, and noted the first snow of the season on October 3, commenting on the scenic contrast with autumn foliage. Upcoming events included the Shrontz Estate's petition to rezone a portion of their property at the November town council meeting and the first seasonal road meeting scheduled for November 12. Mayor Bourke concluded by emphasizing the collaborative efforts of various agencies to maintain Little Cottonwood Canyon Road safely during winter, recognizing Mike Morey as a key leader in those efforts.

Mayor Bourke provided an astronomy report, highlighting recent NASA findings suggesting the clearest signs of past life on Mars. Mayor Bourke concluded by announcing that the next council meeting was scheduled for November 12 at 4:00 p.m.

Councilmembers discussed updates on public transportation and the disproportionate use of emergency services by visitors versus property owners. Ancil asked whether recent discussions at the Utah League of Cities and Towns conference included Big Cottonwood Canyon bus service or tolling; Mayor Bourke clarified that only Little Cottonwood Canyon and related UTA bus service had been discussed, and that any enhancements were delayed by ongoing litigation. Heimark added that negotiations were underway to address lawsuit obstacles as observed by UDOT. Austin and Cawley confirmed that no changes to bus service or tolling would occur this winter, explaining that enhanced bus service rollout involves long lead times for bus procurement and would require coordinated implementation in both Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons.

The conversation shifted to the strain on emergency services caused by visitors. Dan Schilling suggested engaging state representatives, such as GayLynn Bennion, to elevate the issue to the legislative level. Mayor Bourke noted that all attendees at the conference recognized this as a widespread problem affecting multiple canyon areas. Fire Chief Jay Torgersen recommended outreach to county council representatives, emphasizing that some county funds supporting fire and medical services could be jeopardized. The council agreed that collaboration with other canyon communities and agencies could strengthen advocacy, acknowledging that the issue is statewide and not limited to Little Cottonwood Canyon. The discussion concluded with agreement that proactive engagement was necessary to distribute the burden of emergency services more equitably.

7. DISCUSSION ABOUT ADDING A FULL-TIME FACILITY MANAGER POSITION TO OUR EMPLOYEE PORTFOLIO

00:52:40

Clancy presented the need for a full-time, year-round building maintenance position, noting that part-time seasonal hires have historically been difficult to retain and have only lasted one or two seasons. Clancy explained that existing part-time staff are often unable to keep up with the maintenance needs of town facilities, which include snow removal, lighting replacement, trash and recycling management, park maintenance, and general upkeep. Clancy emphasized that a full-time position would allow for more proactive facility care, rather than reactive fixes.

Morey added that part-time staff still leave critical gaps, such as emergency generator maintenance and other heavy-lift tasks, and stressed the value of having someone cross-trained in emergency functions and infrastructure maintenance. Schilling and others highlighted that the new position would be of a more professional nature than the part-time position, focusing on comprehensive building management rather than just seasonal snow removal, and that current staff are performing tasks outside their job descriptions to fill gaps. Cawley clarified that the 40 hours per week of work currently exists but is not fully accomplished due to turnover and lack of continuity, and that a full-time hire would provide both expertise and reliability to maintain the town's facilities safely and effectively. Anctil observed that this model aligns with what condo associations use, with dedicated facilities managers overseeing operations, subcontracting work as needed, and ensuring overall building care.

Clancy emphasized that retaining knowledge from employees beyond six months is critical and that there's currently a void in building maintenance coverage. Byrne added that even in winter, when snow isn't falling, there's always enough maintenance work to keep a full-time employee busy, including deferred and ongoing tasks, and stressed that the position requires skill and supervision, not just manual labor. Byrne highlighted that benefits, including health insurance and housing considerations, would be key to retention.

Clancy noted that offering benefits like health insurance and retirement would make the position more attractive and competitive, and that the town had considered nearby employers to confirm a qualified candidate could be found. Clancy explained that currently, building maintenance costs are spread across four departments, and consolidating them for this full-time position would result in a net budget increase of approximately \$62,000. Council members discussed the salary range, benefits, and necessary equipment.

Councilmembers expressed support, noting that the position would attract qualified candidates and solve ongoing staffing challenges. Clancy concluded that staff would fine-tune the job description and prepare numbers for the November budget amendment for the council consideration. The council indicated consensus to move forward with drafting the position and to include the costs in the budget amendment for November.

8. NEW BUSINESS

01:14:25

Elise Morgan raised a concern she had heard regarding Granite School District (correction: Canyon School District) potentially consolidating classrooms, which could result in closing the local school. Morgan noted that while no official decisions had been made, there had been ongoing discussions between teachers and the district. Morgan emphasized the school's importance to the community and expressed her hope that it would remain open. Austin confirmed she had heard similar concerns from other parents. Clancy suggested that if the council or parents receive further information, the town could write a letter of support or advocate to the district. Schilling and Mayor Bourke agreed, noting the community impact and the importance of staying informed.

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

01:16:30

MOTION: Mayor Bourke motioned to approve going into a close meeting to discuss a matter authorized by Utah code section 52-4-205(1)(c). Carolyn Anctil seconded.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Councilmember Anctil – yes, Councilmember Byrne – yes, Councilmember Morgan – yes, Councilmember Schilling – yes, and Mayor Bourke – yes, a closed meeting was unanimously approved.

RESULT: APPROVED

***** Closed Meeting *****

10. **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

(Elise Morgan was not present)

MOTION: Carolyn Anctil motioned to adjourn, and Dan Schilling seconded.

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

RESULT: APPROVED

Passed this 12th day of November, 2025



Jen Clancy, Town Clerk